

What does Pastor Josh believe?

This sentence summarizes my belief: “The first coming of the Messiah was veiled, and the second coming is as well.”

I lean toward the last two options we will discuss below, “the non-systems,” as they allow me to let Jesus carry out His plan as He sees fit. Their objective goal is to let scripture inform their beliefs, not vice versa. I’m waiting to see what happens. If the rapture happens, I’m OK with that. I don’t see it in scripture without taking verses out of context and contradicting other verses.

I believe the teaching that “the Holy Spirit leaves the Earth during the rapture” is heresy. There is no salvation without the Holy Spirit. I reject merit-based salvation in the OT as Paul did (Romans 4-8; also look up “A New Perspective on Paul” for endless information). The OT and the words of the Lord Himself make it very clear that following the law came from a belief in Yahweh and a rejection of foreign gods.

I also reject any system or belief that DOES NOT include national Israel; I don’t think Paul could have been much more explicit in Romans 9-11.

We can have a good idea about what will happen, but I don’t think we can know the extreme specifics. Some of the 2nd Temple ideas of the Messiah, especially those found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, were accurate, but not a single one got it 100% correct. We can know the options and wait for His coming. We don’t have to be dogmatic about these.

The reason for ambiguity in scripture is essential. Paul tells us why in 1 Corinthians 2:8: “None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” In

other words, you can't have a clear game plan for your enemies to check. It needs mystery and uncertainty, or the enemy could stack the deck against the plan.

Have fun! Discuss theories. Wrestle with your beliefs. These are not salvation theology! STOP DIVIDING OVER THEM!!

While I will strongly disagree with some of these systems if they still believe in Jesus and Him alone as the means of salvation, they are my brother or sister in Christ. I am to love and respect them!

How Does Biblical Interpretation and Prophecy Work?

My idea of prophecy growing up was that someone predicted an event would happen at a particular time in a specific place by the power of the Holy Spirit. While this is part of prophecy, it is not always how Bible prophecy works. Let's look at a few examples of the Messiah.

Psalm 22 - David's Suffering, the Suffering Messiah, or Both?

Psalm 22 is a clear Messianic Prophecy. It starts by prophesying Jesus' exact words on the cross Psalm 22:1 "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?" compare with Mark 15:34 "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Verse 16 contains a prophecy about the pierced hands. Verse 18 predicts the soldiers dividing Jesus' garments and casting lots for them (see John 19:24). However, this is not only a prophecy about the Messiah but about actual events that happened to King David. In many passages, David serves as a type for the future Messiah. God even promises King David that his rule will never end.

Isaiah 7 - The Virgin Shall Bear A Son.

Isaiah 7:14 contains another such prophecy. A familiar verse: “Therefore the Lord will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” This is a prophecy about the Messiah, but it also had a fulfillment in real-time. When Isaiah came to Ahab, he prophesied that an unmarried woman would have a child named Immanuel (likely after marriage in this case). The land would be devastated before the child is old enough to make decisions. Just read some more of the context: Isaiah 7:16–17 “16 For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. 17 The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”” Jesus wouldn’t be born for more than 700 years; this prophecy was fulfilled in the 8th Century BC. BUT AT THE SAME TIME was a messianic prophecy about Jesus. Let’s look at another:

Matthew 2 - Who does Rachel Weep For?

In Matthew 2:16-18, Matthew records Herod killing all the male children in Bethlehem and the surrounding region. Matthew then quotes Jeremiah 31:15, “Thus says the Lord: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”” This isn’t about immediately about the children being killed by Herod. It’s about Judah being exiled to Babylon. This passage serves as encouragement for the Jews who find themselves being hauled away to Babylon that Yahweh will comfort them. But at the same time, it is prophesying about the evil acts of Herod.

Not So Simple

As we see from these three examples, prophecy is not as simple as “event, date, time.” There can be multiple fulfillments of this

prophecy. We see this with Daniel's abomination, who was Antiochus persecuting the Jews in the mid-100s BC. But Jesus Himself will use prophecies about Antiochus to speak about a future Antichrist in Matthew 24.

End-time Prophecy will do much of the same as shown in the commentary part of this book. There are going to be fulfillments that happen in unexpected ways; there is imagery about general things like believers fleeing to the "wilderness" and being given "two wings" to escape into said wilderness (Revelation 12:6, 14). The serpent is pouring water out of its mouth but being swallowed up by the earth (Revelation 12:16-17). Are we going to get wings so we can fly in the end-times? No, John uses figurative language that he expects his readers to be familiar with: The Exodus. The "wings" to flee into the wilderness comes from how Yahweh told the Israelites He protected them in Exodus 19:4: "4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.'" The "earth" swallowing the enemies of God's people up is from the song of Moses in Exodus 15:12: "You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them." Did Israel fly out of Egypt on a giant eagle? No, though I bet that's where Tolkien got the idea for the Lord of the Rings. The Egyptians who pursued Israel weren't swallowed by the earth either, the waters came down upon them. This is a metaphor for the enemies ending up in the realm of the dead "under the earth." This is the same language of Isaiah 25:8, where Death will be swallowed up. The Death of Death (see notes on Revelation 3 - The Keys of Death and Hades).

Do we think we know scripture better than the writers and original readers?

I once heard a Professor saying that Paul and the other New Testament writers would fail his Hermeneutics (how to study the

Bible) Class. How the NT writers use the OT differs significantly from how we are taught to read and interpret the Bible today. We are taught to read the Bible one way. Usually, this means reading it literally, except when it cannot be read that way. Except that's not what NT writers do; it's a mix, an assortment. Look at Matthew 2:23: "And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene." If you want a task that cannot be completed, I have one for you: find this quote. There is not a single OT passage that says, "He will be called a Nazarene." Where does Matthew get this? He gets it from Isaiah 11:1: "1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit." You might ask, "How?" The Hebrew word for "branch" spelled out is "NZR" (pronounced "netzer"). The exact primary letters for NaZaReth. Matthew is using a play on words for those who are in on the language. It's Matthew's subtle way of saying Jesus is the Branch, the Netzer-ene.

This information can be earth-shattering to some. I know it was for me. Sometimes, our world needs to be shattered, especially when it's built on false foundations of what modern bible teachers tell us is the truth when it's not. This ties into the end-times prophesy in a big way. I grew up hearing all the popular things, the timelines, the events, the wars, Russia, China, the United Nations, etc. The question arises, "Is this proper Bible interpretation?" The short answer is sometimes maybe, sometimes maybe not. We must tread carefully.

