

# SATAN EVICTED

A Redemptive Tale of Planet Earth

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## INTERPRETATION GUIDELINES



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### WORKING DRAFT

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# INTERPRETATION GUIDELINES

## INTRODUCTION

The modern Christian Church is far from a monolithic, unified body of believers but rather a diverse set of individuals adhering to a wide array of beliefs and customs. According to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity there are some 41,000 Christian denominations worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Most Christians, I assume, are members of the denomination of their parents or join the denomination that first led them to Christ. Others select a denomination based on a wide array of criteria including core beliefs, youth programs, location, size, facilities, economic similarities, ethnic composition, missionary efforts, congregational age, and minister's personality.

While diversity addresses individual cultural, economic, and personal needs, it is also divisive leading to confusion, conflict, and divergent doctrine, but God's message is coherent, harmonious, and unified. While we celebrate secular diversity, scripture directs us to be of one mind, one heart, and one voice:

**Acts 4:32:** All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. (NIV)

**1 Corinthians 1:10:** I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. (NIV)

**Romans 15:5-6:** May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV)

When we read the Bible, we should strive for an understanding that is consistent with God's intended message avoiding moral, cultural, and social relativism – the Bible should not be forced to conform to modern thought or values. Instead, modern thought and values should conform to the universal, static thought and values of the Bible. Does this mean that we should enslave our enemies? No, absolutely not. The New Testament did not teach that we should own slaves but rather we should become slaves to the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Many fundamentalists view "interpretation" as an evil; the scriptures, they assert, "mean what they say." A severely rigid, literal approach is problematic as it ignores the Bible as a literary masterpiece filled with the beauty of language. On the opposite spectrum, allegorical interpretations examine passages as if they were all figurative even if the passage contains no figurative language – it seeks to find the "spiritual" meaning "beyond those persons, things, and events explicitly mentioned in the text."<sup>2</sup> This method is problematic as it can easily add meaning that was never intended. The Bible is neither inflexibly literal nor invariably mysterious.

It is inevitable that each of us will derive a slightly different meaning from an identical text. Each of us come from differing backgrounds, possess differing frames of reference, and experienced differing joys and suffering. However, our differences do grant us an artistic license – an ability to distort wording, grammar, and language. We should not stylize God's portrait, the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> "Global Christianity," Center for the Study of Global Christianity, ND. <[http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious\\_Affiliation/Christian/ChristianityAppendixB.pdf](http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious_Affiliation/Christian/ChristianityAppendixB.pdf)> August 28, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> "allegorical interpretation". Encyclopædia Britannica. 2012. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/16068/allegorical-interpretation>> August 28, 2012.

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## A PLAIN READING

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Jesus Christ's disciples were not "learned men." They were fishermen, tax collectors, physicians, and tent makers. Jesus Christ's primary audience was not the experts in the law, Sadducees, and Pharisees but the downtrodden, the poor, the lame, the beggar, the sick, and the sinner. Biblical scripture is the only source of for the inspired, infallible Word of God, not the apocrypha, not the writings of the Church, not scholarly commentary, and certainly not academic critiques. The Bible is not an easy work, but neither is it an intellectual academic dissertation. Our first and primary approach, therefore, is a plain reading... What would the passage mean to a common and ordinary person?

**James 1:18:** He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. (NIV)

What is a plain reading? A plain reading assumes that a biblical passage is not a cryptic message written in secret code nor is it a technical manual written in a clear, precise manner. Rather scripture is a piece of literature and must be read as a piece of literature examining purpose and setting, audience and context, genre and language, and grammar and terminology. The Bible is also a work of volumes, sixty-six volumes with some passages requiring foreknowledge and understanding of other passages. Bible verses mean what they say, and we have a responsibility to figure out what they actually say... not what we want them to say:

### Passage Analysis

1. **PURPOSE:** Why was this passage written? What is the intended purpose? What is hoped to be achieved? What promises are offered? What threats are made?
2. **SETTING:** What were the times, seasons, places, and circumstances? What had been occurring before the message was delivered? What will occur after the message?
3. **AUDIENCE:** To whom was this passage directed and under what circumstance? What information do they need? What information do they already understand?
4. **CONTEXT:** What was the theme of the chapter? What is discussed in the previous passages? What is discussed in the next passages? What is the theme of the chapter? Of the book?
5. **GENRE:** Is the passage a song, hymn, story, sermon, letter, prophecy, argument, parable, history, or exposition?
6. **LANGUAGE:** Is the language literal, figurative, commanding, mournful, joyful, pleading, or judgmental?
7. **GRAMMAR:** What is the subject, verb, predicate? What function do the key words serve? How are the words related to each other?
8. **TERMINOLOGY:** What is the denotation and connotation? What word was used in the original language? How else is it used within the Bible?
9. **RELATED PASSAGES:** What other verses address the same issues? What verses utilize similar words or patterns?
10. **WHAT THE VERSE ACTUALLY SAYS:** What is the surface meaning of the verse? What does it say before we attach any spiritual or deeper meanings?

Naturally, we can and should read the Bible for pleasure, for comfort, and for inspiration. These readings do not require complex analysis. However, if we are developing doctrine, understandings, or belief constructs, then we should go beyond a cursory scanning of the text; we should take the time to study.

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## **SAMPLE STUDY: THE FLOOD ANALOGY**

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The allusion to Noah and the Flood within the Olivet Discourse is often misinterpreted in at least two ways. First, some utilize the analogy in partial support of the belief that the Rapture will be a complete surprise. Second, some utilize the analogy in partial support of the belief that only “saved” individuals will initially inhabit the Millennial Kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

**Matthew 24:36-39:** “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (NIV)

### **Passage Analysis**

1. **PURPOSE:** To illustrate “No one knows the day or hour.”
2. **SETTING:** Olivet Discourse following Jesus’ visit to the Temple prior to His passion.
3. **AUDIENCE:** Christ’s disciples – Messianic Jews who possessed a limited understanding of the kingdom of God and the sacrificial offerings of Jesus Christ.
4. **CONTEXT:** In response the disciples’ questions, “When will the Temple be destroyed?” “What are the signs of Christ’s return,” and “What are the signs of the end of the age?”

Within the allusion, all of humanity, except for Noah and his immediate family, were excessively wicked, “every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.” When the flood came, they were caught off-guard and destroyed by the flood waters.

5. **GENRE:** Discourse – a discussion; a monologue between a teacher and His students.
6. **LANGUAGE:** Allusion to the days of Noah; an analogy – a comparison.
7. **GRAMMAR:** Preface, “No one knows the day or hour written,” in present tense. A switch to future tense, “coming of the Son of Man.” Then a comparison of past conditions, “days before the flood,” to future conditions, “That is how it will be.”
8. **TERMINOLOGY: knows:** *eidó*: be aware, behold, consider, perceive.<sup>4</sup> **They:** pronoun referring to the people who were eating, drinking, and marrying.
9. **RELATED PASSAGES:** Genesis 6-9; Mark 13:32; Act 1:7; Luke 17:29-30  
**Acts 1:7:** He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. (NIV) **Luke 17:29-30:** But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. (NIV)
10. **WHAT THE VERSE ACTUALLY SAYS:** In the days immediately prior to Christ’s returns, the people who are wicked will be going about their routine daily activities and will be caught off-guard by Christ’s return.

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<sup>3</sup> The most comprehensive explanation of the view that I have found to date may be found from Allen Beechick, “Who Will Populate the Millennium?” Rapture Solutions, 1999. <<http://www.rapturesolution.com/beeckick/Book/Mill.htm>> July 25, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> “eidó,” Strong’s Concordance: Bible Concordances, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/1492.htm>> August 29, 2012.

This passage is narrowly focused on the “knowing” of the day and hour of Christ’s return. It does not address the manner of Christ’s coming, the manner of destruction, or the characteristics of those who will be saved. Those issues are addressed elsewhere, and it would be inappropriate to draw any conclusions concerning those issues from this passage.

