

Parousia

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The
**PROPHETIC
PILLARS**

*of the
Prewrath Position*

Part 1: The Timing of the Seventieth Week of Daniel

The PROPHETIC PILLARS of the Prewrath Position

by Charles Cooper

Introduction

I recently had the opportunity to teach the prewrath position to several hundred pastors in the Ukraine. My teaching was facilitated by the assistance of an interpreter. But working with a translator presents several challenges that make it very difficult for even the most gifted speaker to communicate effectively. My sentences had to be short. The normal rhythm and cadence of my speech patterns were restricted by the host language. Some English words and phrases required longer explanations in Ukrainian. I had to wait for the translator to repeat what I had just said forcing me to remember what I had just communicated and what I needed to say after the translator finished. To keep the audience's attention, I had to remember where I started and was supposed to finish. Common words and phrases had to be sacrificed to make the translation easier for the translator. These types of challenges often cause some communicators so much frustration that they shy away from opportunities to speak that require a translator.

Having taught the prewrath position using Russian, Manipourian and Ukrainian translators, I have learned how important it is to stick to the basics. Our multimedia prewrath presentation requires at least five hours to teach when taught slowly and carefully with the goal of educating the listener rather than a broad, general overview of the topic.

However, with a translator that time is doubled. Seldom will a speaker have that much time to teach in any given setting. It, therefore, becomes critical to communicate the bare essentials in a minimal amount of time.

The Goal

What then are the bare essentials of the prewrath position? In this and several subsequent articles, we are going to examine the five prophetic pillars of the prewrath position: *The fact and timing of the Seventieth Week of Daniel, the timing of the rapture of the church in relationship to the Day of the Lord, the timing of the salvation of Israel, the timing of God's reclamation of His rule on earth, and the timing of the battle of Armageddon.* These are the irreducible essentials which form the basis and backbone of the prewrath position.

If you have read *The Sign* or our other printed materials, you also know that we have opinions on ancillary issues such as the identity of the restrainer, the persona of Antichrist, and the names of the two witnesses. However, these issues are not the prophetic pillars of the prewrath position. To be truly prewrath, one must hold to five *explicit* prophetic pillars, not to these ancillary issues which are *implicit*. It is because these five pillars are so essential to the prewrath position that the next several issues of *Parousia* will address them in great detail.

The First Prophetic Pillar:

THE TIMING OF THE SEVENTIETH WEEK OF DANIEL IS YET FUTURE

**The Problem**

The prewrath rapture postulates that Daniel 9:27 has a yet future fulfillment. This futuristic position is generally held by those of us who insist upon a face-value fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Notice Daniel 9:27:

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. (Emphasis added)

However, taking this futuristic position does not enjoy unanimous consent among all Bible students. Four views are articulated against a literal interpretation. Liberal scholars argue that Daniel's Seventieth Week concerns events in connection with the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC. Jewish scholars teach that this week concerns events in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Amillennial thinkers insist that the Seventieth Week's events are allegorical, concerning events that cover an indefinite period of time starting with the ministry of Christ until the end of the age. An assortment of the Amillennarians hold to the view that the Week is the time from the beginning of Christ's ministry to undefined events some three-and-a-half years after His death. Dr. John F. Walvoord's response to the four views stated above is worth repeating in full. He writes,

Each of the four views which claim fulfillment largely in the past have their supporting arguments... But they have one common failure, which is the Achilles' heel of their interpretation: none of them provides literal fulfillment of the prophecy. The first view, the Maccabean fulfillment, is built on the premise that Daniel is a forgery and prophecy is impossible. The second and third views explain away problems by spiritualization and have no specific chronology. The fourth view, that of Philip Mauro, finds literal fulfillment of the first sixty-nine and one-half sevens, but no fulfillment of the climax.¹

The only position that meets the demand of a literal fulfillment is the futurist's view, i.e. that Daniel's Seventieth Week is yet future.

