



Connecting the Dots

By

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February 2005

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A Brief Tour

Or

A quick overview of the principle points in this document

It is always helpful to have an overview of where a particular discussion is headed before starting on the details. It is also a good idea to give people a reasonable idea of where the author stands on many issues in order to avoid being labelled as belonging to groups that you would rather not be associated with.

This last point is particularly true when dealing with the subject of Biblical prophecy, as it has to be said that unfortunately this area has attracted a lot of people who have some pretty strange ideas (to say the least). What is worse is that many of these people have a wanton disregard for facts. Most of them simply disregard the basic methods of interpretation of any document. These fundamental principles include the following;

- The immediate context, or environment, in which a particular statement that you are quoting was originally made.
- Any other references to the situation under discussion – such as other historical documents on the subject, and perhaps the contemporary events that may be related to the discussion
- The ordinary meaning of the words that were employed in the original documents
- The general background to the immediate context of the original documents

The other thing that most of these people ignore is that the Bible has many references to the same events that were written by authors separated in time, by hundreds of years in many cases. These authors can be considered to be the witnesses to the events that are described in the Bible. This includes the prophetic statements that they made, because somewhere along the line they “witnessed” – in some form or another – the future events that they described.

If you take the eyewitness accounts of a group of people who observed, say a car accident, you will find that there is a core group of common statements, and a number of witnesses who will report a particular item that others in the group don't. This is simply because each person saw the event from a slightly different perspective – both physically and mentally – and saw some things that others in the group didn't.

If you were investigating any subject where you relied on eyewitness accounts, and they all told the same story, then you would know that you had a case of collusion and that the eyewitnesses were simply cooking up a story to mislead you. The only credible eyewitness accounts are those that have a common core of accounts and a variety of smaller groups (down to a group of one) that related additional facts as well. You can rely on these accounts and reconstruct the original events with a high degree of accuracy and certainty.

Unfortunately some so called academics don't understand – or wilfully ignore – that basic point of evidence. They say that there are “inconsistencies” in the Biblical accounts – therefore they are unreliable. These people would never attain a science degree, and more particularly, a science based PhD, as they are apparently incapable of

critical thought or research and instead engage in Mickey Mouse pseudo-science masquerading as serious research.

On the other hand, many of the “ordinary” people who are attracted to Biblical prophecy are not much better – and in many cases are worse. They simply spin a good story (e.g. the so called rise of some supernatural Antichrist – as yet, still to appear) and ignore all those inconvenient sections in the Bible that completely demolish their “theory”.

The only reasonable way to interpret the Bible – in a manner that would stand up in a court of law – is to treat it as any other document and apply the normal principles of interpretation. That is, you have to take **all the references** to any given subject – **then find the one** (and it will normally only be one) interpretation that is **consistent** with **all** those references and the **events that are, and have, occurred** in the **real world** around you. Failure to do this disqualifies a person as a serious commentator on any particular subject.

Sadly, not many people are prepared to do this.

As a result of the general reluctance to honestly examine facts, many people are at a loss to understand what is happening to the world today.

It is an established fact that the events of September 11, 2001 changed the world. Since the Islamic attack on America on that day the political situation world-wide has dramatically altered in many ways. Old alliances have been broken – governments (read “thugocracies”) have been swept away – Islamic violence in those areas and Israel has increased. This has been accompanied by behaviour on the part of some of the nations involved (who should have known better) that is less than desirable. Scandals involving that most corrupt and incompetent body that the world has ever had the misfortune to be saddled with (the UN) have now finally bubbled up to the surface like scum around the cesspit. We have seen the tsunami on December 26, 2004 occur with massive loss of life.

Is it all coincidence that September 11 seemed to start all this – or can it be explained by referring to the Biblical descriptions of these events. The document ahead explores these questions. It does this by looking at the facts of history and the political events over the last century, with a focus on the events since September 11, and then relating those events to what the Bible claims is to be the sequence of events in the “end times”.

Only you can make up your mind as to whether you accept the thesis presented in this document. All that I ask is that you read it with an open mind. I am more than happy to debate any particular point should you wish to.

Much of this paper is a compilation of other documents that I have published in relation to other discussions over a period of some years with a number of people.

Finally a word on how the Bible presents prophecy. For anyone to present a detailed history of the world would be impossible because of the huge amount of detailed information that it would contain. In order to present a clear and concise record that people can (and are willing) to read, you have to do a lot of pruning. You only present

the important highlights that preserve the essential character of the events that you are describing.

The Bible is no different. It skims over much of history, but every so often it picks up and highlights a particular event that is important in the overall story, much like a bird skimming over a lake and scooping up water (or fish) in its beak. History has shown that the events that do get mentioned are generally fairly significant events in themselves which tend to make it into the history books, and which provide a “linked list” (the computer types will know this term from “information theory” and “data structures”) that enables anyone to follow the links across history. You will find several examples in the rest of this document.

In order to put the whole discussion into context, the very first thing that has to be done is to summarize the Bible so that we are all singing off the same song-sheet. This is done in less than a page (yes, it is possible to do that). All the extraneous detail is pruned away and the core of the subject is simply laid out. Unless this is done, then all the discussions on Biblical prophecy are just so much mumbo-jumbo and wandering around in the dark simply because there is no common frame of reference.

On top of that, any discussions on the “political” dimensions of the subject simply wander around in circles with no focus.

To end this introduction I need to lay out my position on two subjects that plague any discussion of this sort of subject.

First, I present no political viewpoint. You are all free to decide yourself whether George Bush is a madman or whether he is acting according to his claim that, “God has spoken to him”. You are also free to decide yourself about who is “right” and who is “wrong” in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I offer no views on these subjects at all!

Second, just in case some think I am some sort of right-wing-fundamentalist-Christian who ignores the facts of history and science and thinks that the world was made in seven (7) literal days I have included a very short essay on my views of the evolutionists versus the creationists.

Most of the views expressed in this document will be new and probably controversial to some people who read them. This is because they examine the political facts and natural events around us in light of the Biblical claims, and challenge the comfortable beliefs that others have put into our minds – and which all too often we accept without question.

If nothing else, those people who take the time to read and analyse the positions and facts put forward in this paper will come away with a different perspective and framework in which to interpret the events that are currently happening in the world today. Who knows, maybe some of those whom this document reaches will even begin to wonder if perhaps Murphy got it right after all. Even if this doesn’t happen, it will almost certainly provoke a more in-depth discussion than this area has seen in some time (if ever) – and this has got to be a good thing!

Read and enjoy (and debate if you wish)!

The Big Picture
Or
An overview of the Bible

The Bible is a reasonably large book that contains a lot of historical detail, along with numerous accounts of things that occurred in the lives of many of the characters that are mentioned in it. These stories reveal much about the way that God wants people to live. In addition, it also tells of events yet to take place. Yet this book has a **unifying theme** that runs through it just like any other book. We will now prune away all the extraneous detail and lay out the main “plot” of the Bible.

So what is it?

The Biblical story is God’s account of His own nature, and how he established the universe and **created man to rule over it** under the sovereignty of God. It tells how mankind fell into sin and the consequences of this, along with God’s plan to redeem man and the universe to himself.

This plan is centred on the **creation** of the nation of Israel, which was designed to accomplish **three** things. First, Israel was to bring forth the **Messiah**, who would then give his life to atone for the sin of all those who would accept Him as saviour. Israel was also to be a **role model** for the surrounding nations. Finally, Israel is to be the **national instrument** through which God will ultimately rule all the nations of the world, and later the universe, in peace, justice and prosperity.

The end of this redemptive plan will see Jesus return as Lord of lords and King of kings of the earth, ruling from the nation of Israel, with those people who have accepted Jesus as their saviour co-ruling with him as priests. Jesus will reign for a thousand years at which time all creation will have been brought under his control. This period of Jesus reigning over the earth is necessary in order to absolutely prove that by administering the world according to God’s laws, peace and justice for all are assured. He (God) will then be seen to have the undisputed and proven right to judge mankind.

After this period, Jesus will hand the kingdom over to God the Father and the final judgement will take place.

Once this is complete God declares that He will create new heavens and a new earth. He will then make His home with mankind in the New Jerusalem, with mankind ruling over the creation under His sovereignty. This then completes His redemptive plan and man is back where he started in the Garden of Eden.

Simple isn’t it! Believe it or not, this is the main thread of what the Bible is actually about. The story starts with a brief description of beginnings in Genesis and ends in the book of Revelation with the break in the relationship between mankind and God that is described in Genesis, having been healed and restored. This is a powerful argument against those who would try and argue that there are still “prophets” in the world today who have “new revelations” from God to the people of today. The breach in man’s relationship with God has been healed – there is no need for any further revelation!

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The true nature of Man

Or

Are we simply just another animal?

Are we just a very smart animal, or are we something very different?

On the one hand we have the world of science pointing to a large body of evidence showing that man evolved over a period of millions of years. On this basis, the scientists say that mankind is simply another animal, albeit a very smart one. However the problem they have is that there is no satisfactory answer as to why mankind alone has risen to the prominent position that we have.

On the other hand we have a lot of sincere Christians who won't have a bar of evolution. They insist that the Biblical story of seven days of creation must be taken literally. The problem they have is that there is a large body of fossil evidence that clearly traces the evolving body of man. The creationists simply try and ignore this.

Clearly they can't both be right. But the question is how can we really determine which is right or wrong.

More to the point, does it really matter which is right! The answer to this question is very clearly yes because it goes to the very heart of what and who mankind really is. The answer to this question in turn lies at the very heart of the meaning of life. If you get this point wrong, then it is extremely difficult to find any sort of rational or meaningful answer as to who we are, or whether there is any meaning or purpose to life.

The Bible believes the answer to this question is important and puts it very clearly in a number of places. One is quoted below:

Psalm 8:3-8 (New International Version)

*3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 **what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?** 5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour.*

***6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:** 7 all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

By simply looking at what the Bible says about man, and checking those statements with the facts of history it is pretty easy to discover what separates man from the animals.

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, both the scientists and those Christians who say that the entire creation took place in seven days can't both be right. The reality is that both sides have a part of the truth, but due to their own prejudices neither side is willing to examine the "Big Picture" and see how the facts agree with what the Bible says and how this in turn agrees with the reality of history.

The following summary shows how everything is related, but does not get bogged down in technicalities. It simply looks at the overall picture in order to bring some clarity to the question of whether man is simply another animal, or whether he is something more.

The Bible puts the creation of Adam and Eve at about 4000 BC. **History agrees with this date, inasmuch as it also records the rise of civilization at roughly the same period.** There is no evidence of animals that act in the manner which we would regard as conscious intelligent human life much earlier than this.

It must be clearly understood that by conscious, intelligent human life we are talking about those activities that clearly separate mankind from the animal world. These activities include such things as complex language, music, literature, advanced mathematics, science, architecture and large scale political and organizational activities. The other principal trait that defines man is that he alone has a spiritual dimension that leads him to “worship” a higher order of being.

These activities are restricted to the last few thousand years of the history of the world.

It is certainly true that there is abundant evidence of primitive groups prior to this period. However the question is whether they were intelligent conscious **human beings**. The answer is almost certainly that they were not. Various groups of **humanoid animals** had been around for millions of years but had never been able to advance beyond a certain level of intellect. They were simply limited in the same way as other modern primates, by the “Computational Complexity” that the biological computer, known as the brain was capable of.