- **DOES THIS ALLUSION SUPPORT THE BELIEF THAT THE RAPTURE WILL BE A SUDDEN SURPRISE TO ALL OF MANKIND?**

No, absolutely not. Noah and his immediate were not caught off-guard by the flood.

First, verse 36 is the preface to the allusion indicating the topic to be discussed and is written in present tense “knows” indicating that at that time, the time when the words were spoken, no one knew the day or hour. Verse 37 is written in the future tense “will be” indicating that in the future the “knowing” part is comparable to the days of Noah. Although there are no discernible conjunctions joining these two verses, some people read the verse as if they say:

*No one knows the day or hour of His coming, not even the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. The same will be true in the future, and as in the days of Noah...*

This is an error. We must not add or detract from biblical texts. The allusion, therefore, compares the “knowing” at the time of the second coming to the “knowing” at time of Noah, not to the “knowing” when Jesus Christ spoke the words.

Second, when God instructed Noah to build the ark, He told Noah specifically what was going to happen (Genesis 6:13-21), and it took Noah and his family some 98 years to build the ark<sup>5</sup> and seven days to load the ark (Genesis 7:4). Certainly, Noah might not have known the exact “day or the hour” during the years it took to build the Ark, but he and his family certainly knew “about what would happen.” When they started to load the animals, they certainly knew the timing was very, very close.

Who were the people who know nothing about what would happen? They were the people who were “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.” They were the people who were taken away by the flood. It was the unbelievers, the wicked, who were caught off guard, not the righteous, the blameless, and the ones who walk with God (Genesis 6:9). Instead of supporting the belief that all will be surprised by the Rapture, this passage tends to indicate that the true believer will have an awareness of what will soon occur (Matthew 24:32-35).

- **DOES THIS ALLUSION SUPPORT A BELIEF THAT ONLY “SAVED” INDIVIDUALS WILL INITIALLY INHABIT THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM?**

No, absolutely not.

First, we need to remember that the focus of this passage is the “knowing” of the “day and hour.” It does not focus who was saved and who was damned during Noah’s days much less who will survive the turbulence of the latter days and initially inhabit the Millennial Kingdom. Those topics are addressed elsewhere in scripture.

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<sup>5</sup> “How Long did it Take Noah to Build the Ark?” God’s Point of View, ND. <[http://www.godspointofview.com/public/qanda/how\\_long\\_to\\_build\\_the\\_ark.htm](http://www.godspointofview.com/public/qanda/how_long_to_build_the_ark.htm)> July 25, 2012.

Second, if we are to consider the flood as an analogy of the last days, then we must do so very reluctantly and carefully. In this instance, the story of the flood tends to contradict the belief that only the “saved” will initially inhabit the Millennial Kingdom:

There were eight people who entered the Ark and were saved from the flood:

**Genesis 6:18:** But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you [Noah] and your sons [Shem, Ham, and Japheth] and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. (NIV)

The scripture indicates that Noah was righteous and blameless; it remains silent on the others:

**Genesis 6:9-10:** This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. (NIV)

**Genesis 7:1:** The Lord then said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. (NIV)

It might be safe to assume that the wives and sons supported Noah building the Ark and perhaps contributed to the effort – they were obedient. However, it would be a stretch to conclude that they were “righteous” or “saved” in God’s eyes.

The story of Ham tends to indicate that he was not “righteous” but rather wicked and accursed:

**Genesis 9:21-22, 24-25:** When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father’s nakedness and told his two brothers outside... When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said, “Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.” (NIV)

Certainly, Noah was “righteous” and could be considered “saved.” Ham, however, probably should not be considered one of the righteous. The individuals saved from the flood could be considered “obedient” to Noah, but it would be a stretch to consider them “saved.”

We should carefully examine biblical passages to determine what they actually say and not force upon them a meaning that was never intended. A “plain reading” of biblical passages requires us to consider purpose and setting, audience and context, genre and language, and grammar and terminology. We should be careful not to read too little or too much into a passage – we should play the role of Goldilocks striving for an interpretation that is just right.

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## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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I taught high school literature classes for twenty years and found it difficult to teach students how to correctly apply figurative language. Students were accustomed to reading textbooks – fact based writing containing little, if any, figurative speech. With effort, students began to “see” the pictures painted by the author and began to understand that there is more to language than the words on a page.

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE DEFINITION:** Figurative language is a purposeful departure from the literal meaning of words and phrases in order to achieve a particularly vivid, meaningful, or imaginative image. In brief, figurative language “paints” a picture to convey meaning beyond the literal definition of the words – “A picture is worth a thousand words.”

**TYPES OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:** Many consider the Bible a book of “symbols.” However, figurative language within scripture goes well beyond the use of simple symbols. Common types include:

1. **ALLEGORY:** a poem, play, picture, etc, in which the apparent meaning of the characters and events is used to symbolize a deeper moral or spiritual meaning.<sup>6</sup>

**Matthew 25:1-2:** At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise... (NIV)

*Instructs us to be continually filled with spiritual matters in preparation for meeting the Lord.*

2. **ALLUSION:** a reference; an incidental mention of something located outside the passage, either directly or by implication such as referring to Christ’s millennial throne as the throne of King David.

**Matthew 24:37:** As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

*References Noah and the great flood of the Old Testament.*

3. **ANALOGY:** a comparison made to show such a similarity such as comparing the heart and a pump.

**Matthew 24:37:** As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

*Asks the reader to apply the traits of the days of the great flood to the days of Christ’s coming.*

4. **EUPHEMISM:** an inoffensive word or phrase substituted for one considered offensive or hurtful such as using “dearly departed” for the dead.

**1 Corinthians 15:51:** Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – (NIV)

*Uses the term “sleep” in place of the term “die.”*

5. **HYPERBOLE:** an extravagant statement or figure of speech not intended to be taken literally such as claiming that you are as hungry as a horse.

**Psalms 119:136:** Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed. (NIV)

*Although tears may flow down one’s cheek, they do not flow with the same volume as a stream.*

6. **METAPHOR/SIMILE:** a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance such as “he is a lion in battle.”

**1 Corinthians 3:16:** Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? (NIV)

*Compares the human body with that of the Jewish Temple.*

<sup>6</sup> Definitions from Collins English Dictionary: Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/>> August 29, 2012.

7. **METONYMY**: the substitution of a word referring to an attribute for the thing that is meant such as the use of the crown to refer to a monarch.

**1 Corinthians 11:26**: For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (NIV)

*The cup represents much more than the wine of the Last Communion or the spilling of Christ's blood. It represents all of the distrust, hatred, suffering, persecution, and sacrifices of Jesus Christ.*

8. **PARABLE**: a short story that uses familiar events to illustrate a religious or ethical point such as the Parable of the Talents.

**Matthew 24:45-46**: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. (NIV)

*The moral of the story – the kingdom of heaven is worth sacrificing everything we own.*

9. **PARADOX**: a statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expresses a possible truth such as "I know that I know nothing."

**Matthew 10:39**: Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (NIV)

*One would think that losing one's life would result in total loss – death.*

10. **PERSONIFICATION**: the representation of an abstract quality or idea in the form of a person or creature such as "The wind sung through the leaves."

**Isaiah 55:12**: You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. (NIV)

*Mountain and hills are not physically capable of singing, nor are trees and field capable of clapping.*

11. **SYMBOL**: a material object used to represent something abstract such as white representing purity.

**Revelation 2:4**: If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (NIV)

*A lampstand is a bearer of light and is symbolic of Christ. The church bears witness to Christ.*

12. **SYNECDOCHE**: a part is used for the whole or the whole for a part, the special for the general or the general for the special such as ten sails representing ten ships.