The Context of the Passage

According to Daniel 9:2, Daniel had in his possession the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah prophesied in 605 BC that Judah would serve "the king of Babylon seventy years (Jeremiah 25:11)." In fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar began a deporta-

tion of Jews in 598 BC and ultimately destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. 2 Chronicles 36:15-21 details the event. Notice,

And the LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them [Israel] again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on *His people* and on *His dwelling place*, but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand. And all the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its fortified buildings with fire, and destroyed all its valuable articles. And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until *seventy years* were complete. (Emphasis added)

Daniel had come from Jerusalem as a captive to Babylon at the beginning of Judah's discipline and knew that the seventy years were about to be completed. Daniel indicates the time of this particular prophecy as that of "the first year of the reign of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus" which is thought to be 538 BC. Daniel went before the Lord, and confessed his sin and the sin of his people (Israel) on behalf of the holy mountain of God (the temple site) (Dan. 9:20). In answer to Daniel's prayer, God sent Gabriel to give him "insight with understanding" concerning "the appearance" (Dan. 9:23). In other words, Gabriel is going to explain to Daniel the reason for his (Gabriel) appearance at this particular time.

490 Years of Judah's History Detailed

Gabriel instructs Daniel that "seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city..." The Hebrew word for *weeks* (shabu'im) used in Daniel 9:24 can mean a *unit* or *period of seven, heptad or week*.² This term in one form or another is used twenty times in the Old Testament. Three times it means a unit of seven and is contextually defined by the term "days" (Ezek. 45:21; Dan. 10:2-3); six times the context clearly indicates that it means "weeks," that is, a normal seven-day week (Gen. 29:27-28; Lev. 12:5; Deut. 16:9, 10, 16; 2

Chron. 8:13); and six times it is used as a “unit of seven” without reference to specific days or weeks (Dan. 9:24, 25, 26, 27). We are able to conclude from this summary of Old Testament usage that the term means basically “a unit of seven” and must be *contextally* defined as to what specifically is described.

In the context of Daniel 9:24-27 the term *weeks* (*shabu'im*) can only refer to units of seven years. This means that Daniel is speaking of seventy of these units of seven years or a total of 490 years. This conclusion is based on the following reasoning. *First*, in Daniel 9:2 reference is made to “seventy years.” This indicates that Daniel had been thinking in terms of years.

Second, the seventy years of captivity which Jeremiah prophesied and is restated in the 36th chapter of 2 Chronicles was Judah’s repayment (punishment) to God for 490 years of stolen sabbatical years.³ Thus, a parallel exists — 490 years before Judah’s captivity and 490 years after her captivity. The 26th chapter of Leviticus and verses 34-35 and 43 state,

Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it... For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes.

Therefore, the 490 years that precipitated the 70 year captivity will be followed by another 490 years. This argues strongly that “seventy weeks” refers to 490 years and not 490 days or 490 seven-day weeks.

The *third* reason *shabu'im* refers to years in Daniel 9:24-27 is because it is impossible to fit the events detailed in the prophecy into a 490 day or week period. The fact that Messiah would be cut off at the end of a clearly defined period of time makes this conclusion inescapable.

The *fourth* reason *shabu'im* refers to years is because of the parallel expression “time, times and half a time” used in both the book of Daniel and the Revelation of Christ to John. Daniel 9:27 indicates that a covenant will be confirmed for “one unit of seven.” This same covenant will be broken at the mid-point of this unit of seven. A seven-year period best harmonizes with the other time referents given in Daniel and Revelation. *Time, times and half a time* (Dan. 7:25, 12:7; Rev. 12:14) describes the same temporal limits of the trouble and desolation that the half a week describes in Daniel 9:27. The fact that the Revelation of Christ adds the temporal designates: 1,260 days and 42 months is further confirmation of Daniel’s intent.⁴

Fifth, Daniel qualifies *shabu'im* when it refers to days. Notice Daniel 10:2-3 which states,

“In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for *three entire weeks*. I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire *three weeks* were completed.” (Emphasis added)

It is interesting and important to notice that Daniel uses a key phrase here. “Three weeks of days” is the literal translation of the text. The NASB attempts to show the emphasis of the text by translating this key phrase as “three entire weeks.” The fact that Daniel used the term *days* in conjunction with *shabu'im* is instructive. Was it necessary? No one would have misunderstood Daniel’s intent at this point. Even if he had not included the term *days* in connection with *shabu'im*, the reader would not have concluded that Daniel was indicating that he had mourned for 21 years or 21 seven-day weeks (147 days). However, the fact that Daniel included the qualifier *days*, when unnecessary, argues strongly that the unqualified *shabu'im* in Daniel 9:24 refers to years.

