

The Day of Rescue

Rescues from Wrath

We know that the "sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:1) "were by nature children of wrath" (:3). "He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (Jn 3:36). However, "because of His great love with which He loved us" (Eph 2:4) he delivers us from wrath. "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth" (2Th 2:13). "The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Titus 2:11). Christ has been "offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb 9:28). He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed" (Titus 2:14). "By grace you have been saved" (Eph 2:5). Salvation is an ongoing process. We are "those who are being saved" (2Co 2:15). We participate and "keep the commandment without stain or reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Ti 6:14). However, in the course of time he will "appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin" (:28). "For now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Ro 13:11). "You are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pe 1:5). Therefore, he will "confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 1:8). We know the day of the Lord is synonymous with his coming. Jesus directs us to "'straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near'" (Lk 21:28).

This fits into a larger perspective. If you have an "unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom 2:5). "It is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come" (Col 3:6). There will be "'a time of tribulation'" (Mk 13:19). "Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved" (:20). In John's revelation he saw that "'the Root of David, has overcome to open the book and its seven seals'" (Rev 5:5). John heard a loud voice saying, "'Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God'" (16:1). They contain "'the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come'" (6:16-17). Fortunately, we are "to wait for His Son from heaven . . . who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1Th 1:10). "God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation" (5:9). Therefore, put on "as a helmet, the hope of salvation" (:9).

Saved from Wrath

"God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Th 5:9). It doesn't say how we would be protected from divine wrath but "obtaining salvation" is the context of the verse. Christ "died for us" (:10) so that we "will live together with Him" (:10). We obtain salvation because "He who believes in the Son has eternal life" (Jn 3:36). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (:16). "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (1Jn 2:25). "The wages of sin is death,

but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish" (10:27-28). But "He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life" (1Jn 5:12). "He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Mt 25:41). The context is not the method by which we will avoid the wrath but that "we will live together with Him" (1Th 5:10).

Jesus said, "I will keep you from the hour of testing" (Rev 3:10). In Greek the word is "tereo" based on the primary root "teros" meaning to guard. When you guard something you (1) watch over, (2) are careful to pay close attention, and (3) observe to keep close track of it. This preserves its character so it functions as its supposed to and doesn't morph into another configuration or existence. "He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles" (Prov 21:23). To guard is "shamar" which is the primary root of "to keep." You possess and hold the status quo and guide yourself accordingly to avoid distractions. They expressed to "keep yourselves free from such things" (Ac 15:29) and to remain stationary outside from alternatives and separate from enticements. David prayed, "Deliver me from my enemies, O my God. Set me securely on high away from those who rise up against me" (Ps 59:1). He was not a captive and was separate though surrounded. "They lie in wait for my life; the mighty gather against me" (:3). He was free being outside but threatened being inside. The purpose was "to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine" (Ps 33:19). If God keeps you "from the hour of testing" (Rev 3:10) you can be in the midst of famine but you will not die because of the protection. They prayed "deliver our lives from death" (Jos 2:13) where the word is "natsal" to deliver oneself or snatch away. Deliverance is a major tenet of salvation in that "He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom" of God (Col 1:13). Jesus prayed, "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one" (Jn 17:15). They were in the world but "not of the world" (:16) because Jesus "guarded them" (:12) and they had been kept "in Thy name" (:11). "He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him" (1Jn 5:18) and "no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (Jn 10:28). You can be present in the "hour of testing" but preserved from the dangers.

Rapture

Paul told the Ephesians he was "made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace" (Eph 3:7) "to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God" (:9). He said to the Thessalonians that "God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus" (1Th 4:14) and that those who are alive "shall not precede those who have fallen asleep" (:15). Isaiah prophesied, "Your dead will live; their corpses will rise . . . and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits" (Isa 26:19). "Many

of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (Da 12:2). Paul told the Corinthians he would "prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2Co 5:8). God will "bring with Him" (1Th 4:14) those who have died and "the dead in Christ shall rise first" (:16). But if they are with the Lord in heaven having previously died then how could they be brought along by being raised from the grave? Peter referred to Paul "in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand" (2Pe 3:16). Then Paul said "we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds" (1Th 4:17). Jesus had told them "In My Father's house are many dwelling places . . . [and] I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:2). We will "meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1Th 4:17). This implies that we have been transported to heaven.

Paul said "I tell you a mystery . . . [which is] we will all be changed" (1Co 15:51). He refers to "the coming of the Lord . . . [where] the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout" (1Th 4:15-16). He describes it as "the day of the Lord [which] will come just like a thief in the night" (5:2). "Whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him" (:10). Does this refer to living together before "the coming" (4:15) also? In his second letter Paul asks, "Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?" (2Th 2:5). The Thessalonians had "received the word in much tribulation" (1Th 1:6) and wondered if the Great Tribulation had begun and they had missed being "caught up." Paul advised not "to be disturbed . . . to the effect that the day of the Lord has come" (2Th 2:2). He explained "let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (:3). Furthermore, "the Lord will slay [him] with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming" (:8). Many refer to this coming as "the rapture." The "son of destruction" (:3) is the ringleader for the Tribulation, but it is argued that "God has not destined us for wrath" (1Th 5:9), so by being "caught up" we avoid experiencing it. However, if the antichrist is destroyed at the Coming (which is when the rapture occurs) we would have had to have been present during that tribulation waiting for the Coming when Christ would bring the lawless one "to an end" (2Th 2:8). In Paul's letters "some things [are] hard to understand" (2Pe 3:16).

