

# A Secret Rapture?

## Part II

### History and Pillars

*compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, 2015*

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*Scripture is from the NKJV unless otherwise noted*

#### What is “the rapture” teaching?

The word “rapture” describes how the saints will feel, as they are “caught up” to Heaven - rapturous. Believers who talk about “the rapture” usually believe in what they term “**the secret rapture**.” They believe that Christ will come invisibly - “in presence” only, to rapture “the Church.” Every believer will suddenly disappear at the same moment. Seven years later, Jesus will return in glory to judge the Jews and the wicked.

Those who are “**left behind**” at the Rapture (non-Christian Jews and the unsaved) will have seven years of testing and trouble before Jesus returns in glory to rule the earth in peace for a thousand years (during the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium).

When Christ returns in glory, He will return with His church - composed of all of the “saints” who were raptured at His invisible “coming,” along with all of those Christian believers who died during the 2000 years since His resurrection.

The details of the teaching get somewhat murky concerning just who will rule with Messiah. (1) Some believe that God will eventually save every descendant of Jacob. They will all “see” that Jesus really is God’s Son and the redeemer, when He appears gloriously. (2) Others believe that only those who were faithful to Yahweh during their lifetimes, will be saved. (3) Still others believe that only those who believed in Jesus, during their lifetimes,” will be saved.

Those who pass the 7 years of testing between the Secret Rapture and the Glorious Return, will be joined with those Jews who believed in Christ, during the “church age,” and they will all be elevated to rule the world under Messiah.

The role of “saved” Gentile believers in the coming government of Messiah, is less clear, with many and varied opinions, since Darby.

## Let's briefly review the history of this doctrine.

Around 1830, Evangelicals in Great Britain founded a group called **The Plymouth Brethren**. One of their most gifted teachers was **John Nelson Darby**, who began to teach a new interpretation of prophecy called "**dispensationalism**."

**Darby taught** that God's method of "saving" individual human beings, **changed** during progressive eras of human history. Darby called these eras "dispensations."

### **Darby's Dispensations** *(Several variations have been posited since Darby.)*

1. The Age of Innocence - before the Fall (no salvation needed)
2. The Age of Conscience - from the Fall to the Flood (saved by following conscience)
3. The Age of Human Government - from the Flood to the call of Abraham
4. The Age of Promise - from the call of Abraham to Mt Sinai (saved by promise)
5. **The Age of Law - from Mt Sinai to the Cross (saved by works of the Law)**
6. **The Age of the Church - from the Cross to the Rapture (saved by grace)**
7. The Tribulation - Seven years, from the Rapture to the Glorious Return (Jews saved by works)
8. The Millennial Reign
9. Eternity - the Age of the Ages

## ISRAEL and THE CHURCH

(A) **Darby taught** that Israel and "the Church" are **two distinct and absolutely separate** peoples of God.

(B) **Darby believed** that God's method of saving Jews, was different from His way of saving those (Jew or Gentile) who come to believe in Jesus as Messiah, Savior and Son of God, during the "Church Age." Jews were saved "by works of the Law." Those who believe in Jesus Christ are saved by grace, through faith.

Let me just stop here. (We'll get right back to Darby.)

I need to explain how completely **I disagree with Darby on these two points**.

## BY GRACE - THROUGH FAITH

(A) **Our God has always "saved" individuals in the same way - by grace - through faith.**

Persons from the Fall to the Cross looked FORWARD to Christ as the Lamb of God, when they offered a sacrifice.

Persons since the Cross, look BACK to Jesus' death at Calvary, when they are "baptized into His death," and when they eat "the bread" and "drink the wine."

John 14:6 [Jesus speaking] “No one comes to the Father except through me.”

*No one! Not before the Cross, or since the Cross.*

Galatians 2:16 [Paul said] “For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

Paul makes it very clear. No one! Not before the cross - not since the cross, ever was (or ever will be) justified in the sight of God, by “law keeping!” It is impossible for us to keep His law, without His Spirit within.

**Grace is God’s part** - giving mercy and sharing His spirit - through Christ.

**Faith is our response to His grace** - believing in God the Father and in His Son.

We are saved by grace, through faith.

We do good works *because* His spirit enables.

Without Him, we can do nothing good.

## ONE CONGREGATION

(B) **There is only ONE “people of God.”** That congregation is called **Israel**.

