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The Bible And Christianity Explained

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THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

FOREWORD

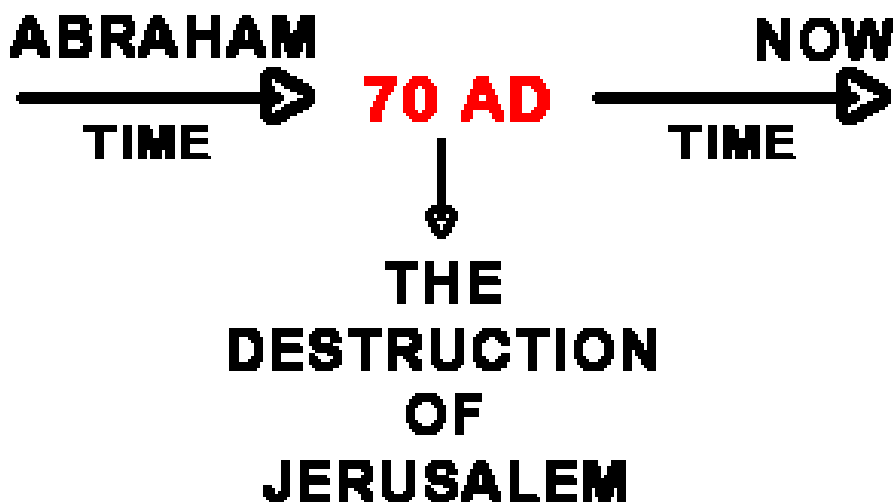
Every page in the prophecy section of this web site is either 1) an explanation of the 70-Weeks Prophecy of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), or 2) built upon the foundation of a proper understanding of that prophecy.

In Daniel's 70-Weeks prophecy God gave the world two prophetic timetables:

- 1) A 69-week timetable leading up to the first coming of Jesus Christ.
- 2) A remaining 70th week leading up to His second coming.

The 69-week timetable consisted of 69 'weeks of years', each week lasting for 7 years (for a total of 483 years). Jesus fulfilled that timetable when He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, four days before His crucifixion.

The 70th week, however, is not like the first 69 weeks; it is not a week of 7 regular calendar years. Rather, it is the great week of the Abrahamic Covenant; beginning roughly 4000 years ago with God's promises to Abraham, divided in the middle by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (by the Romans), and soon to be completed at the second coming of Jesus Christ.



THE GREAT WEEK OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The key to fully understanding Daniel's 70th Week lies in understanding four Bible prophecies that form a great 'prophetic chain'.

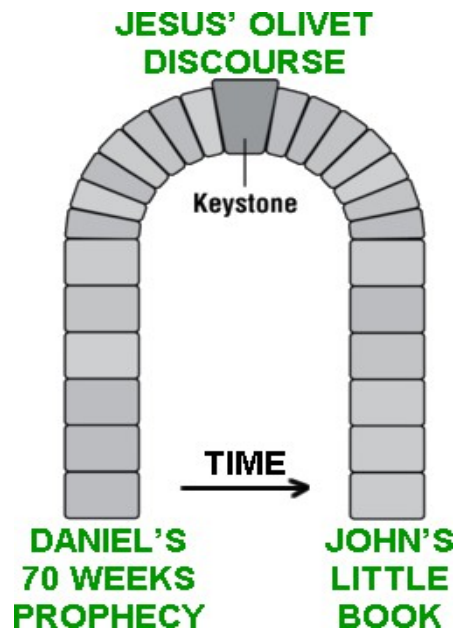


The individual 'links' in this prophetic chain were given to the world by God over a period of roughly 2000 years; beginning with Abraham around 1900 BC, and ending with the apostle John's reception of the book of Revelation around 65 AD. These four links are presented chronologically from top to bottom below:



My first prophecy web page, titled [AN INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE PROPHECY](#), explains both the Abrahamic Covenant and Daniel's 70-Weeks Prophecy.

The second page, titled [THE OLIVET DISCOURSE](#), explains the important 'keystone' prophecy that Jesus gave to His disciples while they sat together upon the Mount of Olives, two days before His crucifixion.

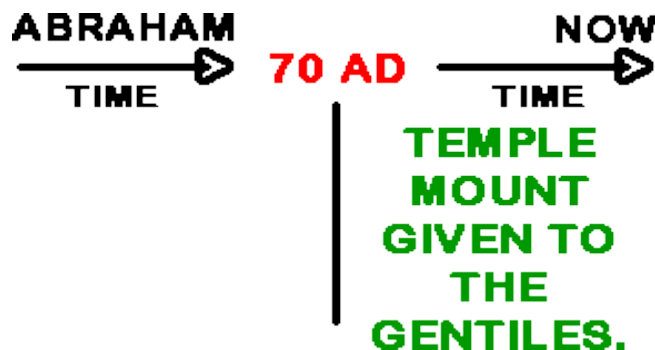


It is a 'keystone' because it provides the vital link between Daniel's 70-Weeks Prophecy and John's Little Book. When we compare the three versions of the Olivet Discourse side-by-side (from the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke), and allow Luke's 'Gentile version' to clarify Jesus' reference to Daniel's 'Abomination of Desolation' in Matthew and Mark, it becomes clear that this 'Abomination of Desolation' that marks the mid-point of Daniel's 70th Week is the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Rome in 70 AD.

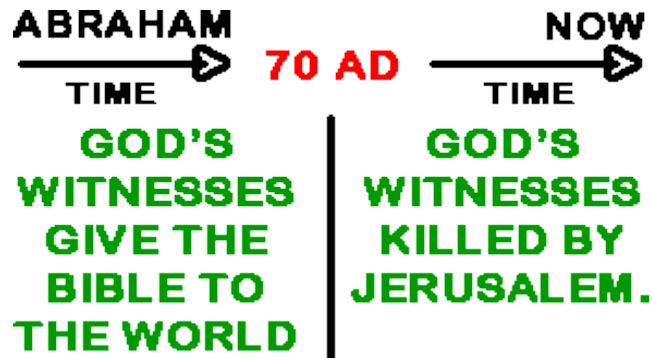
In the third page of this prophecy section, titled **THE TIMETABLE FOR JESUS' RETURN**, I explain John's Little Book itself. John received the Little Book in Revelation chapter 10. He was told to eat it, and was warned that it would be sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his stomach. John then proceeded to write down the contents of that Book in Revelation chapters 11-13.

John's Little Book provides us with four visions of Daniel's 70th Week:

1) THE TEMPLE AND THE COURTYARD (Revelation 11:1-2) The first vision describes the second half of the Week as a time during which the Temple Mount in Jerusalem would be given to the Gentiles.



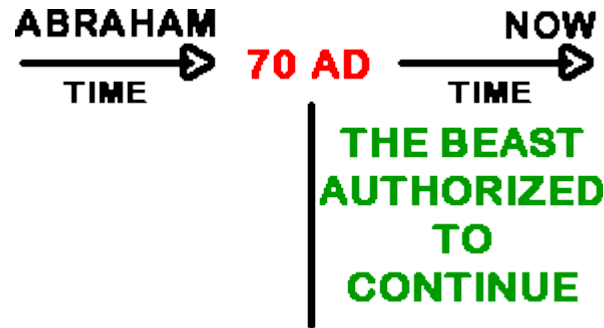
2) THE TWO WITNESSES (Revelation 11:3-12) The second vision describes God's giving of the entire Bible ('the Law and the Prophets') to the world during the first half of the week, and then portrays the dead bodies of God's servants lying in the city of Jerusalem throughout the second half of the week. This is a picture of the guilt of the Jewish nation for their persecution of God's prophets during Old Testament times, their crucifixion of Christ, their continuing persecution of Christ's disciples, and their opposition to the proclamation of the gospel to a human race desperately in need of it.



3) THE WOMAN, THE CHILD AND THE DRAGON (Revelation 12) The third vision describes Israel's bringing of the promised Messiah and 'seed' of Abraham into the world, followed by the dispersion of the Jewish people throughout the world for the following 1900+ years. While the second vision of 'The Two Witnesses' portrays the guilt of the Jewish nation, this third vision reveals God's preservation of that nation through many years of wandering throughout the world. In addition, this vision explains the ultimate source of the persecution of the Jewish people over the past 1900+ years; a defeated and bitter archangel. The 'casting out of Satan' is one of the great themes of the New Testament, and sheds much light upon the history of the world over the past 1900+ years.