Caught Up

Premillennialists take literally the events of Revelation 20:1-6. They see the church as "caught up" or suddenly "seized" by Christ to meet him "in the clouds . . . in the air" (1Th 4:7). This is necessary "for God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:9). We would therefore avoid the Tribulation which occurs next. Jesus "rescues us from the coming wrath" (1:10). This is in accordance with "the words of this prophecy" (Rev 1:3). "Blessed is the one who reads . . . and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near"

(1:3). Premillennialism literally interprets this as a preliminary resurrection where "the dead in Christ will rise first [and] then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together" (1Th 4:16-17). It is an upward "snatching away" as distinguished from "when our Lord Jesus comes [downward, the next time] with all his holy ones" (3:13).

Raised Up

Jesus said, "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (Jn 5:28-29). "Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (6:40). "Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day'" (11:24). "They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Rev 20:4). "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them" (:5). "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies'" (Jn 11:25).

"God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation" (1Th 5:9). "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). "Salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Rom 13:11). However, we are saved when we believe. But Christ "shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin" (Heb 9:28). It is "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pe 1:5). We are therefore "those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). "We wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God" (Titus 2:13). "We through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness" (Gal 5:5) which is represented by the "crown of righteousness" (2Ti 4:8). We "wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead" (1Th 1:10).

Gathered Up

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness" (Rom 1:18). But God does "not appoint us to suffer wrath" (1Th 5:9). "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb 9:27). The Lord is "the righteous judge" (2Ti 4:8). He "will judge the living and the dead, in view of his appearing and his kingdom" (4:1). Paul said God "will award me on that day [the crown of righteousness]--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (4:8). "Keep this command . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time" (1Ti 6:14). "At the last trumpet . . . the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (1Co 15:52). "When He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (1Jn 3:3).

A concern of Paul's was "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him" (2Th 2:1). He explained to the Thessalonians "we do not want you to be uninformed . . . [because] God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus"

(1Th 4:13-14). He used "the coming of the Lord" (:15) to clarify the position of "those who have fallen asleep in Jesus" (:14). They were to "comfort one another with these words" (:18) because "Jesus [also] died and rose again" (:14). Paul referred to "the coming of the Lord . . . [who] Himself will descend from heaven" (:15-16). Then "we shall always be with the Lord" (:17).

Raised Imperishable

Paul told the Corinthians, "I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (1Co 15:51-52). He told the Thessalonians, "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord" (1Th 4:16-17). John said, "I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them" (Rev 8:2). Jesus said, "He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect" (Mt 24:31). "Blow the trumpet in Zion . . . for the day of the Lord is coming" (Joel 2:1). Everyone who "believes in Him may have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:40). "Every one who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself" (1Jn 3:3). He "shall appear a second time . . . to those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). "He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed" (2Th 1:10). "What will you do on the day of the appointed festival and on the day of the feast of the Lord?" (Hosea 9:5).

Paul said "we will all be changed" (1Co 1:7). But "it has not appeared as yet what we will be" (1Jn 3:2). It means that "this mortal must put on immortality" (1Co 15:53). It is a "mystery which has been hidden from the past ages" (Col 1:26) that "has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (Eph 3:5) and "manifested to His saints" (Col 1:26). Therefore he can "transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Php 3:21). Jesus provides a logic for this translation when he says, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (Jn 14:3). "To be absent from the body [is] to be at home with the Lord" (2Co 5:8). Paul said he had "the desire to depart and be with Christ [which is] very much better" (Php 1:23). Jesus told the criminal "today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43). "Enoch was taken up" (Heb 11:5) and "Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven" (2Ki 2:11). Paul was "caught up to the third heaven" (2Co 12:2) and didn't even know if it was in or out of the body (:3). "The Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away" (Ac 8:39). Snatching takes place faster than the blink of an eye. They are instantaneously "caught up together with them in the clouds" (1Th 4:17) in "our gathering together to Him" (2Th 2:1). Paul wanted to substantiate that his teaching in his first letter

on "the day of the Lord" (:2) was accurate and that they shouldn't be "shaken from [their] composure" (:2).

Imminency

Rapture advocates promulgate the imminency of the event since it is impending. They say it is signless so it can occur at any moment even though its inevitability may be postponed. Even Jesus said of that generation that "a sign will not be given it" (Mt 16:4). However, later his disciples asked, "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (24:3). Much later Jesus said, "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown" (Rev 3:11). Paul advised "let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near" (Php 4:5). James agreed saying "be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (Jas 5:8). They anticipated his return using the word "Maranatha" (1Co 16:22) which means "our Lord, come." They were so convinced that Paul suggested they be "awaiting eagerly the revelation" (1:7). He said "we eagerly wait for a Savior" (Php 3:20). Another observed that Christ would appear "to those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). Jude advised "keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life" (Jude 21). But Christ did not come as soon as they expected. Waiting then became an attitude they had to cultivate so they wouldn't be nervous and upset.

We are to wait on God for an answer when we have a problem or decision to make. However, it is appropriate anytime as in waiting "for your God continually" (Hos 12:6). To wait means to tarry, hope for, or to expect. It doesn't mean to put yourself "on hold" or be sitting next to the telephone waiting for a call not knowing when it will come. You must be actively involved and positive. "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps 27:13). Waiting isn't just academic. You might be in a "time of trouble" (Ps 37:39) or in a "pit of destruction" (Ps 40:2). The psalmist exclaimed "I am weary with crying; my throat is parched; my eyes fail while I wait for my God" (Ps 69:3). Another cried "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words" (Ps 119:147). A third professed "O Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong" (Ps 30:7). And there are times where "the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression" (Isa 30:20). Paul told the Corinthians about "our affliction which came to us in Asia" (2Co 1:8). The rationale is that "the sufferings of Christ are ours" (:5). He said "we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so we despaired even of life" (:8). The purpose is "so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God" (:19). God said "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (2Co 12:9). Jesus said "apart from Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). The result is that God "comforts us . . . so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction" (:4). Paul cited that God "delivered us from so great a peril of death" (:10).

