

SIMPLIFYING THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Looking at Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy, Jesus' Olivet Discourse, and the Apostle John's 'Little Book' (written by **Chuck Porritt**: dcporritt@gmail.com)

Over 500 years before the time of Jesus, the prophet Daniel was given the '70-Weeks Prophecy' (Daniel 9:24-27). In the four verses of that prophecy, Daniel was told four things:

Verse 24: God would fulfill all of His promises to Israel and the world by bringing an end to wickedness, and establishing everlasting righteousness in 70 'weeks' of time.

Verse 25: Israel's Messiah and Prince (the Son of David) would come to Israel for the first time after 69 'weeks' of years had passed; each week being a period of 7 regular years (a total of 483 years).

Verse 26: When 'Messiah the Prince' came, He would die. Instead, the people serving another prince would overwhelmingly destroy (desolate) Jerusalem and its Temple. I believe that this 'other prince' was the Roman general Titus, whose father Vespasian had just become Rome's new emperor.

Verse 27: A covenant would be 'confirmed' for one week (the 70 Week). But in the **MIDDLE** of that Week, as sacrifices and offerings were ended in the Temple, an 'abomination' would bring 'desolation'. In the later chapters of Daniel, this event is simply referred to as the '**Abomination of Desolation**' (Daniel 11:31, 12:11)

It is my belief that the majority of evangelical Christians are in basic agreement about the first 3 verses of Daniel's prophecy. But a question arises about who it is that 'confirms a covenant' in verse 27. It can only be one of two persons; either Israel's Prince (Jesus), or the prince whose people destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. But rather than address this question first, it is better to first ask what is this 'Abomination of Desolation'; which marks the **MIDPOINT** of the 70th Week. When Jesus came to Jerusalem for the final time, He supplied that answer. And by following His answer, we eventually discover who confirms a covenant also.

Jesus fulfilled the 69-week timetable when He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, shortly before His death. And during those days Jesus warned the people of Israel about the rapidly approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple that Daniel had foretold. When His disciples asked Jesus about this approaching destruction, Jesus answered them as they sat together upon the Mount of Olives, overlooking the Temple. Jesus' answer has come to be known as the Olivet Discourse.