The Greek word *ekklesia* (#1577) is translated as “church,” but also as “congregation.” (See Acts 7:38, where Paul calls OT Israel “the congregation.”) Some of God’s “congregation” lived during the Old Testament period, some since the resurrection, but they are *all* “the people of God,” and they are *all* Daniel’s people.

Gentiles who come to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, are “**grafted in**” TO Israel.

Jews or other DNA descendants of Jacob, who refuse to believe in Jesus as the Son of God, are “**cut off**” FROM Israel. Paul said that a man is not a Jew who is circumcised only in his flesh. He must be circumcised in heart and mind, *by Jesus Christ (Romans 2:28-29)*.

All those (Jew or Gentile) who never believe in Jesus as the Christ, never become citizens of God’s New Covenant Israel.

Our destination is The New Jerusalem. That City has 12 gates. Over each gate is the name of a tribe of Israel. There is no gate labeled “Gentiles Enter Here.”

Please see our studies: “**Who are Israel?**” and “**Two Covenants.**”

Now let’s get back to **Darby** and **The Rapture**.

## The Prophecy of the “Seventy Sevens” - and the Israel of God

John Darby’s Rapture teaching was based on the prophecy of the “seventy-sevens.”

Daniel 9:24 “**Seventy 'sevens'** are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy.”

We’re going to look more closely at the “seventy weeks” prophecy in Part V of this series, but first I want to explain more of Darby’s teaching, so that you will understand the prophecy - from Darby’s point of view.

The prophecy of Daniel Chapter 9, was spoken to Daniel, and allotted “seventy-sevens” to “**your people.**”

**John Darby believed** that Daniel’s “people” were the Jews - the Israelites. Upon hearing the prophecy, **Daniel himself would have understood the prophecy to concern Israel.**

**Daniel did not know that Jesus would later command the inclusion of all Gentile believers.** They would be “grafted in” TO Israel (*See Romans Chapter Eleven*). The prophecy of Daniel Chapter Nine would not be fulfilled until “the fullness” of those Gentiles had “come in” (*Romans 11:25*).

The resulting “Israel” would be a composite of believing Hebrews and believing Gentiles.

God’s final Israel is not about race. It’s about faith. Yes. Of course, there was a kernel of race, because God chose Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to be the human ancestors of His Son, and they were Hebrews. But God’s “Israel” today is composed of faithful believers of many races, living in many nations.

*KEEP IN MIND: According to Darby, the prophecy of the “seventy sevens” concerns only the Jewish people.*

### THE “SEVENTY-SEVENS” and THE POSTPONEMENT THEORY

Daniel 9:25-28 “Know therefore and understand, That FROM **the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem** UNTIL **Messiah the Prince**, [or simply an anointed prince] there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself” [or: “be cut off without a successor” LEE, or “be cut off and have nothing” ESV, NAS, NET, NIV];

Daniel 9:25-28 [continued] “And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then **he** shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week **he** shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be **one who makes desolate**, Even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.” (NKJ)

**Darby reasoned** that the command to rebuild Jerusalem, was the one issued by King Artaxerxes the First in 457BC. [There is some debate concerning the year of that command.] According to Darby, Jesus was put to death at the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> “week” of years from that command, leaving the last “week” - **the 70<sup>th</sup> “week” of the prophecy, still unfulfilled**. By that reckoning Jesus should return 7 years later, to set up His kingdom on the earth.

To explain why Jesus did not return 7 years after His death and resurrection, **Darby said the 70<sup>th</sup> week was delayed**. This was called “**the postponement theory**.”

**According to Darby, the prophetic timetable was suspended** when the Jews rejected their Messiah. The long “Church Age” had begun, during which time Christ would build up His “heavenly people.” Darby called this “the times of the Gentiles” (*Luke 21:24*).

**According to Darby, the 70<sup>th</sup> “week”** will BEGIN with “the rapture of the Church.”

At the Rapture, the Church will be removed from this earth, to Heaven. **God will then go back to saving Jews by “works of the law.”**

He will go back to the previous “dispensation,” which was left unfinished.

## A TEMPLE - SACRIFICES - THE PRIESTHOOD

**To be saved “by works of the Law,” Jews will need the Temple and sacrifices.**

Now you understand why rapture believers support Israel, and want Jews to recover control of the Temple Mount. Only when the Jews once again have control of the Temple Mount, can the last “week” of the Daniel Nine prophecy be fulfilled, and the Church be raptured. This according to Darby.

