

The Blessed Hope!

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” –(Titus 2:13)

Diamond & Nugget #3

The Bible describes a two-fold plan and purpose that God has for the universe. The difference between these dual programs inside God’s purpose resides in the information that was ‘spoken by the mouth of the prophets since the world began’ and that which was ‘kept secret since the world began’ -(Acts 3:21, Romans 16:25). We mark the difference between the two programs by calling one the subject of prophecy, while the other is the subject of the mystery revealed to Paul -(Ephesians 3:1-5). In recent years I have preferred the term “history told in advance” rather than the word “prophecy” but I will not confuse the reader by using the words “prophetic” and “prophecy”.

We can further distinguish these programs by their sphere of dominion. The prophetic program is promised a future dominion on earth, while the program which was kept a mystery is promised a dominion in heavenly places. These two programs describe what will fulfill God’s single purpose for eternity – that all things would be in Christ - (Ephesians 1:10).

God began to reveal His plan for the Earth almost immediately to Adam, Abraham, and eventually to the nation of Israel. However, He kept the information of His heavenly program a secret from the foundation of the world -(Ephesians 3:9).

The aspects of God’s program for the Earth can be summed up with the following characteristics:

1. Israel was created as God’s chosen people to make know the Creator’s plan. God chose the nation of Israel to be the people through whom Jesus Christ would be born—the Savior from sin and death (John 3:16). God first promised the Messiah after Adam and Eve’s fall into sin -(Genesis chapter 3). God later confirmed that the Messiah would come from the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -(Genesis 12:1-3). Jesus Christ is the ultimate reason why God chose Israel to be His special people. God did not need to have a chosen people, but He decided to do it that way. Jesus had to come from some nation of people, and God chose Israel. God created the nation Israel to have a privileged status before Him as a peculiar people -(Genesis 12:2, Exodus 19:5, and Romans 3:1-2).

2. His chosen nation is promised a kingdom on Earth. God promised a specific piece of land that would mark where He would set up His kingdom on Earth -(Genesis 13:15, Deuteronomy 34:4, Psalm 37:22, Matthew 5:5, and Isaiah 2:2-4).

3. The kingdom will rule the world with the Messiah as King. A Messiah was promised to Israel that would lead the nation into world dominion and power -(Daniel 2:44-45, Isaiah 9:6-7, Jeremiah 23:5).

4. Israel will be the channel of blessing to the Gentile nations. Through their worldwide influence, and access to God, Israel would be the channel of God's blessing to Gentile nations -(Genesis 12:3, 22:18, Zechariah 8:20-23, Isaiah 60:3, and Matthew 5:16).

5. Righteousness comes through God's covenants. God gave the Old Covenant as a token that Israel would be a nation that followed after God. The New Covenant would replace the old as the method of attaining righteousness and entrance into the kingdom -(Deuteronomy 6:25, Ezekiel 36:24-27, Matthew 5:20, John 14:21, and 1st John 3:7-10).

6. Israel will live through tribulation before entering the kingdom. With the divine protection of God, Israel will be able to live through the time of His wrath poured out on Earth. They will be refined as silver and come out prepared to enter the kingdom on Earth -(Daniel 9:24, Zechariah 13:9, Mark 13:13, and 1st Peter 4:17).

These aspects stand in stark contrast to the aspects of God's "mystery" program, or God's program for heavenly places. Today we who are saved are not participants of God's program for the Earth, but rather we are ambassadors of God's heavenly purpose residing on earth to do His will (2nd Corinthians 5:20, and Ephesians 2:6).

Understanding the difference between the Prophecy and the Mystery in the Bible is a key to understanding what God's will is for us today. This basic truth can help us better understand our Bibles and the purpose of our Lord and Savior.

However, God's reason for choosing the nation of Israel was not solely for the purpose of producing the Messiah. God's desire for Israel was that they would go and teach others about Him. Israel was to be a nation of priests, prophets, and missionaries to the world. God's intent was for Israel to be a distinct people, a nation who pointed others towards God and His promised provision of a Redeemer, Messiah, and Savior. For the most part, Israel failed in this task. However, God's ultimate purpose for Israel—that of bringing the Messiah into the world—was fulfilled perfectly in the Person of Jesus Christ.

We live in a "mystery dispensation" where the operation of God on the Earth is significantly different than it was during the dispensation of his prophetic purpose to Israel. Here are some reasons that Israel's prophecies concerning the coming judgment and Earthly kingdom will not be fulfilled during this dispensation.

As better Bible teachers have said, to resolve the confusion of the “signs of the times” we must understand first the “times of the signs”. It is not until the time of this mystery dispensation is complete that the time of prophetic signs and fulfillment will continue according to God’s word.

1. The mystery was kept secret.

If the mystery of Christ was kept secret during every prophetic utterance in since the world began, then prophecy cannot be what is happening during the mystery dispensation -(Acts 3:21, Romans 16:25). What God hath separated let no man put together.