The *sixth* reason to interpret *shabu'im* as referring to years is because of a parallel expression found in the Mishnah (a Jewish Commentary). This commentary on the Mosaic Law states,

If a man leased a field from his fellow [countryman] for ‘a week of years’ for 700 zuz, the Seventh Year is included in the number; but if he leased it from him for ‘seven years’ for 700 zuz, the Seventh Year is not included in the number... They used to prove witnesses with seven inquiries: In what *week of years*...? (Italic added)⁵

Without the context, the references in the Mishnah may not make sense. However, in two separate instances, the Mishnah uses a parallel expression that can only be interpreted to refer to a seven-year period which exactly parallels Daniel 9:24. Therefore, Daniel’s seventy weeks refer to a 490 year time period.

483 Years To Messiah’s Death

While face-value interpreters of Scripture do not agree on the beginning point (*Terminus A Quo*) of the first sixty-nine weeks (483 years), there is greater consensus on the ending point (*Terminus Ad Quem*). Daniel 9:26-27 states

So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

Daniel indicates a time sequence which clearly sets forth an unarguable termination of the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel’s prophecy. Maintaining a clear parallelism between the fate of Israel (the nation) and Jerusalem (the city), Daniel determines that the issuing of a decree *to restore and rebuild Jerusalem... with plaza and moat even in times of distress* would serve as the beginning marker of the temporal sequence. The ending marker of the temporal sequence would be the coming of Messiah the Prince.

The decree *to restore and rebuild Jerusalem with plaza and moat in times of distress* indicates three very important identifying details. First, the words *to restore and rebuild* signal a return of the city to its former state. This is not a refurbishing of the city. Second, the restoration and re-

building of Jerusalem will be accompanied by *plaza* and *moat*. These two words indicate both interior and exterior compartments associated with the walls of Jerusalem. The last detail concerns the atmosphere associated with the restoration. The rebuilding of Jerusalem will *happen during times of distress* or opposition. With these facts in mind, we are limited to only three historical decrees that are potential starting points for the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem: (1) the decree of Cyrus in 539 BC; (2) the decree of Darius in 519 BC; and (3) the decree of Artaxerxes in 444 BC.

Several important details confirm that Artaxerxes' decree is the beginning point of Daniel's temporal sequence.⁶ First, Nehemiah 2:3, 5 and 8 make direct reference to the restoration of the city of Jerusalem along with its gates and walls. This very important condition is not met by the decrees of both Darius and Cyrus which concerned only the rebuilding of the temple. Second, Both Nehemiah and Ezra indicate that the restoration of the walls was done during very distressing circumstances. Third, no subsequent decrees were issued by Persian kings that pertained to the rebuilding of Jerusalem after 444 BC.

Given the temporal sequence outlined by Daniel, it is logical that the sixty-nine weeks were fulfilled historically. The events of Christ's first advent were in no way connected with Daniel's final week and thus the events of this final seven-year period must still be yet future. Several points establish this conclusion.

First, the six elements of Daniel prophecy — to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy cannot be found in a face-value fulfillment in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Both Israel (the nation) and Jerusalem (the city) have not finished their transgression (their rebellion against God and their Messiah) nor are they experiencing everlasting righteousness when their rebellion will turn to love and adoration of their Savior and King, Jesus Christ. In addition, the holy of holies⁷ certainly has not received an anointing in an everlasting righteous Jerusalem.

Second, it is important to remember that Messiah was cut off after the sixty-ninth week and not *during* the seventieth week. Daniel 9:26 states that "after the [seven weeks and] sixty-two weeks Messiah would be cut off and have nothing." Some have insisted that Messiah was cut off during the seventieth week. However, such a conclusion is un-

warranted given a simple face-value reading of the text, and in light of the fact that Daniel clearly indicates that the middle of the seventieth week would be initiated by the stoppage of sacrifices in the temple. These events are in no way connected with the death of Jesus Christ at His first coming.