4) THE BEAST FROM THE SEA (Revelation 13) The fourth vision describes God's authorization of the Beast of Revelation to continue in existence throughout the second half of the 70th Week.



When we combine a proper understanding of Jesus' Olivet Discourse with these four visions from John's Little Book, the nature of Daniel's 70th Week becomes obvious. It is indeed the 'great week' of the Abrahamic Covenant.

I have posted this 'Foreword' at the beginning of every page in this prophecy section, because without a proper understanding of Daniel's 70th Week it is impossible to 'watch' effectively for the Lord Jesus' return, or to understand any of the other important subjects in God's prophetic word; subjects such as the Great Tribulation, the Beast, the False Prophet, the Antichrist, the United States and the City of Rome (Babylon).

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

(THE IMPORTANT PROPHECY THAT JESUS GAVE SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH)

O HAPPY DAY!

In 32 AD the Lord Jesus Christ entered into the city of Jerusalem in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your King comes unto you. He is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass. Upon a colt, the foal of an ass. Zechariah 9:9



Behold, your King!

Zechariah's prophecy addressed both aspects of the 'testimony of Jesus'; His Kingship as the promised Son of David, and His role as the 'Lamb of God' who would provide salvation for all mankind. That day has since come to be known throughout the Christian world as 'Palm Sunday', because the people who accompanied Jesus into the city joyfully waved palm branches in the air and placed them on the road as Jesus rode over them.

As Jesus entered the city the people who greeted Him shouted His praises:

And a very great multitude spread their garments in His path. Others cut down branches from the trees, and laid them in the road. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried out saying "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest". Matthew 21:8-9

And when the Pharisees challenged Jesus about this praise, Jesus gave them a profound answer:

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him "Master, rebuke Your disciples". And He answered and said unto them "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out". Luke 40:39-40

Palm branches have an important significance in Bible prophecy. They play an important role in the third of Israel's prophetic feasts; the Feast of Tabernacles. Israel observed three Feasts in the course of the year. These Feasts symbolized the salvation that God would accomplish for mankind. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (or Passover), symbolized the death of the Messiah as the Savior. The Feast of Weeks (or Pentecost) foreshadowed the birth of the church, that would occur because of its direct connection to Christ's own death and resurrection. And the third Feast, in the seventh and final month of Israel's religious calendar, symbolized the final salvation 'harvest' or ingathering of God's people for all eternity. This final salvation was to be observed with Palm branches:

Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days. On the first day shall be a sabbath (rest), and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And you shall take on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. Leviticus 23:39-40

It is this connection, between Palm branches and the ingathering of God's people to stand before His throne in heaven, that is seen in the following verse:

After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number; of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying "Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb". Revelation 7:9-10

IF ISRAEL HAD WATCHED

When He entered into the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Jesus fulfilled Daniel's 69-week timetable for His first coming. It was exactly 69 weeks of years (483 years) that passed between the permission to rebuild the city of Jerusalem in 445 BC, and Jesus' presentation of Himself to the people of Israel as their promised "Messiah the Prince" (Daniel 9:25). Not only can we know that Jesus fulfilled the 69-week timetable by measuring the days, but we can also know it by listening to His words on that day:

And when He had come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong to your peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you when your enemies shall build a trench around you, and surround you, and keep you in on every side. And they shall lay you even with the ground, and your children within you. And they shall not leave in you one stone upon another, because you knew not the time of your visitation. Luke 19:41-44

In this passage the Lord Jesus was telling Israel that if they had paid attention to the timetable that began with the permission to rebuild their destroyed city of Jerusalem, they would not now be facing the re-destruction of their holy city. I believe that the wise men of the Christmas story (Matthew 2:1-12) did pay attention to the 69-week timetable. They came from a part of the world that was familiar with Daniel and his prophecies. They may even have been Jews themselves, from Babylon or Persia, who were faithfully looking toward the west for a sign of the Messiah's coming when they saw His star.

THE PASSOVER PROPHECY

Not only did the majority of the Jewish people fail to recognize Jesus' fulfillment of Daniel's 69-week timetable, but they also failed to realize that He was also fulfilling an older prophecy; the Passover Prophecy of the book of Exodus. As He entered Jerusalem on the 10th day of the first month of Israel's religious calendar, Jesus was fulfilling the original Passover instructions given to the people of Israel in Egypt:

And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak unto all the congregation of Israel, saying 'In the tenth day of this month they shall take to every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers; a lamb for a house'. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats. And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month. And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they eat it. It is the Lord's Passover. Exodus 12:1-7,11

Palm Sunday was the 10th day of the first month of Israel's year. Everyone in Jerusalem was purchasing his Passover sacrifice for the approaching 14th day. This is

why, when Jesus entered the Temple, He found it filled with merchants who were making money from the sale of sacrificial Passover animals (Matthew 21:12-13).

God had instructed the Hebrew people to obtain their Passover Lamb, and to keep it in their homes for four days, in order to inspect it closely and know that it was physically flawless. These four days also brought the people of Israel to appreciate that something harmless, innocent and lovable was being sacrificed for them. In fulfillment of this four-day process, Jesus entered into the very heart of Israel, Jerusalem, to live openly among the Jewish people and to be subjected to their rigorous inspection. During the four days that began with His entrance into Jerusalem on Sunday, and before His crucifixion on Thursday, Jesus was thoroughly examined by the leaders and people of Israel.

JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED ON A THURSDAY

Traditionally Christians have observed Friday of the Passover week as the day of Jesus' crucifixion; calling it 'Good Friday'. This is because we are told in the gospels that Jesus' disciples did not have enough time to properly prepare Jesus' body for burial, because the sunset was drawing near and a sabbath day would begin at nightfall. Since a sabbath day stood between Jesus' crucifixion and the disciples coming to the tomb at sunrise on Sunday morning, many have assumed that Jesus was crucified on Friday. But I believe that a belief in a Friday crucifixion is an error.

The first thing that we must recognize, as we approach this subject, is that for the Jewish people a new day begins at sunset. This is in keeping with the Genesis creation days, where it is said that 'the evening and the morning' comprised each day. Nighttime precedes daytime in Jewish days. Jesus entered Jerusalem during the daytime on the 10th day of the month, and spent four days anticipating the Passover, just like everyone else in Jerusalem was doing. He joined His disciples in eating the Passover at sunset, as the 14th day (Thursday) was beginning. Later that night Jesus was betrayed by Judas, taken by the Jewish leaders to the Romans, and crucified during the daylight hours of that same day.

All of Thursday, beginning at sunset, continuing on into the night, and then further on during the daytime of Thursday, was the day of Passover. And so while He had observed the Passover with His disciples the evening before, Jesus became the true Passover during the following daytime of Thursday; fulfilling all of its symbolic meaning.

Now someone might observe that, if Jesus was to fulfill the Passover exactly, He would have to have been crucified at sunset at the beginning of Thursday. And that would be a valid argument if there had not been two sunsets on that historically important day. As Jesus hung upon the cross, His Father turned away from Him and allowed Him 'to be made sin for us' (2 Corinthians 5:21). At that moment, when the Father gave up His only Son to become our Passover Lamb, darkness came over the earth. There was a second 'twilight' or sunset' on that Thursday, as God sacrificed His own Passover:

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That is to say "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? Matthew 27:45-46

The key to understanding the two-day gap between Jesus' death on Thursday afternoon, and His resurrection from the dead at sunrise on Sunday, is to realize that both Friday and Saturday were sabbath days. In fact they comprised one, single 48-hour sabbath of rest. This is seen, firstly, in God's ordinance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Leviticus 23:

In the fourteenth day of the first month at evening is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread unto the Lord. Seven days you must eat unleavened bread. In the first day (the fifteenth of the month) you shall have an holy convocation. You shall do no servile work therein. But you shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days. In the seventh day is an holy convocation. You shall do no servile work therein. Leviticus 23:5-8

God commanded that on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which began on the day after the Passover, no work was to be done. It was to be a sabbath day. This was the reason why Joseph of Arimathea hastened to bury Jesus' body before sunset on Thursday:

And now when the evening was come, because it was the preparation (that is the day before the sabbath) Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly unto Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus. And Pilate marveled if He were already dead. And calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took him down and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a tomb which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone to the door of the tomb. Mark 15:42-46

This passage simply tells us that Joseph hastened to bury Jesus' body because the next day was a sabbath, which was about to begin at sunset. For all we know it could have simply been a regular Saturday sabbath. But the apostle John supplies more information for us. John tells us that the approaching sabbath day was a special one:

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said "It is finished", and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day (for that sabbath day was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and they broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they broke not His legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and there came out blood and water. John 19:30-34

But we can rely upon more than the words of John to confirm that there were two sabbath days between Jesus' death and His resurrection. Jesus Himself said that His body would lie three days and three nights in the tomb:

But Jesus answered and said unto them "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. And there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matthew 12:39-40

Because Joseph of Arimathea hurried to place Jesus' body in a tomb before sunset and the beginning of the sabbath, it is legitimate to say that Jesus' body was in the tomb on Thursday; even if His body was placed in the tomb only a short while before sunset. Thus the three days and three nights that Jesus' body lay in the tomb consisted of Thursday-day, Friday-night and Friday-day, Saturday-night and Saturday-day, and Sunday-night before Jesus' resurrection at sunrise on Sunday morning.