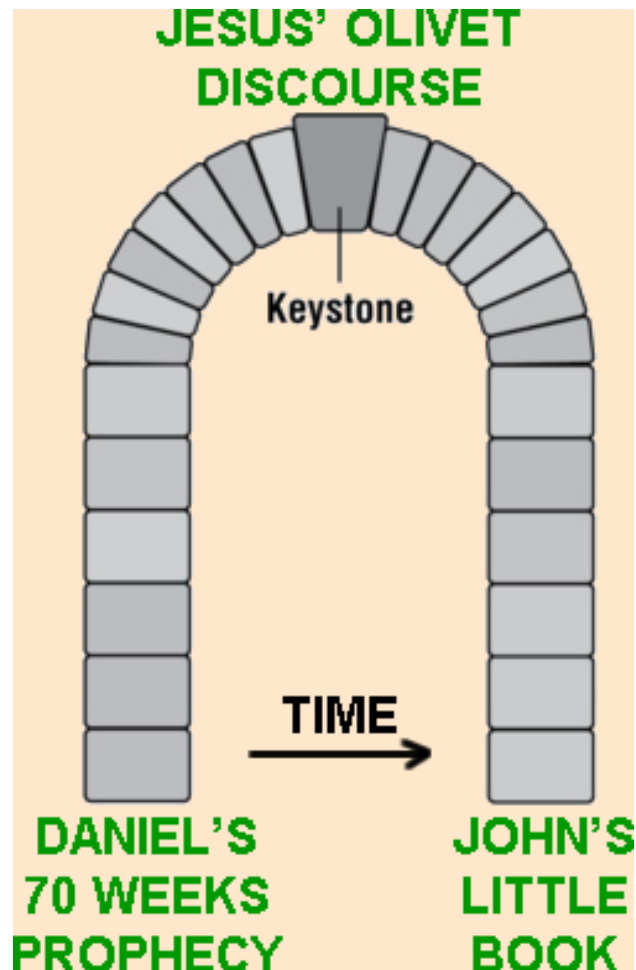


In the following pages I provide the three versions of Jesus' Olivet Discourse (from Matthew, Mark and Luke). When we compare the 'boxed' sections side by side (where the approaching destruction of Jerusalem is described), we see that in Matthew and Mark Jesus used the Old Testament phrase 'the Abomination of Desolation' to describe that destruction. But in Luke's version (written by a gentile for a gentile audience) we find much simpler and more straightforward language. Luke removes all confusion. This is why both Matthew and Mark had to include a warning to the reader to be careful to understand Jesus' words, while Luke did not have to give such a warning.

Luke's version shows us that when Jesus was referring to Daniel's 'Abomination of Desolation' in Matthew and Mark, He was talking about the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Rome in 70 AD.

A leading Dispensationalist, C.I. Scofield, acknowledged that in Luke's Olivet Discourse Jesus was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (in his notes on Luke chapter 21). But Scofield insisted that in Matthew and Mark Jesus was talking about a different, far future 'Abomination of Desolation'. This is the interpretive 'violence' that Dispensationalists have to use in order to make their system work; compelling the Son of God to talk out of both sides of His mouth when He is giving the most important prophetic message in history.

The Olivet Discourse is the 'keystone' of a prophetic bridge that starts with Daniel and then moves to John's Little Book. Without a true understanding of the **MIDPOINT** of the 70th Week, it is impossible to move forward to John's visionary explanation of the **ENTIRE** Week. And a proper understanding of Daniel's 70th Week is the spiritual 'framework' upon which all other New Testament prophecy hangs.



MATTHEW'S VERSION OF JESUS' OLIVET DISCOURSE (Matt 24:1-31)

CONTEXT (Matthew 24:1-3)

Then Jesus went out and departed from the Temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the Temple. And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us...

- 1) When will these things be (the destruction of the Temple)?
- 2) And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

THE GREAT TRIBULATION (EVENTS BETWEEN JERUSALEM'S FALL AND THE SECOND COMING, Matthew 24:4-14)

And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

JERUSALEM'S FALL (DANIEL'S 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION', Matthew 24:15-22)

Therefore when you see the '**Abomination of Desolation**' spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “**then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains**. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For there will be **GREAT TRIBULATION** such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

THE SECOND COMING (Matthew 24:23-31)

Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

Immediately **AFTER THE TRIBULATION** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory**. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (**the 'rapture'**).

MARK'S VERSION OF JESUS' OLIVET DISCOURSE (Mark 13:1-27)

CONTEXT (Mark 13:1-4) Then as He went out of the Temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the Temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, “Tell us...

- 1) When will these things be (the destruction of the Temple)?
- 2) And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”

THE GREAT TRIBULATION (EVENTS BETWEEN JERUSALEM'S FALL AND THE SECOND COMING, Mark 13:5-13)

And Jesus, answering them, began to say: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and will deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.

But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

JERUSALEM'S FALL (DANIEL'S 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION', Mark 14-20)

So when you see the ‘**Abomination of Desolation**’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing where it ought not (let the reader understand), **then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains**. Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter. For in those days there will be **TRIBULATION**, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

THE SECOND COMING (Mark 13:21-27) Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, He is there!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

But in those days, **AFTER THAT TRIBULATION**, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. **Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory**. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven (**the 'rapture'**).

LUKE'S VERSION OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE (Luke 21:5-28)

CONTEXT (Luke 21:5-7) Then as some spoke of the Temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, "These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher...

- 1) But when will these things be? And...
- 2) And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"

EVENTS BETWEEN JERUSALEM'S FALL AND THE SECOND COMING (Luke 21:8-19)

And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first. But the end will not come immediately."

Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.