God has "acted on our behalf" (Ps 68:28). He "acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him" (Isa 64:4). God "delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him" (Ps 35:10). "He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power" (Isa 40:29). "He is their strength in time of trouble . . . [and] helps them and delivers them . . . and saves them, because they take refuge in Him" (Ps 37:39-40). God is "my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken." (Ps 62:6). He is "the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God" (:7). God has said, "'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,' so that we may confidently say, 'the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?'" (Heb 13:5-6). "Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength" (Isa 40:31). It applies to all ages because even "youths grow weary and tired" (:30). "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage" (Ps 27:14). "With the heart a person believes" (Ro 10:10). Therefore, without this strength you will lose heart (Ps 27:13). But remember it is "'not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit'" (Zec 4:6). Make sure you aren't trying to save your own life for you "'shall lose it'" (Mk 8:35). But whoever "loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it" (:35). You defend against being self-centered with this mindset. "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col 3:23).

Day of Atonement

What kind of framework do you put this doctrine in? A world view is okay as far as it goes. It says keep your feet on the ground and stay in touch with reality. It seems to advocate a survival rationale which is what is necessary to survive. So where does the heavenly perspective apply? "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Php 3:20). Jesus said, "'My kingdom is not of this world'" (Jn 18:36). We are as "strangers in the world" (1Pe 2:11 NIV). Even "the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God" (1Co 3:19). Over the centuries religions have tried to reconcile the physical world with spiritual realities. Denominations have created doctrine to define truth for themselves. Some will even use a scripture from the Bible to customize a doctrine to use. However, "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation" (2Pe 1:20). Therefore, we must be "handling accurately the word of truth" (2Ti 2:15). One helpful framework is the Feasts (festivals) of the Lord. Passover occurs in the first month of Israel's religious year. Pentecost transpires in the third month, and Tabernacles in the seventh. The historical events happened to Israel, and then Christ completed them, because the Old Testament experiences pointed to Christ's fulfillments. Passover and Pentecost were fulfilled in literal 24-hour days. The Day of Atonement will similarly take place because, "'On exactly the tenth day of the seventh month is the day of atonement'" (Lev 23:27). "Through His own blood, He entered the Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12). This will "cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve" God (:14).

The high priest entered the Holy of Holies "once a year, not without taking blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people" (Heb 9:7). "It is on this day

that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you . . . from all your sins" (Lev 16:30). "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2Co 5:21). "Christ died for our sins" (1Co 15:3). Christological fulfillment of this day is "where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever" (Heb 6:20). Therefore we must "hold fast the confession of our hope . . . for He who promised is faithful" (10:23). Furthermore "by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement" (:18). We are "laying hold of the hope set before us" (:18) which is "an anchor of the soul" (:19) and "one which enters within the veil" (:19). God told Moses, "I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat" (Lev 16:2) which was in the Holy of Holies. In addition, "Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear . . . to those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). We are "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of Christ" (Titus 2:13). "Every one who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself" (1Jn 3:3). "When He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (:2). It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). "This perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1Co 15:53).

The Return of Christ

Daniel's Dream

"In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay in bed" (Da 7:1). You would think you'd have either a dream or a vision, but it means that visions are frames or parts of an overall dream. That's why "he wrote the dream down" (:1). It was highly symbolic and about the future, which would make it prophetic. That is why it says it "was spoken of through Daniel the prophet" (Mt 24:15). But it wasn't self-evident because he commented, "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me" (:15). He provides "the following summary" (:1) which covers an amount of time because he said "after this I kept looking" (:6,:7,:11,:13) a number of times. Also, time passed because he related that "I was contemplating" (:8). In addition, it was an interactive experience because he "approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this" (:16). It was similar to John's experience who "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev 1:10). He saw "a door standing open in heaven" (4:1) and heard, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things" (:1). John also asked "one of the elders" (7:13) just as Daniel did and the answer is thereby acknowledged with "he said to me" (:14). Daniel and John's visions were of the future but they were participating in the action "real-time" as if they were present themselves. On Pentecost Peter used Joel to prove that, we too, can receive dreams and visions (Ac 2:16) saying, "Your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (Joel 2:28). However, consider Daniel responding, "My

thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself" (Da 7:28).

Daniel's Vision

In 606 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar captured the Jews from Jerusalem and exiled them to captivity in Babylon. Daniel was in that group. He "observed in the books the number of years . . . for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years" (Da 9:2). "For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place'" (Jer 29:10). Even nowadays we can find ourselves in precarious predicaments. "But with the temptation [God] will provide the way of escape" (1Co 10:13). "For I know the plans that I have for you", declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity'" (Jer 29:11). But then he advised, "Search for Me with all your heart . . . and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you" (:14). So Daniel gave "attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications" (Da 9:3). Then Gabriel visited him saying, "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed" (:23). God wants to give you "a future and a hope" (Jer 29:11) and says "come and pray to Me" (:12) and "I will bring you back" (:14). Another time Daniel "had been mourning for three entire weeks" (Da 10:10) and was visited again by a messenger referring to Daniel again as a "man of high esteem" (:11). He said, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words" (:12). Therefore, obey God's command to "Call upon Me . . . and I will listen to you" (Jer 29:12).

Day as Year

While Daniel "was speaking in prayer" (Da 9:21) Gabriel visited him saying, "I have now come forth to give you the skill to understand . . . therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision" (:22-23). He began saying, "Seventy weeks are determined" (:24). He then repeated, "Know therefore and understand" (:25). In modern times we know that there are fifty-two weeks in a year, so seventy weeks would be one year and eighteen weeks. God defines a week explaining, "In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth . . . and rested on the seventh day, therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day" (Ex 20:11). A week is, of course, seven days. God told Moses, "You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath" (Lev 23:16). At seven days/week this would be "seven complete sabbaths" (:15). In Old Testament language a sabbath would be considered a religious week. The term sabbath can also be used symbolically. God said, "You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years . . . namely, forty-nine years" (25:8). Here sabbath means "seven" but the increment is a year as opposed to a day. Laban told Jacob, "Complete the week of this one . . . which

you shall serve with me for another seven years" (Ge 29:27). Therefore when Gabriel said "seventy weeks" he meant 490 years. We are to know and understand this.