Why is it important to understand Jesus' fulfillment of the Passover? Because it provides us with the accurate historical setting in which Jesus gave the Olivet Discourse to His disciples and the world. Secondly, it reinforces the importance of properly handling God's 'days' and 'weeks' in our interpretation of Bible prophecy.

COMING DESOLATION

Not only did the Lord Jesus fulfill verse 25 of Daniel's 70-week timetable, as 'Messiah the Prince coming after 69 weeks', but He also began to warn Israel about the fulfillment of verse 26 in Daniel's prophecy:

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (Temple); and the end thereof shall be with a flood. And unto the end of the war desolations are determined. Daniel 9:26

In simplest terms the Lord Jesus warned the people of Israel about three things that were going to happen:

- 1) They were going to crucify Him and thus bring judgment upon themselves.**
- 2) The city of Jerusalem and the Temple were going to be destroyed; and the destruction would come with an overwhelming, flood-like severity.**
- 3) The Jewish people would experience an ongoing warfare waged against themselves, during which the desolation of Jerusalem and the Temple would continue.**

The theme of Israel's crimes, guilt and approaching punishment were often on the lips of the Lord Jesus during His final days in Jerusalem:

Nevertheless I must walk today and tomorrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet might perish outside of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the prophets and stones them that are sent unto you. How often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house (Temple) is left unto you desolate. And verily I say unto you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you shall say 'Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord'. Luke 13:33-36

When Jesus said that Israel's 'house' would be left desolate, He was referring to the Temple. The Jews called their Temple 'the House of God'. That had been King David's original purpose in planning a Temple; to build a 'house' for God (2 Samuel 7:1-13).

In His parable of the wicked vinedressers, the Lord Jesus warned of God's coming judgment upon Israel:

Hear another parable. There was a certain Householder who planted a vineyard and hedged it round about. And He dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to caretakers, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit harvest drew near, He sent His servants to the caretakers, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the caretakers took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again, He sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying "They will respect My Son". But when the caretakers saw the Son, they said among themselves "This is the Heir. Come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance". And they caught Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and killed Him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard comes, what will He do unto those caretakers? They (the Jewish leaders) said unto Him "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will rent out His vineyard unto other caretakers, who shall render Him the fruits in their seasons". Matthew 21:33-41

In His parable of 'The Wedding of the King's Son', the Lord Jesus portrayed Israel's sins in another way:

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain King who made a marriage for his Son. He sent forth His servants to call them that were invited to the wedding, but they would not come. Again, He sent forth other servants saying "Tell them who are invited 'Behold, I have prepared My dinner. My oxen and My fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come unto the marriage'". But they made light of it, and went their ways; one to his farm, another to his business. And the rest took His servants and treated them badly, and killed them. But when the King heard this, He was angry. And He sent forth His armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Matthew 22:2-7

The culmination of Jesus' public warnings is found in His message to the scribes and Pharisees; that He would be sending godly men (His apostles and disciples) to proclaim the gospel to Israel and the world, and that through their persecution of these men the Jews would bring the wrath of God upon themselves:

You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall you scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. Matthew 23:33-36

In the final sentence above, Jesus warned that the judgment of God would fall upon the very generation that He was speaking to. For the Jews a generation was 40 years. That was how long God waited for the first generation of those coming out of Egypt to die off in the wilderness, before allowing the next generation to enter the promised land. Speaking in 32 AD, Jesus was saying that the destruction of the Temple would occur before 72 AD, which is exactly what happened.

ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

On Tuesday of this important week, Jesus was walking near the Temple with His disciples when they pointed out the awesome splendor of that building. In response He said....

"Do you not see all these things? Verily I say unto you that there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down". Matthew 24:2



NOT ONE STONE OF THE TEMPLE WOULD BE LEFT UPON ANOTHER

Later that day, as Jesus and His disciples sat on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple, they pressed Him for more information, asking Him two questions (Matthew 24:3):

- 1) When would the destruction of the Temple occur?
- 2) What would be the sign of Jesus' second coming and the end of the age?

Jesus' answer to His disciples' questions has come to be known as "The Olivet Discourse". There are three versions of His answer, recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (Matthew 24:1-44, Mark chapter 13, and Luke 21:5-36). In Matthew's version we also find additional warnings and instructions from the Lord Jesus concerning the need for people to watch and be ready for His second coming (chapter 25).

I would encourage my reader to take a look at these passages. I have placed a link, at the end of this sentence, to a PDF file providing these three versions for viewing, downloading or printing; to make it easy to compare them side by side:

(OLIVET PDF – ALL THREE VERSIONS)

In my PDF versions of the Olivet Discourse, I divide Jesus' message into 4 parts:

- 1) World events between the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and Jesus' second coming.
- 2) The destruction of Jerusalem.
- 3) Jesus' second coming.
- 4) When this entire series of events would begin.

It is important to note that Jesus said that no one could know the day or hour of His second coming; only the Father. He said that His second coming would take the world by surprise (Matthew 24:36-44). But He gave a very clear sense of when Israel's 'troubles' would begin (within a generation, 40 years), and of what to watch for (Matthew 24:32-34).

COMPARING THE 3 VERSIONS

Below I present Jesus' words about the destruction of Jerusalem ('part 2' of His message) from the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Matthew and Mark's versions are very similar to each other, describing the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple as Daniel's 'abomination of desolation'. But notice the difference in Luke's version:

Matthew 24:15-22 When you therefore shall see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand) then **let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains**. Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house. Neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that nurse children in those days! But pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day. **For then shall be great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Mark 13:14-20 But when you shall see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that reads understand), then **let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains**. And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house. And let him that is in the field not turn back again to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that nurse children in those days! And pray that your flight be not in the winter. **For in those days shall be affliction**, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved. But for the elect's sake, whom He has chosen, He has shortened the days.

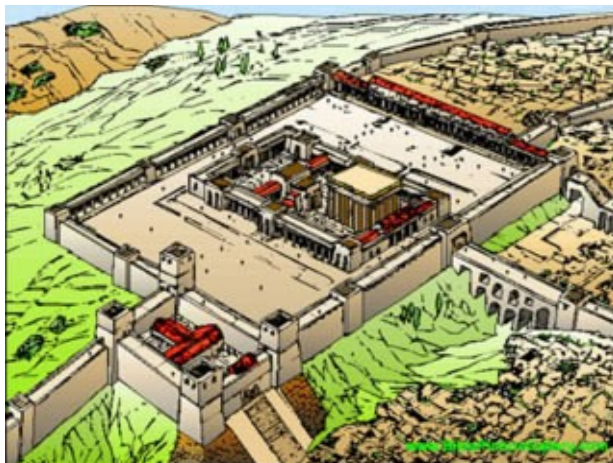
Luke 21:20-24 And when you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its **DESOLATION** is near. Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them who are in the midst of it depart out. And let not them that are in the country enter there. For **these are the days of (God's) vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that nurse children in those days! For **there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**

Matthew and Mark were writing as Jews. The Jews understood what an 'abomination of desolation' was. For the Jews, anything that entered into the sacred Temple area that didn't belong there was an abomination. If this abomination destroyed the Temple, then it was an abomination which caused desolation.