By “Computational Complexity”, I mean the limit of computationally based intelligence that can be achieved by simply adding more and more connections in the brain (or a computer).

This limit of “Computational Complexity” is clearly seen today in the animal world where some animals, mainly monkeys, are capable of being taught to count and understand a limited vocabulary. Present evidence seems to indicate that some animals can attain the intellectual abilities of a young child. But there is no evidence that either computers or animals can ever attain the higher attributes of consciousness and intelligence that human beings possess. This is all the more striking because in the case of animals, anatomically and structurally their brains are not much different to ours. Clearly there is some other major difference between animals and us as far as their intellectual capacity is concerned.

Lots of people will tell you “that they are sure” that in time true computer intelligence will emerge. However when pressed as to when and how, they admit that there is no evidence to support their claim and that they just simply “believe” that somehow this will happen. The reality is that this is just wishful thinking, and has no basis in science at this time.

Clearly there is a huge, apparently unbridgeable gulf between the intellectual capacities of man and the animals; and that this gulf appeared and opened up at about the time the Bible records that God created mankind.

How then to reconcile the evolution theory with the Biblical creation account!

We only have to look up at the night sky and see the vast universe and listen to how science tells us that it all started some 12 to 15 billion years ago with the “Big Bang”, and listen to how the universe developed from there, to see that God uses the process of evolution to create the universe and everything in it. (There are much deeper mysteries here – such as where did the laws come from that governed the “vacuum” from which the universe burst into existence from, at the time of the “Big Bang”. However, this is not the time to explore those questions – however interesting they may be)

The primordial soup of subatomic particles that came into existence during the “Big Bang” formed hydrogen gas. This gas then coalesced into huge balls which then ignited by nuclear reactions to form the stars (suns) that we see in the night sky. The nuclear reactions in the stars produced all the chemical elements that exist today, such as oxygen, carbon, iron sulphur etc. As most stars age, they explode, spewing out all the chemical elements that were formed in them during their life. The stars are in fact gigantic factories that manufacture all the chemical elements that make up the matter in the universe.

These elements then spread throughout the universe and finally formed the planets.

Many experiments have shown how the various chemicals combine naturally to form much more complex molecules that in turn form the basis of the bodies of animals and man. Indeed, one of the pithy little sayings of science is that we are made from “Star Dust”

As billions of years went by, this process of the universe slowly turning from a very simple place consisting only of hydrogen gas just after the “Big Bang”, to the present highly evolved and complex world progressed. We see the world slowly evolving from simple beginnings, to a much more organised and complex place. This is evolution in action. God has used the natural laws to create the physical world that we see around us.

It is clearly seen that he also used this same process of natural evolution to bring into existence all the life forms that have existed in the world. The hard evidence of this is the fossil record of humanoid and other animal life forms stretching back hundreds of millions of years. This evidence cannot simply be dismissed, but rather it must be accounted for.

The Bible itself gives the answer to the apparent contradiction of when human beings, as opposed to the animal bodies of our ancestors, actually arose.

Gen 2:4-7 (NIV)

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

*When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens-- 5 and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, 6 but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground-- 7 **the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground ----- and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.***

The above quotation says that the creation of man was a **two-part process**. First God formed man from the elements of the earth by the process we know as evolution. At some point in time **AFTER** the body of man was created, God “*breathed into his nostrils the **breath*** (Strong’s No. OT 5397) *of life, and the man became a living being*”.

Below is an excerpt taken BibleSoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance, showing the original Hebrew word that the translators have rendered as “breath”.

*OT:5397--- **breath***

*neshamah (nesh-aw-maw'); from OT:5395; a puff, i.e. wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, **intellect**. or (concretely) an animal:*

*Other renderings of this word in the KJV-blast, (that) breath (-eth), inspiration, **soul**,*

This is consistent with the observed facts. Namely, that the universe and the **evolved body of man** are very old; **but that man as an intellectual and spiritual being only came into existence about six thousand years ago in accordance with the timing and description of the Genesis account.**

The Bible is clear that what separates mankind from the animals is that we have a spirit (soul) and they do not. In other words, we are spirit beings that God has somehow fused into our animal bodies that had been formed by the natural process of evolution. This fusing of the spirit of man into the body of man was what is described in Genesis 2:7. All the evidence is that this occurred only in the last few thousand years, just as the Genesis account says.

It is this spiritual nature that sets us apart from the animals, and enables us to acknowledge God. It is also responsible for those aspects of our nature that have raised man up to the head of creation as we see it today.

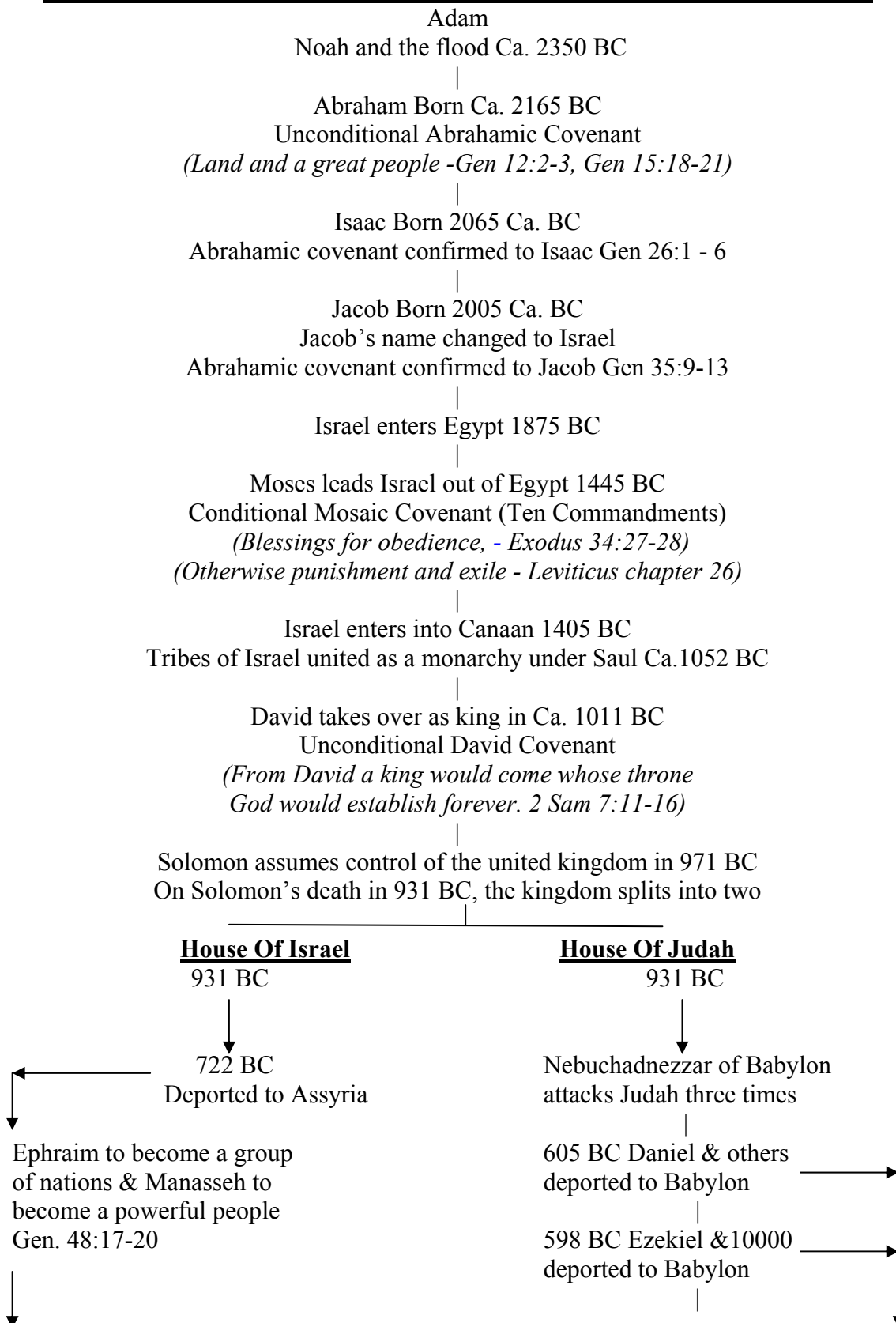
It is important to understand that the Bible is not a scientific textbook and nowhere does it make this claim. It simply reveals God’s plan for mankind, and we are left to fill in the scientific details of how He accomplished what we see around us.

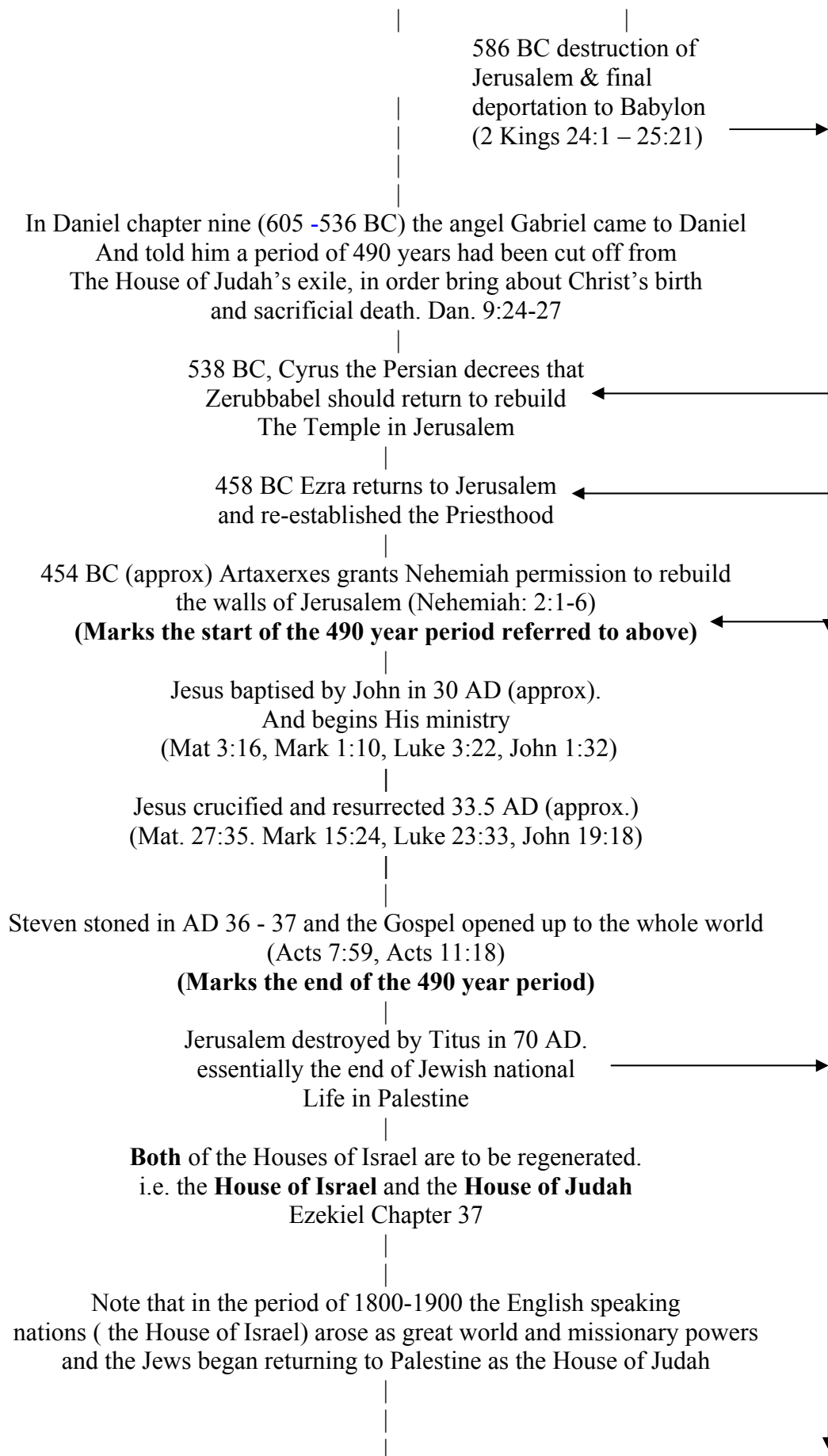
As Genesis makes clear, mankind was created by God to rule over the universe under God. However man rebelled and was subsequently deposed from this position. The Bible then is the account of how God set about redeeming man and restoring the world to the harmony that it originally existed in.