2. What is foretold is not kept secret.

The end time events of judgment, kingdom, and prophetic fulfillment were foretold. If those prophesied days actually speak of days during the mystery dispensation then these days were spoken about before. This is contrary to the Scripture when it speaks what is hidden and revealed.

3. God’s gospel is different.

The gospel of the grace of God is free justification with no accompanying works. The kingdom gospel pertains to the new covenant which has required works of law written on their heart.

4. God’s operation is different.

Some prophecies are about unbelievers, yet others require God’s intervention. The way he intervenes in prophecy is according to the promises and covenants. Yet, today God is not operating with humanity according to the covenants but by his grace.

5. God’s people are different.

The church in prophecy was is the obedient nation of Israel. Today, the people of God are made up of Israel and Gentiles. There is neither Jew nor Greek. These are mutually exclusive.

6. God’s representation is different.

Revelation and prophetic books talk about the priests of the Lord being the promised people of God. A characteristic of this dispensation is that there are no priests of the Lord. The church today as members of his body was not prophesied.

7. God’s purpose is different.

The prophetic purpose was to set up God’s dominion on the Earth. That is not God’s purpose in this dispensation which is to build a new creature to inhabit heavenly dominions.

8. Israel is fallen in this dispensation.

Romans 9-11 describe Israel’s spiritual fall. Prophetic fulfillment requires that Israel be given the position of spiritual and political prominence.

9. Salvation is sent to the Gentiles.

Acts 28:28 tells plainly that salvation is sent to the Gentiles. Yet, according to prophecy the Jewish nation would be the evangelists of God's salvation.

10. We are delivered from wrath to come.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 that we are delivered from wrath to come. The prophesied wrath on the Earth was a result of the covenant relationship between God and his people.

11. We are children of the day, not the night.

1st Thessalonians 5:1-9 says that those in the "night" time are looking for signs. We are not in that time, but are rather children of the "day" time in history. We are not appointed to the coming judgment.

12. God is not imputing sins.

The coming judgment on the earth is justified by the imputation of trespasses on the world. However, at this time God is not imputing trespasses to anyone -(2nd Corinthians 5:19).

13. It is the dispensation of God's grace.

The only events remaining on God's prophetic calendar refer to his declaration of war upon the world that declared war on him 2000 years ago. You cannot offer terms of peace in the dispensation of grace while at the same time declaring war.

14. Prophetic signs are global.

Some think the prophecies contain only specific prophecies such as the mark of the beast or the antichrist, when actually they include the whole Earth. The worldwide nature of some of the prophecies indicates that the prophecies would directly affect any church that was on Earth.

15. Prophecy is on a timetable.

This hidden dispensation has no prophetic timetable associated with it. Paul declares the beginning of his message as being "out of due time". Prophetic fulfillment is foretold to the month and year.

16. Prophecy is for Israel.

Prophecy was a privilege to the nation Israel who required signs (1 Corinthians 1:22). There is no Israel today. It will be Israel's prophets that will be sent to witness to the world during that time.

17. Israel today is not God's Israel.

Most point to 1948 creation of the state of Israel as a fulfillment of prophecy. However, these people who were gathered together by geopolitical forces reject the Messiah. Though they could many choose not to be saved by God's grace without the law. Indeed, that message remains an offense to them. They are not the remnant of Israel that began at Pentecost.

This is an incomplete list of reasons why Israel's prophecy is not being fulfilled today, but it emphasizes the doctrine of the difference between what was prophesied and what was kept secret (mystery). What I am doing here is to show the kind of issues that necessitates the reason for the distinction between Israel and the Church.

This distinction between Israel and the Church in the Word of God is essential in order that we can fully understand the prophecies revealed by the Creator. Much of the global church errs in its understanding and teaching regarding both Israel and the Church.

It was the Catholic Church that said, "*We are the new Israel.*" Even Vatican II says, "*Israel is the people formerly chosen by God.*" All down through history it was the popes who started anti-Semitism as far as so-called Christians are concerned. They were the first ones who put Jews in ghettos. They made the Jews wear an identifying badge, a yellow hat, whatever, depending upon the pope that was doing it. They slaughtered the Jews—the Crusaders, the first Crusade under Pope Urban II—as they moved across Europe they slaughtered Jews everywhere they could find them. People think that the Crusaders went to the so-called holy land to deliver it back to the Jews. No! They went there to take it for themselves, and the leader of the Crusades said he was going to revenge the death of Jesus, and he would slaughter every Jew! And, when they took Jerusalem, they chased the Jews into the synagogue and set it ablaze. Pope Urban II said, "*Go back and take that land for yourselves!*"

So, this is a Catholic idea. They took the names that God gave to Jerusalem . . . Jerusalem is mentioned 818 times in the Bible. It's called the city of God. They took that name for Rome! It's called the city of God; it's called the Holy City. No, they took that name.

Paul refuted this idea of "Anti-Semitism" or "Replacement Theology" and if one takes the time to study Romans chapters 9, 10, & 11. Yes, there's a distinction between the church and Israel. Israel still exists, God still has a program for them, He still has promises, and the Messiah will return to them, they will face Armageddon. That's not the church, and we need to recognize the difference. Prophetic fulfillment will happen as literally as the Bible declares it to be.