Luke, however, was writing as a Gentile. And Luke was a close acquaintance and frequent traveling companion of the Apostle Paul, the 'apostle to the Gentiles'. Luke would have been very sensitive to the needs of his Gentile readers.

Gentiles did not have much of an exposure to the prophet Daniel, or to the Jewish concepts of abomination and desolation. And under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Luke presented Jesus' words in a way that Gentiles could easily understand. This is why Matthew and Mark had to say 'let the reader understand', warning people to be careful with Daniel's 'abomination of desolation'. By contrast Luke's gospel is very plain and straightforward, requiring no such warning.

It is clear that Luke was describing the rapidly approaching destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by the armies of Rome. These would be 'the days of God's vengeance upon the Jews' that Jesus had warned about; an attack which drove the Jewish people 'into all nations', and left Jerusalem to be 'trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled'. When we compare the three versions of the Olivet Discourse side-by-side, the only reasonable conclusion to reach is that Matthew and Mark's 'abomination of desolation' and Luke's simple 'desolation' are all referring to the same event; the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Rome in 70 AD.





THE TEMPLE MOUNT BEFORE AND AFTER 70 AD

Although the Jewish people have now reclaimed the city of Jerusalem after the end of the 1967 war, the Temple Mount is still 'trampled underfoot by the Gentiles' (occupied by two Muslim mosques; Al Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock).



THE TEMPLE MOUNT TODAY; STILL TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT BY THE GENTILES

ACTIVATING THE TIMETABLES

Historical dates are absolutely necessary informational 'keys' to understanding both Daniel's 69-week timetable for the Messiah's first coming, and the remaining 70th Week leading to His second coming. God tied both timetables to specific historical events related to the status of Jerusalem; historical events that would not become known to the world until well after Daniel's death.

God informed Daniel that the 69-week timetable would be defined by its beginning; the permission to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. But God told Daniel that the 70th Week would not be defined by its beginning, but by its midpoint; when Mosaic sacrifices in

Jerusalem's Temple would be brought to an end by the Temple's desolation (destruction):

And He (Messiah) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week. And in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifices and the offerings to cease. And for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate; even until the consummation. And that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. Daniel 9:27

Beginning on the day when permission was given by the Persian King Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem (in 445 BC, Nehemiah 2), the timetable for the Messiah's first coming was easily understood by any serious Bible student. But the date of Daniel's 'abomination of desolation' and the midpoint of the 70th Week was not known to the world until Jesus clarified it upon the Mount of Olives. This is the reason why Olivet is so important for an understanding of Daniel's 70th Week; because it is the 'keystone' in a prophetic 'bridge' that enables us to travel from Daniel's 70-Weeks prophecy to John's Little Book (found within the larger book of Revelation).



**JESUS ACTIVATED THE 70TH-WEEK TIMETABLE
HE GAVE A DATE FOR THE MIDPOINT OF THE WEEK:**

70 AD

DIGGING FOR GOLD

The three versions of the Olivet Discourse are a 'package deal'. God never intended that we should rely upon only one version of that Discourse. The three versions compliment each other. Matthew and Mark tell us the important fact that a prophecy of Daniel is being fulfilled. Luke gives us clarity and certainty about the date of that fulfillment.

Why would God give us this important information in separate versions of the Olivet Discourse? Why would He require our effort to bring them together, like pieces in a puzzle, in order to see the entire picture? Why not simply spell everything out in each version?

First of all, the fact that the versions are different testifies to their historical genuineness; it is consistent with the fact that they were written by independent authors at different times and from different perspectives.

Secondly, the fact that we need all three versions of the Discourse in order to understand it, is perfectly consistent with how God does things. It points to the fact that He is the real Author of the Discourse. As He does in so many places in the Bible, God requires people to 'compare scripture with scripture' in order to 'unlock' its full meaning. It is this ancient concept of comparing various laws and past judgments with each other, in order to arrive at a true understanding of the issues, that continues to underlie sound jurisprudence throughout the world today.

The secrets of God's word are not always served up to people upon a platter. God often reserves an understanding of His word for those who value it, and who believe that their careful digging for 'spiritual gold' will be rewarded. In His wisdom God has often required people 'work' in order to understand His word, while at the same time making the ultimate answers so simple that a child can understand them. This is a trait of God's ways with mankind:

Happy is the man that finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain of it better than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you can desire are not to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that keeps her.

Proverbs 3:13-18

Therefore I (Jesus) speak to them in parables. Because seeing, they do not see. And hearing, they do not hear; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says "By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand. And seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart has become hard, and their ears are dull of hearing. Their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they might see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and might understand with their heart, and might be converted, and I might heal them. Luke 11:9-10

Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asks, receives. And he that seeks, finds. And to him who knocks, it shall be opened. Luke 11:9-10

But without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

God does not 'cast His pearls before swine', so that they can be trampled underfoot by people who do not recognize their value (Matthew 7:6). The history of the people of Israel has long been one of studying God's word, and comparing various scripture passages with one another in order to arrive at an accurate sense of their meaning. This practice was learned by the Lord Jesus in His youth, and was also carried on by His apostles:

...man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. Deuteronomy 8:3

And when Jesus' parents did not find Him, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass that, after three days, that they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors; both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. Luke 2:45-47

Jesus answered him "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, where the Jews always gather. And in secret I have said nothing". John 18:20

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them (in the Jewish synagogue) and for three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures. Acts 17:2

These (in Berea) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, to know whether those things were true. Acts 17:11

Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak. Not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13

Why has God required people to compare the three versions of the Olivet Discourse with each other? Ultimately because it is 'holy ground'. It was given by the Son of God Himself, two days before His crucifixion, and is vital information both for His church and for all of humanity. If we are not willing to be reverent in our handling of it, then God is not likely to grant us an understanding of it.

It is interesting to observe that the 70-Weeks prophecy was given to Daniel in response to his own willingness to study God's word and search the prophecies of Jeremiah:

In the first year of Darius' reign I (Daniel) understood by books the number of the years (through the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet); that God would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. Daniel 9:2-3

And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain (Zion, Jerusalem) of my God; yes, while I was speaking in prayer the man (angel) Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening sacrifice. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill and understanding. At the beginning of your prayers the commandment went forth. And I have come to show you. For you are greatly beloved. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision". Daniel 9:20-23

COME AND SEE

Here I will repeat an invitation that I have already given in my page titled [An Introduction to Prophecy](#); 'Come and see!' In the foreword of this web page I explained that a full understanding of Bible prophecy requires an understanding of four links in a prophetic chain:



In this web page I have sought to explain the third link in that chain: the Olivet Discourse. But three links are not enough. I would invite my reader to join me in looking at John's Little Book in my next page titled [The Timetable for Jesus' Return](#). An understanding of John's Little Book requires a prior understanding of the three prophetic links that precede it. That 'Little Book' gives us a very clear sense of how God sees world history. It also shows us that the return of Christ is very close at hand. Such insights are desperately needed both by Christians and the larger world today.

Through a willingness to 'compare scripture with scripture', and to bring these four links together into one coherent message, God's people have been able to endure the trials of the Christian life throughout the many centuries of the church since the destruction of Jerusalem; knowing that their heavenly Father has cared enough to provide them with 'the big picture', and to show them when He will finally reward their hope.

At this point I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Sir Robert Anderson for his book, [The Coming Prince](#). Anderson's discussion of Daniel's 69-week timetable is excellent, and much of my understanding and confidence regarding the first 69 weeks of Daniel's prophecy have been obtained through his book. Although Anderson was a Dispensationalist, and I do not agree with his views on the 70th Week, I must acknowledge that his work has been a source of blessing and inspiration to me. The book is available online.

DISPENSATIONAL CONFUSION

Dispensationalism is a systematic theology, primarily found within evangelical Protestant churches. It began in the 1800's with a man named John Nelson Darby, and has been embraced and promoted by many others since that time.

Dispensationalists teach that Daniel's final 70th Week is separated from the first 69 weeks by a period of time, or a 'dispensation', called the 'Church Age'. They explain this separation, between the 69 weeks and the final 70th week, by claiming that Israel's 'prophetic clock' stopped with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. They believe that it will start again with the removal (rapture) of God's church from the world. They believe that the 70th Week is a week comprised of 7 regular calendar years.