So how can we know? Building a house requires all your supports to be cut to the correct length. What decides the right length? A standard does. In America, we use inches and feet. What happens if I'm building one side of the house and you're building the other, and my inch is larger than yours? We are going to end up with a crooked

house. One end will be higher than the other. Every measuring tape on the job site needs to be set to the standard of the “true inch.” This is how Bible interpretation needs to be, as well. There needs to be a standard that everyone goes to.

In Biblical interpretation, the standard is “context.” Usually, that means not to read the verse alone but to read the verses or even the chapters around it. That is a great start, but it is not the whole context. The entire context is not limited to the book it is written in. The context of a single verse is the Bible as a whole. More than that, the context has to be read through the eyes of the original audience. That is who the original writer was writing to. The imagery, parables, metaphors, language, and examples will be given to the original audience because it is their world. Over the centuries since about the 400s AD, we have created our own contexts for the Bible. We have rejected the author and recipients’ world and inserted our world. This cannot happen if the Bible is to be understood correctly. A perfect example is the church in Laodicea, the famous “I wish you were hot or cold, but because you are lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth.” In a general reading, we can get the gist of the story, “We should be on fire for the Lord, not lukewarm.” This is how I have heard this passage preached many, many times. But when we consider the context of the original audience, it starts to unfold the true meaning. Much like today, there are two preferred ways to drink water: cold water or hot water with some flavoring (tea and coffee, for example). The Greek world was the same. For drinking water, they wanted cold water or spiced hot water. Laodicea lacked natural a natural water supply. Because of this, they had to pipe in water from the hot spring six miles to the south. By the time it reached the city, it was no longer hot but lukewarm.

Similarly, water coming off the mountain would lose its chill before use. This city of luxury lacked in one thing: useful water, a particular

complaint of the city's wealthy populace. The message isn't "be on fire" for the Lord, though that is true. The message is: "Be useful. Laodiceans, be like hot water, used for spiced water or bathing. Be like cold water, satisfying to drink. Don't be like your useless water running through your city."

My desire as a teacher is to bring this kind of knowledge. This knowledge should have been passed down to us through the centuries to anyone who desires to understand the Bible in its context. I want to regain what has been lost to uncomfortableness, pride, selfishness, and deceit. It starts little by little, I believe (and am seeing) as the Day draws closer. Christians are not satisfied with the answers given to them over the years. They aren't happy with not knowing the Bible thoroughly. People worldwide are starting to take Bible study more seriously than I have ever seen in my lifetime and more seriously than I have read about since the early days of Christianity. Christians are throwing off tradition and what has "always been taught" and seeking the Lord in His word the way He initially communicated it. Whether you agree with my conclusion or not, I hope you, too, have a passion for understanding the Bible in its context, throwing off tradition and diving head first into His Word.

Daniel's 70 Weeks

The Book of Daniel deals with a timeline, specifically chapters 9 and 12. This timeline is crucial to some eschatological (study of end-times) systems, while others aren't as fundamental. It's especially important in interpreting parts of Revelation 11 and 12 which use Daniel 12's 1260 for its period of persecution. While I cannot fully detail how complicated this is, I wish to put forth enough information to let you know what most prophecy teachers won't:

this is complicated. One teacher I have called this the “pit of despair,” and I wholeheartedly agree.

Let’s start with some basics, and then we will get to more complicated stuff in the section “Let’s talk about calendars.” Note that this first section is based on only one of the possible calendars we will talk about.

For a pre-tribulation rapture to happen, the final week of Daniel’s 70 weeks must not have happened yet. Any books, teachers, pastors, etc., who claim this is “easy” and have it “all figured out” either don’t know or aren’t telling you the whole story. Most don’t know that it’s as complicated as it is. This is because famous, loud voices for the pre-tribulation rapture have not been honest about how difficult it can be. The passage in question is:

Daniel 9:24–27 ESV

²⁴ “Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. ²⁵ Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. ²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

We also have to look at a few other timeline prophesy scriptures in:

Daniel 8:13–14 ESV

¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, “For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?” ¹⁴ And he said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.”

This gives us a set of 1,150 days to deal with (2,300 sacrifices with one in the morning and one at night it 1,150 days). The last passage is Daniel 12.

Daniel 12:7–13 ESV

⁷ And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

⁸ I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” ⁹ He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

¹³ But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”

Two sets of 70 or one?

Before we even talk about where we start the 70 weeks, we have to talk about how many sets we have. While I don't necessarily buy this

myself, I want to demonstrate it's complexity and the possibilities that are out there. I can by no means means comprehensively or adequately describe every view, but I will attempt to share some of the ones I have found worth thinking about:

View #1:

- The 70 weeks are 70 periods of seven years.
- The 70th (final) week is therefore 7 years.
- The Tribulation is 7 years long.
- Therefore the 70th week of Daniel is the tribulation.

Things to think about:

- The top two make perfect sense.
- The bottom two are major assumptions:
- There is NO verse in the entire Bible that connects the 70th week to a Tribulation Period or Great Tribulation, no matter what “connecting words” you try. For example 7 years, 1 week, days, etc.
- To accept this you will have to accept on grounds OTHER than clear Biblical connections. In other words I cannot use scripture to interpret scripture here, I have to interpret through my end-times system.

View #2

- Two sets of 70 weeks?
- Separation between verses 24 (1st set of 70 weeks) and verse 25-27 (2nd set of 70 weeks)
- One that represents 490 years and one of 70 years or just 490 years?

Things to think about

- If we separate verse 24 from 25-27?
- You get 70 weeks (490 years) to “anoint the holy place.”

- And you have another 70 weeks (70 years).
- What you get is: the first 70 weeks is 70 years then the second 70 weeks which is 490 years. You end up with a crucifixion date of 25 AD. A viable crucifixion date.
- There are also two ways to look at this, the 70 years take place before the the 490 years, or the 70 years take place after.

Where do we start the 70 weeks?

1. When Jeremiah prophesy referred to in Daniel 9:2 - 605 BC (Jeremiah 25:12) or 597 BC (Jeremiah 29:10)?
2. Prophecies concerning the fall and restoration of Jerusalem - 587-586 BC (Jeremiah 30:18-22; 31:38-40)?
3. Gabriel's words to Daniel right now - 539 BC (exact date unknown)?
4. Decree of Cyrus - 539-537 BC? (Isaiah 45:1; Ezra 1:1-4)
5. Decree of Darius - 521 BC? (Ezra 6:1-12)
6. Decree of Artaxerxes - 458-457 BC? (Ezra 7:12-26)
7. Warrant given to Nehemiah - 445-444? (Nehemiah 1)

Let's explore some of these options.