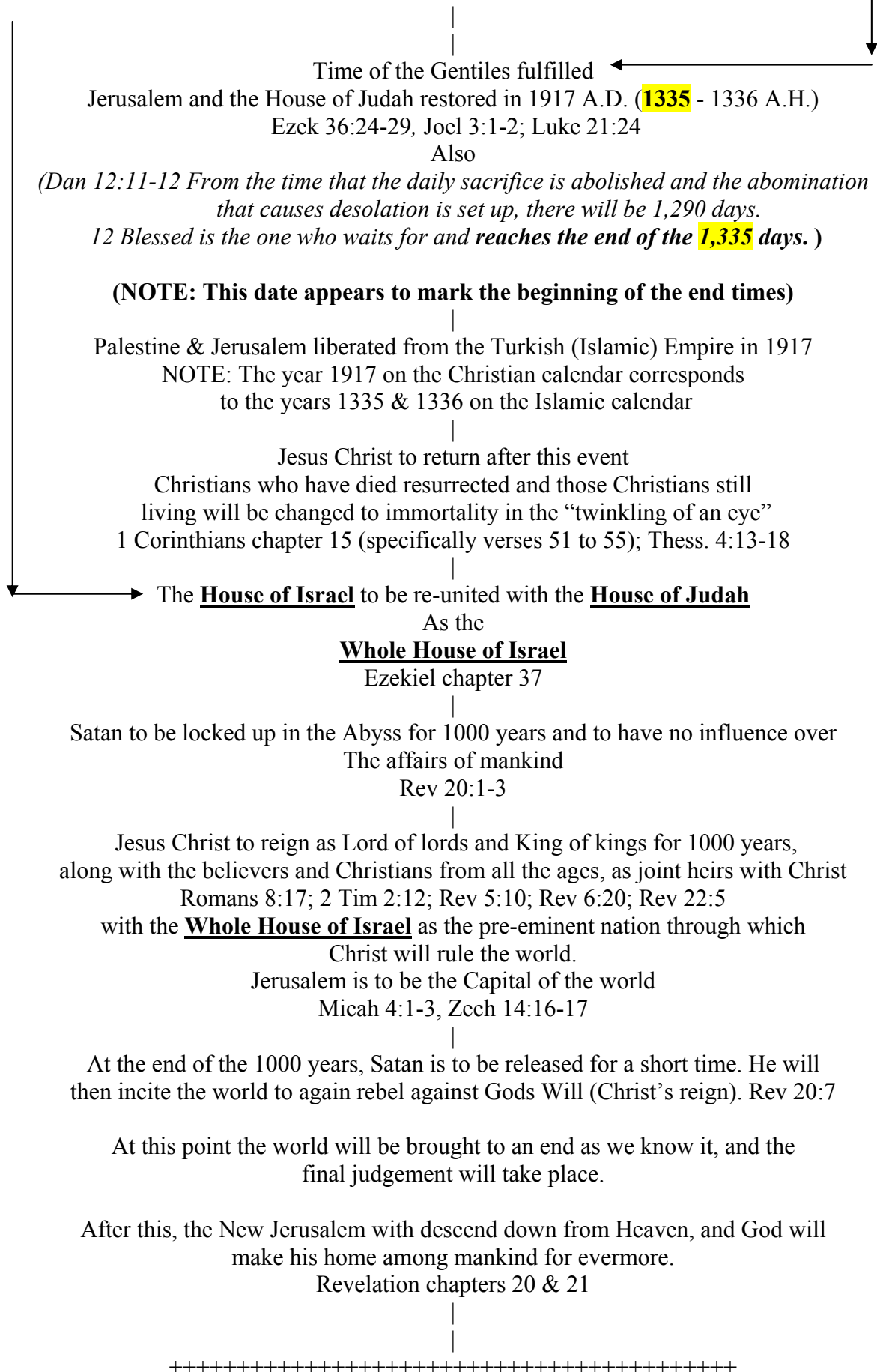
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**Time Line of God’s Plan for Redeeming Mankind and the World
or
Israel’s History**

Creation of man as an intellectual & spiritual being: 4004 BC (Bishop Usher)







The Road Map from The Liberation Of Jerusalem Until The Return of Jesus

THE END TIMES BEGIN

Time of the Gentiles fulfilled
 Palestine and Jerusalem (**The House of Judah**) liberated from the Turkish (Islamic)
 Empire in 1917 (1335 & 1336 A.H.)
 Ezek 36:24-29, Joel 3:1-2; Luke 21:24

A general period when travel and knowledge will greatly increase
 Daniel 12:4

THE FINAL PHASE BEGINS

The surprise Islamic terrorist attack against America Sep. 11, 2001
(see separate commentary for line by line analysis)
 Ezek 38:10-13

God says “I will turn you around, **put hooks in your jaws** and bring you out with your
 whole army“ to illustrate how He will drag an unwilling world to the Middle East, like
 a fish on a line, where He will sit in judgement on them
(There is a close resemblance here to the huge resistance to the war with Iraq)
 Ezek 38:1-6

Jerusalem a burden on the nations, those who try to move it to be seriously injured.
*(All personal & international efforts to solve the current dispute in Israel have left all
 the players reputations shattered)*
 Zech 12:3

National turmoil and great fear among the people
*(This describes what is now clear was a tidal wave that is to be followed by asteroid
 strikes on maybe the moon and planets –maybe including the earth)*
 Luke 21:25-27

People will be speaking of peace and safety for Israel just prior to the attack
*(Ref. the “Road Map” to settle the violence between Israel & the Palestinians
 sponsored by the EU, Russia, UN & US and the world cry for peace over Iraq)*
 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

Arab Nations attack the
 Nation of Israel
 Zech. 12:1-2

Simultaneously the Arabs
 overrun **half the city of Jerusalem**
 (Arab East Jerusalem) Zech. 14:1-2

**This event triggers God’s intervention as
 He destroys the armies of the nations
 attacking Israel Zech 14:3**

↓
Chemical & Biological weapons are used

*“ This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: **Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.**”*

(Typical of gas gangrene which UN reports say has been made into a biological weapon)

Zech 14:12-15

↓
The sign of the Son of Man appears in the sky.

30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory

Matt 24:30

↓
 Zechariah also describes this event.

*6 On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. 7 It will be a unique day, without daytime or night time-a day known to the LORD. **When evening comes, there will be light.***

Zech 14:6-7

↓
Christ Actually appears

4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

*5 You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.***

Zech 14:4-5

↓
Christ to return to the place that He ascended from

*9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**"*

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

Acts 1:9-12

↓
 |+++++

Background

Or

*A quick look at the necessary background in order to
put everything into perspective*

One group, known as the Preterists, will tell you that Jesus is not literally coming again because the Church instead fulfilled the prophecies of his return. According to this interpretation, the persons and events prophesied in Revelation were all fulfilled prior to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The group that believes that he will literally come again is split into two camps.

The first and largest group is the Futurists. They believe that we are about to witness the events they believe will take place during “Daniel’s 70th Week Of prophecy”. They believe that this “week” will occur just prior to the return of Jesus. Their reasons for believing this vary considerably and have no consistent interpretation. The main reason used to be that they believed a ten headed confederacy will make a pact with the Antichrist. (Rev ch. 12) This idea was given legs back when the EU was composed of 10 nations. Now that it has gone onto 15 then 25 nations on 1st May, 2004, this idea has taken a back seat. The other main justification seems to be the “mark of the beast (666)” in Rev 13:18. They believe that micro-chips would be used for this and that because it is now possible – then now must be the end-times. They believe that most of the prophecy in Revelation will all be fulfilled in either a 3 ½ or a 7 year period just prior to Christ’s return, depending on which version you follow.

The second, and by far and away the smallest group, is the Historicists. This group believes that prophecy progressively unfolds over history. They point to Daniel chapter 2 where Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of his dream of the large statue as the basis for believing that prophecy spans the entire period of history and is not just collected together in short periods of time such as is required for the “theories” on prophecy that the Futurists disseminate. It’s marvellous what you can “prove” if you selectively ignore certain inconvenient hard cold facts – such as actual quotations in the Bible, and the corresponding historical and political facts in reputable books and media outlets.

Daniel Chapter 2 (Nebuchadnezzar’s first dream)

Using his ability, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of the two dreams that Nebuchadnezzar had.

The head of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in one of the dreams was gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. Nebuchadnezzar also saw a rock that had been cut out without the help of human hands, which struck the statue on its feet and smashed them. The rock then became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel said that this foretold the succession of world powers that were to come, culminating in the final kingdom of God ruled over by Christ.

History reveals that these powers were to be Babylon (605-539 BC), Medo-Persia (539-331 BC), Greece (331-146 BC) and the Roman Empire would then dominate until the return of Jesus. The Imperial Roman Empire ruled from 146 BC to 476 AD. Its power then passed to the Holy Roman Empire which is considered to have arisen about the period of Justinian as emperor of the west (Heer, page 45).

"The most essential part of his imperial duty seemed to him (Justinian) to be the restoration of the Roman Empire whose fragments the barbarians had divided" (Charles Diehl, Justinian, The Imperial Restoration in the West, Cambridge Medieval History, Vol.2 - Foundation of the Western Empire, p. 4).

Justinian regained certain parts of the western Empire: North Africa in 535, Italy in 553 - after twenty years of warfare - and Southern Spain in 554 - through his generals Belisarius and Narses (Hermann Kinder and Werner Hilgemann, Atlas of World History, Penguin, Volume 1, page 139).

On March 6, 1806, Francis II, who had previously assumed the title of Emperor of Austria, abdicated as Holy Roman Emperor and declared the old empire dissolved. The Holy Roman Empire lasted about 1260 years. (Ref. Revelation 13:5-8)

This showed that prophecy extended from Daniel's time (including the period of the Babylonian exile during the years of ca. 605-536 BC) to the end-times.