In keeping with what Daniel 9 has to say about the 70th Week, Dispensationalists also believe that their Week will be divided in the middle by an 'abomination of desolation'. They do not believe that the 'he' of Daniel 9:27, who confirms a covenant, brings an end to sacrifices and desolates the Temple is the Messiah:

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

Dispensationalists believe that the 'he' of verse 27 is the 'prince who is to come' mentioned in verse 26. This 'prince' is supposedly the Antichrist, or Paul's 'Man of Sin', who will desolate the Temple by standing in it and declaring that he himself is God:

Let no man deceive you by any means. For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped. So that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

Thus Dispensationalism's definition of desolation (standing in the Temple and calling one's self 'God') differs with how the word 'desolation' is used elsewhere in the Bible; to mean total destruction. And Dispensationalism's explanation of the 'he' of Daniel 9:27 is very different from the one that I have offered in my [Introduction to Bible Prophecy](#); that the 'he' of that verse is the Messiah; the Lord Jesus.

As I have already shown in this present web page, it is reasonable to conclude (by comparing the three versions of the Olivet Discourse with each other) that the 'abomination of desolation' that marks the midpoint of the 70th Week is the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the armies of Rome in 70 AD. So how is it that Dispensationalists have come to handle the Olivet Discourse differently, moving the 'abomination of desolation' away from 70 AD and out into the distant future; over 1900 years after Jesus spoke on the Mount of Olives?

The foundational position of Dispensationalism is that Jesus, when He was speaking to His disciples upon the Mount of Olives, was actually talking about two completely different 'desolations'. Dispensationalists claim that, when Jesus referred to Daniel's

'abomination of desolation' in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, He was referring to their far distant 70th week that would precede His second coming.

At the same time Dispensationalists acknowledge that, in the corresponding portion of Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus was indeed describing the soon-approaching 'desolation' (destruction) of Jerusalem by the armies of Rome in 70 AD. They acknowledge that Luke's words in verses 20 and 24 below (highlighted in red), are referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, at the hands of the Roman General, Titus.

And when you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them who are in the midst of it depart out. And let not them that are in the country enter there. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that nurse children in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. **And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Luke 21:20-24**

But Dispensationalists insist that the same corresponding sections of the Discourse in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, that contain many of the same words and phrases that are found in Luke, are referring to a far future 'abomination of desolation'. My reader does not have to take my word for this. I need only quote the comments of C.I. Scofield, editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, regarding verses 20 and 24 from Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse:

Verses 20,24 are not included in the report of the Olivet discourse as given by Matthew and Mark. Two sieges of Jerusalem are in view in that discourse. Lk 21:20-24 refers to the siege by Titus, A.D. 70, when the city was taken, and verse 24 literally fulfilled. But that siege and its horrors but adumbrate (foreshadow) the final siege at the end of this age, in which the "great tribulation" culminates. At that time the city will be taken, but delivered by the glorious appearing of the Lord Rev 19:11-21. The references in Mt 24:15-28, Mk 13:14-26 are to the final tribulation siege; Lk 21:20-24 to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (in 70 AD). In Luke the sign is the compassing of Jerusalem by armies Lk 21:20. In Mt 24:15 Mk 13:14 the sign is the abomination in the holy place. 2Th 2:4.

According to Scofield, Matthew and Mark's 'abomination of desolation' and Luke's 'desolation by surrounding armies', are not descriptions of the same event; but two completely distinct events separated by many centuries of time. With this approach Scofield and the Dispensationalists, no matter how well-intentioned they may have been, have broken one of the most fundamental rules of Biblical interpretation; that we are to allow the Bible to shed light upon itself. We are to allow 'scripture to interpret scripture'.

Sometimes there are understandable disagreements between people about whether or not one part of the Bible is being properly used to clarify a spiritual principle that is also addressed in another part of the Bible. But in this case we are not talking about

spiritual principles. We are talking about one historical event; one message that was given by one Man, one time. Furthermore, as we compare the three accounts of that message with each other, it is striking that they are all organized along the same lines, and use many of the same words and phrases in the same places. And yet Dispensationalists insist that the Son of God was employing 'double talk' as He gave His answers to His disciples' questions.

Dispensationalists claim that it is OK to impose this 'interpretive violence' upon the Olivet Discourse because of a concept called 'Dual Fulfillment'; the idea that sometimes a passage in the Bible can refer to past and future events simultaneously. The Bible's words about Babylon are an example of this. The Bible speaks both of ancient Babylon and its judgment by God, as well as of a future 'Babylon' that will exist prior to Jesus' second coming (Revelation chapters 17 & 18), and will also be judged by God. And so sometimes when we read about God's judgment of Babylon in the Old Testament, it is not always clear whether God is referring to ancient Babylon, last-days Babylon, or both at the same time.

The problem with using Babylon as an example, however, is that God has made it plain from the very beginning that there would be a 'Babylon' that would begin with King Nebuchadnezzar around 600 BC, and would continue until the second coming of Christ. This is seen in Nebuchadnezzar's statue (Daniel chapter 2) where we are shown a oneness and continuity between ancient Babylon (the head of gold), and the final Roman phase of Babylon (the iron legs and feet of the same statue). All four empires in this 'prophetic statue' are 'Babylon'; because Persia, Greece and Rome have extended what Babylon began: the removal of the kingdom of David from the world until the second coming of Christ.

When we look at various passages in the Bible, we can often consider the possibility of 'dual fulfillment' in good faith. It is another thing, however, to make the Son of God talk out of both sides of His mouth when He is giving the most important prophetic message in the history of the world. This is especially unacceptable when there is a much simpler and more straightforward way to approach the three versions of the message; allowing Luke to clarify Matthew and Mark. This was the 'majority approach' to the Olivet Discourse in Christendom prior to the rise of Dispensationalism in the 1800's, and continues to be widely accepted to this day.

Jesus' Olivet Discourse was His response to two questions that His disciples asked. Their first and primary question was 'When will the destruction of the Temple occur?' I would ask Dispensationalists one simple question: 'If Jesus' words to His disciples in Matthew and Mark (about Daniel's 'abomination of desolation' and the need to flee from Judea) do not constitute His response to their question, then what other portion of Matthew and Mark's versions could possibly be considered a response?' Are Dispensationalists suggesting that Jesus simply ignored His disciples' question in Matthew and Mark?

I have known good and godly people who have embraced and taught Dispensationalism. And God has used them to bring people to a saving knowledge of Christ. There is no doubt in my mind that the use of a Scofield Reference Bible has done people some good. It did me some good when I first came under the conviction of

the Holy Spirit as a young man in high school. It brought meaning and insight to God's word, and showed me that there was such a thing as a thoughtful, systematic approach to the scriptures. But I believe that Scofield has also done much harm.

Not only have I come to believe that Dispensationalism is false and misleading, but to also believe that Scofield's promotion of 'Once Saved, Always Saved', and his teaching that the book of Hebrews was directed primarily to Jews, represents a great disservice to God's church. It is one thing to write a separate commentary on the Bible, and have it published. It is another thing to publish a Bible with one's own commentary interwoven through it. This is a very bold stance to take before the living God. It might even be viewed by Him as adding to, or taking away from His word:

For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book; If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19

Dispensationalism portrays itself as a large, comprehensive systematic theology that explains the entire Bible and all of the world's history. They would have us believe that their handling of Jesus' Olivet Discourse is only one small part of a greater seamless 'whole'. But this is not true. Dispensationalism's handling of the Olivet Discourse lies at its very heart. It is the starting point and 'cornerstone' of Dispensationalism, and still ultimately defines it to this day. However well-intentioned many Dispensationalists have been, in the end I believe that their mishandling of the Olivet Discourse will leave them greatly ashamed:

Study to show yourself approved by God; a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

Dispensationalists have made prophecy complicated and difficult for lay people to understand. The unspoken message in their approach to the Olivet Discourse is that 'special insight' is necessary in order to grasp the 'true meaning' of prophecy. This message has intimidated and discouraged many Christians from even trying to understand it. But God made prophecy for the common man. Two things need to be kept in mind when we approach the study of prophecy:

- 1) The simplest answers are usually the correct ones.
- 2) An understanding of God's word does not come through the human intellect, but is a gift from the Spirit of God.