Option #6 and #7 are the Pre-Tribulation Rapture options. They leave an addition 1 week (7 years) of Daniel's prophesy remaining to be fulfilled. Unfortunately for this system they have the most severe problems.

Option #6 is the only one that works for a 33 AD crucifixion and a pre-tribulation rapture view using a solar calendar. (More on calendars below. Option 6 requires a start in Ezra 7.

The biggest problem is in Ezra 7 itself, there is not a single word about rebuilding anything in the passage. To go with this option we have to assume that we start the 70 weeks from a passage the Bible

itself doesn't even hint of a "word to restore and build Jerusalem." It seems weird that the passage signifying the beginning of the 70 weeks wouldn't begin with a single word telegraphing it's beginning. How proponents of this view take this passage is "it's metaphorical." The city's rebuilding isn't about the city itself but the restoration of people. This is possible, but if those supporting this system were honest, they would have to admit it's inconsistent. This is supposed to be the "literal view" of scripture, except when it can't be. Yet the foundation of your view is a symbolic reading of scripture. This idea has permeated recent Bible Colleges, leading to a watered-down and misunderstanding of scriptures, especially the OT. Bible access is at an all-time high, and understanding and misuse are not improving at the rate it should. In some circles, it's getting worse. Further the rebuilding and regathering of people has been stated in the decrees of Cyrus and Darius, both passages do mention building. There is nothing significantly different about the decree of Artaxerxes.

Let's look at some of the views before we get into the calendar and some other views:

Option #7 has Nehemiah 1 as it's beginning point, a very logical start. However it only works when using a lunar calendar. This almost certainly cannot be the start because (as we will show below) Daniel was not using a lunar calendar.

My biggest problem with eschatology is we are so invested in proving our system this fact is probably new information to the vast majority of anyone reading this. Having your beliefs is okay, but we must be honest about where our systems cheat because they all do. The takeaway I hope anyone gets from this is DO NOT PLACE YOUR HOPE IN AN END-TIMES SYSTEM. Place your hope in JESUS ALONE. The rapture, if there is one, is not our blessed hope. Jesus IS. PERIOD.

Options #2-5 have much less importance on their specific start and

end because they don't leave any time remaining. There are several different ways theologians reconcile them. I will not be going into much detail on these for the current book.

What Calendar do we use?

Before we discuss Option #1 I want to ask a question: "How many days are in a year?" You likely thought 365. The question we have to ask in Biblical study is: how many days were in a year Daniel's view? Well, that gets complicated as there were multiple calendars. On the surface, it would be easy to ask, "What's the big deal?" The thing is, it's a big deal. The calendar was such a hot topic of the day that the Essenes (Enochian, the probable name for people who lived in Qumran and wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls) separated themselves from the Pharisees and Sadducees over the calendar. They believed the calendar used in the Temple around the time of Jesus was a pagan calendar. Because they wanted nothing to do with what they perceived as pagan, they left.

While you may not be aware of these calendars, you are likely influenced by their existence. Have you noticed how Easter/Resurrection Sunday is a floating holiday? Depending on the year, it can be in March or April. In 2024, Easter is March 31st. In 2025, Easter is April 20th. This is because of the calendars used to decide Jewish holidays (not just limited to Easter).

As I mentioned, this whole subject is the "pit of despair." Essentially, two different kinds of calendars are in use in Daniel's day. Still, there are some other variations of those calendars. There is a lunar calendar that some Jews prefer. This calendar has 29, 30, or 31 days. They go by the moon's phases, which are not always neatly divisible by 30. The Jewish lunar calendar has 353, 354, or 355 days a year. This is what Judaism uses today. Because they use this calendar,

they sometimes have to add an extra month to determine when Passover will be.

Then there's the solar calendar, which is 12 months each with 30 days. 12 times 30 is 360, so you have a 360-day year. 360 is a nice round number that makes things pleasant to work with. However, a 360-day calendar doesn't perfectly align with the Jewish holidays. To accomplish this, at Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls), they added a day every 90 days, which gives you 364 days total. This allows you to have Passover and all your other feasts on the same day every single year. No more "do we have to add a month" stuff going on.

Similarly, another Jewish sect called the Zadokites used a solar calendar with 364 days. They also had a way of lining things up with the Jewish feasts in a complex and convoluted way. The reason for these 364-day calendars is to have a Sabbatical calendar that lines up with holidays, sabbath years, and jubilee years.

So why bring all this up? Because depending on the calendar you use, change what dates you end up at with Daniel 12's 1290 and 1335 days and the 70 weeks of Daniel 9. But it's more complicated than choosing one calendar. Daniel uses a 360-day solar calendar (without the added four days) and a Sabbatical calendar (364 days).

Option #1 - Jeremiah's Prophecy

Below, I will quote different parts from a book that explain just one perspective; the author's goal is not to prop up a system of eschatology. He is an expert in 2nd Temple Judaism, writing a paper about the calendars Daniel might use. His perspective has Daniel's 70 weeks ending in 164 BC with the first Hanukkah after the persecution of Antiochus, which began 3.5 years earlier in 167 BC.

Note: If you get lost in the quote, you can jump to the end, where I will summarize.

Here is a quote from a few parts of a chapter from Gabriele Boccaccini called “The Solar Calendars of Daniel and Enoch” from the book “Daniel, Volume 2, Composition and Reception”, Pages 311-328 [I will put comments in brackets to explain some contexts or make comments]:

Daniel 7:25 blames the iniquitous king, Antiochus Epiphanes, for “changing times” in Temple worship. According to A. Jaubert and J. C. VanderKam, this marks the occasion on which the Hellenistic lunar calendar definitively replaced the old Zadokite solar calendar, which Jubilees and Qumran would seek in vain to restore after the Maccabean revolt.

The obvious implication of this hypothesis is that Daniel also used the solar calendar. Nevertheless, the book of Daniel itself is conspicuously absent in the discussion about the antiquity of the solar calendar that has involved many other Jewish documents. In fact, the chronological references in Daniel are apparently too obscure to infer any calendar. While “the half week” of Daniel 9:27 and “a time, (two) times and a half time” of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 are symbolic, yet quite consistent indications of time, the “2,300 evenings and mornings” of Daniel 8:14 fall short of the three and a half years they should refer to, and [to make matters worse] the “1290- 1335 days” of Daniel 12:11-12 somehow go further.