Devout Jews want control of the Mount, because they understand from the Old Testament prophecies that Messiah must come to the Temple. They must restore the Temple, so their Messiah can come. They also believe they can only receive “atonement” as a nation, through animal sacrifices, offered at that Temple.

*NOTE: I can see the possibility, that the last “week” was delayed. I have a problem however, with anyone being “saved by works of the law.” I have a problem with idea of two separate peoples of God. And I have a problem with a “secret rapture” whereby the Church is removed from the earth 7 years before the Glorious Return of Jesus.*

## THE COMMAND TO REBUILD

Starting point for the Seventy-Sevens

Daniel 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, That **FROM the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem** until Messiah the Prince [or simply "an anointed prince"], There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

An ancient command allowing Jews to return to their land and to rebuild "the House of God" at Jerusalem, was issued by **King Cyrus** in the first year of his reign over Babylon, where the Jews were captive (*Ezra 1:1-4*). That year was 538BC (according to an ancient Greek astrologer and historian writing some 500 years later). From 538BC to the Spring of 26AD = 563 years. NOT the 483 years, needed to fulfill the 69 "weeks," or even the 434 years needed to fulfill 62 "weeks" of years.

A decree commanding no interference with the rebuilding, was issued by **Darius** (the son-in-law of Cyrus) a few years later, but that decree was based on Cyrus original decree (*Ezra Chapter 6*).

Eighty years later, in 457BC, **Artaxerxes the First** issued a decree of self governance, under the Law of the God of Israel, to be administered by Ezra and the priests (*Ezra 7:11-26*). The Temple was partially constructed by that time (*Ezra 6:15*).

Those who want to use the 457BC date, for the start of the 70 weeks prophecy, do so because 69 "weeks" of years from that date, reaches to 26AD, the year they believe Jesus was baptized. But **the 457 decree was NOT a command allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem, or even a general command to rebuild**. Also, there is a growing body of evidence that Jesus died in the Spring of 33AD, not 30. This would put His baptism in 29AD, not 26 (assuming a 3.5 year ministry).

An excellent article by Paul S. Crosby, can be found at the following link:  
<https://letgodbetruer.com/bible-topics/index/prophecy/cyrus-decree-to-rebuild/>

Crosby argues that only the decree of **Cyrus** fulfills the prophecy of Daniel 9:24, and the prophecy of Isaiah 44:28. The year of that command (536BC) is taken from an account of Persian kings written by Claudius Ptolemy, a Greek astronomer, astrologer, and geographer who lived at Alexandria, Egypt between 70AD and 161AD. The author argues that we cannot accept as fact, the dates of Cyrus rule given by a Greek, writing **five centuries after the event took place**. This over the clear prophecies of Scripture that Cyrus would cause the Israelites to "return" and "rebuild" the Temple at the end of the 70 years of captivity, prophesied by Jeremiah (*25:11-12; 29:10*). IF the command of Cyrus was issued in 452, 453 or 450, rather than 536BC, then the 483 years of Daniel 9:24, would reach (*possibly*) to the baptism of Christ, or even to the death of Christ.

**That just leaves the absence of a 7 year covenant.**

Daniel 9:27 “He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering” (NIV).

*There is no record of a 7 year “covenant” made with the Jewish people either shortly before, or shortly after, the death of Christ, which is why I favor a fulfillment in the last days.*

## OTHER TRANSLATIONS - OTHER INTERPRETATIONS

Daniel 9:25-26 “Know therefore and understand: **from** the time that the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem **until** the time of an anointed prince, there shall be seven weeks;

and **for** sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with streets and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 **After** the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing, and the troops 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.” (New Revised Standard Version)

In this version, “an anointed prince” [or ruler] would come after just “seven weeks.” The “anointed ruler” to come after the first “seven weeks” (49 years), could be the high priest of a restored Temple, or a descendant of King David anointed to rule at Jerusalem.

Following the “seven weeks” the Temple would “be built again” for “sixty-two weeks.” THEN” “an anointed one shall be cut off” [killed], presumably by “the prince who is to come,” who would destroy the city and the Temple. This would fit with Jesus’ death at the hand of Rome.

**There are several different explanations and expositions of the prophecy.** For me this is sure evidence that the perfect understanding of this prophecy, is YET FUTURE.

Here is another link, to an article by Diana Edelman, University of Sheffield 2005, titled: “Redating the Building of the 'Second' Temple.”