Gabriel's Message

Daniel was studying Jeremiah's prophecies and read, "For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place'" (Jer 29:10). Isaiah had prophesied, "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid'" (Isa 44:28). To bring this to pass "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent out a proclamation . . . [saying that God] 'has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem'" (Ezra 1:1-2). Gabriel instructed Daniel that, "From the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" (Da 9:25). Cyrus had "put it in writing" (Ezra 1:1). Zerubbabel said, "We ourselves will together build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia has commanded us" (4:3).

Which decree was Gabriel referring to? When Daniel was in exile in Babylon, King Belshazzar was overthrown. Daniel had prophesied this saying, "Your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians" (Da 5:28). After Belshazzar was killed "Darius the Mede received the kingdom" (:31) in 539 B.C. They followed the "law of the Medes and Persians" (6:12). "Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (:28). However, the Persians under Cyrus the Great overthrew the Medes, conquering Lydia and Babylonia to fulfill Daniel's prophecy. The Edict of Cyrus in 538 B.C. allowed the Jews to return to their homeland. This is confirmed by the leaders testifying, "In the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this house of God" (Ezra 5:13). Later this was contested but they searched the archives for the original decree and "a scroll was found" (6:2). Then Darius issued decrees (:8;:11) and said, "I, Darius, have issued this decree, let it be carried out with all diligence!" (:12) "They finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia" (:14). The temple was dedicated in 516 B.C. However, Gabriel had referred to the "decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (Da 9:25). The first phase of "seven weeks" (:25) or forty-nine years would cover that project.

Gabriel's Answer

Gabriel told Daniel to "give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision" (Da 9:23). It was the answer he had been praying for. Isaiah prophesied, "He declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid'" (Isa 44:28). Gabriel explained that "from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" (Da 9:25). Time passes "until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes" (:25 NIV). Seven weeks is equivalent to 49 years and 62 weeks is 434 years totaling 483 years. But Gabriel had just

explained that "seventy weeks have been decreed for your people" (:24) leaving a week to be accounted for. Gabriel had summarized six phases where the first three were "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity" (:24). He addresses this group saying, "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing" (:26). Sixty-nine weeks expire leaving a week which some call Daniel's "seventieth week." God was dealing with "your [Daniel's] people" (:24) which was according to the Law. But to complete the 490 year plan it would remain "to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place" (:24). The first three purposes were accomplished by Christ's first coming whereas the last three would need to be completed by the second coming. Therefore, transpiration of time was paused after the resurrection until it would resume to complete the 490 years. These are "times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority" (Ac 1:7). This would allocate a time for the Gentiles in that "Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in" (Ro 11:25). The seventieth week is not mentioned until Daniel 9:27 following the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Return from Exile

The temple was completed in "the sixth year of the reign of King Darius" (Ezra 6:15). "After these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, there went up" (7:1) to Jerusalem. "This is the copy of the decree which King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest" (:11). The king stated that, "I have issued a decree" (:13) and repeated, "And I, even I King Artaxerxes, issue a decree" (:21). Consequently a second phase of the return from exile began in 457 B.C. They were even given the authority to "appoint magistrates and judges that they may judge all the people who are in the province beyond the River" (:25).

Gabriel instructed Daniel to "give heed to the message and gain understanding from the vision" (Da 9:23). He said, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end to sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place" (:24). Furthermore, "there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again" (:25). Sixty-nine weeks are equivalent to 483 years. Counting from the decree of 457 B.C. one arrives at 26 A.D. Scriptural years are 360 days and an extra five days for each year and leap years must be taken into account. Also, scripture tends to round off any part of a day or year to a whole number. Finally, an adjustment to errors in our present calendar of four years must be made which would establish that Christ was born in 4 B.C. Therefore the passage of 483 years would take the passage of time to when Christ began his ministry at thirty years of age. However, Gabriel stated that "after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off" (:26). Accordingly, some count the expiration of 69 weeks (483 years) to the year of crucifixion. This would cover "to make

an end of sin, [and] to make atonement for iniquity" (:24). Therefore, a "seventieth week" remains to be fulfilled which scholars usually associate with the Second Coming.

Return of Christ

Before the Sanhedrin the high priest said, "Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God" (Mt 26:63). Not only did Jesus confirm it but also said "hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (:64). Afterwards at his ascension "clouds received Him out of their sight" (Ac 1:9) and "two men in white . . . [told them that Jesus] will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (:10-11). Later Peter warned that there will be those who ask, "Where is this 'coming' he promised?" (2Pe 3:4 NIV). They will be those "walking according to their own lusts" (:3) saying, "Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation" (:4 NIV). They are Jews referencing their ancestors but ignoring "that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water" (:5 NIV). Jesus had asked, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Lk 18:8) and Peter cites the lack of faith of these scoffers. He says "they deliberately" (2Pe 3:5 NIV) and "willfully forget" (:5 NKJV) "for when they maintain this, it escapes their notice" (:5 NASB). However, Paul warns that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against . . . [those] who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro 1:18). "Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (:20). Peter instructs "that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of us" (2Pe 3:2). He reminds that "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise . . . [and is] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (:9).