[2,300 is the number of sacrifices, there are two sacrifices per day which gives us 1150 days. 1150 days is shorter than 1260 (times, times, and half a time). On the other hand Daniel 12’s 1290 and 1335 days are longer than 1260. Do you sense the “pit of despair” yet?] *While none of these figures explicitly supports the solar or lunar calendar, there are some indications that Daniel may have indeed used a solar calendar.*

In Daniel 12:11-12 the difference between 1,335 and 1,290 days is 45 days. This figure makes sense only if we have two consecutive 30-day

months, one month plus a half (30+15), which is possible only in the solar calendar. Whoever wrote Daniel 12, therefore, knew a calendar in which the months were not calculated according to the moon, that is, in a sequence of 30-day and 29-day months.

However, since Daniel 12:5-13 presents the “half week” (v. 7), the “1,290 days” (v. 11) and the “1,335 days” (v. 12) in a series, we should expect the same proportion between the “half week” and the 1,290 days. According to the 364-day calendar of Jubilees and Qumran, three and a half years equal 1,274 days. The addition of 16 days to reach 1,290 days, and a total of 61 days to reach 1,335 days, does not make much sense. How many days does the “half week” count in Daniel?

The only ancient text that explicitly elaborates on the figure of Daniel is the Revelation of John, and it is strikingly straightforward. The time of persecution is a period of “42 months” ([Revelation] 11:2; 13:5), or “1,260 days” (11:3; 12:6), or “a time, two times and a half time” (12:14). According to the book of Revelation, therefore, Daniel would have known a solar calendar of twelve 30-day months, which makes a year of 360 days. In fact, such a calendar allows us to establish a sensible relationship among the three calendrical references in Daniel 12. A consistent and proportioned series links the “half week” (1,260 days) to the 1,290 days (the addition of one 30-day month), which in turn becomes 1,335 days with the further addition of one 30-day month and a half.

Accordingly, K. Marti and R. T. Beckwith have argued that Daniel followed the Mesopotamian calendar of 360 days with the figures in Daniel 12:11-12 representing the addition of intercalary months. That the ancient Jews were familiar with this calendar would be attested by the Flood narrative in Genesis, where the period from “the 17th day of the second month” to “the 17th day of the seventh month” is said to total “150 days,” that is, five consecutive months of 30 days each

(Genesis 7:11, 24; 8:3-4).

But all evidence points to the fact that the solar calendar of the early Second Temple literature was a sabbatical one, that is, a calendar in which each day of the year fell on the same day of the week, year after year, which was not the case in the Mesopotamian calendar. The chronological indication of Daniel 10:4 makes sense only if “the 24th day of the first month” is Friday, and this is possible only if Daniel also used a sabbatical calendar. How can Daniel use at the same time a 360-day calendar and a sabbatical one?

Every time Daniel refers to the period of Antiochus’ persecution, particularly in the key prophecy of chapter 9, it gives the figure of “half a week [of years]” (Daniel 9:27; or “a time, two times and a half” in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7). In both halves of the outer frame around chapter 9, instead, we face slightly different chronological indications, the one approximate by deficiency (the 2,300 “evenings and mornings” of Daniel 8:14) and the other by excess (the “1,290-1,335 days” of Daniel 12:11-12).

Obviously, the author expected some events to occur immediately before and immediately after the foretold death of Antiochus. As John J. Collins also acknowledges, in chapter 8 [of Daniel] “the primary focus of the end is the restoration of the Temple cult,” while “chapters 10-12 focus their hopes... on the resurrection of the dead.”

The conflicting times of the end fit perfectly the overall theology of the book, which, as is now widely recognized by its interpreters, sprang from an apocalyptic circle different from the one that produced the Enochic lit. On one hand, against Enoch, Daniel does not view the Second Temple as impure and therefore argues in chapter 8 that God would restore the daily sacrifices before the end, as an act of justice owed to the Temple’s legitimate cult.

On the other hand, the almost careless, yet ingenious, mechanism through which in chapter 12 the times of the end are progressively

lengthened and desynchronized, emphasizes another tenet of Daniel's theology: the distinction between the collective destiny of Israel and the destiny of each individual. Daniel rejects the Enochic claim that angelic sin has substantially deprived human beings of personal freedom, the ability to endure, and responsibility.

[“Enochic claim that angelic sin” is the same as “the devil made me do it and I didn't have a choice.” Some of the ancient Jews were similar in thought to what Calvinists believe in regards to freewill. Some believe that God created people destined for hell. I reject this claim and believe the text shows everyone has a choice to serve Yahweh and Jesus or not. The author of this paper is claiming Daniel is rejecting this thought as well.]

For the judgment of individuals, it therefore looks beyond the time in which God would set an end to history and establish the everlasting kingdom of Israel. The judgment of the nations ([Daniel] chapter 7) and the judgment of the individuals (chapter 12) are not synchronic. The 360+4-day calendar adds new and surprisingly meaningful nuances to Daniel's discourse about the times of the end. The piece of information provided by Revelation was accurate. For the Zadokite calendar, the year indeed counted “1,260 days.”

As we have already noticed, this allows us to establish a sensible and coherent relationship between the three calendrical references in Daniel 12. The extra times of thirty and forty-five days at the end of the seventy weeks of years cannot possibly refer to any kind of [added] months. Even though we do not know how and just how often the 360+4-day calendar was intercalated [added to] on the basis of the observation of equinoxes and solstices, the sabbatical nature of the Zadokite calendar required the addition of weeks, not months, so that the appointed times for festivals were not changed. The meaning of the calendrical indications of Daniel 12:11-12 must be found elsewhere. By skillfully exploiting the richness of the cultic calendar,

the text depicts a sort of spiritual itinerary of preparation for the individual. First, one month is given, the month of Passover, so that 1,290 days are completed [1260+30]. Then, one and a half more months are added (1,335 days) to reach the third month, which according to the Zadokite calendar was the “month of the oaths” (2 Chronicles 15:10-15; cf. Jubilees). And with the 15th of the third month being the feast of Shevu’ot, what date could be more appropriate than the feast of the renewal of the covenant for the celebration of the final judgment?

I will spare all the math, but as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, Boccaccini comes up with his thoughts on how the numbers play out. He has the middle of Daniel’s last week at 167 BC, the beginning of Antiochus’ persecution. From that time, he added the 1,150 days (2300 sacrifices, half in the morning, half in the evening). If you do the math, you end up according to the books of Maccabees and Josephus when Hanukkah took place in the winter of 164 BC. This makes a lot of sense. We know that Antiochus was the first fulfillment of the abomination. Maccabees and Josephus take the day of rededication of the Temple as the fulfillment of the “time, times, and half a time).