Then again in **Dan chapter 11** Daniel has a vision in which verses 21 – 45 deal with the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, the little horn spoken of in Dan 8:9 and who was a sworn enemy and persecutor of the Jewish religion. It would appear that the reason that the angel devoted such a large section of prophecy to Antiochus is that during the reigns of the Persian kings the Jews had living prophets with them, Haggai and Zechariah. **However, by the time of Antiochus, prophecy would have ceased, and the only guidance and encouragement would come from the already written word.**

The underlying idea of Historicism is that events such as the rise of the "Holy Roman Empire" (the Catholic Church) and the associated horrors of the inquisition were important to Christians. As such, it seems reasonable to assume that God would have forewarned His people of events such as these, as he did in Old Testament times when he forewarned the Jews of the rise and fall of Antiochus Epiphanes. (Ref. Revelation 13:5-8 for a view of where he did this)

The Bible gives 3 **marker events** that define the end-times. The first of these is the event that heralds the start of the final events before Christ returns. He clearly says that he did this so that we may know what is happening.

Amos 3:7 (NIV)

7 Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

Historicists base their beliefs on the Biblical texts that state that Jesus will return after the Jews had returned to Jerusalem and Israel has been reborn. This came to pass in 1917 when Jerusalem was liberated from the Islamic Turkish Ottoman occupying power. The modern day state of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948. This was the first Jewish state to be established in nearly 2,000 years.

Joel 3:1-2 (NIV)

1 In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.

Remarkable fact

There are only two instances in the Bible that I am aware of where a specific **starting** date is given for an event. **The first time** is recorded in

Dan 9:25-27 (NKJV)

25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

The Persian ruler of Babylon, Artaxerxes I Longimanus granted Nehemiah permission to return to Jerusalem to restore and rebuild it in Ca. 454 BC (Neh. 2:1-6)

This decree in 454 BC **marked the beginning of a very important time** in the national life of Israel. It was that period in their history when some of the Jews were to return to Palestine in order rebuild the city and establish a presence in the land that was to lead to the birth of the Messiah and His work of redemption. After this they were to be dispersed again until the “times of the Gentiles” had been fulfilled, when they were to be re-gathered into the land of Israel.

In light of this, it is clear that God regarded this period starting in 454 BC as a very significant event; important enough to give an actual starting date, e.g. “*the going forth of the command*”, ref. Dan 9:25 above. **As the restoration of the Jews into the land of Palestine in the end time heralds a more important event**, i.e. the start of the period that is to culminate in the Second Coming, it seems likely that He would also mark the start of this period with a specific date. (e.g. 1335 AH – Ref. Dan 12:12)

The first Marker Event that starts the end times

The Liberation of Jerusalem in 1335-1336 AH (19717 AD)

In Daniel chapter 12 we find Daniel was given a vision which sketched out some of the things which were to happen when the “times of the Gentiles” had been completed and God had restored the Old Testament House of Judah and Jerusalem as the modern day State of Israel. This was the beginning of the time which was to herald the return of Jesus.

Dan 12:1-4 (from The New King James Version)

*"At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; **And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation**, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.*

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

*4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; **many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.**"*

He is also told:

Dan 12:12 (from The New King James Version)

*12 Blessed is the one who waits for **and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.***

Remember when reading the above verse, that although God had promised that He would send Israel into exile because of their disregard for His laws, He was also going to re-gather the Jews back into the land of Palestine at the time of the end and Jerusalem was to be restored to the Jews as their capital. (Ezek 36:24-29, Joel 3:1-2)

It should be noted that the Jews are technically only those descendants from the House of Judah who returned to Jerusalem, first in Ca 538 BC, when Cyrus the Persian decreed that Zerubbabel should return to rebuild The Temple in Jerusalem, then in Ca 458 BC when Ezra returned to Jerusalem and re-established the Priesthood, and then finally when Artaxerxes granted Nehemiah permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. These people only constituted the minority from the House of Judah – and none at all from much larger House of Israel (Remember Israel, the nation, split into two parts after Solomon's death into the two tribed southern kingdom of the House of Judah and the ten tribed northern kingdom of the House of Israel)

After Jerusalem was overthrown in 70 AD the Romans began to rebuild the city under the name Aelia, which continued for several centuries. In A.D. 614 the Persians under Chosroes II captured Jerusalem and massacred the inhabitants. From 637 A.D to 1917 the city remained in Muslim hands except for the brief periods between 1099 and 1291 when the Crusaders held Jerusalem. The latter part of this Muslim reign from 1516 A.D. was under the Ottoman Turks, who held it until the British General, Allenby, liberated it in 1917.

Allenby's campaign began on June 1917 A.D. when he took command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. He defeated the Turks at Gaza in November 1917 A.D. which then led to the capture of Jerusalem on December 9, 1917 A.D.

The significance of these dates is that as the Ottoman Turks were Muslims, **they used the Muslim calendar**, also called the Islamic calendar.

This dating system is used in the Muslim world except Turkey, which abandoned the Muslim calendar a few years after it lost control of Jerusalem and adopted the Gregorian calendar. It is based on a lunar year of 360 days, unlike our Gregorian calendar which is solar based and has 365¼ days per year. Year one (1) in the Muslim

calendar is taken from the year of the **hijrah** (hegira), the year of Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina. Islamic scholars have set this date as July 16, 622 A.D.

June 1st 1917 on the Christian calendar corresponds with Friday 11 Sha'baan **1335 A.H.** on the Muslim calendar. (i.e. Allenby's campaign started in the Moslem year 1335)

December 9, 1917 corresponds to Sunday 24 Safar **1336 A.H.** on the Muslim calendar. (i.e. Allenby's campaign finished in the Moslem year 1336)

The date 1-1-1336 A.H. on the Muslim calendar corresponds to Wednesday October 17, 1917 A.D.

To check these dates yourself, one of the many online calendar converters can be found at: <http://www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/>

Using the Biblical principal where a day stand for a year in prophecy (Ezek 4:4-5) we see that in the very year of 1335 A.H., as predicted by Daniel (12:12), the siege against the Muslim control of Palestine started.

The "times of the Gentiles" came to an end, signified by the liberation of Jerusalem, **after the end of the year 1335 A.H.** precisely as Daniel predicted.

Dan 12:12 (from The New King James Version)

*12 Blessed is the one who waits for **and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.***

As part of the 19th-century Zionist movement, Jews had begun settling in Palestine as early as 1820. The effort to establish a Jewish homeland received British approval in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Following this the modern state of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948. It was the first Jewish state to be established in nearly 2,000 years.

This then brought to pass the prophecies shown below (Note – Ezekiel was one of those deported to Babylon with the House of Judah)

Ezek 36:24-29 (NIV)

*24 "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 **You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.***

Reading the scandals involving Israeli Government Ministers and the generally lamentable situation in Israel in the daily newspapers from Israel, clearly confirms that verse 25 & 26 (above) has not yet been fulfilled. This will occur after Jesus returns.

The scene then moves on to the New Testament where we find Jesus talking to the disciples telling them about what was going to happen to the temple (when the Romans

destroyed it in 70 A.D.) and answering the question the disciples asked about the things that were to happen in the period leading up to His Second Coming.

Matt 24:1-3 (NIV)

24:1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 2 "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." 3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Mark 13 and Luke 21 tell the same story.

Jesus then gives a bare-bones outline of some of the major events that were to take place across the centuries culminating in His Second Coming. History records that most of these events have already been fulfilled.

He goes on to give several indications in the Gospels as to the general time when He was to return.

Matt 24:32-35

*32 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. 34 I tell you the truth, **this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.** 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

The fig tree is a Biblical **symbol** of the nation of Israel (Jer. 24; Joel 1:6-7; Hos. 9:10) and Jesus was associating the revival of the nation of Israel with the approach of His second Coming. He says that the generation that saw this happen would not pass away before He returned.

It is unclear exactly which event Jesus was referring to when He said "**Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near**" which was to mark the beginning of the generation which would not pass away before He returned.

There are two likely contenders. The first, and most likely, was the liberation of Jerusalem in 1917. I say this because as I said earlier, there are only two instance in the Bible where a specific **starting** date is given for an event. The first time is recorded when the Persian ruler of Babylon, Artaxerxes I Longimanus granted Nehemiah permission to return to Jerusalem to restore and rebuild it in Ca. 454 BC (Neh. 2:1-6)

*Dan 9:25-27 (NKJV) 25 "Know therefore and understand, **That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;***

This decree in 454 BC **marked the beginning of a very important time** in the national life of Israel. It was that period in their history when some of the Jews were to return to Palestine in order rebuild the city and establish a presence in the land that was

to lead to the birth of the Messiah and His work of redemption. After this they were to be dispersed again until the “times of the Gentiles” had been fulfilled and when they were to be re-gathered into the land of Israel.

In light of this, it is clear that God regarded this period starting in 454 BC as a very significant event. Important enough to give an actual starting date. **As the restoration of the Jews into the land of Palestine at the time of the end heralds a more important event**, i.e. the start of the period that is to culminate in the Second Coming, it seems likely that He would also mark the start of this period with a specific date. (e.g. 1335 AH)

The second, and less likely, date was May 14, 1948, when the first Jewish state to be established in nearly 2,000 years was declared.

Although it appears that God has given a starting date for the end time, it is still true that we do not know exactly when the end of this period is because of the uncertainty surrounding the question of how long a generation is

Matt 24:32-37 (NIV)

*32 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. 34 **I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.** 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. 36 **"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.***

The most natural way of interpreting His statement about how long a generation is, would be to use the following example of everyday speech. “The generation of people who were born in 1917 will not die out before all these things come to pass.”

People today often live between 80-100 years. If 1917 is the correct starting date, then we are nearing the end of the generation in question, and we should be starting to see the final events beginning to take place.

The second of the three markers

Ezekiel 38 – The Signal event that starts the final sequence

Ezek 38:1-13 (New International Version)

*38:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, set your face against **Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him** 3 and say: `This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. 4 I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army-your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. 5 **Persia, Cush and Put** will be with them, all with shields and helmets, 6 also **Gomer** with all its troops, and **Beth** (house of) **Togarmah** from the far north with all its troops-the many nations with you.*

7 "Get ready; be prepared, you and all the hordes gathered about you, and **take command** of them. 8 After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you **will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel**, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety. 9 You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land.

10 "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will **devise an evil scheme**. 11 You will say, "I will invade a land of **un-walled villages**; I will attack a **peaceful and unsuspecting** people—all of them **living without walls and without gates and bars**. 12 I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the **resettled ruins** and the **people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the center of the land**." (See verse 12 also below) 13 **Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish** and all her villages will say to you, "**Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?**" '

Ezek 38:12 (New American Standard Bible Update)

*12 to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of **the world**.*'

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(Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators.)

*OT:776 (**the land - the world**)*

'erets (eh'-rets); from an unused root probably meaning to be firm; the earth (at large, or partitively a land):

*KJV-X common, country, earth, field, ground, **land**, X nations, way, + wilderness, **world**.*

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GOG

Gog is connected to the land of Magog, and is also the **chief prince** of Meshech and Tubal and is to be the **commander** of Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer and (Beth) Togarmah in their assault on Israel.