**Acts 27:37**: And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. (KJV)

*The term "souls" represent the entire person – body, mind, soul, and spirit.*

**APPLICATION OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**: When possible, figurative language should be taken at face value, read plainly. If we say, "She has a heart of gold," we readily understand that we are not literally referring to the woman's heart, but her display love, compassion, and charity. We also readily understand that her heart is not literally made of gold metal, but rather she exhibits qualities that are highly attractive, precious, and desirable. These metaphors contain NO deep, hidden meanings, but plain, simple truths.

The presence of figurative language within a verse does not give the reader artistic license to interpret the verse in any fashion they choose. The Bible is not a highly encrypted, mystical book filled deep, hidden meanings. It is a book written for common men with plain truths.

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## **SAMPLE STUDY: THE 1<sup>ST</sup> SEAL**

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Some proponents of a pretribulation Rapture assert that the rider of the white horse in Revelation 6:1-2 is the Antichrist going forth to conquer. He accomplishes this task, they assert, through diplomatic means as he possesses a bow without arrows.<sup>7</sup> Others assert that the rider on the white horse is Jesus Christ. Still others insist that the rider is the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> Why the confusion? I believe that people are attempting to force scripture to say more than what it actually says.

**Revelation 6:1-2:** I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. (NIV)

### **Passage Analysis**

1. **PURPOSE:** A part of a much wider narrative revealing prophetic events occurring prior to Christ’s return. John’s Revelation also seems to be an immediate, literal message of encouragement against persecution and suffering. Christ will be the ultimate victor.
2. **SETTING:** John is in heaven observing events surrounding the heavenly throne of God.
3. **AUDIENCE:** The seven churches in Asia Minor who are receiving admonishment and praise for their actions and deeds associated with their Christian walk.
4. **CONTEXT:** Jesus Christ has just been handed the scroll with seven seals from God the Father. The right to accept the scroll was earned through Christ’s earthly ministry and sacrifice. Three more horsemen follow – war, famine, and death.
5. **GENRE:** Prophetic narrative: describes images of future events.
6. **LANGUAGE:** Symbolic: thunder = authority of God; white = purity; horse = conquest, speed, strength; crown = authority; bow = war; white horse = nobility
7. **GRAMMAR:** The horse performs the action of going forward. The rider was given a crown. The rider is given authority to conquer and he intends to conquer.
8. **TERMINOLOGY:** **come:** *erchomai*: I come, go.<sup>9</sup> **bent:** *nikaó*: to conquer, prevail<sup>10</sup> **he rode:** *exerchomai*: to go or come out of<sup>11</sup>
9. **RELATED PASSAGES:** Matthew 24:4-5; Zechariah 6:1-8; Zechariah 1:7-17; Revelation 19:11-21
10. **WHAT THE VERSE ACTUALLY SAYS:** With the breaking of the first seal, God (thunder) sends forth (Come!) a conqueror (bow) with nobility (white horse), authority (crown) and the intent to conquer (bent).

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<sup>7</sup> “The First Seal: The Antichrist Political Aggression,” *People Get Ready*, August 20, 2012. <<http://peoplegetready.org/end-times/seals-trumpets-bowls-series/seal-antichrists-political-aggression/>> August 29, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Trofern, “The True Identity of the Rider on The White Horse,” *Bible Prophecy Revealed*, ND. <<http://www.bibleprophecyrevealed.us/rev/the-true-identity-of-the-rider-on-the-white-horse-3/>> August 29, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> “erchomai,” 2064. *Strong’s Concordance: Bible Concordances*, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/2064.htm>> August 29, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> “nikaó,” 3528. *Strong’s Concordance: Bible Concordances*, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/3528.htm>> August 29, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> “exerchomai,” 1831. *Strong’s Concordance: Bible Concordances*, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/1831.htm>> August 29, 2012.

In isolation, this passage provides very little insight into the latter days... it provides only a very small piece to a very large puzzle. The passage says no more and no less than:

*With the breaking of the first seal, God sends forth a conqueror with nobility, authority, and the intent to conquer.*

**Arrowless Bow: Reading too much into a passage?** The following commentary provides an example of how people can read more into a passage than what it actually contains:

*People Get Ready, August 20, 2012: Arrowless bow: the Antichrist's authority will initially increase without any bloodshed. The arrow is an ancient symbol of war that speaks of striking one's enemies from a distance. This rider is pictured as ready to go to war with a bow in hand on a horse. However, since the bow does not have arrows, it is understood as a "threat of war without war actually breaking out."<sup>12</sup>*

Where in this passage does it mention that there are no arrows? The passage doesn't mention a saddle, but we assume there is one unless we are told otherwise. The passage doesn't describe the rider's clothing, but we assume he is dressed unless told otherwise. Not all passage explicitly states every detail within an image, message, or story... To list every possible detail within every passage would result in a very large and very cumbersome Bible.

Common human convention dictates that if there is a bow, then there are also arrows UNLESS specifically mentioned otherwise. If the lack of arrows was important to this passage, then John could have listed an "empty quiver" within the description. Without additional scriptural support, the assertion made in the above commentary should be considered speculative.

**Can we determine the identity of the rider?** Unfortunately, no. Many scholars assert that we can identify the rider as the Antichrist because of the color of his horse, white, and his non-diadem crown. The Antichrist, they claim, pretends to be Jesus Christ – he is the great deceiver. However, that claim is speculative at best; there is insufficient information within the passage to accurately identify the rider. Since the fourth rider is specifically identified, we should assume that the first three riders would have also been identified if their identity was important to our understanding.

**What can we do with such little information?** Passages within Revelation 6:1-8 are not intended to create a detailed illustration of the people, places, and events of this time period. Rather, they are quick snapshots intended to serve as an outline, a place marker, within the primary narrative. Other passages, such as the Olivet Discourse and Revelation 13, provide additional details and assist us in creating an elaborately detailed mosaic of the people, places, and events. Children who work complex jigsaw puzzles may attempt to force pieces together; the end results is a jumbled, distorted picture with little resemblance the picture on the box. As adults, we should avoid doing the same thing with prophetic scripture. We should allow the prophetic scriptures to paint the portrait... we should accept the portrait God wishes for us to see.

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<sup>12</sup> "The First Seal: The Antichrist Political Aggression," *People Get Ready*, August 20, 2012. <<http://peoplegetready.org/end-times/seals-trumpets-bowls-series/seal-antichrists-political-aggression/>> August 29, 2012.

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## SAMPLE STUDY: WHEAT & TARES PARABLE

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Some assert that the parable of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) proves: (a) There is only one resurrection and one judgment partially supporting an amillennial or postmillennial view. (b) Humans fall into one of only two groups – the saved and the unsaved partially supporting the belief that the initial inhabitants of the Millennial Kingdom will be “saved” individuals. Neither belief can be substantiated by this parable:

**Matthew 13:24-30:** Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

“‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

“‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’” (NIV)

**Matthew 13:36-43:** Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

### Passage Analysis

1. **PURPOSE:** To reveal the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.
2. **SETTING:** Sitting beside a lake with a large crowd gathered before Him.
3. **AUDIENCE:** General Jewish audience; a large crowd before a lake.
4. **CONTEXT:** Kingdom of heaven parables specifically related the spread of the Word of God and separation of the righteous and the wicked.
5. **GENRE:** Parable: teaching general principles through everyday activities and events.
6. **LANGUAGE:** Figurative riddles: Matthew 13:11: The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. (NIV)
7. **GRAMMAR:** Extended narrative followed with an explanation of key elements.

8. **TERMINOLOGY: weeds:** *zizánion*: *zizanium* (a kind of darnel resembling wheat). Spurious wheat, darnel; a plant that grows in Palestine which resembles wheat in many ways but is worthless.<sup>13</sup> **age:** *aión*: an age, a cycle (of time), especially of the present age as contrasted with the future age, and of one of a series of ages stretching to infinity.<sup>14</sup>
9. **RELATED PASSAGES:** Matthew 13:4; Matthew 8:12; Acts 13:10; Matthew 3:12; Matthew 24:31
10. **WHAT THE VERSE ACTUALLY SAYS:** Satan spreads deception amongst the good news of the Gospel. At the end of the age, the wicked will be removed and those that remain will stand out within the kingdom.