The *third* reason the events of the Lord's first advent are not connected with Daniel's Seventieth Week has to do with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple mentioned in Dan. 9:26. This event occurs before the initiation of this final seven-year period, thereby identifying the person who will confirm the covenant with Israel in Daniel 9:27. It is very important for the reader to pay very close attention to the text at this point. Notice Daniel 9:26: "And the *people* of the prince who is to come *will destory the city and the sanctuary*," (Emphasis added). It is "the *people* of the prince who is to come" who destroy the city and sanctuary. This is a very important point. For those who insist that "the prince who is to come" is Jesus Christ, it is required of them to show in what sense either New Testament believers or unbelieving Jews destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. There is no historical basis upon which one can even allude to such a conclusion. It never happened! Neither believers nor unbelieving Jews have ever destroyed Jerusalem or the temple in Jerusalem. Another support of this conclusion is the inescapable fact that Jesus at His first coming did not confirm an existing covenant with Israel, but was, at every point, rejected by the religious leaders of his day. The only covenant explicitly associated with Christ in the New Testament is the new covenant.⁸ A final point against the notion that Jesus Christ is "the ruler" mentioned in Daniel 9:26 is the impossibility of Christ breaking a covenant. There is simply no New Testament foundation for such a conclusion. Therefore, Jesus Christ is not "he (who) will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering..." (Dan. 9:27).

The *fourth* reason the events of Christ's first advent are not connected with Daniel's Seventieth Week is because Christ's death made atonement sacrifices unnecessary, but allowed for the continuation of other sacrifices. This conclusion is supported by the fact that sacrifices continued in the temple at Jerusalem until AD 70 and will resume during the time of the tribulation temple (II Thess. 2:4) and the millennial reign of Christ (Ez. 40:5-47:12).⁹ Three-and-a-half years after Daniel's Seventieth Week begins, all sacrifices will stop. No sacrifices were stopped in conjunction with the

death of Christ in AD 33.

A *fifth* reason the events of Christ's first advent are not connected with Daniel's Seventieth Week has to do with the fact that He (Jesus) predicts a yet future literal fulfillment of the events depicted in Daniel 9:27. The Lord Jesus, Himself, predicted a future fulfillment in Matthew 24:15 when He said, "Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)...." Here the Lord specifically indicates that the event which will mark the middle of the Seventieth Week is yet future. The fact that the Lord spoke this prophecy several days before His death assures us that this prophecy was not fulfilled during the Lord's earthly ministry. Such a conclusion is strengthened by the fact that Matthew wrote his gospel prior to AD 70, several years after the Lord originally spoke the prophecy. Any possible fulfillment would have surely been indicated by Matthew given his great interest in reporting prophetic fulfillment.¹⁰

The Apostle Paul, subsequent to the Lord's prophetic statement, reiterates the future fulfillment of Daniel 9:27. He writes,

Let no one in any way deceive you, for [the Day of the Lord will not come] unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of wor-

ship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

Commenting on these verses, Leon Morris writes,

All attempts to equate the Man of Lawlessness with historical personages break down on the fact that Paul was speaking of someone who would appear only at the end of the age. The Man of Lawlessness is an eschatological personage. Paul wrote that he will appear just before the Lord comes again.¹¹

Morris adds, "The teaching of Daniel was taken up by our Lord (Mark 13:14), and it is from Him that it becomes Christian Tradition."¹² The temple desecration predicted by Daniel, restated by the Lord and explained by Paul was still an unaccomplished fact in or about AD 50.¹³

If one needed more proof that Daniel 9:27 will have a yet future literal fulfillment, the Revelation of the Lord to His bond-servants should be enough. The individual described as the Beast—who makes war with the saints, who has authority over the nations, and who demands the worship of the world—accords best with "he [who] will confirm a covenant for one week" mentioned in Daniel 9:27. The description of the Beast (Rev. 13:1-3), the forty-two months of authority to act on the earth (Rev. 13:5) when compared to the activities of the prince to come in Daniel 9:27, and the persecution of the people of