As the map below shows, all these Old Testament nations today include many dissimilar modern nations. More to the point, any idea that they co-operate politically is laid to rest when you read the daily newspapers from these countries. The largest national grouping among them is the Arabs. The Arabs were struggling to even agree on the agenda for the proposed Arab League annual summit to be held in Tunis on May 22-23, 2004. Tunisia had already postponed the summit, which was originally due to be held in March 2004 after saying Arab countries had rejected essential proposals for democratic reform and the empowerment of women.

The only common thread that binds all these countries together is Islam. **The spirit of Islam** is what the majority of people in those countries respect and which they pay homage to. Islam **truly is the “chief prince”** and the **“commander”** of any **common** action that Islamic countries take. In the case of terrorism, it is **militant Islam** that is the cement that binds the terrorists and their motives together and acts as the unifying leadership for their actions. Thus Gog can be truly identified as the spirit underlying Islam – particularly militant Islam.



In the opening scene (Ezekiel 38:10-13) in the final act which culminates in Christ’s return:

:

1. Gog will **devise an evil scheme that involves:**
2. Gog invading a land of **un-walled villages**
3. Gog attacking a **peaceful** and **unsuspecting** people
4. These people will be **living without walls** and without **gates** and **bars**.
5. Gog will plunder and loot and turn his hand against the **resettled ruins** (*desolate places that are (now) inhabited* in many translations)
6. The **people** who are attacked will be **gathered from the nations** (e.g. migrants)
7. The people who are attacked will be **rich** in livestock and goods
8. These people will be **living at the center of the world**. (most American Bibles)
9. **Sheba** and **Dedan** and the **merchants of Tarshish** say **"Have you come to plunder?"** e.g. they are asking a question – they are puzzled. “What was your motive? - was it for profit? – was there another motive? – (the US) why do you hate us”. You only have to discuss the matter today to find out people are still asking “Why” (and there are still just about as many different answers as there are people to give them)

Curious Facts

Some of the above points can be applied to the current state of Israel (who will be attacked in the **next** and **final phase** – Ref. Zechariah chapters 12 though 14)

However **all** of the above points (Ezek 38:10-13) can be applied to the attack on September 11, 2001 on America.

The “evil scheme” was an Islamic plot by Bin Laden against a rich, unsuspecting country which was at the political centre of the world (e.g. the only super-power in the world today). Bin Laden believes that the country that the Islamic world describes as the “Great Satan” (US) is the main enemy of Islam. It had to be attacked in order to weaken its grip on the rulers of Saudi Arabia, who as far as Bin Laden is concerned have corrupted Islam in Saudi Arabia because of American influence. Mecca, in Saudi Arabia was the original home of Islam. As such, militant Muslims believe that it is important to keep Saudi Arabia from being “contaminated” by the Christian west.

It is striking that none of the nations mentioned in Ezek 38:1-6 are mentioned in verse 13. Only Sheba & Dedan (Saudi Arabia), in addition to the “merchants of Tarshish” (Spain) are named in verse 13 asking the question “why did this happen – what was your motive” After the attack the Saudis were asking, “why did our nationals do this”. Even more striking is the fact that the “merchants of Tarshish” (Spain) are also said to be asking these questions, because they were, and still are not, either an historical or obvious modern ally of America.

It is conspicuous that these two countries then joined an otherwise predominantly Anglo-Saxon alliance in the last war in Iraq. In Spain’s case it was open for all to see. Saudi Arabia was more secretive in order not to antagonize the Saudi people.

Question: Was Sept 11 the opening scene of the final act that leads to Christ’s return?

References

1. Read the parallel passages in Zechariah chapter 12 through 14. In particular 12: 1-6 and 14:1-6 (Compare Ezek 38:18 and Zech 14: 2 & 3 and compare to the **Islamic countries** statements about Israel today)
2. Geographical locations of the various nations referred to in Ezek 38:1-6 are taken from the International Standard Bible dictionary, the New Unger’s Bible dictionary, Nelsons Bible dictionary, Fausset’s Bible dictionary, Josephus - the Collected Works and the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Modern Location</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Gog	Appears to be militant Islam.	The prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. His territory was known as the land of Magog, and he was the chief of those northern hordes who were to make a final onslaught upon Israel.
Magog	Were principally concentrated in what is now the southern Ukraine and the Caucasus	The Jewish historian Josephus identified these people as the Scythians, known for their destructive warfare. Magog may be a comprehensive term which means "northern barbarians." Probably the European Scythians, dominant in the region between the Caucasus and Mesopotamia for 30 years from 630 to 600 B.C.

Meshech	The South Western end of the Black Sea in modern day Turkey	In the records of Tiglath-pileser I (c. 1110 B.C.) and Shalmaneser III (860-825 B.C.) the land of Musku (Meshech) is mentioned and situated in the mountains on the northern boundary of Assyria and bordering on Tubal, biblical Tubal, in the west. The Phrygians were almost certainly the people called Mushki by the Assyrians
Tubal	The South East end of the Black Sea in modern day Turkey	They are held (Winckler and Jeremias) to have been remnants of the old Hittite population which were gradually driven (probably by the Cimmerian invasion) to the mountainous district Southeast of the Black Sea.
Persia	Modern day Iran	The original native name Parsa, or Persia, the homeland of the Persians in the western and larger part of the Iranian plateau that extended from the Indus on the East to the Tigris on the West. Iran was another native designation of the land. This name was officially restored in 1935 by the Persian government and means "the [land] of the Aryans
Cush	Includes part of the modern day countries of Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.	Cush is the southern portion of the ancient region known as Nubia which is an ancient region in northeastern Africa, extending approximately from the Nile River valley (near the first cataract in Upper Egypt) eastward to the shores of the Red Sea, southward to about Khartoum (in what is now The Sudan), and westward to the Libyan Desert.

Put	Includes part of the modern day countries of Djibouti, Somaliland and Yemen	Latest views of the identification of Put are that it is Punt, South of the African Cush. This is based on ancient Egyptian and Greek geography which shows it on the southern coast of the Red Sea and adjacent coasts of the Gulf of Aden, corresponding to modern coastal regions of Djibouti, Somaliland and Yemen as it is described as being on both sides of the Red Sea.
Gomer	The central section of modern day Turkey	The name evidently designates the people called Gimirra by the Assyrians, Kimmerians by the Greeks. A people in the 7 th century BC who left their abode in what is now Southern Russia and moved through the Caucasus into Western Asia. Some of them moved eastward toward Media, others westward, where they conquered Cappadocia and made it their special abode.
Togarmah	Includes modern day Armenia and South Eastern Turkey	Present general opinion is that Togarmah was located in South Eastern ancient Armenia, which extended from the south-central Black Sea coast to the Caspian Sea and from the Mediterranean Sea to Lake Urmia in present-day Iran.

Sheba	Includes part of modern day Yemen and South Western Saudi Arabia.	Biblical Sheba was a kingdom in pre-Islamic south-western Arabia, frequently mentioned in the Bible and variously cited by ancient Assyrian, Greek, and Roman writers from about the 8th century BC to about the 5th century AD. Its capital, at least in the middle period (7 th – 4 th century), was Ma'rib, which lies 75 miles (120 km) east of present-day San'a', in Yemen
Dedan	Modern day central and northern Saudi Arabia.	An Arabian people named in Gen 10:7 as descended from Cush; in Gen 25:3 as descended from Keturah. Evidently, they were, like the related Sheba (Sabaeans), of mixed race (compare Gen 10:7,28). The name seems still to linger in the island of Dadan, on the border of the Persian Gulf. It is found also in Minaean and Sabaeon inscriptions
Tarshish	Centered on the modern day city of Seville in South Western Spain	Ancient region and town of the Guadalquivir River valley in south-western Spain, with which the Phoenicians traded (2 Chron 9:21; Ps 72:10). The exact site of the town is not known, but archaeological evidence suggests it may have been near present-day Seville.

The Third and final one of the three markers

God Says that half of the city of Jerusalem is to taken into exile in the final battle just before Christ returns.

Zechariah wrote the words below sometime during the period of 520 – 460 B.C. How could he have possibly known the political situation in the revived state of Israel just prior to Christ's return? These words accurately reflect the statements that are often in the headlines of a number of newspapers throughout the Middle East today.

Zech 14:1-4 (The New King James Version)

*Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. 2 **For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.***

3 Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.

The statement that the city is to be captured, but only half the city is to go into exile is a curious statement. Normally where a city has been captured in a battle, the victors keep the entire city. However the Bible is quite categorical in this case, the **city will be captured, but only half of it will go into exile**. This is followed by the equally curious statement: “**But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.**”

The Bible records that the Jews would be gathered back into the land of Israel, with Jerusalem as their capital in the years leading up to the return of Christ. Jerusalem was liberated in 1917 and following the United Nations partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, and an armed conflict with Britain over the details, Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948. Up until this declaration, the Old City of Jerusalem had been divided into four sections.

1. The NE section which was the largest, was the Moslem area
2. The NW section was the Christian area
3. The SE section was the Jewish area
4. The SW was the Armenian area

The day after the declaration, some of the surrounding Arab states attacked Israel. The Arabs were quickly beaten, but many of the Palestinian people living in the area fled as refugees to the surrounding Arab lands. To this very day, most of them still live in squalid refugee camps in the various Arab states and are expecting to return after a final peace settlement with Israel. These refugees are a major problem in the current peace process between Israel and the Palestinians; because they are claiming the right to return and settle not only in what is to be the new Palestinian state, but also what is to become the new state of Israel. Israel totally rejects this claim.

During the fighting in 1948, Transjordan (now known as Jordan) captured the Old City of Jerusalem, which was then divided between Transjordan and the Israelis. Transjordan was given the old **Walled City**, in what is now known as East Jerusalem, and the Israelis had the rest. Israel then proclaimed Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel.

During the Six-Day War of June 1967 the Israelis stormed and conquered East Jerusalem, including the old Walled City, and claimed Jerusalem to be unified once again. This was in fact the first time in 2000 years that Israel actually exercised sovereign control over the Old City.

Despite a UN resolution that disapproved of the Israeli actions, the city continued to develop as a unified entity under Israeli administration. The declaration by the Knesset in 1980 that officially made unified Jerusalem the capital of Israel stirred considerable international controversy, and recognition of the capital was withheld by numerous countries. To this day, the city's status remains a point of international contention and is referred to as part of the "occupied territories"

Leaving aside the details of the history of the conflict that the Arabs refer to as the "nakba"(catastrophe) when the Jewish state came into existence, we move on to the Oslo accords which resulted from secret talks held in Norway. This led to a plan to establish Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and in Jericho. As part of the agreement, Arafat repudiated the long-standing Palestinian denunciation of Israel's "right to exist" The signing of a Declaration of Principles based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338, presided over by U.S. President Bill Clinton, followed on September 13, 1993.

The most important of the UN resolutions is No. 242 (1967), which talks of the principle of land for peace. On the basis of resolution 242, Israel is required to give the Palestinians land for them to establish a Palestinian state, and in return the Palestinians are required to make peace with Israel.