Jesus told his disciples, "There are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (Mt 16:28). Six days later three of them accompanied him up a mountain and "He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light" (17:2). Peter later related that "we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2Pe 1:16). You could say that this was done as a demonstration to dispel imaginations they might have harbored. You might say Jesus had to bring "down to earth" understandings that they otherwise might incorrectly develop about heaven. Also he knew his disciples would feel left out once he departed so to encourage them he advised, "Let not our heart be troubled" (Jn 14:1). He told them, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places . . . [and] if I go prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (:2-3). He confirmed it saying, "If it were not so, I would have told you" (:2) and reiterated, "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you'" (:28). This is not just mentioned in passing. He said, "Now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass you may

believe" (:29). "I am coming quickly" (Rev 22:7,12,20) is reinforced three times. In fact, the Second Coming is specifically mentioned in twenty-four books of the New Testament. I read where one author had counted over 300 references and another approximately 450 occurrences.

Second Advent

John prophesied, "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him" (Rev 1:7). Enoch prophesied, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones" (Jude 14). He "shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire" (2Th 1:7). "The Lord will come in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind" (Isa 66:15). The Second Coming will come "immediately after the tribulation" (Mt 24:29). In "those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (:29). There will be "men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world" (Lk 21:26). "Just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt 24:27).

His angels "will gather together His elect from the four winds" (:31). "In Christ all shall be made alive . . . at His coming" (1Co 15:22-23). "In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives" (Zec 14:4). But "that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2Th 2:3). Therefore, "we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). However, "not everyone has faith" (2Th 3:2) but we do not "grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope" (1Th 4:13). Many "come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14). "The armies of heaven following him . . . were dressed in fine linen" (Rev 19:14) which are the "righteous acts of the saints" (:8).

Second Coming

Peter cited how the Old Testament prophets sought to know what "time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" (1Pe 1:11). Jude reports "that Enoch . . . prophesied, saying, 'Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones'" (Ju 10:14). Zechariah prophesied that "'the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations'" (Zec 14:3) and "'you will flee . . . [and] the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!" (:5). These are those who "God will bring with Him" (1Th 4:14) who "will be caught up together" (:17) in "our gathering together to Him" (2Th 2:1). "Creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the Sons of God" (Ro 8:19) and "the glory that is to be revealed in us" (:18). This revelation is an unveiling or exposure to view. We are to "wait for His Son from heaven" (1Th 1:10). Knowing that "our citizenship is in heaven" (Php 3:20) we set our "mind on the things above" (Col 3:2) and when Christ is revealed "you also will be revealed with Him in glory (:4). Paul prayed that God would "establish your hearts without blame in holiness . . . at the coming of our Lord Jesus with

all His saints" (1Th 3:13). Peter prayed that your faith "may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1Pe 1:7). Paul prayed "that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 1:7).

The event of the Second Advent is called the parousia. Jesus, whose presence is in heaven, comes to earth where his arrival is observed by everyone. When it occurs is not known but there are metaphors to describe it. "Just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt 24:27). It "will be just like the days of Noah" (:37). "They did not understand until the flood came and took them all away" (:39). "On the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed" (Lk 17:29-30). "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" (21:26-27). He will come "with His mighty angels in flaming fire" (2Th 1:7) "and then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds" (Mk 13:27). Therefore "when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Lk 21:28). "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt 16:26). "All the tribes of the earth will mourn" (24:30). He "will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts" (1Co 4:5). "Each man's praise will come to him from God" (:5). Paul explains that he will receive "the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2Ti 4:8). He "will repay every man according to his deeds" (Mt 16:27). He "rescues us from the wrath to come" (1Th 1:10). "Then He will sit on His glorious throne" (Mt 25:31).

The Parousia

"Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when" (Mt 24:1) "one of His disciples said to Him, 'Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!'" (Mk 1:13). Jesus answered, "'Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down'" (Mt 24:2). "As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, 'Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?'" (Mk 13:4). Later in the discourse he said "'the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky . . . and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky'" (Mt 24:30). "'You shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes'" (10:23). This was prophesied by Daniel saying, "'I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming'" (Da 7:13). This Parousia occurs after the Great Tribulation when cosmic signs appear (Mt 24:29). It is when "the sun became black . . . and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to earth" (Rev 6:12-

13). "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves" (Lk 21:25). "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes" (Joel 2:30-31). "Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near" (2:1). Jesus explains that at his coming "He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds" (Mt 24:31).

Paul cites that it happens "in the twinkling of an eye" (1Co 15:52) "just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt 24:27). It is "at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1Co 15:52). He explains that "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout . . . and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first" (1Th 4:16). Then he says "we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord" (:15) "will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (:17). Jesus had stated, "I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (Jn 14:3). "Everyone who is found in the book, will be rescued"" (Da 12:1). Both Jesus and Paul place activity in the clouds and sky, and both cite a trumpet sound. Angels are involved in both accounts, and each says that the elect will be gathered together. It was revealed that, "Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (Ac 1:11). All scriptures point to the Second Advent as being after the Tribulation which shows that there is no preliminary event before the Tribulation directly connected to the Parousia afterwards. The Gospels and Epistles are in agreement on this.

Presence

Paul told the Galatians "that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man . . . but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11-12). It was "the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past" (Ro 16:25). A revelation is an apokalupsis (Gr.) or uncovering of something which had previously been covered being a mystery because its understanding had been hidden. But it is an apocalypse since the secret has been revealed such as when "their minds were hardened" (2Co 3:14) but then the truth is brought to light when the veil is "removed in Christ" (:14). Peter then explains "the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1Pe 1:13). At any time the Holy Spirit "may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph 1:18). However, Peter here is talking more about a revelation in the last days. Paul similarly discusses "awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 1:7). He also tells the Thessalonians "with regard to the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Th 2:1) to not be confused "to the effect that the day of the Lord has come" (:2). He had earlier explained to them "that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night" (1Th 5:2). He equates the "day of the Lord" (2Th 2:2) to the "coming of our Lord" (:1).