**Simon Peter answered and said "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God". And Jesus answered and said unto him "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jona. For flesh and blood have not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven".
Matthew 16:16-17**

**For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace; as in all churches of the saints.
1 Corinthians 14:33**

But I fear, lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:3

The king answered and said to Daniel (whose name was Belteshazzar) "Are you able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation of it?" Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said "The secret which the king has demanded the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians and the soothsayers cannot show unto the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and makes known to king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days". Daniel 2:26-28

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said "I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Your sight". Luke 10:21

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled. And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13

For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, God has chosen. Yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are. That no flesh should glory in His presence. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to all men liberally, and rebukes not. And it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord. James 1:5-7

ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES: DISPENSATIONAL PROTOTYPE

How is it that Dispensationalists justify redefining 'desolation'? The word describes utter destruction throughout the Bible. But Dispensationalists have claimed that Paul's 'Man of Sin' will desolate the Temple (in the middle of their 'week') by simply sitting in the Temple and declaring himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). How have they justified this conclusion? By offering an example from the Old Testament of someone who supposedly desolated the Temple by calling himself God while he stood in the Temple; Antiochus IV Epiphanes (from Daniel chapter 11).

After the famous Greek leader, Alexander the Great, finished conquering much of the world, he died a short time later in 323 BC. After his death his Greek Empire was divided among his generals into four smaller kingdoms. The people of Israel found themselves living between two of those kingdoms; the Seleucid kingdom to the north, and the Ptolemaic kingdom (in Egypt) to the south.

In the 11th chapter of the book of Daniel, God gave the people of Israel very specific prophecies regarding the struggles that these two kingdoms would have with each other. This very accurate foretelling of events was given by God to strengthen, encourage and reassure the people of Israel during those trying times; when the

leaders of these two kingdoms (and their armies) would travel back and forth through the land of Israel as they interacted with each other.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (A4E) was the last king of the northern Seleucid empire. His father, Antiochus III (Antiochus the Great), had been defeated and conquered by the Romans. As a result of that defeat, A4E had spent time in Rome as a hostage, before returning to his homeland to pursue power. The Bible describes A4E as a 'vile' man who would not rise to power in a manly way, but through deceit and treachery (Daniel 11:21). We are told that in his first battle against the southern Ptolemaic dynasty A4E would be successful, returning home with great riches and doing damage to Jerusalem along the way (Daniel 11:28)

It is important to stress two things at this point:

1) The battles between these two Greek kingdoms must be seen within the context of Daniel's earlier prophecies in chapters 2, 7 and 8. Those prophecies described a series of four kingdoms that would dominate Israel; Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. And so we need to keep in mind that these Greek kingdoms in Daniel 11 would be ultimately replaced by Rome.

2) In Daniel 11 God gave the Jewish people an advanced notice about this approaching transition from Greek to Roman dominance. In Daniel 11:27 God said that the rulers of the north and the south would meet a second time and make plans. But Daniel wrote that those plans would not prosper because their end would still be "at the appointed time"; in other words at God's appointed time.

In Daniel 11:29 A4E is described as making his third trip to Egypt at God's 'appointed time'; in 168 BC. But God foretold that A4E's visit would not be like his former visits. He would be confronted by ships from western lands; the Romans. Compelled to bow to Roman power, A4E would be grieved and enraged against God, doing damage in Israel on his way home:

At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south. But it shall not be as the former (first trip) or as the latter (second trip). For the ships of Kittim (Rome) shall come against him. Therefore he shall be grieved, and return and have rage against the (God's) holy covenant. Daniel 11:29-30a

Historians tell us that, as A4E approached Egypt, the Ptolemaic dynasty called upon Rome for protection. As A4E was preparing for conquest, he was confronted by a Roman ambassador who ordered him to retreat. When A4E said that he wanted to 'think about it', the ambassador drew a circle around him in the dirt and told him that if he did not provide his answer before leaving the circle, it would be seen as a declaration of war against Rome.

A4E's father, Antiochus III (the Great) had already been conquered by Rome. A4E had spent time in Rome himself, and he knew what war with Rome would have meant. And so he sensibly bowed to Roman power, and headed for home. At that 'divinely appointed time' both the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms became a part of the Roman Empire. And thus, by extension, the small land and people of Israel between those kingdoms also became a part of the Roman Empire.

Daniel 11:30a indicates that A4E was enraged at God and did damage to Israel on his way home. It may be that he was told beforehand, when he was on his way to attack Egypt, that God had foretold his defeat and humiliation through the prophet Daniel. This could explain part of his rage against the Jews. In any case, A4E would return home after attacking the Jewish people, to die four years later in 164 BC.

I have divided the 30th verse of Daniel chapter 11 into parts 'a' and 'b', putting the first half of the verse in the quote above. The numbering of Bible verses is not divinely inspired. People have separated the verses from each other and numbered them for the convenience of finding them easily within the Bible. Therefore we are not obligated to assume that the 'he' in the first half of verse 30 is also the 'he' in the second half of the verse. And so I would pose this question; is the 'he' of the second half of verse 30 A4E, or is it Rome?

Thus shall he do. He shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part. And they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that makes desolate. Daniel 11:30b-31

It is certain that the 'he' of the first half of verse 30 is A4E. Dispensationalists claim that it is also A4E who does all of the other things that are listed in the second half of verse 30:

- 1) Have intelligence with those who forsake the covenant.
- 2) Arms (military strength) shall stand on his part.
- 3) Pollute the sanctuary of strength (the Temple).
- 4) Take away the daily sacrifice.
- 5) Place the abomination that makes desolate.

Dispensationalists make much of A4E's last name; Epiphanes. It means 'God revealed' or 'God manifested'. It is certainly reasonable to believe that A4E was arrogant, and may have even fancied himself to be godlike. It was not uncommon for kings and rulers in his day to attribute divinity to themselves, and to demand reverence or worship from others.

This is an especially important idea for the Dispensationalists, because if they can claim that A4E desolated the Temple by entering it while claiming to be God, then they can also claim that Paul's 'Man of Sin' is an 'abomination of desolation' by claiming to be 'God in the Temple of God'.

I will provide two arguments, however, that I believe weigh against these Dispensationalist claims:

- 1) Arms (military strength) were not established on A4E's part; they ended. The fact that he did damage and killed many people in Israel on his way home does not constitute military strength. It constituted his futile rage over the loss of his military strength.
- 2) A4E did not desolate the Temple. He did not place an "abomination that makes desolate".

As I have already pointed out, in the Bible 'desolation' means 'destruction'. All that we need to do in order to determine whether or not A4E desolated the Temple, is to consider the testimony of the Jewish people regarding what A4E did. A4E desecrated (polluted) the Temple. He did not desolate it.

Ever since A4E's final visit to Jerusalem, the Jewish people have celebrated Hanukkah; the Festival of Lights. This is done in commemoration of the fact that God miraculously kept the lamps in the Temple burning after A4E's attacks; until the Temple could be cleansed, new olive oil could be pressed for the lamps, and proper sacrifices could be restored. The Jewish people have been telling the world for centuries, ever since 168 BC, that A4E did not desolate the Temple; he desecrated it.

So what are the arguments in favor of Rome being the 'he' of verse 30b? They are...

- 1) Having 'intelligence' (close communication and inside information) with those in Israel who were ambitious, and would forsake God's covenant, was a primary tactic of Rome. It was an aspect of their political shrewdness. Why rule a people by spending blood and treasure, when they can be ruled with cleverness? Rome's management approach to Israel eventually found its expression when Julius Caesar appointed a man named Antipas I, an Idumaeen, as procurator (Governor) of Judea. Antipas I was the father of Herod the Great.
- 2) Arms (military strength) certainly were established on Rome's part.
- 3) Rome would eventually pollute God's Temple.
- 4) Rome would also eventually end the daily sacrifices.
- 5) Rome would become Daniel's 'abomination of desolation'.