The main sticking point in relation to resolution 242 is over the city of Jerusalem. The reason for this is because Jerusalem is of central importance to the three major monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The disagreement is so deep that it has essentially totally derailed the peace process. The city today consists of the old eastern sector that contains the old “Walled City”, and the modern western sector that has been built since 1948. In East Jerusalem the old Walled City is located on top of the Jewish Temple Mount. This is where the two original Jewish temples stood, first Solomon’s, then later in Christ’s day, Herod’s temple. The problem today is that this area is the site of the al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest shrine in Islam.

These competing claims on Jerusalem have led to the crisis today. Israel has publicly stated, many times, that **all of Jerusalem is its “eternal undivided capital”, and they will never give it up.** The Palestinians on the other hand have declared many times that they will establish a Palestinian state that has **East Jerusalem as its capital, and that they will not settle for anything less.**

Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority went further and publicly stated many times that **if necessary Jerusalem will be taken by force.** When he made these statements he normally also explained that he would declare the city “open” to all people, and Jews, Christians and Muslims will all have access to the “holy places” of their respective religions.

Despite the fact that Arafat is now dead, most Palestinians have not given up on the dream of having Jerusalem as the capital of their proposed state. Certainly the Islamic world still insists on East Jerusalem being the capital of a Palestinian state. It is still the sticking point – along with the refugees – that will yet take the region to war.

The question then becomes one of how credible Arafat’s claim that he – or his successors – will take Jerusalem by force is, as the Palestinians today are militarily defeated.

The Bible gives the answer in chapter 12 of Zechariah where the prophecy relating to some of the events leading up to Christ’s second coming starts. It clearly says that it is to be the people who surround Israel, the Arabs, who will invade Israel.

Zech 12:1-9 (NIV)

*This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: 2 **"I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem.** 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, **I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.** 4 On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness," declares the LORD. "I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. 5 Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.'*

6 "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

7 "The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. 8 On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them. 9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.

This prophecy is saying the exact same thing as laid out in Ezekiel 38 which says that the countries that surround Israel – under the leadership of Gog (Islam) – will invade Israel.

This prophecy also says a number of other things that accurately reflect the political situation in the Middle East today.

- ***2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling"***

The Arabs – and much of the west – blame Israel and the question of Jerusalem for all of the problems in the Middle East today.

- ***3" On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves."***

Many leaders and diplomats from the UN and the European Union along with Israeli leaders and President Clinton of the US have tried for many years to bring peace to the Middle East. All of their boastful claims that they have the "secret formula" to bring peace have been shown to be rubbish. Their personal reputations as wise and capable leaders have all been shattered as a result of their vain boasts.

Although we have not yet seen all these prophecies relating to Israel come true, the political situation in the Middle East today exactly mirrors the words of the Bible where it is describing some of the events that immediately precede Christ's return. In the near future, these events will be demonstrated history like so many other prophecies in the Bible.

Namely:

- ***"I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling"***

The Arabs blame Israel for all the troubles in the Middle East.

- ***"Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves."***

The reputation of every one who has tried to bring peace to the Israelis and the Palestinians has been shattered.

- ***“Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem”***

The Arabs are currently saying that Judah (modern Israel) should be dealt with in the same way as the US threats against Iraq.

- ***“For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken,”***

Israel today stands alone. Its only real ally is the US. There is increasing talk by most nations, but particularly the Arabs, of Israel being forced to comply with UN resolutions and using force to disarm it in the same manner as Iraq, if it will not disarm voluntarily.

- ***“Half of the city shall go into captivity”***

Arafat long threatened that with the help of the Arabs, the Palestinians would take the eastern half of Jerusalem for a future Palestinian capital. Despite Arafat’s death, this claim still stands.

- ***“But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.”***

Arafat always said that he will declare Jerusalem an “open” city so that people of all faiths have access to their holy places. In other words, no one will be cut off from East Jerusalem. This is part of the internationally agreed plan for the division of Jerusalem into the Israeli west and the Palestinian east.

The six points above correspond exactly with the political facts on the ground in the Middle East today. Considering that the book of Zechariah was written about 2500 years ago, there is only one explanation; and that is that God has put his stamp of authority on His book, the Bible, by doing something that no human has ever been able to show that they could do in controlled scientific experiments. That is, to tell the future.

Many people will try and argue that ‘Nostradamus’ has done the same. Well many academic investigators will tell you two things about good old Nostradamus.

- There is a lot more Nostradamus quoted than he ever wrote. In fact many times when you go to look up the quote in his **actual authenticated works**, lo and behold, it doesn’t, and never did exist. People just made it up, knowing that very few people will ever check the accuracy of the words that they claimed to be written by Nostradamus.
- These investigators are still waiting to be shown an actual quote of Nostradamus that can be related to any event in history.

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More Confirming events

Or

The events that the Bible claims will occur in the final stages of the end times, but which don't have a specific date or place named

The futurists often point to scriptures such as the following (there are others also) as one of their justifications for saying that these are the “end times”

Luke 21:10-11

10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

Wars and natural disasters are nothing new. They have always been with us. However the Bible does say that these things will also be a characteristic of the end times. The real question is how then to distinguish between the natural disasters that have always been the lot of mankind and those that the Bible says will occur as “signs” of the end times.

There are two significant natural events that the Bible says will occur in the end times.

The first one of these events has occurred many times before – so how to distinguish the “end time” occurrence from the earlier events is an important question that needs to be answered.

The other event that the Bible describes has no precedent in the history of man’s conscious inhabitation of the planet. While there have been minor episodes of this event in the past, the Biblical description of this final version leaves no doubt that this, as yet future event, has had no precedent in man’s history.

Together these two events constitute a powerful confirmation that these are the “end times” where the world is heading for a “change of management”- not the physical end of the world. This statement is made wholly and solely not on the basis that these two events are necessarily unique in history – but rather that the Biblical account of them gives certain detailed descriptions that uniquely describe those particular occurrences of those events. More importantly, it then effectively asserts that these uniquely described events are “signs” confirming that we are in the end stages of the “end times” on the basis that they occur in the period of time shortly after the marker event of September 11, 2001 that appears to have started the final sequence (e.g. Ezekiel 38:10-13)

You could argue – and indeed some people do – that it is just “mere coincidence” that the first one of the events seems to have been predicted before it actually happened, and that should the second one occur in the near future, it would simply be “an amazing coincidence” – but still not beyond the bounds of possibility.

It has to be said that this in fact could be true – but I think that I would rather bet with someone else’s money on that one. However that’s a decision that we all have to make individually.

Let’s get down to the business of specific predictions!

The tsunami on December 26, 2004

The tsunami that occurred on December 26, 2004 was a significant event confirming that the world has entered that time which heralds the return of Christ.

Luke 21

*24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. **Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.***

*25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, **nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.***

26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Verse 25 gives a pretty good description of what happened as a result of the tsunami on December 26, 2004 that resulted from an earthquake under the Indian Ocean.

It says that this event is to take place after the *times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*. (e.g. 1917 AD or 13135 AH on the Islamic calendar, Ref. Dan. 12:12). This then distinguishes this tsunami from all others before that time. It uniquely determines the event because there has certainly never been a tsunami of this magnitude and **that involved so many nations**, certainly in the last century – and indeed for a long time before that.

The whole context of this verse is the events that lead up to the Second Coming. Because it only talks about one major event occurring after it (in this passage – other passages describe additional events occurring around the same time), then it is reasonable to assume that verse 25 is talking about an event that occurs after the opening scene of the final act in the “end time” play (e.g. Ezekiel 38:10-13, i.e. Sept 11)

It seems a pretty long shot to attribute an event – that the Bible gives a perfect description of the headlines used to describe it in the daily newspapers, e.g. “*12 nations devastated by a roaring, surging tsunami*” – as occurring by chance at “just the right time” to fit in with the Biblical time-line for Christ’s Second Coming.

Below is an excerpt from Wikipedia, the free online encyclopaedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake)

*The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake was an undersea earthquake that occurred at 00:58:53 UTC (07:58:53 local time) on December 26, 2004. The earthquake generated **a tsunami that was among the deadliest disasters in modern history.***

At a magnitude of 9.0, it was the largest earthquake since the 9.2 magnitude Good Friday Earthquake off Alaska in 1964, and tied for fourth largest since 1900. In February 2005, new analyses suggested the magnitude was

underestimated, and one study estimates it at 9.3; however, the USGS has not yet confirmed this. [1] (<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn6991>)

The earthquake originated in the Indian Ocean just north of Simeulue island, off the western coast of northern Sumatra, Indonesia. The resulting tsunami devastated the shores of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South India, Thailand and other countries with waves up to 30 m (100 feet) high[2]

(http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/211012_tsunamiscience07.html).

It caused serious damage and deaths as far as the east coast of Africa, with the furthest recorded death due to the tsunami occurring at Port Elizabeth in South Africa, 8 000km (5 000 miles) away from the epicentre

[3] (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Countries_affected_by_the_2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake#Countries_suffering_some_casualties_and_damage).

Anywhere from 228,000 to 310,000 people are thought to have died as a result of the tsunami, and the count is not yet complete. In Indonesia in particular, 500 bodies a day were still being found in February 2005 and the count was expected to continue past June.

By anybody's standards this tsunami was a very significant event. More to the point, verse 24 clearly places the time of this event after the time that, "***Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled***". In other words, in the time frame after Jerusalem had been liberated from Islamic rule in 1335-1336 AH (e.g. 1917 AD) As the next two verses (26 & 27) clearly and unequivocally state, this event where, "***nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.***", immediately precedes a rather more startling event that the Bible records as one of the last "signs" preceding Christ's return.

There is an interesting side issue here. The tsunami was a pretty significant event. About 300,000 people had a direct interest in knowing about this before hand – after all, their lives depended on knowing about it before it occurred. It seems a bit strange that the clairvoyants, astrologers and other assorted soothsayers didn't manage to see the tsunami coming in their crystal balls, tarot cards, tea leaves or entrails of an owl.

A cynic like me might just be tempted to say that perhaps the "fortune tellers" should give their current methods away and have look in the Bible – after all its track record seems pretty good!

An even more startling prediction

Luke 21

26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.

*27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things **begin to take place**, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

Verse 26 above clearly does not describe the event in verse 25 (*anguish at the roaring and tossing of the sea*) for two reasons.

First – as far as I know – nobody (certainly not in large numbers) fainted in fear of the approaching tsunami.

Secondly verse 26 says that they, “**will faint from terror, *apprehensive of what is coming on the world***”. This clearly, and unequivocally says that they are apprehensive (e.g. anxious or fearful about the future) about some event that they were fearfully expecting to happen in the future. This clearly rules out the tsunami, because it hit without warning.

Verse 26 then goes on and describes what people are terrified of when it says, ‘**for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.**’. A number of translations render this verse as

Luke 21:26

26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly powers will be shaken.

At the time that the New Testament was written, the “powers of the heavens” usually referred to the “gods” of the moon, various planets and the sun god – not to mention a whole pantheon of other pagan “gods” who often lived in the sky.

What can we make of this pretty specific prediction of coming terror that will dwarf the recent tsunami?

Well surprisingly the Bible has quite a bit to say about this event, that all too often people disregard. Most Biblical commentators have always regarded this statement – and others like it – as simply a figurative way of saying that things are going to get worse before they get better. As an example, most commentators point to the following – particularly verse 10 (highlighted below) – as proof that a lot of these sorts of statements were simply a poetic and figurative way of describing some of these unpleasant events. They point out that there is no historical evidence that verse 10, “*The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light*” was literally true. Rather, it was simply a poetic way of describing the monumental political events surrounding the downfall of ancient Babylon.