First, we must be cautious not to over analyze kingdom of heaven parables. Parables are not intended to impart complex, specific truths but rather to reduce complex truths into more general principles... We err in attempting to draw more from a parable than originally intended. This parable teaches about the effects of the two separate forces at work within the world:

1. Jesus Christ whose “seed” will result in plants bearing good fruit (wheat).
2. The devil whose “seed” will result in plants resembling wheat but bearing bad fruit (darnel).
3. The wicked, the weeds, will be removed and destroyed at the end of the age.
4. The righteous, the wheat, will remain and stand out within the kingdom.

Second, this is a kingdom of heaven parable and is, therefore, applicable for all time – past, present, and present. The parable would be just as appropriate during the days of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, or the Church. The parable is also just as appropriate for the Millennium Kingdom because Satan’s “tares” will be sown during the latter days of that age. The parable teaches a universal truth – the Word of God results in good, and the word of Satan results in evil. Eventually, at the end of time, the wicked from all ages will be separated and destroyed.

**Can a deeper analysis reveal greater insight into the kingdom of heaven?** Absolutely! The term “weeds” used in the NIV, tares in the KJV, is the translation of the Greek term *zizánion*:

**weeds:** 2215 *zizánion* (plural, tares/zizania) – a tare (darnel); (figuratively) a pseudo-believer (false Christian); a fruitless person living without faith from God and therefore is “all show and no go!”<sup>15</sup>

*from “Lolium temulentum”<sup>16</sup>*

Darnel usually grows in the same production zones as wheat and is considered a weed. The similarity between these two plants is so extensive that in some regions, cockle is referred to as “false wheat”. [1] It bears a close resemblance to wheat until the ear appears. The ears on the real wheat are so heavy it makes the entire plant droop downward, but *L. temulentum*, whose ears are light, stands up straight. The wheat will also appear brown when ripe, whereas the darnel is black. [2] When the *Lolium* matures, the spikelets turn edgeways to the rachis, where the wheat spikelets remain as they grew previously.

<sup>13</sup> “zizánion,” 2215. Strong’s Concordance: Bible Concordance, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/2215.htm>> July 22, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> “aión,” 165. Strong’s Concordance: Bible Concordance, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/165.htm>> July 30, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> “2215 zizánion,” HELPS Ministry: HELPS Word-Studies, 2011. <<http://concordances.org/greek/2215.htm>> July 22, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> “Lolium temulentum,” Wikipedia, June 14, 2012. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darnel>> July 23, 2012.

The darnel can be infected by an endophytic fungus of the genus *Neotyphodium*, and the endophyte-produced, insecticidal loline alkaloids were first isolated from this plant.[3] It parasitizes wheat fields. The French word for darnel is ivraie (from Latin *ebriacus*, intoxicated), which expresses that weed's characteristic of making one feel poisoned with drunkenness, and can cause death. This characteristic is also alluded to in the scientific name (Latin *temulentus* = drunk).

From this term we can learn that the agents of the devil may not have a different presentation than the agents of Jesus Christ – they look, act, and talk like Christians. Their initial message may seem Christian in nature; however, examination of their full doctrine reveals deceptive imitators.

When I lived in Hawaii, I was approached by a young man who looked, acted, and talked like a Christian. In fact, he appeared to be an ideal Christian as he spent his spare time repairing the homes of the aged, buying groceries for the poor, and performing other small “Christian” chores for the needy. When he talked religion, he used the same Holy Bible that we use. However, he wasn't a Christian in the traditional sense; he was a member of the Unification Church. They view Sun Myung Moon as the messiah and believe Jesus will take an earthly bride and father children.

There are other religious movements that carry the Holy Bible but teach a gospel different than that taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles. These gospels may consist of noncanonical books, traditions derived outside of biblical sources, or belief systems centered on an individual and their teachings. They may have the appearance of truth but lead individuals astray:

**Galatians 1:8:** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! (NIV)

**Can a deeper analysis reveal that there is only one resurrection?** No. Kingdom of heaven parables impart universal truths and are relevant to all times, ages, and periods. Although the parable specifically mentions that the tares are collected first (v. 30) and the wheat is then gathered into the barn, the focus of the explanation (v.40-42) is on the **weeding** of the kingdom. If we assume a literal view, the wicked are removed and the righteous remain within the kingdom – they are never removed. This parable is **not** teaching universal truths concerning the resurrection(s) but truths concerning the **effect** of the work of Jesus Christ and Satan. This parable lacks sufficient detail to support a single resurrection theory.

**Does this parable support the theory that only “saved” individuals will initially inhabit the Millennial Kingdom?** No. Kingdom of heaven parables impart universal truths and are relevant to all times, ages, and periods. Although the use of angels as harvesters may parallel some latter day prophecies, the “end of the age” within this parable **remains undefined**. If we apply a literal, dispensational approach from the parable's perspective, the “end of the age” would have occurred between 30 AD and 135 AD, the end of the previous age. Naturally, proponents of “only the ‘saved’ will initially inhabit the Millennial Kingdom” attempt to shift the parable to the end of the current age. Such a shift is speculative at best.

Secondarily, the theory invokes an either-or fallacy (false dilemma). The question of who will be resurrected when and where and under what conditions contains multiple facets not addressed within the parable. According to a pretribulation viewpoint, the “sons of the kingdom” are raptured from the world prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation... thus parable's “sons of the kingdom”

would be restricted to those were “left behind” and later saved... thus the parable would be restricted to the last seven years of the current age... Such an assertion doesn’t seem to fit well within the overall theme of the parable, are well beyond the scope of the passage, and are well beyond the scope of parables that impart simple universal truths.

We must be judicious in our interpretations of scripture. The Word of God is certainly a living and breathing instrument that imparts individual messages and meanings to each individual; however, we error if we read more into a passage than what is actually contains.

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## ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

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**Allegorical interpretation** is an interpretive method which assumes that the Bible has various levels of meaning and tends to focus on the spiritual sense (which comprises the allegorical sense, the moral sense, and the anagogical sense) as opposed to the literal sense of scripture.<sup>17</sup>

As a living, breathing instrument of God, the Bible has a voice that speaks in the quiet, still voice of the Holy Spirit. All of us, as individuals, have either heard or read a Bible passage and received a special, personal message that speaks to a particular need or circumstance. The Bible becomes a personal letter of communication between a loving Father and His child. These messages are precious, meaningful, and purposeful, and they illustrate the living nature of Holy Scripture.

As a living, breathing instrument of God, the Bible contains an infinite volume of knowledge despite having a finite number of words. The Bible contains less than 750,000 words, but describes the creation of man, the wickedness of humanity, the exploits of great men, the travails of nations, the forces of evil, the nature of the kingdom of God, the sacrifices of Jesus Christ, the mysticism of the Church, and God’s eternal plan for mankind. It can do this because, “The whole is more than the sum of its parts.”<sup>18</sup> Certainly, the words impart more meaning than their simple definitions; however, their meaning is not unlimited and their application can be easily distorted:

**Matthew 4:5-6:** Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” *from Psalm 91:11-12 (NIV)*

Allegorical interpretations become problematic when they exceed the scope of a passage – when more meaning is attributed to the passage than revealed through a plain reading. This is especially problematic in the development of doctrine or when they lead to strange teachings, philosophies, and practices.