<https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/2005/11/ede298001>

## SEAL UP THE BOOK - til the Time of the END

The prophet was told to “shut up the words, and **seal the book until the time of the end**” (*Dan 12:4*). The messenger said, “Go your way, Daniel, for **the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end**” (*Dan 12:9*).

Does the whole prophetic time period - the whole seventy-sevens, belong to “the time of the end?” Or is it only the final “week,” that belongs to the last days?”

Perhaps we should look for another command in the very last days. If the Old City of Jerusalem is destroyed in a Middle East war, then **another command** to rebuild Jerusalem, **may be forthcoming.** **The entire 70 weeks may belong to the last days.**

## SO MANY PIECES TO THE PUZZLE

This study on the “Secret Rapture” question, has a great many parts.

I must explain what Darby taught, and the basis of his teaching.

I must explain why I believe that Darby was wrong.

I must explain what I believe, and why I believe as I do.

I must explain all of these things for each teaching of Darby  
- each teaching that impacts the Rapture question.

We began this series with **two words** - “parousia” and “apokalupsis.”

We moved on to Darby’s “**dispensations**”

and his teachings concerning God’s “method” of saving individual human beings.

We mentioned the need for a **restored Temple**, if Jews are to be “saved by works of the Law.”

We considered just who Daniel’s “people” were, and are. [Who are Israel?](#)

We looked at **the “seventy-sevens,”**

and asked just when **the command to restore Jerusalem** was issued.

Going forward, we will consider the “sevens.” **How long is a “seven?”**

I will try to summarize my beliefs concerning the return of Jesus Christ,  
the persecution of the last days, and the final events of this age.

We will ask **why this question** concerning a “Secret Rapture,” **is so important.**

In Part 3 of this series, we will consider the evil “prince to come,”

who will destroy the City and the Temple (*Dan 9:26*).

In Part 4 we will look more closely at the final period of persecution under “the Beast.”

In Part 5, we will ask **what is “finished,”** at the end of the “seventy-sevens.”

This in light of the ancient prophetic Sanctuary imagery and TYPE.

### How long is a “seven?”

ONE WEEK of **SEVEN DAYS**: The Hebrew word translated as “**week**” in Daniel 9:27, is shabuwa` (Strong’s #07620). The meaning, according to Strong’s Concordance is “**seven**” - a period of 7 days, or of 7 years.

Seventy literal “weeks” would total **490 days** (1 year, 4 months, 10 days, using the Hebrew 360 day year, and 30 day month). This time period fits easily into the “**time, times, and a part**” prophesied for the last days.

If one day (in prophetic time) is equal to one literal year, then “seventy sevens” would be **490 years** (*Exo 23:10-11, Lev 25:3-4*). The Children of Israel were told they would wander 40 years in the wilderness, one year for each day that the twelve spies were in the land (*Num 14:34*).

ONE PLANTING CYCLE of **SEVEN YEARS**: Israel was commanded to farm the land for six years, followed by one year of “rest for the land” - a Sabbath year. Each cycle was called a “seven.” Seventy of those planting cycles would equal **490 years**, but not exactly, because an additional six months must be added for each of 9 Jubilee. The Jubilee year began half way through each 49<sup>th</sup> year. Adding 6months for each of 9 Jubilee, makes the total 494 years 6 months, for “seventy sevens.” Beginning with the command of Artexerxes in 457BC, 494.5 years brings us to 38.5AD. Not a good fit for either the birth or the death of Christ.

ONE YEARLY ROUND of **SEVEN FEASTS**: Another more obscure meaning connects the word *shabuwa* ' with the Feasts. There were 7 Feasts each year, which all took place within the first 7 months of the year. Seventy rounds of the seven Feasts would take place within **70 years**.

*NOTE: The nation known today as Israel, celebrated 70 years of national identity in 2018. The UN recognition of the State of Israel did not command the rebuilding and restoration of the City of Jerusalem. No Messiah appeared in 1948, or has since appeared. The United States under President Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, on December 6, 2017.*

#### SIDE NOTE

**Some folks believe** the 69<sup>th</sup> “week” ended with the anointing of Jesus at His baptism. They believe that Messiah - Jesus, was “cut off” in 30AD, half way through the 70<sup>th</sup> “week.”

The prophecy said it would be 69 “weeks” to Messiah Prince, from the command to restore Jerusalem. From 457BC to 26AD = 483 years. Fall of 26AD (the Baptism) to Spring of 30AD (the Cross) = 3.5 years, or half a week.