Isaiah 13:1-13

An oracle concerning Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw:

2 Raise a banner on a bare hilltop shout to them; beckon to them to enter the gates of the nobles. 3 I have commanded my holy ones; I have summoned my warriors to carry out my wrath--those who rejoice in my triumph.

4 Listen, a noise on the mountains, like that of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The LORD Almighty is mustering an army for war. 5 They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens--the LORD and the weapons of his wrath--to destroy the whole country.

6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. 7 Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man's heart will melt.

8 Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame.

*9 See, the day of the LORD is coming --a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger--to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. **10 The stars***

of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.

The Babylonian empire had a pretty long history from at least about 1700 BC to its final downfall when Alexander the Great of Greece conquered it in 331 B.C. Alexander planned to refurbish and expand the city and make it his capital, but he died before accomplishing these plans. The city later fell into insignificance because one of Alexander's successors founded a new capital at Seleucia, a short distance away.

In the Old Testament the prophetic books of Isaiah and Jeremiah predicted the downfall of the city of Babylon. This was to happen as God's punishment of the Babylonians because of their destruction of Jerusalem and their deportation of the citizens of Judah (Isa 14:22; 21:9; 43:14; Jer 50:9; 51:37).

However it is almost certainly the case that this figurative way of interpreting Luke 21:26 is not correct.

Verse 25 starts off by saying, *"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars"*. The sun, moon and stars are physical entities. A sign involving a physical entity must also be a tangible event in itself. Secondly, the last part of this verse, *"On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea"*, involved a very real physical and tangible event.

Given that context it is not reasonable to assume that while the first part of the prophecy has clearly been shown to have a real physical outcome, that the second part e.g. *"men fainting for fear"* is only to be regarded as figurative.

I venture to say that anybody with a reasonable grasp of the English language would have to admit that if the first part (verse 25) describes a literal event – then the second part (verse 26) also describes a literal event.

If that is the case, then what else does the Bible have to say about the event that has occurred in history before, and which in its most fearsome manifestation, the Bible clearly states is the immediate precursor "sign" of Christ's return?

There are quite a few references in both the OT & the NT to this event. I will only look at a few of them in order to put them into context.

Matt 24:29-31

*29 "Immediately after the distress of those days **"the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."***

*30 "At that time **the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn.** They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

Mark 13:24-27

24 "But in those days, following that distress,

"the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

26 "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

Isaiah 24:18-23

18 Whoever flees at the sound of terror will fall into a pit; whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare.

The floodgates of the heavens are opened, **the foundations of the earth shake.**

19 **The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken.** 20 **The earth reels like a drunkard,** it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls--never to rise again.

21 **In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below.** 22 They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days.

23 **The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed;** for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.

Zechariah 14:5-7

You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

6 **On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. 7 It will be a unique day, without daytime or night-time - a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light.**

Joel 2:1-11

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand- 2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. **Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come.**

3 **Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste- nothing escapes them.**

4 They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. 5 With a noise like that of chariots **they leap over the mountaintops,** like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

6 **At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale.** 7 They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. **They all march in line, not swerving from their course.** 8 They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. **They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks.** 9 **They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.**

10 **Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.** 11 The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?

The quotation directly above (*Joel 2:1-11*) describes an army the likes of which the world has never seen before. Even the might of the American army that was assembled to invade Iraq on 20 March 2003 did not cause (verse 6), “*At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale*” Clearly we have not yet seen this “army” that Joel speaks of.

All these references above refer to the events that the Bible claims will occur in the period directly preceding Christ’s return. More to the point they are all descriptions of the same event in Luke 21:26 where it says, “*men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*”

How realistic a scenario do these verses describe?

How realistic are the verses in Zechariah 14:6-7 where it says, “*6 On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. 7 It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light*”. In particular, is the event described in these two verses possible at all by naturally occurring events – or is this just another fanciful story from the Bible. (And have I been eating the famous hallucinogenic magic mushrooms?)

Let’s look at some hard, cold scientific facts before we decide to call the men in the white coats to come and take me away for a “holiday” to recover from the magic mushrooms.

Each year the earth passes through three different asteroid belts. The best known of these are the Leonids. http://www.atnf.csiro.au/asa/www/info_sheets/leonids.html This particular set of meteors usually appears in mid-November these days. Below is an excerpt from the website above.

On an average night, around 5 to 10 meteors can be seen in an hour from a dark country location. The term "storm" is thus most apt for the 1966 Leonids, when a peak rate of over 100,000 meteors/hr was estimated by observers in western North America. For about quarter of an hour either side of maximum, the rates were over half this value. Eyewitness accounts of the 1966 storm, for which only vague predictions existed, were typically expressions of awe and great excitement. It is no wonder therefore that throughout history, many cultures across the world have clearly documented the occurrence of meteor storms.

Apart from the regular displays of meteors each year there are other large objects that fall from the sky at regular intervals. The best known of the relatively recent events occurred in 1908.

From Wikipedia, the free online encyclopaedia.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunguska_event

The Tunguska event was an aerial explosion that occurred at 60° 55' North, 101° 57' East, near the Podkamennaya (Stony) Tunguska River in what is now Evenkia, Siberia, at 7:17 AM on June 30, 1908. The size of the blast was later

estimated to be between 10 and 15 megatons. It felled an estimated 60 million trees over 2,150 square kilometers.

At around 7:15 AM, Tungus natives and Russian settlers in the hills northwest of Lake Baikal observed a huge fireball moving across the sky, nearly as bright as the Sun. A few minutes later, there was a flash that lit up half of the sky, followed by a shock wave that knocked people off their feet and broke windows up to 650 km (400 mi) away. The explosion registered on seismic stations across Eurasia, and produced fluctuations in atmospheric pressure strong enough to be detected by the recently invented barographs in Britain. Over the next few weeks, night skies over Europe and western Russia glowed brightly enough for people to read by. In the United States, the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and the Mount Wilson Observatory observed a decrease in atmospheric transparency that lasted for several months.

Had the object responsible for the explosion hit the Earth a few hours later, it would have exploded over Europe instead of the sparsely-populated Tunguska region, producing massive loss of human life and changing the course of human history.

Apart from that well known event, many smaller events are recorded surprisingly often. Type, “stones falling from the sky” into Google (or any of the other internet search engines), you will find large numbers of accounts dating from far in the past right up until recently of stones falling from the sky.

Now clearly some of these accounts are the work of assorted nutters. However, some of them at least appear to be reasonably reliable accounts of past events of this nature. The important point is not the actual details of any of the particular stories. Rather, it is to demonstrate that there are what appear to be reasonably reliable historical accounts of stones falling from the sky.

This is important as Luke 21:26 can only reasonably be interpreted in one way. There is only one way in which you can shake the heavenly bodies (e.g. the moon and planets) and that is by a hit with a meteor of some type. All of the planets (including the earth) along with all the moons in the solar system have evidence of impacts all over them. The last big impact in the solar system was the *Shoemaker-Levy 9* comet.

<http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/comet.html>

*From July 16 through July 22, 1994, fragments of Comet P/Shoemaker-Levy 9 collided with Jupiter, with dramatic effect. This was the first collision of two solar system bodies ever to be observed. Shoemaker-Levy 9 **consists of 20 discernable fragments with diameters estimated at up to 2 kilometers**, which impacted the planet at 60 km/s. The impacts resulted in plumes many thousands of kilometers high, hot "bubbles" of gas in the atmosphere, and large dark "scars" on the atmosphere which have lifetimes at least on the order of weeks. Smaller bits and dust continue to impact the planet. Shoemaker-Levy 9 is gone, but as the Earth- and space-based images show, it did not go quietly.*

There is no other reasonable explanation of Luke 21:26. This is clearly describing a strike on the planetary bodies – possibly including the earth. The verse says

Luke 21:26-27

26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.

This verse clearly and unequivocally states that people are fainting from terror in **anticipation** of what is coming on the earth. In other words, they have advance notice of “something”

The *Shoemaker-Levy 9* comet was discovered by Eugene and Carolyn Shoemaker and David Levy. It was first detected on a photograph taken on the night of March 24, 1993 with the 0.4-meter Schmidt telescope on Palomar Mountain in California. This was over a year in advance of the actual impact – whose actual impact date and target area on Jupiter had been calculated almost as soon as the comet was first discovered. There was plenty of rather excited anticipation all over the world of the impending impact on Jupiter.

I wonder what the reaction would have been if people were “anticipating” a similar set of impacts on the earth. I wonder whether they would be “*fainting from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world*”.

It seems to me that there would be nothing quite like an asteroid or comet heading towards the earth with “your name” on it to create a bit of mayhem and general panic – not to mention a bit of terror on the side!

Compare the above statements from Joel’s prophecy with the statement (below) taken from the internet that describe stones falling from the sky.

Joel 2:8-9

8 They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. 9 They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.

<http://www.meteorlab.com/METEORLAB2001dev/metics.htm>

Thomas Jefferson and the Yankees

In the early 1800s news travelled relatively slowly. People did not get frustrated waiting 15 seconds for a page to load from 3,000 miles away. New information could take months or years to be collected, analyzed, published and distributed. In the cold chill of a December morning in 1807, Judge Wheeler walked from his home in Weston, Connecticut, USA, and was surprised to see a ball of fire moving across the northern horizon. He watched as it passed to a point almost overhead where it flashed several times and disappeared.

A few moments later he heard a great noise. Thunderous and roaring, the noise grew to a frightening level. He then heard the whizzing sound of something falling. As the judge looked up, he observed a small stone strike a nearby building, bounce off, and roll onto the grass. The judge decided to contact nearby Yale University and ask that the event be investigated.

Two very sceptical professors came out to look into the matter, fully prepared to dispel the story of stones falling from the sky. The two professors conducted a lengthy investigation. They knew these stones were different from any they had ever seen and they witnessed local townspeople extracting them from holes in yards and nearby fields. Finally, the two wise professors from Yale concluded the stones must have fallen from the sky.

Eventually the story found its way to the White House in Washington, D.C. President Thomas Jefferson was a scientist as well as statesman. When he heard this peculiar story he declared it could not be true, but his advisors insisted that the stones were observed falling from the sky and that two Yale professors investigating the incident vouched for its truth.

Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, responded with great skepticism: "Gentlemen, I would rather believe that two Yankee professors would lie than believe that stones fall from heaven."

Associated with comets and asteroids is a field of much smaller gravel sized objects. In the same way that we see hailstones (or at least the larger ones), (verse 9) *"they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows."* bounce along the ground and hit the windows, so we would also expect the smaller gravel sized stones associated with a comet or asteroid to do the same thing.

The description above sounds very much like a smaller version of what Joel records will happen in this "last sign" before Christ's return where he says:

Joel 2:1-11

*6 **At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale.** 7 They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. **They all march in line, not swerving from their course.** 8 They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. 9 **They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.***

*10 **Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.***

The comet/asteroid interpretation also is consistent with the statement in Mathew 24:30

Matt 24:29-31

29 "Immediately after the distress of those days

*"**the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.**"*

*30 "At that time the **sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn.** They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.*

What is this "sign" in the sky that causes, *"the nations of the earth to mourn"*? Well, I reckon something like the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet with a lot of big fragments associated with it – or even perhaps more likely, a swarm of the things, might just be enough for, *"all the nations of the earth will mourn"*.