JERUSALEM'S FALL (DESOLATION BY THE ARMIES OF ROME, Luke 21:20-24)

But when you see **Jerusalem surrounded by armies**, then know that its **desolation** is near. Then **let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains**, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of **VENGEANCE**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and **WRATH UPON THIS (Jewish) PEOPLE**. And **THEY WILL FALL BY THE EDGE OF THE SWORD**, and be **LED AWAY CAPTIVE INTO ALL NATIONS**. And **JERUSALEM WILL BE TRAMPLED BY THE GENTILES UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES ARE FULFILLED**.

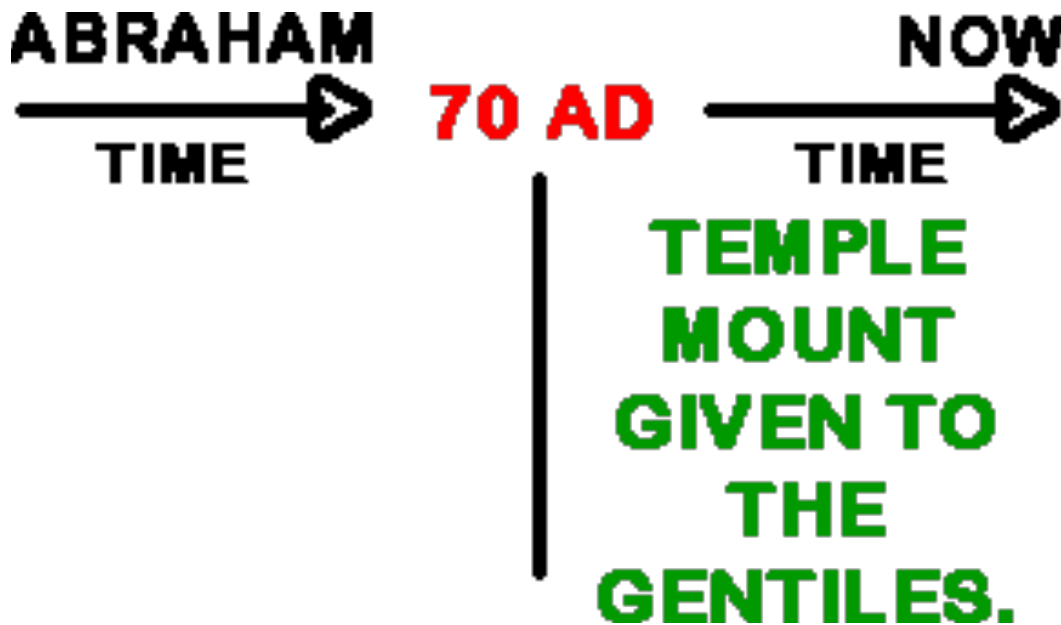
THE SECOND COMING (Luke 21:25-28)

And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars. And on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring. Men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then **they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory**. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Given this information from the Olivet Discourse, that the **MIDPOINT** of Daniel's '70th Week' is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, we can go on to understand the **ENTIRE** 70th Week. This comes as we examine the four visions of that Week that are given to us in **JOHN'S LITTLE BOOK** (Revelation chapters 10-13).

Those four visions are...

VISION #1 - THE TEMPLE MOUNT (Revelation 11:1-2)