Suppose we take the conclusion of Daniel’s 70 weeks at Hanukkah. We land nicely according to the ancient calendar at Jeremiah’s prophecies in 605 BC. Therefore, according to this view, we would have no 70 weeks to look to. Thus, John’s use of it in Revelation would be a symbolic “time of tribulation” not limited to an exact 3.5 years. This also lines up with Jesus’ use of the abomination in Matthew 24:15-28 and Paul’s use of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

What’s cool about this theory is where Daniel’s other numbers end up. Daniel’s 1290 days (an extra 30 days from the entire 1260) ends at Passover, a significant festival. Daniel’s 1335 (an additional 45

days) lands us squarely in the Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks. The Feast of Weeks is the feast celebrating the harvest. It's also right before Pentecost. How this works out on a symbolic level is the second coming of Christ is preceded by Passover, the marriage feast of the Lamb. Recall Jesus saying, "I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." - Matthew 26:29. After that, you have 45 days. You have the glorification of the believer and the White throne judgment. Is this the answer? I don't know! That's my point. This theory lines up so well, just like other theories. What I like about this one is it's based just on the numbers, not a system that doesn't automatically make it correct. Still, it is something that needs to be considered.

What would this mean for Revelation 11 and 12?

Depending on how you read interpret Daniel 9 and 12 is going to affect your interpretation in Revelation 11 and 12. If the theory about the ending in 164-163 BC is the correct interpretation, Revelation 11 and 12's numbers call back to this idea. The idea is that there will indeed be a period of persecution. Something that is already happening worldwide right now, which we expect to get worse. When Jesus returns, He will defeat the abomination, the Anti-Christ. We will have the marriage feast, the heavenly Passover, followed by the glorification of the saints (the harvest) and the White Throne Judgment. Let me stress just one last time: I'm not saying this IS the interpretation. I'm saying it needs to be considered.

Conclusion

The short conclusion to all of this is we really don't know. Every system has to start their 70 weeks somewhere, and every system

starts it with what best fits their system. I don't believe our loyalty should be placed in systems that require us to interpret based on our system. Systems, if we have one, should be based on the text not the other way around.

The Millennial Reign

Another area of disagreement is: "What is the Millennium?" There are two options.

1. The literal Millennium is taking place AFTER the return of Christ.
2. A spiritual, non-literal millennium that is taking place right now.

In a reading of Revelation 20 on its own, one would naturally conclude that it is after Christ's return. It mentions 1000 years six times in Chapter 20. Option #1 comes from a strictly straight literal reading.

Option #2 requires asking, "Why is John using the language He is using?" First, the Millennial Kingdom is spoken of in the same terms that are already a reality. Revelation 20:6 speaks of believers being "priests of God and reigning with Him." In the Bible, including Revelation, we are already priests and rulers. Revelation 1:6 speaks of us being a kingdom and priests in the past tense: "Him who... made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father..." 1 Peter 2:9 tells us the same thing: "9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

While there are passages in Acts and Paul's writings about the Kingdom now, I believe none are conclusive. Yes, the Kingdom is now, but it could be an "already, but not yet." I want to give you something to think about: look at the end of the Millennium, specifically the Battle of Gog and Magog (for more, see notes on

Revelation 20). Revelation 20:7-10 says: “7 And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

First, we must consider why Jesus is fighting two battles against a multitude of people. At the Battle of Armageddon, we have 200 million named as the army’s size. In Revelation 20, they are as numerous as “the sand of the sea.” There are two options to this question: the Battle of Gog and Magog and Armageddon are the same, or God wants to defeat Satan and his followers twice. In contrast, the first option requires us to look at John’s use of Gog and Magog, while the second option is an assumption made from a direct reading. Let’s explore this further.

Gog and Magog are not original to Revelation. They are from Ezekiel 38-39. Here, I tell you this decision on Kingdom now or not yet gets difficult. While John only uses the terms Gog and Magog in Revelation 20, he uses the language Ezekiel uses for the Battle and defeat of Gog and Magog throughout Revelation 16-20. As I believe scripture to be inspired and this not be an accident, I have to consider it at least and wonder. Let’s begin our journey.

Leading up to the day of the Lord, Revelation tells us of judgments poured out upon the earth leading up to a final battle. This final Battle occurs when John sees the Euphrates dry up (Revelation 9:14; Revelation 16:12) in the 6th Trumpet and Bowl. This is the prophetic depiction of the antichrist army being able to march against

Jerusalem (Revelation 9:16; Revelation 16:14-16). In the first century AD, troops had to walk by land. Suppose an army could travel through the Euphrates on the ground rather than traversing the river; they would have a much easier time attacking. This is the Battle of Armageddon.

Most popular teachings say that this Battle will occur at Megiddo in the Jezreel Valley in Israel. If you go to Megiddo today and go into the museum, they have a big presentation about the final Battle taking place there. The actual pronunciation of “armageddon is “har magedon.” In Hebrew, ‘har’ means ‘mountain,’ so we get ‘mount magedon.’ You might notice that magedon and Megiddo are similar but not the same. Also, if you look up Mount Megiddo, you will be disappointed. There is no mountain there; it’s a valley. There’s nothing but a small hill where the city of Megiddo stood for centuries.

Many suggest we look elsewhere, especially when you consider that other books of the Bible say the final Battle takes place in Jerusalem, Joel and Zechariah, for example. Isaiah 14 pronounces judgment upon Babylon (guess what John uses to represent the world in Revelation; he uses Babylon). In this judgment, the Lord compares Babylon to the original divine rebel, the devil, Satan, the dragon. Isaiah 14:12–17 says: “12 “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! 13 You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ 15 But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. 16 Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, 17 who made the world like a desert and overthrew its

cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?”

In verse 13, the divine rebel says he will “sit on the mount of assembly, in the far reaches of the north.” Without going too deep into Hebrew grammar, assembly is spelled with the Hebrew letters “mem,” “ayin,” and “dalet.” M - ‘ - D. The -‘- represents a guttural something we don’t have in the English language, but long story short, the ayin (‘) makes a “G” sound. Har Magedon is not Megiddo but the mount of assembly. The place where God dwells. Where is God’s city? It’s Jerusalem. As Joel 3 and Zechariah 14 say, the Battle of Armageddon will occur in Jerusalem. It is Jerusalem where Jesus will set His feet on the Mount of Olives and defeat the army of the Antichrist. Hopefully, you noticed I underlined the word “north” in Isaiah 14:13. The divine rebel said he would sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the North.