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## EXAMINATION: REVELATION 1-18 & THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Within Protestantism, a common allegorical interpretation asserts that the Roman Catholic Church is the harlot within Revelation 17-18:

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<sup>17</sup> "Allegorical interpretation," Wikipedia, May 28, 2012. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegorical\\_interpretation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegorical_interpretation)> August 29, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysica*

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*: I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore; that noted and famous one, known before to John by the names of Jezabel and Babylon, who taught and caused many to commit fornication, Revelation 2:20 Revelation 14:8 and is no other than Rome Papal; for that a city or state is meant is clear from Revelation 17:18 and it is usual for idolatrous or apostate cities to be called whores or harlots, see Isaiah 1:21 Ezekiel 23:2 and she is called a "great" one, because of the largeness of the Papal see...<sup>19</sup>

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*: 17:1-6 Rome clearly appears to be meant in this chapter. Pagan Rome subdued and ruled with military power, not by art and flatteries. She left the nations in general to their ancient usages and worship. But it is well known that by crafty and politic management, with all kinds of deceit of unrighteousness, papal Rome has obtained and kept her rule over kings and nations.<sup>20</sup>

Could the Roman Catholic Church be a "type" of the harlot and the Pope a "type" of the Antichrist? Certainly, just as Adolf Hitler, Nero Caesar, and Antiochus IV Epiphanes were types of the Antichrist... they provide examples... they foreshadow... they share characteristics in common with the Antichrist; but, they are not the Antichrist.

Speculating about individual prophecies can be a healthy activity. It permits us to compare traits described within a prophecy to those traits exhibited is a potential model. Revelation 17-18 can serve as an example:

### Revelation 17: Traits of the Harlot

1. **She sits on many waters**: The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages (v. 15). She transcends a single, physical geographical location; global in nature.
2. **Kings committed adultery with her**: Adultery: idolatry, or the worship of false god, e.g. money, power, wealth, sexuality, mysticism, etc.
3. **People intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries**: Her sinfulness excessively alluring, desirable.
4. **Dressed in purple and scarlet**: Along with blue, scarlet, and crimson, purple is used to describe hangings and fine materials.<sup>21</sup> Purple = royalty; scarlet = blood, sin; authoritative
5. **Glitters with gold, precious stones and pearls**: sparkle, attractive, desirable, alluring; wealth
6. **Golden cup filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries**: May parallel cup of the covenant; detestable things, lewdness; may refer to false teachings, especially paganism.
7. **Mystery Babylon the great**: The Empire Babylon was the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth, cradle of world paganism.
8. **Drunk with the blood of the saints**: Took pleasure/delight in persecuting the saints, specifically Christian – testimony of Jesus.

Certainly, in centuries past, the traits exhibited by the Roman Catholic Church resembled many of the traits. However, the fit is less convenient when considering the modern Catholic Church. It no longer has significant sway over world leaders, and it is doubtful that she can be considered drunk

<sup>19</sup> "Revelation 17:1," *Exposition of the Entire Bible* by John Gill [1746-63]. <<http://bible.cc/revelation/17-1.htm>> August 29, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> "Revelation 17:1-6", *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary: Online Parallel Bible*, ND. <<http://mhc.biblecommenter.com/revelation/17.htm>> August 30, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> "Color Symbolism and Color Meaning in The Bible," *Riding the Beast*, ND. <<http://www.ridingthebeast.com/articles/colors/>> August 30, 2012.

with the blood of saints. Could this change in the future? Absolutely, but a different form, such as humanism, might be a closer match in the near future:

*Progressive Living*: Humanism is a down-to-earth philosophical movement that represents a turn toward the satisfaction of human needs, both material and spiritual, and the fulfillment of human potential, here and now.<sup>22</sup>

Using an allegorical interpretation approach to scripture is similar to looking for shapes within the clouds, we can find virtually anything we want; the meaning of scriptures becomes arbitrary, relative, and subjective. It should be used with great caution when developing formal beliefs and doctrine:

*James R. White, 2002*: It is simply unverifiable. In other words, no person using the allegorical method can honestly and logically affirm that his or her conclusions are actually based upon the text that is being interpreted. Because the actual meaning of the text is ignored, the allegorical meaning can have no more weight than one invests in the allegorical interpreter. Since each allegorical interpreter may “see” or “feel” something different in the text, allegorical interpretations can never be verified by others working with the same text.<sup>23</sup>

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## BIBLICAL HYPERBOLES & IDIOMS

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Two common figurative devices used in everyday conversation are hyperboles and idioms. If I told you, “I’m so hungry that I could eat a horse,” you wouldn’t take that statement literally – you would understand that I was hungry. You wouldn’t assume that I really wanted to eat a horse. If I told you that I was burning bridges, you wouldn’t assume that I was an arsonist – you would understand that I wanted eliminate past relationships.

Within our own communities, such subtle nuances of our personal language are understood by our family and peers. When we leave our community, detecting these subtle nuances becomes more difficult. When we leave our geographical region, the task becomes much, much more difficult. When we speak with foreigners, the task may become nearly impossible even if we speak the same language.

We face similar difficulties when we read the Bible. Not only were the words written in a different language, they were written centuries ago by men with vastly different experiences, cultures, and traditions. Of course, we have the Holy Spirit who speaks softly and quietly in our ears, but the task remains difficult. We should keep this in mind as we read and study passages within the Bible.

**The Bible is filled with hyperboles. Some hyperboles are easy to detect:**

**Matthew 23:24**: You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. (NIV)

**Matthew 5:29**: If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. (NIV)

**Luke 14:26**: If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple. (NIV)

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<sup>22</sup> “What is Humanism?” *Progressive Living*, ND. <<http://www.progressiveliving.org/humanism.htm>> August 30, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> James R. White, “Harold Camping,” *Christian Research Journal*, volume 25, number 1, 2002. <<http://www.equip.org/articles/harold-camping/>> August 30, 2012.

Did the teachers of the law and Pharisees go around swallowing camels? Did Jesus really desire a person to pluck out their eyes? Must you really hate your family to be a disciple? No, these passages are not intended to be read literally. Certainly, the Pharisees focused on trivial matter instead of the more important matters. Certainly, we need to remove those things that nurture sin. Certainly, we must place God before our family. The use of hyperbole clearly communicates and emphasizes that Jesus Christ felt these topic were of great importance.

**John 12:19:** So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!" (NIV)

**Mark 1:4-5:** John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan... (KJV)

**Matthew 11:23:** And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. (KJV)

Did the whole world go after Jesus? Were all the inhabitants in Judea baptized by John? Was the town of Capernaum brought down to Hell for disbelief? No. These are all extreme exaggerations that express the large numbers or the severity of the crime. Certainly, each passage would have far less impact if hyperbole was not used.

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## **SAMPLE STUDY: THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS**

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Some hyperboles and idioms are subtle, hard to recognize, and difficult to understand:

**Matthew 24:34-35:** I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. (NIV)

We should notice that this the Lord is swearing an oath, an affidavit – a solemn statement or promise undertaking to do something or affirming that something is true.

- **I can hear what you are thinking. Yes, the New Testament is very specific about oaths:**

**Matthew 5:34-37:** But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. (NIV)

- **However, oaths are not uncommon within New Testament scripture:**

**Romans 1:9:** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers. (KJV)

**Romans 9:1:** I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. (KJV)

**2 Corinthians 1:23:** Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. (KJV)

**2 Corinthians 11:31:** The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. (KJV)

**Galatians 1:20:** Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. (KJV)

- **An oath generally has three components:** (1) the affirmation – a declaration of telling the truth, (2) content – the listing of the facts, and (3) the authority – the power. The statement made in Matthew 24:34-35 contains all three components:

(1) **Affirmation:** I tell you.

(2) **Content:** this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

(3) **Authority:** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

- **Why is this important?** Before we understand the content, we need to understand the rhetoric, the type of language, being used. Will heaven ever pass away? No, the earth might, but not heaven. So we can see that the Lord is using an idiom... making a statement that is not intended to be read literally but is nevertheless understood by the listener. This use is not unique:

**Matthew 10: 14-15:** If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. (NIV)

**Matthew 10:23:** When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (NIV)

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone – everything was totally consumed. It would be more than 1,980 years before Jesus Christ's return plenty of time to travel through the cities of Israel. Neither component should be understood literally... they are idioms... they are used rhetorically for emphasis, not for factual accuracy.