Perhaps you think this to be either unlikely – or not even possible. Read below!

<http://aboutfacts.net/SpacePlanets17.htm>

The Asteroid Belt puts the Earth at risk enough but there is more danger waiting for us. There are near Earth objects that have been knocked into orbits that send them near us. Want more? There is something called the Kupier Belt, it is beyond Neptune and contains, by best estimate, over 70,000 objects with diameters over 100 km. This is the home of short period comets such as Halley's Comet, they usually repeat their appearance in under 200 years. Think you heard it all now? Not yet, there is also a place called the Ort Cloud which is thought to be about 50,000 times the distance from the Earth to the Sun. The Ort Cloud contains the long term comets, those that take over 200 years to appear. It would only take an object only a couple of miles across to wipe out most or all life on Earth.

We then have to explore the quotation in Zechariah 14:5-7 where it says about the day that Christ returns:

Zech 14:5-7

5 You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

*6 On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. 7 **It will be a unique day, without daytime or night-time-a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light.***

Is such a day possible, e.g. twilight all over the world? More to the point, can any realistic scenario be imagined where the comet/asteroid interpretation can be invoked to provide a realistic explanation of a twilight day simultaneously all over the world? The answer is, yes it can! More importantly, it is the only way that you can produce twilight all over the world simultaneously.

Consider the mechanics of the solar system.

The earth orbits around the sun in a slightly elliptical orbit once every 365¼ days at a radius of about 150 million km from the sun. The plane in which the earth moves around the sun is known as the ecliptic plane.

Looking down from above the earth's North Pole, the moon moves in an elliptical counter-clockwise direction with an average distance of about 385,000 km from the earth. This is about 60 times the radius of the earth itself. The plane of the moon's orbit around the earth is inclined at an angle of about 5° with respect to the ecliptic plane on which the earth rotates around the sun. It takes the Moon 27.3 days to go around the Earth once

The moon itself is not a luminous body like the sun. Rather, it simply reflects sunlight off itself back onto the earth. The reason that the moon is able to shine on the earth at night is simply because of the fact that the orbit of the moon is angled at 5 degrees to the ecliptic plane of the earth. That inclination, along with the radius of the moon's orbit, allows it to rise somewhat above the ecliptic plane of the earth – depending on

the phase of the moon – and hence reflect light back onto the dark side of the earth at night. E.g. there is a direct line of sight between the moon and the sun.

Now consider what most of the scripture references are saying with respect to this “day”.

Matt 24:29

29 "Immediately after the distress of those days

"`the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

"The sun will be darkened". This one is easy. Simply put a large body – or a large number of bodies between the sun and the earth. This will block a large amount of light from reaching the earth. We are all familiar with this one, e.g. a solar eclipse by the moon.

However simultaneous with this we have to prevent the moon from giving its light at the same time in order to differentiate this “darkening of the sun” from any one of the numerous solar eclipses.

"The moon will not give its light". The moon only reflects the light from the sun when it is high enough in the night sky to be able to draw a straight line between it and the sun – without hitting the earth. This then makes it easy to see why the moon would not give its light if there were a number of comets/asteroids etc. that were in the direct path between the moon and the sun.

"The stars will fall from the sky". We are all familiar with shooting stars e.g. usually very small meteors that fall to the earth as meteorites. These “shooting stars” are normally associated with the debris that normally accompanies comets and asteroids.

How then do we produce the simultaneous twilight situation all over the world as described in Zechariah chapter 14.

Zech 14:5-7

5 You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

6 On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. 7 It will be a unique day, without daytime or night-time-a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light.

This is not really difficult. Consider the following situation. There are comets/asteroids swarming across the path of the earth’s ecliptic plane around the sun that are reducing the direct sunlight reaching both the earth and the moon. In addition to these bodies blocking the light directly from the sun, there are others that are located in trajectories that pass the earth on the far side of the earth to the sun. In other words, these comets/asteroids are passing between the earth and the outer planets such as Mars and the other outlying planets. If these bodies on the outer trajectories are located both above and below the ecliptic plane, then they would have a direct line of sight back to the sun. In this case this ***"large and mighty army"*** as Joel describes them – be they

comets or asteroids – would then be reflecting light back onto the dark side of the earth in exactly the same way as the moon normally does. The exact amount of light reflected back onto the dark side of the earth would be determined by the exact distribution, positions, size and reflectivity of the bodies concerned.

The end result of all this is that the side of the earth facing the sun would be in twilight because of the eclipsing effect of the comets/asteroids, and the dark side of the earth would then be illuminated by the reflected “comet /asteroid light”. “Voila” – the whole world is in twilight so fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy (*Zech 14:5-7*)

“***The heavenly bodies will be shaken***”. In a situation where all these comets/asteroids are swarming past the earth, moon and other planets, it would be most surprising if some – or all – of the “heavenly bodies” did not receive some hits.

We now have all the elements that are prophesied e.g. a darkened sun, no moonlight, stars falling from the sky, the heavenly bodies being shaken and a simultaneous twilight all over the world. Better still, we got all this with not a supernatural event in sight – yet.

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Wrapping it all up

Or

A recapitulation of everything and then tying it all together

Summary

We have now compared the Biblical claims of what is going to happen just prior to Christ's return to the real and actual events on the ground over the last one hundred years or so. Recapitulating we find the following.

1. The time of the Gentiles (over Jerusalem) came to an end in 1917 AD, or more particularly, in 1335 AH (e.g. the same date – but using the Islamic calendar) as prophesied in Daniel 12 verse 12
2. Daniel gave a general description of the end times. He said at that time that travel would be greatly increased and knowledge would increase greatly. These are two defining characteristics of the last century. They uniquely ensure that this description cannot be applied to earlier times.

Dan 12:4

4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

3. Jesus said that the generation that saw the re-emergence of modern day Israel would not pass away before he returned (Mathew 24 verse 34). It has to be said that most people who were born in 1917 have now died and the rest are now 88 years old. We should be starting to see something happening by now.
4. We have seen the start of the final act when the Islamic terrorists attacked America on Sept 11, 2001. A description of this aspect of the final scene is given in Ezekiel chapters 38 & 39, in particular 38:10-13
5. We have seen the tsunami on December 26, 2004 and the almost perfect headline description that the Bible described it with in Luke 21:25. The timing of this event according to the Bible is well into the final act of the play e.g. after Sept 11.
6. We have the prediction in Zechariah chapters 12 through 14, and particularly chapter 14 verses 1 & 2, where the final attack against Israel by the surrounding Arab countries will take place – along with the fact that half of Jerusalem will go into captivity again e.g. Israel will lose control and the Islamic world will **briefly** gain control of East Jerusalem again.

You don't need to be Einstein, a rocket scientist or a political scientist to know that this event is already on the horizon – and will soon be an historical fact. The current peace talks are balanced on a knife edge. There are extremists on both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides that are determined on scuttling any likely deal between the two sides. Iran and Syria – via Hezbollah – are actively working to scuttle the deal. The planned Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in July this year (2005) is – on the current political situation – almost certainly going to cause great civil unrest in Israel, at the very least. Many Israeli commentators are saying

that civil war is possible because of the withdrawal proposal. On top of that, there are all the “wildcard” events such as the assassination of Rafic Hariri the former Prime Minister of Lebanon on February 14, 2005, the full ramifications of which are as yet still unknown.

Given the history of that area, it would be an extremely optimistic person who really believes that the current peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis has much hope of succeeding.

There is an interesting prophecy in the New Testament that says:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

*1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 **For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.***

There is a very interesting parallel here with the current revival of the peace process now that Arafat has died. For the first time in fifty years they are all talking peace in a credible manner (it never was under Arafat). This is interesting, because after all the decades of efforts to get some sort of realistic and credible peace talks, when do the peace talks finally look (at first glance) like bearing fruit – none other than right in the middle of the final act (e.g. after Sept 11), just as the Bible predicted would happen.

7. The most startling, and terrifying event – according to Luke 21:26 is still yet to happen.

Luke 21:26-27

26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Will this come to pass in the foreseeable future?

Well I said right at the beginning of this document that if you were investigating any subject where you relied on eyewitness accounts, then you would expect the eyewitness reports to have a common core of accounts and a variety of smaller groups (down to a group of one) that related additional facts as well. The large common core of the stories occurs only because the event(s) that this group of reports deals with is the central event(s) that they are all reporting on.

Given this line of reasoning, the reason for people fainting from terror because of the fact that the heavenly bodies are shaken, along with the attendant darkening of the sun and moon etc. is quoted in more passages than any other single aspect of Christ’s return. On this basis, it has got to be a significant event that caps off the “end time” act.

Two questions

1. The whole argument so far has rested on one central pillar. That is that the author of the Bible is in fact God (with mankind simply the pen-man), and not the collected works of a lot of human authors. If the Biblical claim is correct – then we would expect that its claims are also accurate. Are they?

This is a question that everyone will have to answer for themselves.

I am a person whose first response to any story is, “show me the proof”. The hard cold political facts and physical events of the last one hundred years correspond exactly to the Biblical description of the events that have occurred in the time frame that the Bible has given for the “end times”.

2. The second question that everyone will no doubt begin to ask themselves is about President Bush. In the opening scenes of Ezekiel chapter 38 (and also 39) God says that He will be the one that drags all the Arab nations to war against Israel under the Leadership of Gog (Islam).

Ezekiel 38:1-6

*1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him 3 and say: `This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. 4 **I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army**-your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. 5 Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, 6 also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops-the many nations with you.*

He says, “**I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army.** The reality is that at the moment (Feb, 2005) the Islamic world is being “dragged along” by Bush’s response to September 11. Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine are directly affected by America’s current policy of regime change – and Iran and Syria are on the list as well at the moment. All the other Arab states are being dragged towards democracy by way of Bush’s New Middle East Initiative in an effort to root out the Islamic terrorist threat to America. Needless to say, the Islamic world (along with Europe) is not happy with Bush.

These are the same countries that God said He would put hooks into their jaws and drag them along to war with Israel – but the agent on the ground that is doing this “dragging” is America.

Will the current American actions lead to war against Israel? The Arab Islamic world and Europe is saying that if it’s good enough for the Arab world to comply with the new ideas – then why not the same for Israel?

Bush has often claimed that God spoke to him. How then do people reconcile Bush’s claim with the claims of the Bible in Ezekiel 38?

Three Predictions

1. In the foreseeable future we will see the Arabs attack Israel and take over East Jerusalem – as per the prophecy in Zechariah 14:1-2
2. If (when) you see the Arabs attack Israel and take East Jerusalem – buy a hard hat, because the next prophecy is that *“Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken”*
3. If you find that you need a hard hat, then standby for an even more startling event – Christ’s return.

It’s always a risky business looking into the future. However if my reading of the Bible and the actual political events of the last one hundred years or so are correct, then the near future is going to reveal whether all those wild stories about the Second Coming are really true or not.

If I am wrong, then I will worry about crossing that bridge when – and if – I have to cross it.

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END

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