The translators use the Greek word *parousia* to explain the Coming, and since it is synonymous with the day of the Lord, it refers to the Second Coming. The concordance describes it as "a presence" or "a coming" but with the NASB the latter is most always used. It is from "to be present" or "to have come" which carries the meaning "to exist by the side of." However, Jesus had already promised this saying to the disciples, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (Jn 14:18). His return would be a spiritual coming in the presence of "another Helper, that He may be with you forever" (:16) so that "you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (:20). Jesus also supplied a longer term application advising, "Let not your heart be troubled" (:1). He said, "In My Father's house . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . [so that when you die] I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (:2-3). However, pretribulationists take "the coming of the Lord" (1Th 4:15) to mean that they would "be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall be always be with the Lord" (:17) in heaven. They interpret this *parousia* as Jesus coming down partway to snatch believers from the earth prior to the Tribulation. They distinguish it from his epiphany or appearing prior to the Millennium as being the first phase of a two-stage Second Coming. Their Rapture is necessary to piece together all the events in the last days for them.

Appearance

Martha told Jesus that she knew her brother Lazarus, "Will rise again in the resurrection on the last day" (Jn 11:24). Jesus had earlier said, "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day" (6:44). Revelation 20:5 cites this saying, "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection." The crux of the matter is that if there was a preliminary resurrection called the Rapture then scripture couldn't call a second resurrection the first. Therefore to iron this out you'd have to synchronize all the many scripture references to demonstrate that there is only one Second Coming. Jesus explained when this would occur saying that the "harvest is the end of the age" (Mt 13:39) and "so it shall be at the end of the age" (:40,49). It will be "on the day that the Son of Man is revealed" (Lk 17:30) at "the appearance of His coming" (2Th 2:8). Jesus related, "They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory" (Mt 24:30). Daniel said, "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him" (Da

7:13-14). "The Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels" (16:27) and "then He will sit on His glorious throne" (25:31). In this harvest "the reapers are angels" (13:39) and Jesus explained, "I will say to the reapers, 'First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn'" (:30). He will "send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness" (:41). They will "take out the wicked from among the righteous and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (:49-50). "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats" (25:32). "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father" (13:43). Paul summarized the event to the Thessalonians "with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him" (2Th 2:1).

"Just as it happened in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man" (Lk 17:26). "They did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt 24:39). "Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all" (Lk 17:27). "Lot went out from Sodom [and] it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all" (:29). "Just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt 24:27). "He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (:31). "Be on the alert--for you do not know when the master is coming . . . --lest he come suddenly and find you asleep" (Mk 13:35-36). "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left" (Lk 17:35). "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left" (:36). The wicked are taken and the righteous live. "Where the [dead] body is, there also will the vultures be gathered" (:37). "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (1Co 15:52). "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1Th 4:16). "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (:17).

First Resurrection

Near the end of the Book of Revelation John concludes "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection" (Rev 20:6). This is said just after John observes "I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True" (19:11). In addition, "the armies which are in heaven . . . were following Him on white horses" (:14). This is commonly referred to as Christ's second coming. However, didn't the "resurrection of the dead" (1Co 15:21) come first when Christ was "raised from the dead, [and became] the first fruits of

those who are asleep" (:20)? Resurrection is said to be when "in Christ all shall be made alive" (:22). Is this instantaneous or sequential? Paul explains that it happens to "each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming" (:23). Therefore, the first resurrection can be defined as this period of time where certain related events transpire. However, others argue that there is only one, single resurrection. Daniel first recounted, "'Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt'" (Da 11:2). Jesus said, "'All who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment'" (Jn 5:28-29). Paul explained to Felix, "'There shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked'" (Acts 24:15). Jesus also cites "'the resurrection of the righteous'" (Lk 14:14).

Those who observe only one, official resurrection put forth the "sea" (Rev 20:13) and "Hades" (:13) giving up "the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds" (:13) as a general resurrection. This would agree with Jesus saying, "'All who are in the tombs shall hear His voice'" (Jn 5:28) because it is said that the graves "gave up their dead" (Rev 20:13). Jesus said, "'I Myself will raise him up on the last day'" (Jn 6:40) and Martha concurs saying, "'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day'" (11:24). At the Second Coming, Christ "shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin" (Heb 9:28) "for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pe 1:5). But Hebrews goes on to say it is for "those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). However, they do not appear to be waiting in their graves. "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1Th 4:16-17). Paul also mentions "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him" (2Th 2:1). Does he define this "coming" (:1) as the Second Coming? Jesus said that angels would "gather together His elect" (Mt 24:31) when "'they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds'" (:30). At this time everyone sees Christ's appearance and "in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives" (Zec 14:4). But only believers are "looking for the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) "who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord" (1Th 4:15) who will "see Him just as He is" (1Jn 3:3). Premillennialists see this as a separate resurrection they call the Rapture. Others may see it as the Day of Atonement being "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus" (Titus 2:13).

Bodily Resurrection

We are "justified as a gift by His grace" (Ro 3:24) made possible by "redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul . . . which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us" (Heb 6:19-20). Therefore "by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim

light" (Ac 26:23). In the interim we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Ro 8:23). We know that "we have been buried with Him through baptism into death" (6:4) since "the body is dead because of sin" (8:10). But we are not temporarily stuck depending upon our own devices in order to survive. "Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (6:4). "You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if Christ is in you . . . [and] the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (8:9-10). "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (1Co 15:45) for "just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so even the Son gives life to whom He wishes" (Jn 5:21). God will "give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit who indwells you" (Ro 8:11). He has "raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). "As He is so also are we in this world" (1Jn 4:17). "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Php 3:20). "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1).