Christ’s ministry of 3.5 years, followed by another 3.5 years (which ended with the stoning of Stephen) completed the final “week” of the prophecy. **Those who hold to this view**, say that the death of Christ, His resurrection, ascension, and the anointing of Heaven itself with His blood, fulfilled the prophecies of Daniel 9:24-28. Probation for the Jews (as the “chosen people” of God) ended with the killing of Stephen. The Church then became “the chosen,” and the Gospel then went to the Gentiles. **I must disagree.**

(A) On the Mount of Olives, just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He commanded his followers to go and teach and baptize people of all nations (*Matt. 28:19*). He didn’t tell them to teach only Jews for three and a half more years.

(B) Israel is still the name of “the chosen people” of God. The New Covenant is made with Israel and Judah, not with a different group called “the Church” (*Hebrews 8:7-13, Jeremiah 31:31*). Gentile believers are “grafted in” TO Israel. That is *how* they partake of the covenants.

(C) Many historians believe that Christ was executed in the Spring of 33AD. Others site 31AD. The year 30AD, is by no means certain.

## How did Darby's teaching become so popular?

**C.I. Scofield**, an American follower of **Darby**, published "**The Scofield Reference Bible**" which contained the dispensationalist views. Scofield's commentary was printed on the lower half of each page of that Bible. Scofield's views were widely accepted, and to this day, are deeply held belief by many ("*Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*" by Timothy P. Weber 1979).

"**Charting the End Times**," a book by **Tim LaHaye** and Thomas Ice, published by Harvest House, contains a good visual representation of the dispensationalist teaching, and of the different "ages." The "Left Behind" movie series, is based on the secret rapture teaching.

## Our belief - at prophecyviewpoint.com

**First: We believe** that God's method of saving individuals from sin, and Satan's domination, has always been the same. **Human beings are saved "by grace" - "through faith"** (*Ephesians 2:8*). All human beings, not just New Testament Gentile believers. Abel offered a better sacrifice - by faith. Enoch walked with God - by faith. Noah built an ark - by faith. These people lived long before the Cross of Jesus.

**Second: We believe** that "**Israel**" is the name of the covenant people of God. Gentiles who come to faith in Christ as Messiah, are "grafted in" to Israel (*see Romans chapter 11, and Ephesians chapter 2*). The ancient Jews who refused to believe in Jesus as Savior and Son of God, were "cut off" from Israel. Jesus said, "No man comes to the Father but by Me" (*John 14:6*).

*NOTE: Thousands of Jews did believe, and were baptized into Christ.*

The rebellious and wicked who have never believed or repented of sin, are not citizens of Israel. True Israel and "the church" (the congregation) are one and the same body of believers. See our study: "**Who are Israel?**"

**Third:** Daniel was told to "shut up the words, and **seal the book until the time of the end**" (*Dan 12:4 NKJ*). I have hesitated to publish a study on the prophecy of the "seventy-sevens," because we have not yet reached the final "time of the end" - the last 3.5 to 7 years. The prophecy of **the seventy-sevens** has NOT YET been fully "opened" for our understanding.

The vision of Daniel Chapter Eight includes "the daily," the Temple, and "the abomination of desolation." The angel told Daniel concerning that vision, "Understand, son of man, that **the vision is for the time of the end**" (*Dan 8:17*). "I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be" (*Daniel 8:19*).

I have shared with you those things I believe are most likely, but let's be clear. We do not yet fully understand this prophecy. We do not yet know the identity of the final terrible Beast power, or the identity of the "Little Horn." **This prophecy has NOT YET been unsealed.**

**Fourth: We believe** that Jesus Christ will return for all His people on the same day, following “three and a part years” (1260 days, 42 months) of terrible persecution by the Antichrist power, against those who “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

*Darby said only Jews (left behind at the Rapture) would be persecuted for keeping the Law, but Revelation clearly says the remnant of “Israel” (the woman of the prophecy) will have the faith of Jesus.*

- a. The Beast will rule over all mankind - “EVERY tribe, tongue and nation” (Rev 13:3-8).
- b. The Little Horn (on the Beast) will be the visible leader, and enforcer.
- c. The Little Horn will set up the Image of the Beast, in the Temple.
- d. The Image will cause everyone to take the “mark” of the Beast power.
- e. Those who refuse the mark, will be persecuted and forbidden to buy or sell.
- f. The Beast power will “intend to change time law.” (Dan 7:25)

*The 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment requires “rest” on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath (Saturday).  
“Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 12:17, 14:12).*

The “Two Witnesses” of Revelation Cpt Eleven will give their testimony, the warning Trumpet plagues will be unleashed, and the people of God will be severely persecuted, all during this three and a half year time period.