The Dispensational claim that A4E desolated the Temple is false, and thus he cannot serve as a precedent and prototype for their claim that Paul's 'Man of Sin' will also be an 'abomination of desolation'. Dispensationalism's mistake in their handling of A4E, Rome and Daniel 11:30 lies in overlooking the somber and momentous words of God in verses 27 and 29:

“AT THE APPOINTED TIME”

One other question might be asked about this transition point between Greek and Roman dominance over Israel. God spent 10 verses in Daniel 11 (21-30a) describing the activities of A4E and their impact upon Israel over a span of roughly 8 years (175BC-168BC). And my claim is that God then proceeded to describe the history of Roman dominance over Israel for the next 230 years (until 70 AD) in a span of 1.5 verses (30b-31). Is that credible, or does it undermine my argument?

During the times of Greek dominance over Israel, the Jewish people were in need of a spiritual compass and source of support from God. That support was to be found in God's word. Because God had given the Jews a specific description of all of the events that they would experience, as the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties trampled back and forth over them, they were never left without the assurance that God was in control and knew what they were suffering. The 11th chapter of Daniel was a tremendous

source of strength for the Jews during that time, and also ingrained within them an ongoing reverence for the Bible and God's promise of a coming Messiah.

When A4E returned to Jerusalem for the last time in 168 BC, in defeat and a murderous rage, I suspect that God-fearing Jews had already abandoned the city, having been forewarned by Daniel regarding what was coming. They may have then waited and organized in the countryside, planning to restore their Temple and national worship after A4E's rage had passed. And so God's many words about A4E, followed by His few words concerning Rome, make sense to me. His 'many' words would be desperately needed. I see no reason to abandon my belief that the second half of Daniel 11:30 is a description of Rome.

IDENTIFYING THE PLAYERS

SATAN & THE GREAT TRIBULATION (Matthew 24:21, Revelation 7:14) It is impossible to understand the 'Prophetic Players' listed below without a proper understanding of "The Great Tribulation". The Great Tribulation is the time of Satan's wrath. It is not the time of God's wrath, which is 'The Day of the Lord' referred to throughout the Bible, and which is revealed in the Trumpets and Bowls of Revelation (chapters 8-9 and 16). The Great Tribulation began after the resurrection of Jesus Christ and with the casting of Satan out of heaven and down to earth. That event is described in Revelation 12:

And the great dragon was cast out; that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Revelation 12:9

Therefore rejoice you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time. Revelation 12:12

The first manifestation of Satan's wrath was the destruction of Jerusalem and desolation of Israel in 70 AD, with the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews and the dispersion of the surviving Jewish people throughout the world.

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman (Israel) who brought forth the Man Child (Christ). Revelation 12:13

Satan's wrath, while beginning with the Jewish people and progressing to Christians (Revelation 12:17), will find its ultimate expression in the onset of nuclear war described in the sixth seal of Revelation 6:12-17. This late exercise of Satan's wrath, which will engulf all of mankind, was foretold by the prophet Isaiah:

How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, who did weaken the nations! They that see you shall narrowly look upon you and consider you, saying "Is this the one that made the earth to tremble and that shook kingdoms? That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed its cities? That opened not the house of his prisoners?" Isaiah 14:12, 16-17

To put it in simplest terms, the Great Tribulation is the second half of Daniel's 70th Week, beginning with Satan's destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people in 70 AD, and continuing to this very day. For people living in the wealth and comfort of the 'western world', it is hard to think of ourselves as living in 'The Great Tribulation'. But for much of the world today, and throughout many centuries, the Great Tribulation has always been real. And times are soon going to change drastically for Christians in the 'West'.

1) THE BEAST OF REVELATION

I have explained the Beast of Revelation in my web page titled Understanding the Beast. I have reached my understanding of the Beast of Revelation based upon its six primary traits described in Revelation. I discuss those traits in the order that God presents them to us in His word. The first four traits are found in the first five verses of Revelation chapter 13:

- 1) MILITARY EMPOWERMENT BY SATAN (Revelation 13:1,4)**
- 2) THE 4TH BEAST OF DANIEL 7 (Revelation 13:2)**
- 3) A WOUNDED HEAD THAT IS HEALED (Revelation 13:3)**
- 4) EXISTENCE FOR OVER 1900 YEARS (Revelation 13:5)**

The fifth trait is found in the second half of Revelation chapter 13:

- 5) AN ALLIANCE WITH THE FALSE PROPHET (Revelation 13:11-18)**

The sixth trait is found in Revelation chapter 17:

- 6) A WOMAN RIDES UPON ITS BACK**

In Revelation 17 we are told that this 'Woman' is the city of Rome. In addition, Revelation chapter 17 explains the symbolic meanings of the Beast's seven heads and 10 horns, and provides God's explanation for the 'wounded head' of Revelation 13:3.

In conclusion, the Beast of Revelation is comprised of military leaders and nations, beginning with the Roman Emperor Vespasian in 70 AD, who...

- A) HAVE LOVED MILITARISM AND BLOODSHED**
- B) HAVE EMBRACED SATAN'S AGENDA OF PERSECUTING JEWS, WAGING WAR UPON CHRISTIANITY AND DESTROYING HUMANITY**
- C) WILL USE THE 'FALSE PROPHET' OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE LAST DAYS TO IMPOSE 'POLITICAL CORRECTNESS' AND THE 'MARK OF THE BEAST' UPON ALL MANKIND**
- D) HAVE ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH THE CITY OF ROME IN A 'CHURCH + STATE' RELATIONSHIP SINCE THE RISE OF VESPASIAN IN 70 AD**

The following list provides notable examples of men and nations who have fulfilled these criteria, and have been 'the Beast' over the past 1900+ years:

1) The Roman Emperor Vespasian (9 AD - 79 AD), founder of the 'Flavian Dynasty'. As a Roman General, Vespasian began the destruction of Israel before becoming the Emperor of Rome. His son (Titus) completed Israel's destruction and the slaughter and dispersion of the Jewish people in 70 AD.

2) The Roman Emperor Constantine; founder of Roman Catholicism in 312 AD. Up until the rise of Constantine, Rome had been the religious center of world paganism, and had sought relentlessly to exterminate Christianity. But with the rise of Constantine, Rome went from trying to destroy the Christian church, to proclaiming 'I am the true Christian Church'.

Constantine usurped the three offices of Jesus Christ; Prophet, Priest and King. He established Roman prophetic authority through ecumenical councils that would 'decide' what the Bible says (as well as add to the Bible). Constantine embraced 'sacramentalism'; belief in a Roman priesthood whose sacraments would have the power to forgive sins and save souls. And Constantine declared Rome's authority to wage 'holy wars' in the name of Christ; thus making Rome the 'king of kings, and lord of lords'.

Constantine's claim, to be waging war for Christ, is represented by the conqueror on a white horse in the first seal of Revelation chapter 6. The six seals of Revelation 6 portray the entire history of the Roman Catholic Church; from its rise to its destruction (for a further discussion of the Roman Catholicism, see The City of Rome in Bible Prophecy).

3) Charlamagne (Charles the Great, 742-814), who was crowned the 'Emperor of Rome' (Holy Roman Emperor) by the Pope in 800 AD. Charlemagne imposed Roman Catholicism, at the point of a sword, upon those whom he conquered.

4) The Crusaders, first called to wage war in the service of Christianity by Pope Urban II in 1095 AD. The religious wars of the Crusaders were characterized, from the very beginning, by the persecution of Jews wherever they found them. Ultimately, after having conquered the 'Holy Land' of Palestine, and then having lost it back to the Muslim world, these crusading 'kings and nobles' focused their attention upon their homeland of Europe; supporting Rome in its battle against Jews, Muslims and Protestant 'heretics'. These wars against anyone deviating from Roman Catholicism began around 1250 AD, and are known as "the Inquisition".

5) King Ferdinand II of Spain (1452-1516), known as 'the Catholic'. As king of Spain he promoted the Spanish Inquisition and began the conquest of the 'Americas' (the Western Hemisphere) for Spain and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). Ferdinand's grandson, Charles V, was a 'Holy Roman Emperor' who vigorously sought to unite Europe under the RCC. Charles V's son, Phillip II, sent the Spanish Armada against England in 1588, for the purpose of imposing Roman Catholicism upon Great Britain.

6) King Ferdinand II of Austria (1578-1637), also declared a Holy Roman Emperor, was the initiator of the '30 Years War' against Protestantism (1618-1648). This war left countless Protestant Christians dead and Europe devastated. The war ended in the Peace of Westphalia, which laid the European foundation for the modern, secular

nation-state; seeking to restrict religious meddling in the internal affairs of nations.