The 2000 Year Gap

The overwhelming evidence supports a yet future fulfillment of the Seventieth Week of Daniel. It is the only natural, face-value interpretation of the Scriptures possible. That said, there is one question unanswered. Why the gap? A yet future fulfillment of Daniel's Seventieth Week requires a gap that is already 2000 years long between the end of the first 483 years, the cutting off of Messiah, and the final seven years of end-time events. This has been a stumbling block for many interpreters of prophecy.

At first glance, one might consider a gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week as a matter without scriptural foundation. However, there is biblical support for the separation.

First, the 70-week prophecy concerns both the nation (Israel) and her holy city (Jerusalem). Since Messiah was cut off, Israel has experienced the Diaspora, having lost her national identity and her holy city. Only in 1948 did she regain her recognition as a nation, and in 1967 once again she regained control of Jerusalem, setting the stage for the 70th week to begin.

Second, there is an accepted principal of interpretation that recognizes the OT phenomenon of *prophetic perspective*, in which gaps in time were hidden from the prophet's view. The prophets were often looking at the future from a horizontal perspective. This is much like looking at several mountains peaks unaware that between the mountain peaks is a valley. Only by having a bird's eye view or direct revelation could the prophets have known of the gaps in time between certain events. This is clearly apparent in the case of the Lord's first and second coming, the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, and the millennial and eternal kingdoms of God. These three events are separated by many, many years which was not detailed to the prophets in the O.T.

The *third* support for a gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks concerns the six prophetic events depicted in Daniel 9:24: "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy," all have reference to the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, events that neither the nation nor the city has experienced in a final sense.

A *fourth* support concerns the Messiah's death. Daniel indicates that Messiah would be cut off *after* the sixty-ninth week and not *during* the seventieth week. Daniel clearly states that "after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing..." In contrast, Messiah is not directly identified with the seventieth week in Daniel 9:27 at all.

The *fifth* and final support for a gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week concerns "he [who] makes a covenant for one week with the many." Because he makes a covenant for seven years, breaks the covenant after three and a half years, and stops the sacrifice and offering, Christ is eliminated. The only person who fits the description given by Daniel is the Man of Lawlessness or the Beast. Both Paul (2 Thess. 2:1-11) and John (Rev. 12-13) indicate that the activities of the Man of Lawlessness or Beast accord best with Daniel's prophecy, which must be a still-future event that occurs in the last days.

God (Rev. 13:7) establishes the future fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. Those who move away from a simple, literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy fail to see and appreciate this fact.

The generations that followed the Apostles understood that the events of Daniel's Seventieth Week were yet future. A most important witness to this fact is Hippolytus. He was a disciple of Irenaeus who was a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of the Apostle John. Concerning Daniel's Seventieth Week being an event that is still futuristic, Hippolytus forges a direct link back to the Apostle John who links us to Christ who links us to Daniel, the prophet. Hippolytus writes,

Now Daniel will set forth this subject to us. For he says, "And one week will make a covenant with many, and it shall be that in the midst (half) of the week my sacrifice and oblation shall cease." By one week, therefore, he meant *the last week which is to be at the end of the whole world...* (Italic added)¹⁴

David G. Dunbar of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School writes,

The second century was a time of intense eschatological concern for the church... (T)he non-fulfillment of the Parousia... was the cause of speculation, disagreement, and doctrinal and institutional development among the early Christians... Eschatological interest was therefore already in the wind at the opening of the third century when the shock of renewed persecution fell upon the church... It is not surprising that this period also produced the most extensive treatment of biblical eschatology found among the Fathers. The author of this material is Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170-c. 236), a student of Irenaeus, whose exegetical writings were largely devoted to apocalyptic themes... His Commentary on Daniel, the oldest known continuous commentary on any book of the Bible by an orthodox Christian dates from the period AD 201-204...¹⁵