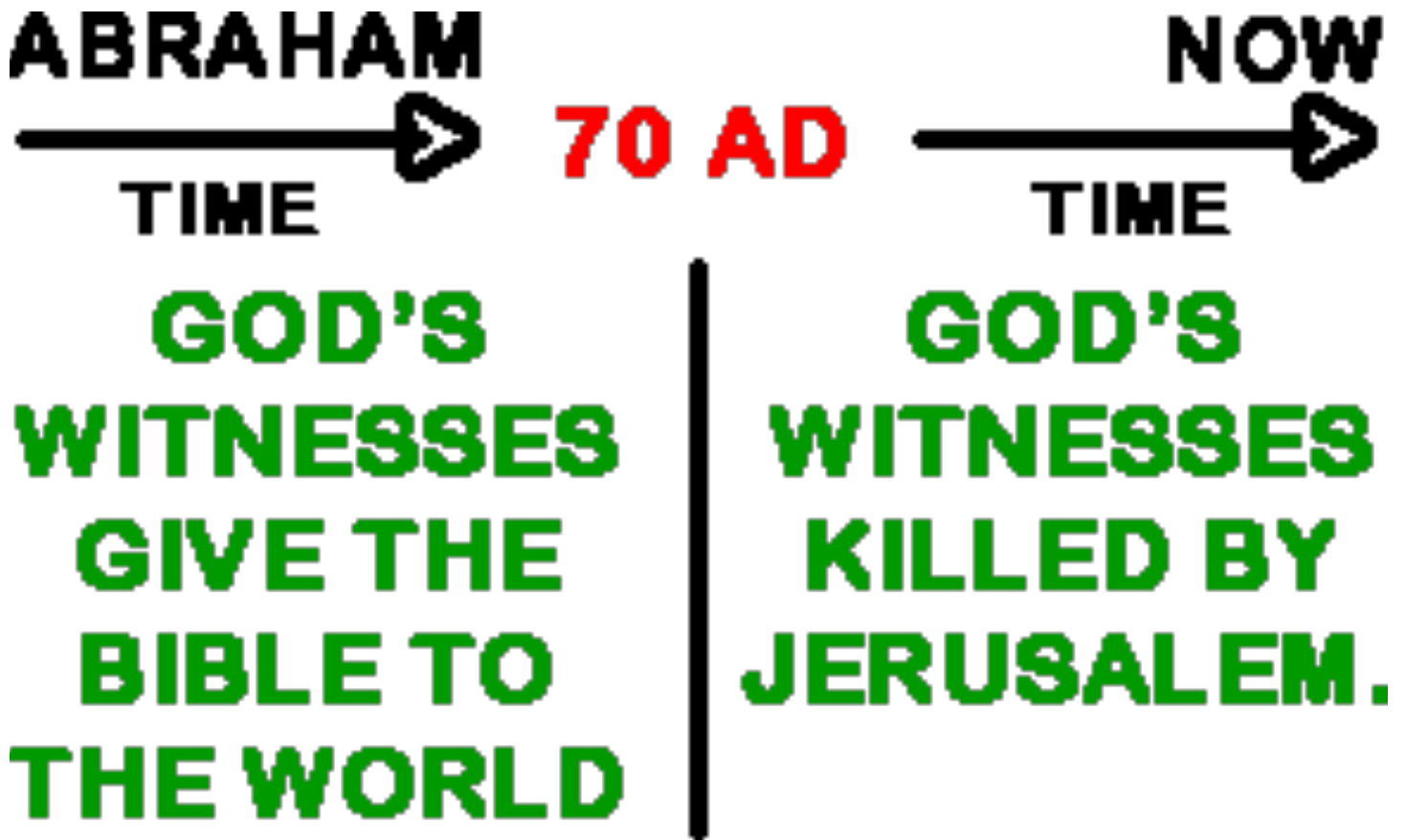


In this vision John was told that the gentiles would trample the Temple Mount underfoot for 42 months (one half of a 'week' of 7 years). But this has been the status of the Temple Mount from 70 AD to the present. This suggests the possibility that the '42 months' of this vision symbolize a much longer period of time. And as we look at the remaining 3 visions of John's Little Book we shall find that Daniel's 70th Week is the 'Great Week' of the Abrahamic Covenant, and that the resurrected Savior is the One who has 'confirmed' that Covenant.