7) The European Axis powers of World War II (WW2), comprised of Germany, Italy and Spain. These powers had all reached 'understandings' with the Roman Catholic Church prior to WW2. Together these governments of Hitler, Mussolini and Franco (along with the Vichy government of conquered France) facilitated the deaths of many millions, including the murder of 6 million Jews.

8) The United States, with a large Roman Catholic population and many Roman Catholic institutions, was strongly urged by the Vatican to wage war against Communism after WW2 (i.e. against Russia, China, Korea and Viet Nam). A close connection between the government of the United States and the RCC continues to this day.

As the lead nation within 'the Beast' of these last days, America will leverage the three 'miraculous' technological powers of the False Prophet (military advances, communication advances and economic advances) to impose the 'Mark of the Beast' upon the world. Ten kingdoms (or nations) will soon join the United States and the 'West', giving their power and authority 'to the Beast' (Revelation 17:12-13). This will unify the Beast throughout the world, convincing many that world peace and security have finally been achieved (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

But the final version of the Beast, that will battle against Jesus Christ at His second coming (Revelation 19:19-20), will be comprised of these 10 kingdoms alone (Revelation 17:14). The United States and the 'Roman Catholic world' will not be a part of the Beast that confronts Christ at Armageddon.

The 10 kingdoms will have destroyed 'Roman Catholic Babylon' with a sudden, unexpected fiery attack before then confronting the Lord Jesus Christ. God describes this attack as 'eating her flesh and burning her with fire' (Revelation 17:16), and says it will occur in fulfillment of His will (Revelation 17:17). This attack upon 'Babylon' (which I believe will be a nuclear attack) is described at length in Revelation chapter 18.

2) THE FALSE PROPHET (Revelation 13:11-18, Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10)

This is the second Beast described in Revelation 13. It is described as coming up out of the earth or land. It possesses the traits of a false prophet, appearing like a lamb while speaking like a dragon (Satan).

The False Prophet does not experience the long lifespan of the Beast; from 70 AD until the present. The False Prophet is a product of our modern times. It performs what the apostle John might have perceived as three 'miracles', corresponding to today's technology:

A) It brings down fire from heaven through the technology of powered flight; rockets, airplanes, drones, satellites, lasers, missiles and bombs.

B) It causes an image to come alive and speak, through the technology of movies, television, smart phones and 'virtual reality' devices.

C) It will impose the 'Mark of the Beast' upon the world through Block Chain technology; a computerized 'distributed ledger' system that will make every person a part of the world's 'Internet of Things', and will revolutionize the economy and administration of the world.

I discuss the False Prophet at length in my web page titled [Understanding the Beast](#).

3) [THE WOMAN, HARLOT, WHORE, BABYLON](#) (Revelation chapters 17 & 18)

This is the city of Rome, confirmed for us in Revelation 17:9,18 where she is described as being seated upon seven hills, and as 'that great city' which was ruling over the kings of the earth when John received the book of Revelation.

I have discussed the city of Rome, and its 'metamorphosis' in 69 AD, in my web page titled [Understanding the Beast](#). In the Roman Civil War of 69 AD, Rome went from being the 'seat of power' in the Roman Empire, to being a religious city that has ridden upon the back of military power ever since. I explain Bible prophecy regarding the religion of Rome in my web page titled [The City of Rome in Prophecy](#).

4) [THE APOSTLE PAUL'S 'MAN OF SIN'](#) (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)

The apostle Paul's 'Man of Sin' is described in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

Let no man deceive you by any means. For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped. So that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

Paul was not describing a single man, but a unique class of men; the Roman Catholic priesthood. How do Rome's priests portray themselves as God in the Temple of God? By claiming to be Christ's representatives on earth, when they are in fact stealing the three divine offices of Jesus Christ; those of Prophet, Priest and King.

Roman Catholic priests claim prophetic authority to interpret the Bible, and add to it. They claim priestly authority (in the Mass) to do what Christ alone can do; offer a sacrifice before God that can atone for the sins of men. And Rome's priests claim kingly authority to wage holy wars in the name of Christ, making themselves the 'king of kings'.

God tells people to come directly to His Son by faith, hearing Him speak by reading their Bibles, and speaking to Him in prayer. But Rome says that we must come to Rome, and has always discouraged the free distribution and study of the Bible throughout its history. Rather than represent Jesus Christ before the world, Rome actually competes directly against Him for the souls of men. For further information about Rome, I refer my reader to my web pages titled '[The City of Rome in Prophecy](#)', '[Understanding The Beast](#)', and '[The United States in Prophecy](#)'.

5) THE ANTICHRIST

The Antichrist is mentioned in only four verses, all written by the apostle John, and found only in his letters. The word 'antichrist' never appears anywhere else in the scriptures, apart from two letters that John wrote. It means what it appears to mean; one who is against or opposed to Christ.

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. 1 John 2:18-19

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 1 John 2:22

And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. 1 John 4:3

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 2 John 8

As we examine John's words, the one thing that defines the antichrist is false doctrine. More specifically, John defines antichrists as...

- A) Those who profess faith in Christ, but have departed from biblical Christianity.
- B) Those who deny the Father and the Son (the Trinity).
- C) Those who deny that the Son of God has come into the world in human flesh.

John's description of an antichrist could apply to any one of a number of people, religions or cults that have claimed to be Christian or to respect Christ, but have departed from the true Christian faith.

It should be observed that John never says anything about the Antichrist establishing covenants, ending sacrifices, claiming to be God, having miraculous powers, cooperating with the Beast or being destroyed at the second coming of Christ. Nor does he link 'the Antichrist' with any other passage of scripture. The term 'antichrist' is not even found in that greatest of all prophetic books, Revelation, which John himself wrote.

Rather than take caution from this, many have taken advantage of it. Because of his sinister name, and because so little is said about him, many have felt free to plug the Antichrist into their end-times scenario wherever they please. For Luther and the Calvinists the Antichrist was the Pope. For others the Antichrist has been 'the Prince who is to come' (of Daniel 9:26), the 'Abomination of Desolation', Paul's 'Man of Sin', and 'the Beast'. One cannot count all of the books, articles and movies that have flowed out of John's very limited words about 'the Antichrist'.

Although John says that there are many antichrists, in 1 John 2:18 he seems to refer to one specific person, 'the Antichrist', who surpasses all other antichrists in his opposition to God. So who is this Antichrist? I do not know. One candidate to consider would be Mohammad. Islam claims Biblical roots and speaks well of Jesus, but fiercely denies that God has a Son, and that Jesus was 'Emmanuel'; 'God with us' in a human body. There is no other religion that more directly and forcefully denies the deity of Christ than Islam.

Muslims have written 'God has no son' inside their mosque, the 'Dome of the Rock', sitting on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This will ultimately prove to be a profound embarrassment to them. It was this One who declared Himself to be the Son of God, and who predicted the desolation of the Temple and its possession by the Gentiles until His second coming, whose words they now fulfill with their mosque on the Temple Mount.

6) THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION - (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14) The Roman general Titus and his army, which destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD (see [The Olivet Discourse](#) for an explanation of this fact, and see [The Timetable for Jesus' Return](#) for a discussion of Titus).

7) THE 'PRINCE WHO IS TO COME' OF DANIEL 9:26 - The Roman general Titus.

8) THE LITTLE HORN OF DANIEL 7:8 - The United States of America (see [The United States in Bible Prophecy](#))

9) THE LITTLE HORN OF DANIEL 8:9-12 - The City of Rome, beginning as a very small power on the edge of the Greek Empire. Rome first expelled Greece from the Italian peninsula in the Pyrrhic War. It then defeated its southern enemy, Carthage, in the Punic Wars. And finally it proceeded to move east, conquering Greece and Asia Minor (defeating Antiochus the Great) before eventually taking over the rest of the Middle East (including Israel).

This Little Horn exalted itself against the Prince of God's host, the Lord Jesus Christ. It then brought an end to the daily sacrifices, destroying Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 AD. Because of Israel's transgressions the Roman Empire was allowed to continue its dominance over the Jews, and to establish a religion (Roman Catholicism) that casts truth to the ground. No better combination of brevity and accuracy regarding Rome's history can be found.