Dunbar concludes his excellent article by saying,

Thus, Irenaeus is the source not only for specific points of Hippolytean exegesis but also for [his] overall eschatological approach. The major patterns of historical-eschatological understanding so important to Hippolytus — the succession of world-empires in chapters 2, 7, and 8 of Daniel, the eschatological interpretation of the Seventy Weeks prophecy, and the creation-week typology — are already present in Irenaeus. There is, therefore, not a great deal of new material in Hippolytus. He does develop a few original themes; but by and large he is not an innovator but a preserver and collector of what has gone before. This suggests that in Hippolytus we find a kind of "main-line" eschatology which may have been quite widespread during the closing decades of the second century.¹⁶

By quoting Dunbar at length, we seek to establish a very important connection. Five hundred years before Christ, Daniel received a prophecy from Gabriel. Jesus restated the prophecy in Matthew 24:15 two days before His death. The Apostle Paul restated "by the word of the Lord," the same prophecy 10 to 15 years after the death of Christ

but before the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Upon the direct revelation of Christ, the Apostle John highlighted, with expanded details, the same prophecy of Daniel's Seventieth Week 50-plus years after the death of Christ and 20 years after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.¹⁷ Hippolytus' teachings, 100 years after the Apostle John, state that the teachings of the church were in fact that Daniel's Seventieth Week was yet future.

ENDNOTES

1. John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 232.
2. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, eds. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), pp. 988-989.
3. God commanded Israel to allow the land to rest for one complete year every seven years. During this eighth year (a sabbatical year), the land was not to be planted (Ex. 23:10-11); slaves were to be freed (Ex. 21:2-6); and all debts were to be forgiven, (Deut. 15:1-6). It was Israel's failure to observe these details that resulted in their judgment and enslavement to the Babylonians.
4. The time designates in Daniel and Revelation point to a 360 day year with each month consisting of 30 days. This is confirmed by Dr. Henry M. Morris in his work, *The Genesis Record*. He writes, "These months [mentioned in Genesis 8:13-14] were apparently 30 days in length, as is inferred from the data in Genesis 7:11, 24 and 8:3, 4. The Flood had started on the 17th day of the second month; so they were in the Ark a total of 371 days, a period of exactly 53 weeks. See page 210-211.
5. Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew, with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933) pp. 363, 388.
6. Students of *The Sign* will recognize a small change at this point. Sir Robert Anderson calculated the beginning of the sixty-nine weeks from the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus which Anderson understood was given on or about March 14, 445 BC. Anderson counted 173, 880 days until April 6, AD 32. Anderson recognized that 476 years existed between March 14, 445 BC and April 6, AD 32 which totaled 173, 740 days. He then added 116 days for leap years and 24 days for the difference between March 14 and April 6 and thus arrived at a total of 173, 880 days. However, Anderson recognized a problem with his calculations which resulted in Christ's death occurring on a Sunday or Monday. Sir Robert Anderson was unable to find a credible solution. However, since Anderson's time, scholars have better evidence that Artaxerxes Longimanus' decree was issued on March 5, 444 BC which puts the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on March 30, AD 33.
7. This is the literal translation of the Hebrew. There is debate concerning whether a person, a thing or a place is intended. In *The Sign* we take the position that it refers to Christ.
8. Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 8:8, 13 and 9:15.
9. It should not escape the reader's attention that no atonement sacrifice is indicated during the millennial temple system.
10. Matthew indicates more than 15 different prophecies fulfilled in the life of Christ.
11. Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 221.
12. *ibid.* See footnote 16.
13. James Everett Frame, *Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960) 20. Also F.F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians, Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 45 (Waco: Word Books, 1982) xxxv.
14. GCS 1/2.27
15. David. G. Dunbar, "Hippolytus of Rome and the Eschatological Exegesis of the Early Church," *WTJ*, V45, Fall 1983, page 323-324.
16. *ibid.*, page 339.
17. The date of the book of Revelation is debated.