VISION #2 - THE TWO WITNESSES

(Revelation 11:3-14)



These two witnesses resemble Moses and Elijah, given their miraculous powers. But they are not Moses and Elijah. They symbolize what the Jewish people call their Bible: 'The Law and the Prophets'. This is a vision of God's completion of the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

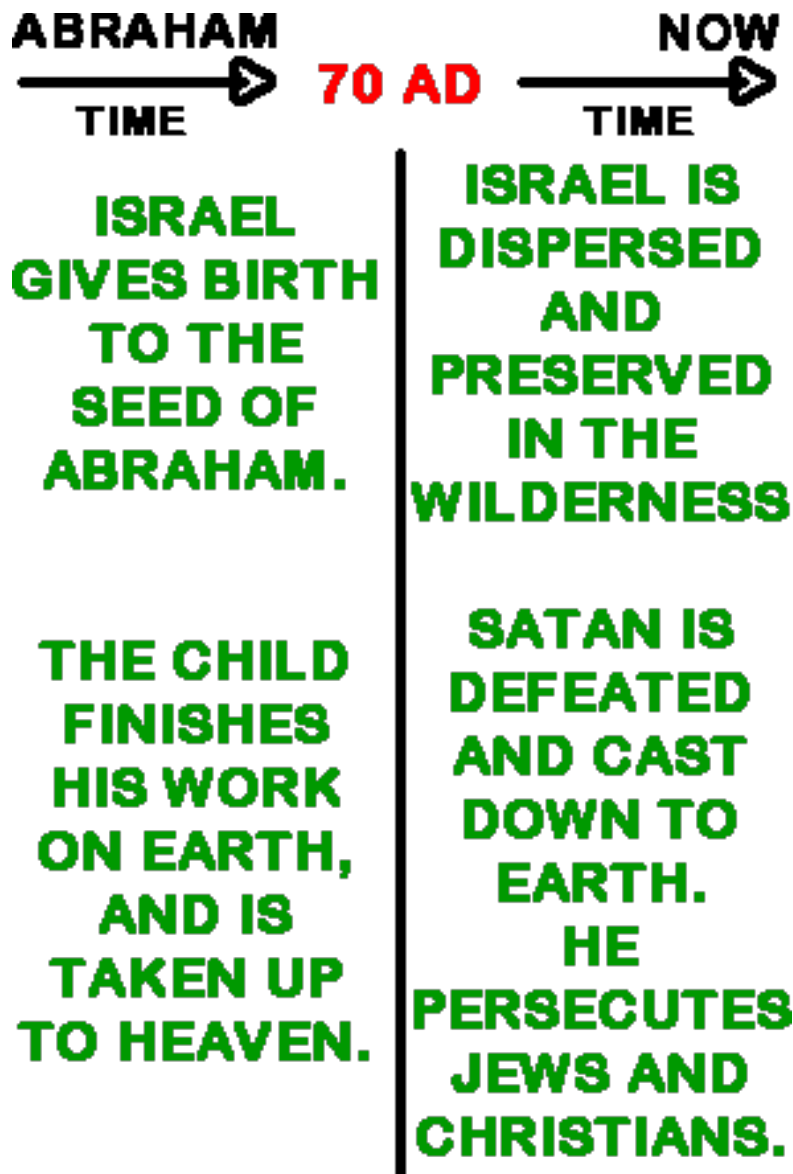
The fact that the bodies of the 'witnesses' lie in the street of Jerusalem represents the fulfillment of Jesus' warning to the Jews:

"Therefore indeed I am sending you prophets, wise men and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify,...that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth." (Matthew 23:34-36)

Some believe that the book of Revelation was given after the destruction of Jerusalem, but this is not true. Both the internal witness of the book of Revelation itself, as well as a proper understanding of early church history, indicate otherwise.

VISION #3 - THE WOMAN, THE CHILD, AND THE DRAGON

(Revelation chapter 12)