An idiom is a term or phrase whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal definitions and the arrangement of its parts, but refers instead to a figurative meaning that is known only through common use.<sup>24</sup> Examples include: I'm going to blow my top, I swear on a stack of Bibles, he's sweating bullets, and you need to mend fences.

- **Are there other similar examples from our Lord?** Yes, they are not infrequent:

**Matthew 16:28:** I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (NIV)

**Matthew 5:18:** I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. (NIV)

- **Do we use similar structures, a combination of oaths, hyperboles, and idioms?** Yes, although most Christians attempt to avoid swearing, many of us are guilty of using mild expletives such as "goodness," "my, my," and "great Scott." We may also use those mild expletives in combination

<sup>24</sup> "The World of Idioms," *English Exercises*, ND. <<http://www.englishexercises.org/makeagame/viewgame.asp?id=3608>> August 30, 2012.

with hyperboles and idioms. The use of a heavenly authority is generally discouraged, e.g. “I swear to God,” “my heavens,” or “Jesus Christ”:

*I swear, that child didn't get beat enough as a child.*

*Goodness, I'm going to beat that child black and blue.*

Within our community, “spanking” children continues as an acceptable form of discipline (Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 22:15); however, “beating” a child is socially and legally unacceptable. Therefore, using a dysphemism for the term “spank” is readily understood as a hyperbole. The phrase becomes idioms when it would easily be misunderstood outside the local community.

Now, the realization that our Lord and the apostles employed such forms of figurative language does not grant us an unlimited license. No, our language should always be guarded as to not cause offense or serve as a stumbling block. But we should be “mature” enough to recognize such speech and its effect within biblical passages.

- **How does this affect our study of the Bible?** It should cause us pause, “Why has the Lord become so severe in this passage?” In this case, we should recall the previous chapter within Matthew and the seven woes to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees:

1. ***Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!*** You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.
2. ***Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!*** You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.
3. ***Woe to you, blind guides!*** You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools!...
4. ***Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!*** You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness...
5. ***Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!*** You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence...
6. ***Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!*** You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean...
7. ***Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!*** You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’...

***You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?***

Matthew 24:34-35 should cause us pause and encourage us to examine our own life to see if we are guilty of stirring the Lord's anger.

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## SAMPLE STUDY: 2 PETER 3:7, 10

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Many scholars assert that the earth and the sky will be burned away either at the end of this age or at the end of the Millennial age. Regardless of their scriptural and logical evidence, such descriptions do not seem to fit into the events in either. Is there a discrepancy? Yes, there is, but the problem is unrelated to biblical prophecy. The problem relates to a rigid, inflexible literal interpretation. Unfortunately, some fail to recognize the passage for what it is – a hell and brimstone sermon:

**2 Peter 3:7, 10:** and the present heavens and the earth, by the same word are treasured, for fire being kept to a day of judgment and destruction of the impious men.... it will come – the day of the Lord – as a thief in the night, in which the heavens with a rushing noise will pass away, and the elements with burning heat be dissolved, and earth and the works in it shall be burnt up. (YLT)

### PASSAGE ANALYSIS

1. **PURPOSE:** 2 Peter 3:1: “to stimulate you to wholesome thinking”
2. **SETTING:** 2 Peter 2:1: “there were also false prophets among the people...They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord ...”
3. **AUDIENCE:** Churches in general
4. **CONTEXT:** Destructive heresies, turning away from the scriptures and gospel.
5. **GENRE:** A fire and brimstone sermon
6. **LANGUAGE:** Imagery: language employed to conjure images of a major conflagration, fire = passion, jealousy, consuming, purifying; destruction = wrath, vengeance
7. **GRAMMAR:** compare-contrast; promises v. destruction
8. **TERMINOLOGY:** Peter uses a good guy, bad guy approach. He addresses the individual as “dear friend” but the other as false prophets, ungodly people, and scoffers
9. **RELATED PASSAGES:** Isaiah 66:15; Malachi 4:1; Matthew 10:15; Isaiah 34:4
10. **WHAT THE VERSE ACTUALLY SAYS:** We should remain rooted in the scriptures and the teachings of the apostles because wicked people will come and attempt to convince us that we will not be judged purposely omitting examples of God’s past judgment. But we need to remember the wrathful God of the Old Testament, and we need to live a Godly life else our wickedness, in time, will be exposed and punished.

This passage should not be interpreted literally but rather figuratively. Perhaps the easiest way to recognize the nature of this passage is to examine the phrase “works in it shall be burnt up”:

**works:** *ergon*: task, employment; a deed, action; that which is wrought or made, a work.<sup>25</sup>  
**will be burnt up:** *heuriskó*: to find, learn, discover, especially after searching.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>“*ergon*,” 2041. Strong’s Concordance: Bible Concordances, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/2041.htm>> September 1, 2012.

People think they can hide their evil... bank robbers cover their identity with masks, burglars carry out their work at night, and the wife beaters ply their trade behind closed doors. Mankind may verbalize that God is omniscient, all knowing; but, they act as if God cannot detect their sins:

**John 3:20:** Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (NIV)

However, fire, within this passage, burns away those disguises uncovering what lies beneath:

**Luke 8:17:** For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. (NIV)

**Why are the heavens and earth reserved for judgment?** Both are used symbolically. The heavens (the sky) as a covering that separates mankind from God, a blanket that conceals evil deeds. The earth as mankind's dwelling place, the place where the deeds are committed. Frequently, some believe that they can "get away" with their sins until death and judgment which occurs in God's terrain, thinking of the earth as their turf and heaven as God's turf. Those fallacies will be exposed on the day of the Lord:

1. **The heavens will disappear with a roar:** The cover allegedly hiding evil deeds from the eyes of God will be removed.
2. **The elements will be destroyed by fire:** The rudiments of belief, misconceptions, and delusions that mankind can escape the consequences of wickedness – they will be removed.
3. **The earth and everything in it will be laid bare:** The Lord will come and expose all iniquity.

**Matthew 10:26:** So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. (NIV)

**Luke 12:2:** There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. (NIV)

Humanity's deeds will be uncovered and the quality of those deeds will be tested by fire:

**1 Corinthians 3:12-13:** If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. (NIV)

**Why a metaphor of fire?** If you have ever been seriously burned by fire, then you understand that burns are extremely painful. Fire is not passive but aggressive... If not kept in check, fire will run rampant and consume everything in its path. Fire symbolizes violence, revenge, judgment, and hell. Fire is the cornerstone of fire and brimstone sermons:

**Jude 1:22-23:** Be merciful to those who doubt; ***snatch others from the fire and save them***; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. (NIV) [*Emphasis added*]

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<sup>26</sup> "heuriskó," 2147. Strong's Concordance: Bible Concordances, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/2147.htm>> September 1, 2012.

**Ezekiel 22:31:** So I will pour out my wrath on them and **consume them with my fiery anger**, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD. (NIV) [*Emphasis added*]

*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*

Jonathan Edwards

The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them...

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours...

In summary, we error if we assume that the sky and the earth literally will be consumed by fire either at the end of this age or the next. 2 Peter 3 is a sermon, a hell and brimstone sermon. It is intended warn, frighten, and invoke those who have strayed back onto the straight and narrow.

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## SCRIPTURE TO INTERPRET SCRIPTURE

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On the surface, “scripture to interpret scripture” seems logical and appropriate; unfortunately, in application, the results are anything but...

A good definition for this concept is provided by Phillip M. Way, *TIME in the Word Ministries*:<sup>27</sup>

What is the “Analogy of Faith”?

My good friend Steve Owen wrote in answer to this question:

The Analogy of Faith is a Scriptural concept revived at the Reformation. The expression is derived from Romans 12:6 (‘katates analogian tes pistews’ - according to the analogy of the faith). According to this principle, the Scriptures can never contradict themselves, so the exegete should study all relevant biblical passages on any one topic to avoid contradictions and achieve harmony.