In Ezekiel 38-39, Gog and Magog come from “the north.” This leads many prophecy teachers to say Gog and Magog are Russia. This, however, lacks credible biblical interpretation. Every army against Israel that didn’t come from Egypt came from the North. The mountains and rivers on its East and South borders naturally guard Israel. At the same time, its West border is in the Mediterranean Sea. The East and South are deserts. If a military wanted any chance against Israel, they would have to take their armies north, where there is food and water for their troops and animals. Not to mention not having to traverse rivers and mountains.

Furthermore, “North” contains a spiritual metaphor. While we today usually think of heaven as up and hell as down, Israelites viewed the “North” as the “Realm of the Deity.” Psalm 48:2 is a good example: “2 beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.” Mount Zion (Jerusalem) is not in the North. It’s not even in the North of Israel. It’s in the middle of the country. Pagan gods were also from the North. Baal, the pagan god

who was a thorn in Israel's side for all of Israel's history leading up to the exile, was from the mountain in the North.

What are the chances that "Armageddon and the North" are in the same passage about a divine rebel, the same divine rebel leading these armies against God? This would make a lot of sense to a reader familiar with Hebrew and the culture.

Further, you have this mountain element in the Gog and Magog Battle; Ezekiel 39:2 especially stands out: "2 And I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel."

The aftermath of the Battle contains more familiar language that John uses BEFORE Revelation 20. Ezekiel 39:4: "4 You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured." Compare this to Revelation 19:17-21 "17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh."

After the Battle of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 39, the Lord promises

the restoration of Israel, Ezekiel 39:25-29. The promises are amazing: the restoration of Israel, the end of exile, the forgiveness of their sins, and gathered in their land. The problem is that all this happens at Christ's return, not at the end of a Millennium (Pre-Millennium Return of Christ). Ezekiel portrays the Battle of Gog and Magog the same way John describes the Battle of Armageddon. At the end of it is the end of the exile, God has gathered His people to Himself. I don't need you to change your view of the Millennial Reign. What I hope you see is there are things to consider. I know of Pastors in denominations who have to keep their opinions on this a secret lest they get kicked out of their denomination. That is madness. We all serve the same risen Savior! I don't know what you do with Ezekiel and other OT passages if the Millennium is post-2nd coming. I have yet to see a satisfying answer.

Adding more to the headache is the rest of Ezekiel. After the Battle in chapters 38-39, we have this restored temple with priests, sacrifices, and the whole thing. Those who hold a pre-millennium return say this is the temple during the Millennial Reign. While its inclusion after the Battle doesn't necessarily mean this vision is chronologically after the Battle, one does have to wonder why John's new heaven and earth of Revelation 21-22 is patterned after this temple. Read through Ezekiel 40-48 and Revelation 21-22 and notice the similarities. Let's look at just a few examples. In Ezekiel 47, a river comes from the temple; this river produces life all along its bank and turns the sea's salt water into fresh water "so everything will live where the river goes" - Ezekiel 47:8. Revelation 22's river of life does the same thing. In Ezekiel's river, trees grow on either side of it (Ezekiel 47:7, 12). These trees will produce fruit every month of the year. The same thing happens in the new earth (Revelation 22:2). The leaves of both trees are used "for the healing of the nations" (Ezekiel 47:12; Revelation 22:2).

While there certainly are differences. Ezekiel, for example, depicts a temple with walls. Where John's temple is God Almighty and the Lamb, this makes sense in the context of scripture. If you're a Jew living in exile in Babylon, what is the sign of everything being set right and brought out of exile? A temple, with God dwelling with His people. In the New Testament, it is revealed that God no longer dwells in temples made by the hands of men, but in His people, the body of Christ. It makes sense then that the temple in the New Jerusalem is God Almighty and the Lamb.

What should we be looking for?

1. Continued hostility against Israel along with continued salvation of many Jews.
2. The fulfillment of reaching the Gentile nations with the Gospel.
3. The Antichrist.
4. Persecution of believers.
5. The Return of Jesus.

The Systems Overview

Replacement Theology

The church replaces natural Israel and becomes the new Israel. Natural Israel has no part to play in the New Covenant. Takes a "spiritual non-literal view" of scripture.

- The belief of most of the church fathers through the end of the reformation. The view favored by most non-evangelicals.

Dispensational Theology

The church and Israel are separate entities. Natural Israel is still Yahweh's chosen people. The Church is completely separate from Israel. Israel is placed on a shelf until a proposed rapture takes

place, in which Israel will again be in the forefront of Yahweh's plan. Takes a "literal view" of scripture.

- Has become primary belief of American Evangelicals beginning in mid-1800s.

Non-Systems: Historical/"Already but Not Yet"

The church and Israel are one, but the Lord is not done with national Israel. The church is grafted into natural Israel, and natural Israelites who do not believe in Jesus as Messiah are cut off from Israel (Romans 11).

Interprets scripture based on literal and non-literal/spiritual/metaphorical views. Different genres require different approaches, and most languages contain many metaphors in ordinary speech.

- Primary beliefs of the early church and many non-American evangelicals.

End-Times Systems General Details

Note: None of these options are "set in stone." There are different things people who put themselves into a system will believe differently. This is a general overview and should not be viewed as all-inclusive. While some views generally don't have a literal Antichrist, some believers in that system might believe a literal Antichrist. If your system hasn't been described to your beliefs, please understand it is not done to provoke; my intention with this list is to be as general about particular belief systems as possible. I tried to find the systems' origins or what is generally believed as a whole in the systems according to different sources.

Note: The use of metaphor in the Bible does not mean "not real."

Replacement Theology Systems

Key themes:

- Spiritual/metaphorical return of Jesus.
- The Church replaces Israel in the plan of God.
- No literal reign on earth after the 2nd Coming.
- Spiritual Reading of Revelation (except where it can't).
- Satan is already bound and presumably judged by God already.

Shared Pros:

- Doesn't ignore spiritual reading scripture consistent with Jewish writing of the day, especially Apocalyptic writings.
- Doesn't require Daniel's 70 weeks to start on a certain date (see section on Daniel's 70 weeks).

Shared Cons:

- Goes further than interpreters of Jesus' day in it's "spiritual only" reading of prophecy.

Preterism (full/partial):

The belief that all (full) or most (partial) of the contents of end time prophecies in Revelation and the prophecies about the end times were fulfilled before and during 70 AD. The Anti-Christ was Nero. In this view Revelation is viewed as a *lawsuit* against Israel before it's collapse in 70 AD.