It is natural to perceive resurrection as being spiritual. But is there more to look forward to? We know our body is "the earthly tent which is our house" (2Co 5:1) as Peter said "I am in this earthly dwelling" (2Pe 1:13). But we also know as Paul explained that "our house is torn down" (2Co 5:1) and Peter related it's "laying aside" (2Pe 1:14). If we were always kept guessing then it would cause anxiety. Therefore we are told "just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1Co 15:49). We believe "knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus" (2Co 4:14). "We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (5:1). "It has not appeared as yet what we shall be" (1Jn 3:2). He "will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory" (Php 3:21). Paul said "some one will say, 'How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?'" (1Co 15:35). "God gives it a body just as He wished" (:38). It is an "imperishable" (:42) "spiritual body" (:44). Adam and Eve made a mistake in this regard when "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Ge 3:7). "We, having put it on, shall not be found naked" (2Co 5:3). It is accomplished "by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Php 3:21). "God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power" (1Co 6:14). "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead" (Jn 21:14). He told them, "A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (Lk 24:39).

The Day of Redemption

End of the Age

The disciples asked Jesus what the sign would be for "the end of the age" (Mt 24:3). He had previously explained that "the harvest is the end of the age" (13:39). He answered it would be "when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of

through Daniel the prophet" (24:15). Jesus cited Daniel as a prophet which shows that God had predicted the future long ago. In fact, because it was "through Daniel" (:15) it means that Gabriel had proclaimed the message to him and Daniel had recorded it. He related "on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate" (Da 9:27). Peter stated "we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention" (2Pe 1:19). He said prophecy came by "men moved by the Holy Spirit" (:21). Daniel received revelations about the distant future, for example when serving Darius he prophesied, "His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away" (Da 7:14). He also studied and "observed in the books [Jer 25:11-12; 29:10] the number of years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem" (Da 9:2). He explained that his approach was to give "my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications" (:3). Another time he was told by God's messenger that "from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words" (10:12). During the encounter Daniel looked up (:5) and "alone saw the vision" (:7). He reported "I retained no strength but I heard the sound of the words" (:8-9). In a previous prophecy he was told "a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (9:26) which would be the Roman general Titus at Jerusalem in 70 AD. In this case he was told "you are to know and discern" (:25) and that "even to the end there will be war" (:26). "The word of God is . . . able to discern" (Heb 4:12). However, one time he replied "I heard but could not understand" (Da 12:8). Then he was told, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time" (:9).

In one prophecy Daniel was told "those who have insight will understand" (Da 12:10). Peter emphasized to "pay attention" (2Pe 1:19) to the prophetic word. Jesus asked his disciples, "Have you understood all these things?' They said to Him, 'Yes'" (Mt 13:51). Daniel comprehended as when "a message was revealed to Daniel . . . and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision" (Da 10:1). Daniel paid attention. Jesus was sad to recount that, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes" (Lk 19:42). Passover and Pentecost happened in one day. He continued saying "the days shall come upon you . . . because you did not recognize the time of your visitation" (:44). His advice is "be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Mt 24:44). The wise thought about it and "took oil in flasks along with their lamps" (25:4) and because they were ready "went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut" (25:10).

Everlasting

Jesus told Nicodemus, "Whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:15). Jesus told them, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never

perish" (10:28). He offers it since he "alone has immortality" (1Ti 6:16). "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). Why was the offer made in this way? Was life so miserable that any possibility of escape appealed to people? Consequently, Jesus "through death . . . [did] release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb 2:14-15). "The wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23). Jesus paid the price of redemption but you have to accept the gift to have eternal life. He told them, "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (Jn 8:24). He said that the ones who reject the offer "will go away to everlasting punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Mt 25:46). "Those who do not obey the gospel . . . shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2Th 1:9). Spiritual death is separation from God. Jesus told them, "It is better for you to enter into life maimed . . . [than] to go to hell into the fire that shall never be quenched" (Mk 9:43). In verse 48 Jesus equates their condition to "the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me, for their worm does not die" (Isa 66:24). The "worm" refers to man's eternal spirit. Does that imply that when God creates a person it is on a permanent basis such that those who accept salvation go on to heaven and those who reject it spend eternity separated from God? In Jesus' parable both Lazarus and the rich man died. The latter "being in torments in Hades . . . saw Abraham afar off" (Lk 16:23) and was told "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed" (:26). He was warned, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (:31).

Jesus stated, "Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). However, the spirit transcends the flesh. Jesus "being put to death in the flesh" (1Pe 3:18) "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself" (Heb 9:14). "With the heart a person believes" (Ro 10:10) which is the "inner man" (Eph 3:16). Man is composed of "spirit and soul and body" (1Th 5:23). "The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground" (Ge 2:7) which is the body. The brain is a physical organ and we make decisions with our intellect. But you "believe in your heart" (Ro 10:9) which is from another capacity. That source is from when God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Ge 2:7). Job said the "Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). You could limit God's creation if you only considered Solomon saying "they all have the same breath" (Ecc 3:19) or Isaiah stating, "Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils" (Isa 2:22). But a distinction is made by Solomon saying, "Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?" (Ecc 3:22). He says "man goes to his eternal home" (12:5) and "the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (:7). Zechariah states that it is the Lord who "forms the spirit of man within him" (Zec 12:1). He is the "Father of spirits" (Heb 12:9). Moses referred to the Lord as "the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num 27:16). Jesus "became a life-giving spirit" (1Co 15:45) and "breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (Jn 20:22). Therefore be careful of an "unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God" (Heb 3:12).