Simply put – the Bible does not ever contradict itself. Therefore we must study through it to be sure we are not applying a text in a way that runs contrary to what the rest of the Bible says. We use Scripture to interpret Scripture. If a portion of Scripture is not clear, then we use other Scriptures to help us understand.

Sounds like a logical and appropriate approach for careful biblical interpretation, correct? That’s what I thought when I first encountered the phrase. However, after reading several works based upon the approach, I discovered the approach actually meant something entirely different:

*Scriptures can never contradict my doctrine of belief, so we should seek an explanation for those seemingly contradictory passages until they conform and harmonize with my beliefs.*

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<sup>27</sup> Phillip M. Way, “What is the ‘Analogy of Faith?’” *TIME in the Word Ministries*, ND <<http://timeintheword.wordpress.com/2008/03/04/what-is-the-analogy-of-faith/>> Nov. 12, 2011.

Scholars who employ this approach possess a preset notion of what they will find within biblical scripture, and they study the Bible for verification of that notion. New scriptural discoveries are permissible but only to the extent that they conform and harmonize with existing doctrine. Biblical contradictory passages become the “difficult” or “unclear” passages and must be explained or “spiritualized” until the apparent contradiction has been overcome.

This difficulty is most recognizable when examining prophetic passages especially the book of Revelation:

When dealing with the book of Revelation, which is filled with symbolic imagery, one must define this imagery not by the morning newspaper or CNN but by examining the clearer portions of Scripture where many of John’s pictures are clearly defined. Scripture must be used to interpret Scripture. The clear passages must be used to interpret the less clear.<sup>28</sup>

**Satan Bound:** The most dramatic example of this difficulty rests in the assertion that Satan was bound during the first coming of Christ. They appeal to Matthew 12:28-29 as evidence (binding of the strongman). They also appeal to John 12:31, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” If Satan was truly bound during Christ’s earthly ministry, why then is he still called the “god of this world” within the epistles (2 Corinthians 4:4). Their response?

This does not imply that Satan can do no harm whatever while he is bound. It means only what John says here: While Satan is bound he cannot deceive the nations in such a way as to keep them from learning about the truth of God.<sup>29</sup>

What is the connection between casting out demons and deceiving nations?

Jesus Christ bound the strongman of the house. *[True premise]*

Jesus Christ and his disciples cast out demons. *[True premise]*

Jesus Christ charged his followers to make disciples of all nations. *[True premise]*

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**Therefore:** Satan’s binding is restricted to no longer deceive the nations. *[Invalid conclusion]*

The argument lacks an internal link between casting out demons and deceiving the nations. If the “house” refers to planet Earth, then we would expect Satan to be bound in all ways not just one way, but advocates of this view restrict it to only one specific area... Something that’s counterintuitive.

Is Satan bound today? Has Satan been cast out? I think not. One need only consider the evil within our world to understand that Satan is active and seeking to devour those who are ill equipped with the truth. Ample scriptural evidence supports this simple observation. 1 Peter 5:8, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 2 Corinthians 2:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4, James 4:7, Ephesians 6:11, 1 Timothy 3:7, 2 Timothy 2:26, and 1 Thessalonians 2:18 provide a few examples.

Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry, sacrifice on the cross, and victorious resurrection took all the steps necessary to redeem the earth from Satan’s grasp, but He has not yet taken the concrete steps to evict Satan as the God of this world – this will take place after Christ’s Second Advent, Revelation 20:1-3.

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<sup>28</sup> Brian Schwertley, “The Premillennial Deception: Chiasm Examined in the Light of Scripture,” Reformed Online Library, 1996 <<http://www.reformedonline.com/view/reformedonline/milenium.htm>> Nov. 12, 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Hoekema, Professor of Systematic Theology at Calvin Theological Seminar, “Amillennialism,” *The Highway*, c. 1977. <[http://www.the-highway.com/amila\\_Hoekema.html](http://www.the-highway.com/amila_Hoekema.html)> Sep. 30, 2011.

However, for some scholars, Revelations 20:1-3 cannot chronologically follow Revelation 19:11-21 because that would result in a unique age where Jesus Christ physically reigns over planet Earth, and such an age is outside their acceptable doctrine. Therefore, those scholars employ “scripture to interpret scripture” until a suitable explanation can be found to explain away any contradictions.

**Judging the Twelve tribes of Israel:** A second example of how using “scripture to interpret scripture” can be abused is found in the amillennial interpretation of Matthew 19:28.

**Matthew 19:28:** Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (NIV)

In his essay, “The Premillennial Deception: Chiliasm Examined in the Light of Scripture,” Reverend Brian Schwertley, Westminster Presbyterian Church, provides a detailed explanation of why a premillennial interpretation should be rejected:

Furthermore, this passage cannot be taken in the literal sense, for the ten tribes carried away by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. have forever been lost, being absorbed among the Gentiles. Thus, the only way the apostles could judge the twelve tribes would be by judging the Gentiles and the Jews, which is precisely what Christ instructed them to do (cf. Mt. 28:18-20).<sup>30</sup>

Does God possess limited or unlimited capabilities? While reading essays on various biblical topics, I was amazed by how an author could allude to the power of God in one paragraph and then restrict that same power in the next... such is the case of statements such as Reverend Schwertley’s. He asserts that Christ is currently ruling the kingdom from his heavenly throne, but then he asserts that God cannot locate members from the ten “lost” tribes – God created the entire universe, but he has difficulty locating a remnant from his chosen people? The two concepts do not logically blend.

Please don’t misunderstand my intentions. Reverend Schwertley’s arguments are thorough, thoughtful, intellectual, and, I believe, sincere. Unfortunately, far too many scholars have become “academics” where Bible study is an academic exercise, not divine revelation. While they assert that Christ’s kingdom is spiritual – and I believe that it is – they employ human logic to understand the spiritual.

All biblical verses are the inspired Word of God and carry the same weight as if spoken directly by God:

**2 Timothy 3:16:** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

It is an error to place more emphasis on those passages that agree with our personal belief system than those that disagree. Yes, we should look to other passages to assist us understand more difficult passages but it is an error to ignore the meaning of those difficult passages.

If a scripture says that Christ’s disciples will sit upon twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel, then Christ’s disciples will be granted authority to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. We should not

<sup>30</sup> Brian Schwertley, Westminster Presbyterian Church, “The Premillennial Deception: Chiliasm Examined in the Light of Scripture.” Reformed Online, 1996  
<<http://www.reformedonline.com/view/reformedonline/milenium.htm>> Nov. 13, 2011.

“spiritualize” the twelve tribes by claiming that they are the Church unless there is strong, concrete scriptural evidence indicating that the Israel is now the Church, and such evidence simply does not exist.<sup>31</sup>

God’s Word is difficult, but we have little chance of acquiring a greater understanding if we restrict our understanding to what we already believe. Within this current study, I have encountered ideas that were contrary to my understanding. Occasionally, I attempt to ignore or explain those contradictions away, but they didn’t seem to want to go away. I have to set aside my prejudices... I have to go outside and feed the chicken, collect the duck eggs, watch a television program, read the news, eat lunch, sit out under the trees, or take a nap... I have to do something to give my mind (and spirit) a chance to listen...