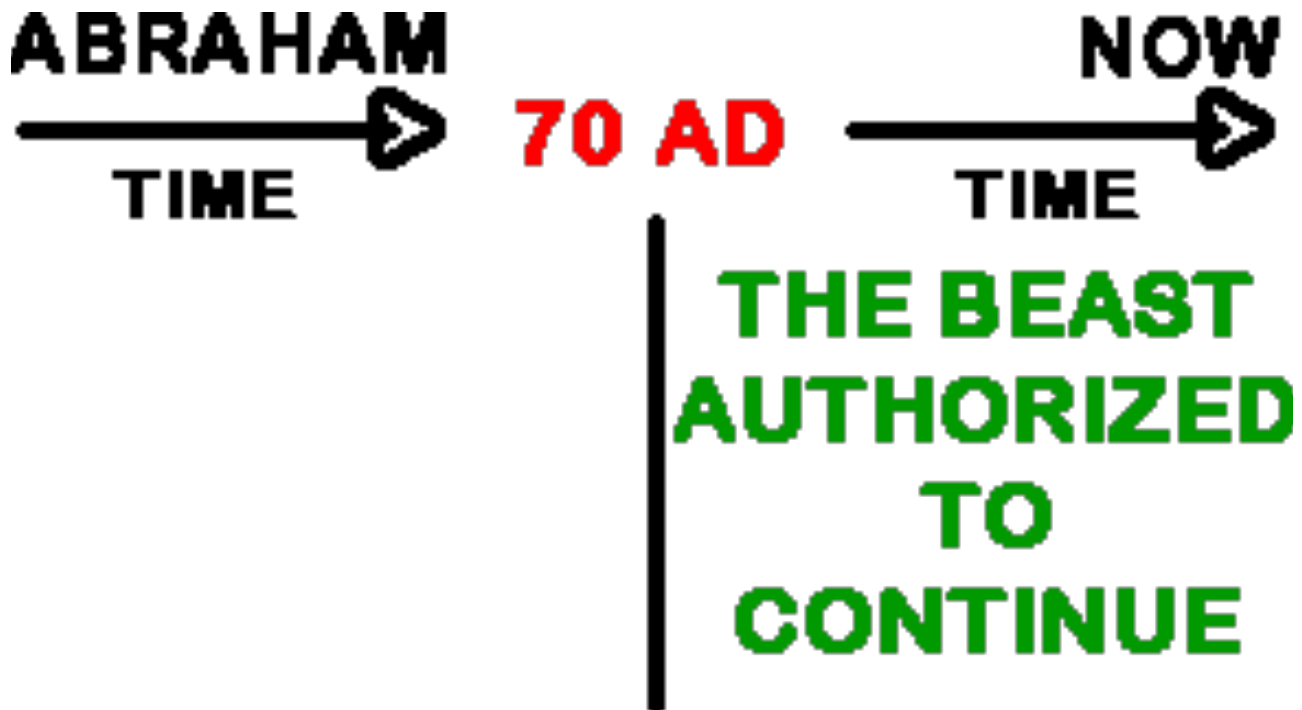


While the first two visions portray God's judgment upon Israel, this vision portrays Israel's dispersion, the source of its persecution, and God's preservation of a Jewish remnant.

It should be pointed out that while the first half of the week in this vision is described as 1260 days (11:3), the second half is described as 3.5 days (11:9,11). And in the third vision (below) the first half is described as 1260 days (12:6), while the second half is 3.5 'times' (12:14). These various ways of indicating a week suggest that this 'Week' could be symbolic, and not literal.

VISION #4 - THE BEAST ALLOWED BY GOD TO CONTINUE FOR 42 MONTHS

(Revelation 13:5)



When we combine the fact that Jesus placed the midpoint of the 70th Week at 70 AD, a divine 'flexibility' with the expression of time in these four visions, and the obvious 'real world' agreement of these visions with history, I myself feel compelled to identify the 70th Week of Daniel not as a week of 7 literal years, but as the 'Great Week' of the Abrahamic Covenant. And this perspective is in keeping with God's own emphasis upon that Covenant:

And God said to Moses "I AM WHO I AM". And He said "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'". "Moreover God said to Moses "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you'. This is **MY NAME** forever (I AM), and this is **MY MEMORIAL TO ALL GENERATIONS**" (that I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) (Exodus 3:14-15).

And finally we see the New Jerusalem with 12 gates named after the 12 great-grandsons of Abraham, and 12 foundations named after the 12 original Jewish apostles of Jesus Christ, the promised 'Seed' of Abraham (Revelation 21:12-14). The Abrahamic Covenant is God's memorial FOREVER.

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