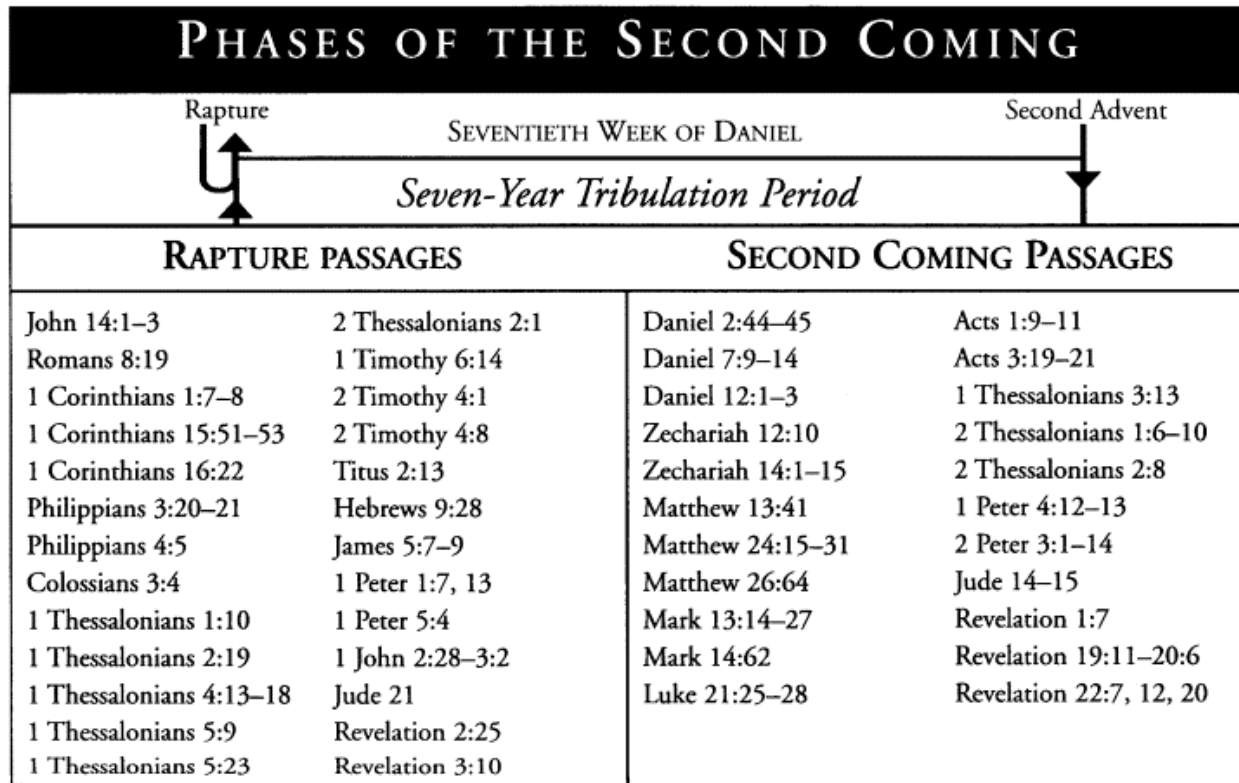
The Dispensational Approach is Rightly Dividing the Word. When the Bible is not taken literally there is no difference between Israel and the church, mystery and prophecy, or the different gospels in the Bible.

The millennial kingdom reign with Christ's priests might as well be happening today, the church might as well be the Israel of God, and what was kept secret might as well be what was foretold by the prophets.

The differences are blurred. Dispensational distinctives are covered by spiritualization. When the Bible is taken literally, suddenly the church and Israel are different, the church is never called a priesthood, and the prophetic fulfillment in Revelation 20 is not the

same as the mystery church. This does not preclude typology or thematic contextual messages

The Biblical literalist must become dispensational, separating the church from Israel, and mystery from prophecy. God has been operating through his church according to the revelation of the mystery of Christ. Prophecy (Revelation 20) has been postponed til the future.



This aligns with Paul’s statements in Romans 11 about Israel’s future return, and shows that literal Premillennialism necessitates dispensational thinking.

This is why finding Premillennialism in Christian history is so important: it identifies where literal dispensational thought existed. When a person fails to address all the points here they fall for the Roman Catholic doctrine appropriating for the RCC which is not theirs to claim. **The Pre-Tribulation Rapture doctrine originated with the Apostle Paul preceding Roman Catholicism by six centuries and was given by the Lord!** The Apostle Paul wrote Romans, 1st & 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st & 2nd Thessalonians, 1st & 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and according to most scholars, Hebrews. Perhaps the reason he was so prolific was that God called him and delivered supernaturally to him the message he was to give to the believers which would become part of the Word of God: ***"But I certify you, brothers, that the gospel which was I preached is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."*** –(Galatians

1:11-12).

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