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## TIME: GOD’S CONCEPT OF TIME

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Man’s concept of time does not match God’s. In some instances, a day represents one 360 degree rotation of the earth; in other instances, a day can represent a thousand year. Biblical scholars have frequently attempted to make sense of Biblical time; Charles Wesley predicted that the world would end in 1794 and William Miller predicted sometime in 1843 or 1844. We must approach biblical time cautiously, what is a wink of an eye in God’s mind may be a lifetime ours:

**John 12:31-33:** “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” This he said, signifying what death he should die.

now: *nun*: adverb (a) of time: just now, even now; just at hand, immediately, (b) of logical connection: now then, (c) in commands and appeals: at this instant.<sup>32</sup>

John 12:31 seems to claim two things took place at the time the verse was spoken:

1. The world was judged.
2. Satan was cast out of this world.

Yet, we know from 2 Corinthians 4:4 that Satan was not in fact cast out and the judgment of this world will not materially occur until the latter days of the current age:

**2 Corinthians 4:4:** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Do these two scriptures contradict each other? Absolutely not! The problem lies not within the scriptures but within human logic and human perception of time. Let’s take a look at a similar passage:

**John 19:30:** When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Was Jesus Christ’s work finished on the cross? Well, yes because he had accomplished the sacrificial offering, but no because ample work remained ahead such as sending the Holy Spirit, advocating the plight of mankind before the throne, and redeeming planet Earth from the clutches of Satan.

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<sup>31</sup> See “Apologetics: Israel & the Church.”

<sup>32</sup> “nun,” Strong’s Concordance: Biblos.com, ND. <<http://concordances.org/greek/3568.htm>> Nov. 13, 2011.

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## MULTI-STEP EVENTS

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We need to understand that a single event may involve two or more steps. The first step occurs when the justification for the act is accomplished; the second step occurs when the act is materially completed. For example, evicting a renter from leased property takes at least three steps – giving notice, obtaining an eviction judgment, and then physically removing the renter by law enforcement officials. The process can take as little as twenty days but may take several months or even years. The giving notice and subsequent removal does not occur simultaneously.

We find similar multi-step events within the Bible. <sup>(1)</sup>Jesus Christ gave notice to Satan when He resisted Satan’s temptation in the wilderness, <sup>(2)</sup>He obtained an eviction judgment through His sacrifice on the cross, and <sup>(3)</sup>He will physically remove Satan as the “god of this world” during His Second Advent. The entire process will take at least 1,985 years, possibly much, much longer.

Let’s take a look at another example of a multi-step event:

**Revelation 11:15:** And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.”

A plain reading of this verse would seem to indicate that Christ is taking possession of the earth at the very moment the seventh trumpet sounds; however, that is not the case. After the sounding, angels pour six bowls of wrath; then at the pouring of the seventh bowl, Jesus Christ takes the physical steps necessary to remove Satan and his crew – the final step of a twenty-one step process:

1. **Steps 1-6:** During the breaking of the first six seals, the world is placed on notice that the end of the age is quickly approaching – this giving notice is accomplished by the three angels with the three messages (Rev. 14:1-12). Those who heed the warning and place their trust in God are raptured at the breaking of the sixth seal. Those who do not heed the warning remain on earth and endure the plagues of the first six trumpets.
2. **Steps 7-13:** The breaking of the seventh seal releases the seven angels with the seven trumpets. During the sounding of the first six trumpets, the world is placed on notice that God is about to pour his wrath upon the planet – this serving of the eviction judgment is accomplished by the two witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13). Those who heed the warning might survive God’s wrath and become inhabitants of the millennial age. Those who do not heed the warning endure the coming bowls of wrath.
3. **Steps 14-20:** The sounding of the seventh trumpet releases the seven angels with the seven bowls of wrath. The pouring of the first six bowls of wrath warns the inhabitants of the earth that God’s judgment is upon them. Unfortunately, those who have not yet repented from their wickedness will not do so during these final hours (Rev. 16:11).
4. **Step 21:** At the pouring of the seventh bowl of wrath, Jesus Christ comes in his glory with his angels and saints and forcibly evict Satan, the Antichrist, the false prophet, and all of their coconspirators.

When examining scripture that involves an event, we need to consider the number of steps involved in completing that event. Is it a single step process? Or, are there two or more steps? Far too often, biblical scholars interpret a multi-step event as a single step process. Failing to grasp the complexities involved, they make assumptions that lead to interpretation errors. This problem, I believe, is just one of the reasons there is such diversity among Christian beliefs.

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## EXTENDED TIME PERIODS

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Some futurists, those who believe that most prophecies have yet to be fulfilled, love 2 Peter 3:8:

**2 Peter 3:8:** But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Some use this single verse to extrapolate the year of Jesus Christ's Second Advent, for example:

It took God six days to create the earth.

The seventh day God rested (the Sabbath).

The millennial reign represents the seventh day or the Sabbath for the earth.

According to 2 Peter 3:8, one day equals a thousand years.

Jesus Christ will begin his millennial reign 6,000 years after Adam's birth.

Adam was born in 4004BC.

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**Therefore:** the Second Advent of Jesus Christ will occur in the year 2004 AD.

Of course, this calculation is in error; the Second Advent of Jesus Christ did not occur in 2004. Several variations of this argument exist with some excluding Jubilee years or using lunar calendars. In any event, those who calculate Christ's Second Advent have, thus far, been inaccurate, and it tends to show the folly of attempting use human logic to calculate God's timing.

A good example of how biblical timing does not parallel human logic can be found in Revelation 12:

**Revelation 12:1-6:** Then I witnessed in heaven an event of great significance. I saw a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant, and she cried out because of her labor pains and the agony of giving birth.

Then I witnessed in heaven another significant event. I saw a large red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, with seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept away one-third of the stars in the sky, and he threw them to the earth. He stood in front of the woman as she was about to give birth, ready to devour her baby as soon as it was born.

She gave birth to a son who was to rule all nations with an iron rod. And her child was snatched away from the dragon and was caught up to God and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place to care for her for 1,260 days. (NLT)

If we were to paraphrase the meaning of this passage, it might sound something like:

The woman with the crown of twelve stars on her head represents the nation of Israel. The red dragon, we are told in verse 9, is Satan. The son who was to rule all the nations is Jesus Christ, and he went and sat at the right hand of God after his resurrection. Israel, of course, ceased to exist as a nation after the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD – ethnic Jews were scattered (fled) among the nations (wilderness) where God sheltered a remnant against extinction (a place to care for her) until the end of the age (1,260 days).<sup>33</sup>

The state of Israel gained independence in 1948, and Israel recaptured Jerusalem during the six-day war in 1967. It would take a great deal of speculation to align the 1,260 days with either of these two

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<sup>33</sup> See "Revelation 12: The Woman, Child, and Dragon" for an analysis of this passage.

events... or any other dates in the foreseeable future. Yet, numbers such as these are frequently used to calculate future events.

Interestingly, this passage is a dual occurrence passage. A slightly different description of the event is also given in Revelation 12:13-17 with the 1,260 days converted to time, times, and half a time (3 ½ years). A number frequently used to calculate the seven year transition period between this age and the next. What then does the 1,260 days represent? My best estimate is that the number represents a very long but specific period of time... Can we calculate when this regathering will occur? No, not really because only God the Father knows (Matthew 24:36) when the harvest of Christian believers is full (Romans 11:25).

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## **A BIBLICAL DAY IS INCALCULABLE**

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Many Bible scholars assert (X) must be true else God is a liar. Unfortunately, statements such as these ignore the nature of biblical scripture and of God's timing. The exact meaning within biblical passages is difficult, if not impossible, to determine; this is especially true of time:

**Zephaniah 1:18:** Your silver and gold will not save you on that day of the LORD's anger. For the whole land will be devoured by the fire of his jealousy. He will make a terrifying end of all the people on earth.

Is the "day of the Lord" a literal, twenty-four hour day? Unlikely. A biblical "day" can have various lengths:

**Ezekiel 4:6:** And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

**Numbers 14:34:** After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

**2 Peter 3:8:** But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

**Psalms 90:4:** For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

A direct application of the "a biblical day is incalculable" can be found in the following verse:

**Genesis 2:17:** But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Did Adam die the same day as he ate of the tree? Some claim that he died spiritually, that he was separated from God. However, that would be over simplifying the verse. We see from later verses that God continued to interact with mankind – he spoke directly to Cain (Genesis 4:6). Altogether Adam lived 930 years (Genesis 5:5) which is nearly one-thousand years...