Location of Heaven

In a section of a book by a Bible teacher of a critique of another teacher's article he argues against theological presuppositions which do not allow the text to speak for itself. There must be solid exegesis, especially with the subjects of the Rapture and Second Coming. There are groups, for instance, which are based on when the Rapture will occur in relation to the Tribulation and when the Second Coming occurs relative to the Millennium. They all utilize the scriptures so as to support their own interpretation just as religions each have their own explanation of existence. The teacher used hermeneutics and I noticed all the colloquialisms used which reflect his thinking. They represent the depth of the analysis as well as how drawing conclusions can get muddled if proper exegesis takes second place to presumption. For example, he said a meaning had to be established by describing it provided it was acceptable, intended, and the usual message. It is to be taken as if spoken in a meaningful sense so it is a probable interpretation of what it means. Other phrases used involve the meaning in the original language being the key evidence to a correctly applied understanding. The context demands settling on and proving the acceptable position. There should be general agreement, examples would demonstrate it, and there would be lexical confirmation. Other phrases used are that a sense of the phrase under consideration has to do with the idea and notions about it as seen in the light of what it connotes and what is conveyed. Other wording warns of improper exegesis which goes against scriptural parallels, arguments are inconclusive or run counter to standards, purported pronouncements are unreliable, precipitous claims are made, or invalid logical leaps are taken and results are inconclusive. All these aspects and cautions reveal what pitfalls are possible and how these subjects are especially sensitive.

You have to piece together all the clues. At the last of his ministry Jesus revealed everything necessary to the extent that "His disciples said, 'Lo, now You are speaking plainly, and are not using a figure of speech'" (Jn 16:29). He had said, "From now on you shall not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Mt 23:39). He spoke of the Second Coming. He said, "Again a little while, and you will see Me" (Jn 16:16) but some of the disciples said, "We do not know what He is talking about" (:18). Consequently at the Olivet Discourse they asked, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Mt 24:3). "Jews ask for signs" (1Co 1:22), and again, the Second Advent was the subject. Previously Jesus had comforted his disciples saying, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places . . . [and] I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:2). The location is heaven. He continues saying that he will then "come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (:3). But Thomas questioned, "We do not know where You are going; how do we know the way?" (:5). Of course later on "He was lifted up while they

were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Ac 1:9). Then two men in white said, "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you in heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (:11). Again, heaven is the location.

Your Inheritance

God's plan of redemption began when he "put enmity . . . between your seed and her seed" (Ge 3:15). Moses said, "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance" (Dt 32:9). Israel was the product of Eve's seed because "she was the mother of all the living" (Ge 3:20). Moses said that Israel was "Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness" (Dt 9:26). "We [also] have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph 1:11). "Since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions . . . those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal promise" (Heb 9:15).

God has "qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints" (Col 1:12) which is an "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph 5:5). We are "to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven" (1Pe 1:4). "The reward of the inheritance . . . is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col 3:24). We have been "born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1Pe 1:3). We are therefore to "hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (Heb 3:6). "We have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end" (:14).

Paul said that the Lord "will award to me on that day [a crown] . . . but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2Ti 4:8). But they had a "need of endurance" (Heb 10:36) in order that they "may receive what was promised" (:36). "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord . . . [and] strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (Ja 5:7-8). For if the vision "tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay" (Hab 2:3). In a very little while, He who is coming, will come, and will not delay" (Heb 10:37). "Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Nu 23:19). "The Lord is not slow about His promise" (2Pe 3:9).

Overcome

Christ says that, "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Rev 3:21). It is not just a one-way street. "Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1Pe 2:21). It is "a hope sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever" (Heb 6:19-20). Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33). Paul explained "I run in such a way, as not without aim" (1Co 9:26) so that he would "win" (:24) and not "be disqualified" (:27).

Jude said to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). "Violent men take it [the kingdom of heaven] by force" (Mt 11:12). "Prepare your minds for action" (1Pe 1:13) and "be self-controlled and alert" (5:8). "Have [your faith] as your own conviction before God" (Ro 14:22). "The testing of your faith produces endurance" (Jas 1:3). Trials occur "so that your faith . . . may be proved genuine" (1Pe 1:6-7). "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith" (1Co 13:5). Then "set your hope fully on the grace to be given you" (1Pe 1:13). "Abide in Him, so that when He appears, you may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming" (1Jn 2:28). Jesus said, "He who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit" (Jn 15:5). He advised let "my words remain in you" (Jn 15:7) and for them to "remain in me, and I will remain in you" (:4). He also said, "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love" (:10). "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1Jn 5:4).

Walk in White

As a solution Jesus advised to "remember what you have received and heard" (Rev 3:3). What they had received was "the word implanted, which is able to save your souls" (Ja 1:21). To "wake up" (Rev 3:2,3) is imperative. "It is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Ro 13:11). Furthermore, what you remember you are also to "keep" (Rev 3:3). This is done by laying aside "the old self" (Eph 4:22), "every encumbrance" (Heb 12:1), and "all that remains of wickedness" (Ja 1:21). "Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality" (Col 3:5). "Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph 4:24) "who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col 3:10). As a result "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1Jn 1:7).

Jesus said, "You have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments" (Rev 3:4). There were only some with a right relationship. God had chosen Israel as a brand from the fire (Zec 3:2). Joshua, the high priest, was "clothed with filthy garments" (:3) and the Lord said, "Remove the filthy garments from him" (:4). Then he explained, "I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes" (:4). In Revelation he explains "they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy" (Rev 3:4). Furthermore, "he who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments" (:5). "It was given to [the Bride of Christ] to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev 19:8). "When [the priests] enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments" (Eze 44:17) for "they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat" (:18). Sweat symbolizes human effort and Paul acknowledged that he "be found in Him, not having righteousness of my own . . . but that which is through faith in Christ" (Php 3:9). "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God

in Him" (2Co 5:21). They are "clothed in white garments" (Rev 3:5). "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14).