The Sign Ministries' *Promotional*

VIDEO

I N P R O D U C T I O N



Seven-thirty AM. The lighting crew, director, and assistant director arrive on the set. Lights, stands, diffusers, reflectors, and a camera crane are unloaded from the grip truck, and crew members add final tufts of grass to a fifty-foot indoor set of the Mount of Olives. Actors file in around 9:30, with costumers ready to suit them up. The Director double checks the storyboards, and the Assistant Director makes sure every last prop is in place. At 11:15, the camera rolls for the first shot of the day. The slate is lifted in front of the camera to identify the shot, and the director calls for action. Four “disciples” approach “Christ”, seated on an artificial “boulder”, and the reading from Matthew 24 begins: “What will be the sign of Your coming?”

Such is the opening scene for the first promotional video for The Sign Ministries. Currently in production, this eleven minute tape is geared toward pastors and other ministry leaders who may be interested in hosting an End-Times Presentation. The video will also be helpful for anyone who would like to learn more about The Sign Ministries.

The video provides an introduction to the ministry, including our face-value interpretation of end-times prophecy. The video places special attention on outlining the different presentation formats offered by the ministry, such as pastors meetings, church presentations, and area-wide seminars and conferences. Executive Director Roger Best gives us the introduction and background for the ministry, Charles Cooper shares in a segment devoted to highlighting presentation formats, and Bill Lee-Warner provides a few examples of the questions addressed at the conferences. Several testimonials from conference attendees wrap-up the program.

The script was written by several members of the staff, and the footage taped on several locations. Narration is performed by Pastor Dan Hayden, founder of Truth in Grace Ministries. An original music score rounds out the production. The video is expected to be available this fall.

Resource News

COMING SOON

www.revelationcommentary.org

In the final book of the Bible, Revelation, we find critical information detailing the culmination of God's purposes and plans for mankind. Over the years, next to the question on the Rapture, the one request we hear probably more than any other here at The Sign Ministries is for help with the book of Revelation.

With a rising interest in the biblical teaching regarding the return of Christ and the events surrounding His coming, as well as the increased number of voices teaching varying views regarding His return, we have felt the need to produce an easily accessible and understandable commentary on Revelation. As you can imagine, this project is no small task. We therefore anticipate that the commentary will take some time.

Our vision for the commentary is to publish it on the internet instead of in book form. The reason is practical: once a book is published, it requires large amounts of money to either add to it or make any changes. There are many details to be noted in the book of Revelation and constant study is necessary for greater understanding. The internet allows us to have a platform by which the commentary can be fluid, since we are constantly learning, and plan to update the commentary as new insights are gained so our readers can avail themselves of our latest findings.

Our hope is that by late fall 1999 or early winter 2000, we will have in place (1) an introductory overview of Revelation, (2) an explanation of our face value biblical study method, (3) an outline of Revelation, (4) a section on important terminology, and (5) the beginnings of a verse-by-verse commentary. The website address will be: www.revelationcommentary.org.

We'll keep you updated as to the developments. In the mean time, as the Lord leads you, pray for Mr. Van Kampen and the team as we work to put this commentary together.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

www.signministries.org/faqs.htm

This special section of our website addresses many of the questions that we're asked time and time again such as: Why study prophecy? Are the seals of Revelation 6 the wrath of God? Does Revelation 5:9-10 teach a Pretribulation Rapture? Who are the "beheaded martyrs" in Revelation 20:4, and why are they resurrected at the beginning of the millennial kingdom? Who are the twenty-four elders? What is America's part in the End Times?

Every month we try to add another response to an FAQ, so be sure to visit the website regularly. If you have a particular question you'd like to ask, please either call us at 1-800-627-5134 or email us at info@signministries.org. Our desire is to grow as both students and teachers of the Word of God as we seek to discover, not determine, the meaning of Scripture.

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Seminar in the Philippines

God continues to open doors for The Sign Ministries around the world. At the invitation of Johnny Sy, president of Praise Inc., Roger Best had the privilege of presenting a Parousia Seminar in Manila. Mr. Sy had read *The Sign* and was led to contact us concerning ministry in the Philippines.