- Full Preterism believes in a spiritual 2nd coming that already came in 70 AD. When we die we go to heaven and live with Him there forever. *This will continue supposedly until there is no life in this plain of existence.*
- Partial Preterism believes scripture has been completely fulfilled except Jesus is yet to come.

Pros:

- Some events may have been fulfilled or partially fulfilled in 70 AD. For example Matthew 24:15–20 may have been fulfilled or partially

fulfilled. Some events in Revelation could be thought as prophesy about the siege of Rome against Jerusalem.

Cons:

- This view holds a large inconsistency with an extreme metaphorical/spiritual reading of scripture with an extreme literal reading of the events leading to 70 AD and the destruction of the temple.
- Requires an early writing of Revelation which is the minority view of scholars and history.
- Its spiritualistic reading cannot be found as a consistent interpretation of the Messiah's first coming (see *Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 for example*).
- Satan being bound in Revelation 20 is a major issue, it appears he is clearly active in deceiving the nations still.
- While there is most certainly a prophetic lawsuit part to Revelation there is no indication it is only a lawsuit narrative. This claim is overstated.
- Also, the lawsuit in Revelation is not aimed at Israel but clearly aimed against Rome and "Babylon." Babylon being the representation of the fallen world in general.
- In 70 AD the nations were not judged, Israel was. Revelation clearly speaks to the nations being judged (see Revelation 11:17-18).

Amillennial:

The scriptures are not to be understood from a literal perspective but only a spiritual one. Christ's "millennial reign" is now through believers. Jesus will return at the fulfillment of the Great Commission where He will spiritually return to take believers to Heaven for eternity and judge the non-believers. No need for a literal Anti-Christ.

Pros:

- Doesn't ignore spiritual perspectives of scripture prevalent in the early church and 2nd Temple period.
- There are certainly indication to a "reign of Christ" now.

Cons:

- Everything is interpreted spiritually except where it cannot because of contradictions, leading to inconsistent readings with First Coming prophecies.
- Binding of Satan in Revelation 20 makes no sense as the enemy is clearly deceiving the nations.
- Paul is rather specific that God is not done with natural Israel (Revelation 11).
- Verses on a literal coming of Christ are hard to explain as metaphorical.

Post-millennial:

Same as amillennialism except: Christ's "millennial reign" is now through believers and culminates with believers essentially "taking over the world" with the Gospel which ushers in the 2nd Coming of Jesus in which Jesus will spiritually return and take believers to be with Him. No literal reign on earth. No literal Anti-Christ needed.

There are some postmillennial beliefs that are closer to dispensationalism but it is not what typically comes up when post-mill is discussed.

Pros:

- Doesn't ignore spiritual perspectives of scripture prevalent in the early church and 2nd Temple period.

Cons:

- Has to interpret spiritual vs literal inconsistently and possibly contradicts itself when its needed to support its system.
- Bible seems to clearly speak of the world getting worse not better.
- The language of almost all end-times passages speak of horrible

evil and it's judgment, of war, abominations, and it's defeat. The support texts for post-mill shouldn't be considered separate from other Day of the Lord passages.

Covenant Theology:

Similar to post-millennialism but with some aspects of dispensationalism. Specifically the Old Covenant is a covenant of works and the New Covenant is a covenant of grace. *Information for this system is relatively vague.*

Pros:

- Takes previous views and adds in popular teaching about dispensationalism.

Cons:

- Same as above but with a debatable dispensational system (see dispensational system cons)

Dispensational Theology Systems

Key Themes:

- History is divided into eras or “dispensations.”
- This leads to ideas like salvation in the OT is based on works, where salvation in the NT is based of grace and faith because of the different “dispensations.” This system doesn't hang it's hat on this belief, and the system can work with a proper understanding that salvation in the OT and NT is based on grace and faith.
- Israel and the Church are completely separate entities
- Rapture of the church so Israel can regain it's relationship with the Lord (except for Post-Tribulation).
- Extreme focus on a literal seven year tribulation.
- Literal 1000 year Reign on Earth.
- Satan is bound for 1000 years.
- After Satan is released he will wage war against Jerusalem again

and be defeated once and for all.

- Literal Reign on Earth for eternity
- Literal Anti-Christ.
- Literal and Chronological reading of Revelation.

Shared Pros

- Ephesians 1:10 does speak of the “plan/administration/dispensation of the fullness of times.”
- Understand prophecy from a literal fulfillment is consistent with many passages about the First Coming of Jesus.
- Emphasis on Jesus as our protector.
- Emphasis on the salvation of natural Israel.
- Fulfills all Covenants with Israel (if there are still other covenants that need to be fulfilled).

Shared Cons

- Making a system based on one Greek word “οἰκονομία - oikonomia” in Ephesians 1:10 can be viewed as an over-statement in that it supposed different οἰκονομία means God managed with humanity differently in other Eras. This comes from a misunderstanding of the OT sacrificial system and purpose of the Law (see the book of Hebrews).
- Literal fulfillment of prophecy lacks spiritual fulfillment found in many passages about the First Coming (see section on How Does Biblical Interpretation and Prophecy Work?).
- This system tends to be inconsistent with its literal vs spiritual; most problems are explained away with “this one is a spiritual prophecy” but there is no consistency to its interpretation.
- Possible over emphasis of how Jesus protects us that is inconsistent and possibly offensive to Christians dying for their faith in the worst ways all over the world for the last 2000 years.

- While prophecies and scriptures are taken literal, rapture scriptures must be taken spiritual and out of their larger context. Rapture scriptures require interpretation techniques that do not work in any other parts of the Bible.
- There is no scripture in the entire Bible that mentions a 7 or 3.5 year period with a tribulation or Great Tribulation. *This doesn't exclude it, but should be known.*
- A linear reading of Revelation is extremely hard to reconcile. Especially with John's use of the Old Testament.
- Requires Two-Last Trumpets (one for the rapture, one for second coming).
- Possible contradiction of the meaning and Jewish/Greek traditions of the word "meet" (Greek: apantesis) in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. The word "meet" is the word used to describe people going out of the town to immediately escort the king or important person back into the town. This is both a Greek custom and an expected Messianic custom in Jewish thinking.
- Requires external resources or teaching to arrive at conclusions, especially a pre-2nd Coming rapture.
- Daniel 70 (see Daniels 70-Weeks section below for a deeper dive).
- Dispensationalism requires Daniels 70 years to start at an exact time, and Jesus' death to take place on a certain date. The date of Jesus' death is far from certain and the date at which Daniel's 70 weeks has to begin is the least likely option.
- Jesus' death has to be in 33 AD.
- The Daniel's prophesy of "word going out to rebuild Jerusalem" to start Daniel's 70 weeks must take place take place in Ezra 7:11-26 which doesn't contain a single mention of rebuilding anything in the passage.
- An option for Nehemiah 1 to start Daniel's 70 weeks makes more sense but requires the use of a lunar calendar which doesn't work

with Daniel's descriptions of the weeks.