Roger arrived in Manila late Wednesday evening, May 26th and the next morning had the opportunity to speak at the monthly meeting of pastors which was held at the Southern Baptist headquarters. Then on Friday and Saturday a two-day seminar was conducted at Pasay City Alliance Church, where Rev. Kenneth Gerada is pastor. Many people traveled long distances to attend the seminar. Although the temperature was very high

and there was no air conditioning, the reception to the teaching was wonderful.

Praise Inc. did an outstanding job of organizing and carrying out the seminar. Pastor Jun Matundan moderated the meetings, and Sarah Go, national sales manager for Praise Inc., facilitated Roger's schedule. The Sign Ministries expresses its thanks to all who had a part in making the Philippine experience so successful. We are thrilled with the many new friends we have in the Philippines.

We've been invited back next year and already are making plans not only to do a seminar in Manila but other places on the islands as well. We thank God for His faithfulness and the wonderful opportunities He is placing before us.



Letters & Email of Encouragement

Thank God for Mr. Van Kampen's spiritual and intellectual honesty. The author [of *The Sign*] makes it plain to perceive that though God is omniscient, He is also perfectly logical in revelation and communication.

— J.K. in Ireland

The Rapture Question Answered helped me enormously and confirmed what I had felt for some years. (It was quite amusing as I was so sure the book would contradict my own views completely.) Additionally the freshness of the book restored so much of my expectations of end-time events and helped me understand the sequence of events more clearly than ever before.

— P.J. by email

As an Associate Pastor... I found your book *The Sign* an excellent ministry tool! Being brought up in the pretrib rapture teaching, I found through careful study this position did not line up with Scripture. I adopted what I

thought was correct according to Scripture and thought I was probably alone in my views, which [are prewrath.] I now know I'm not alone in this view.

— T.G. in Kentucky

The Holy Spirit led us to your ministry and it has really fired us up! Your goal of getting the Word out by all measures is commendable. I'm so proud of you all. So many ministries have the almighty dollar in mind and they have forgotten their calling... Thank you hardly seems enough, so I'll add that I pray God blesses you beyond measure.

— M.&T.W. in South Carolina

As one of the Navy's first women fighter pilots I faced a lot of opposition, but that experience has been overshadowed by the reception I have had when I have respectfully but candidly questioned my church teachers and pastors about their pre-tribulation rapture stance... But so far no one would seriously sit down with me and answer the questions I had...

and how it seemed to contradict Scripture... I am going to give [some of my good Christian] friends a copy of your book; perhaps your logical, well-written analysis will convince and convict them of what I was unable to: God's plan for end times... Thank you for your work!

— L.T. in California

My wife and myself were staunch supporters of the pretrib rapture for over 20 years, for it was all we knew. Then one morning our Baptist pastor in Tennessee said he didn't believe in it and started us on the road to the truth... [thank] you again for all your labors in this matter.

— F.E. in Arizona

Through the Spirit's work, Mr. Van Kampen's books have accomplished incredible things in my life. I pray that he might have more opportunities to do so for others. May the Lord strengthen you in your work.

— J.M. by Email

My wife and I want to thank you for an excellent conference... in Holland, Michigan. We had a great time... We wish we could have heard more... Keep up the good work. We look forward to a return visit next year.

— M.&M.V. by Email

I have been a believer in Yeshua for 39 years. Before my wife and I made Aliyah to Israel, we belonged to two mainline denominations in the States, who preached the pretribulation rapture. All the years I studied this subject... cross-referencing the Scriptures they preached, I always walked away scratching my head, frustrated and confused. It was as though I came to a dead-end street with no way to turn around, but only back up. All I can say is, praise the Lord! And, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. I know what the Holy Spirit has given you is true and vital for every believer in Yeshua the Messiah to know.

— R.M. in Israel

Just a few of the places we've been:



Eau Claire, WI • Columbus, OH • Mexico City • Seattle, WA
Portland, OR • Cherry Hill, NJ • Miami, FL • Herefordshire, UK
Wheaton, IL • Pleasant Valley, CA • Idaho Falls, ID • Lamar, CO
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Laconia, NH • Norwood, MA • Minneapolis, MN • Havre, MT

And we'll come to your church or area too!

**Call 1-800-627-5134 for more information
or to schedule a free end times presentation.**

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