- There are other ways to read Daniel 9. Including the 70 years which are 490 years (Daniel 9:24) and a 2nd 70 years (Daniel 9:25-27). If this is taken you can start at Cyrus and end the 490 years and the 70 years at 25 AD another very possible date for the crucifixion.

Pre-Tribulation Rapture:

Jesus returns for the Church at the beginning of the 7 years, Israel is put at the forefront for revival. Some believe the Holy Spirit is taken from earth during this period of 7 years. Some believe the Marriage Feast of the Lamb takes place during the 7 years.

Pros:

- Primary view of evangelicals in America since 1850s.

Cons:

- Seeming contradiction with 2 Thessalonians 2, which says we will "see the man of lawlessness" and we know Christ hasn't come back yet because we haven't seen this man of lawlessness be exalted.

Mid-Tribulation Rapture:

Jesus comes back in the middle of the Tribulation and before the Great Tribulation which is a final 3.5 years.

Pros:

- Possibly removes the contradiction with 2 Thessalonians 2.

Cons:

- Doesn't work with Daniel's 70 years as well. Specifically the final week and the return on Israel in dispensational thinking.

Post-Tribulation Rapture:

Christians will go through all of the Tribulation. Jesus will return for His followers at the end.

Pros:

- Removes problems with Pre and Mid Tribulation positions.

Cons:

- Removes the need for a 7 year dispensation to put Israel in the spotlight. The Lord can't/won't focus on Israel at the same time as the church, yet the church never leaves for the Lord to focus on Israel.
- No need for dispensational system.

Pre-Wrath Rapture:

Jesus will return at some point in the last 3.5 years right before His Second Coming.

Pros:

- Adds in what Jesus says in Matthew 24:22 into thought.

Cons:

- Same as Post-Tribulation cons.

The Non-Systems: Historical Pre-Mill and “Already But Not Yet” Perspectives

Key Themes:

- God has always been the same and will always be at work with all creation.
- Salvation is faith in Him alone in both the OT and NT, consistent with what Paul says (Romans 4; Galatians 3) and the writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 11).
- Interpreting prophecy contains both literal and spiritual components.
- Interpretation starts at the scriptures, not in aligning scriptures with my system.
- “Already but not yet.” Fulfillment of a prophecy doesn't mean the prophecy has been entirely fulfilled. Psalms 22 and Matthew 24 for

example.

- Revelation is read as a cycle.
- Deep connection with the Old Testament.
- Literal Anti-Christ.
- A seven year final “week” works if there is a week left to be fulfilled.

Shared Pros:

- Interpretation includes both spiritual and literal, consistent with First Coming prophecies and all of scripture in general.
- Doesn't require “either/or” interpretation but allows for “both/and” interpretation.
- Requires a deep knowledge of the Old Testament.
- Allows Daniel's 70 weeks to be interpreted in its own contexts.
- Takes pros of previous theologies and works with them together.
- Israel still has a plan, the Church is grafted into Israel. After Satan is released he will wage war against Jerusalem again and be defeated once and for all.
- Fulfills all Covenants with Israel (if there are still other covenants that need to be fulfilled).
- Can be understood with only the Bible and understanding of the culture of original authors and recipients.

Shared Cons:

- Requires a deep knowledge of the Old Testament.

Traditional Pre-Millennial:

Jesus returns at the end of the Great Commission. He sets up His literal Millennial Kingdom and reigns for 1000 years until He remakes the earth and reigns in the New Jerusalem forever with His believers. After Satan is released he will wage war against Jerusalem again and be defeated once and for all.

Pros

- Consistent reading of prophecy.
- Allows Revelation 20 to be read on its own.

Cons

- Requires making hard decisions about certain parts of Revelation, especially in passages John seems to be using the Old Testament and reuse of words.
- Especially hard decisions with Revelation 20 and Ezekiel 38-39/ Revelation 16-19.

“Already But Not Yet”:

Same as Historical Pre-Millennial except the Millennial Reign is spiritual and right now. Jesus will literally return, defeat the anti-Christ and set up His eternal kingdom from Israel for eternity. In Revelation 20 Satan is not bound entirely, he is bound from gathering the nations to attack Jerusalem. When God allows Satan will be released to gather the nations for a final battle against Israel, the Lord will return and defeat the Antichrist and his army.

Pros:

- Reconciles the OT and John’s use of it in Revelation the best.
- Reconciles John’s reusing of phrases and words in Revelation.

Cons:

- Requires a specific definition of the term “bound” (Greek: edesen) in Revelation 20:2 which would have to mean “bound from doing a specific thing or task” (*there is support for this definition*).
- I’ve heard an argument that a 1000 year Reign after Christ’s return is necessary to fulfill all of Israel’s promises. Though I haven’t been able to find a list of promises that can only be fulfilled in a 1000 year reign.

Note: The understanding of Satan being bound from accomplishing a specific task DOES NOT work in the replacement systems as

traditionally believed, those systems do not necessarily believe in a literal anti-Christ nor a literal attack on Israel by the Satanic forces.

Final Conclusion

The goal of this appendix is not to get anyone to change their views on the end times. But it is my goal to challenge them. At the very least, I hope you are challenged not to be dogmatic about it. I hope the next time you talk about the end times, you speak out of “this is what I think” rather than “this is what’s going to happen.”

Even more so, I hope anyone who has an uncontrollable desire to study the end times realizes this is not something that a solid conclusion can be achieved. Our time is not best spent endlessly studying this topic. Instead, we should spend most of our time seeking and knowing Him. Revelation is not about our end times systems; it’s a warning to make sure we know Him! It’s a letter to believers to “hold on” to Him. Things will get rocky, but he protects those who are His.

I certainly don’t mean we should never talk about the end times or the topic should be altogether avoided. Still, I believe some issues are more straightforward and more easily understood for a reason. I pray we as believers would rise up to be the temple He has made us to be, holy and pure. Devoted to Him, bold in our witness, not loving our lives even unto death (Revelation 12:11).