## SIDE NOTE

Some have tried to convince me that the 1260 days were actually fulfilled during the Dark Ages when the Roman Catholic Church dominated the Christian world. They say this period ended when the Pope was taken captive by Napoleon, receiving a “deadly wound.” I cannot agree.

This period of persecution follows AFTER the “deadly wound” is “healed” - not before the “head” is wounded. This period of persecution ENDS when the heavenly Court sits, and dominion is given to the saints of the most high (Daniel 7:21-26). This time has certainly not come. The saints of God are not yet ruling this world.

The Catholic Church did not rule over “every tribe, tongue, and nation” and “all who dwell on the earth.” Sorry. That interpretation just doesn’t fit.

**Fifth: We believe** that God’s people **will be on the earth** during the warning **Trumpet plagues**, leading up to the return of Christ at the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet.

Christ will remove His people from this earth just before the **seven last Bowl plagues** (the wrath plagues) are poured out. See our study “Trumpets and Bowls.”

**Sixth: We believe** that all life on planet earth will be destroyed by **the 7 wrath plagues**, which will be unleashed on the day the people of God are removed from this planet, by Christ at His glorious return.

The earth will remain uninhabited and desolate for all or at least for a good portion of the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium, while the people of God are living in the New Jerusalem - the place which Christ has prepared for them, in the Heavenly realm. They will prepare to serve as “priests of God and of Christ” for “the rest” who will be resurrected at the 8<sup>th</sup> millennium (*Revelation 20:5-6*).

See our studies: “[Millennium](#),” “[A Kingdom of Priests](#),”

“[The Change of the Priesthood](#),” and “[The 8<sup>th</sup> Day](#).”

### Why is this study important?

1. If you believe that you will be “raptured” before any real persecution begins, then you will not prepare your mind and heart to endure that time. If you come up to *that time*, and you have NOT been raptured, what will be going through your mind? What you believed - didn’t happen!!

If you have ever experienced a **crisis of faith**, you know what it feels like. You wonder *what you can* believe. Going into a period of great persecution is NOT the time for a crisis of faith. All those folks who believe they will simply be raptured out, will be in crisis.

Such a crisis of faith, happened to Israel on the border of Canaan. Caleb and Joshua were saying “We can do it!” The LORD is with us!” The people were saying, “It would have been better to die in the wilderness.” And so they did. They died in the wilderness.

2. The LORD gave the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, *for His people in the last days*. Realizing this, we may assume **these prophecies contain vital information** - information that will help get us through this last period of persecution.

The prophecies tell us how long this period will last. If folks know the suffering will not last forever, that it is limited to a specific period of time, they can better steel their hearts to endure it.

3. When the people of God see the prophecies coming to pass before their eyes, they will know that Jesus’ coming is very near. Knowing that this time *was* prophesied, believers will have confidence that the LORD is in control, and will soon set things right.
4. The prophecies make it clear that this is a testing time - the last testing before Jesus returns. The Trumpet plagues will be warnings, for the world, that judgment day is approaching. The people of the world will NOT heed these warnings. They will blame the people of God for their trouble. This will allow the LORD to withdraw from them. The seven last plagues of wrath, will be unleashed.
5. Knowing beforehand, that many will be imprisoned or martyred for their faith during this time, the faith of believers will not be unsettled when such persecution comes.
6. The LORD will NOT pour out His final wrath, **UNTIL the world has filled its cup of wickedness**. **The silencing and persecution of God’s people will fill that cup**. This is the WHY - why God will allow the final persecution. The Little Horn Antichrist figure will rise “when rebels have become completely wicked” (*Daniel 8:23 NIV*). The New Jerusalem Bible reads, “**when the measure of their sins is full**.”

The people of Noah's day said to God, "Depart from us" (*Job 22:17*). The people of the last days will do no less. Censorship will be followed with threats of punishment.

The angel said to Daniel, "When **the power of the holy people is completely shattered**, all these things will be finished" (*Dan 12:7*). The "power" of God's people is that bestowed by the Spirit, for witnessing (*See Acts 1:8*). When the last Two Witnesses are martyred, it's over.

See our study: "[The Two Witnesses](#)."

Our Savior cannot return UNTIL the world has filled its cup, by persecuting us.

When we suffer in the last days for His name,  
we can know that our suffering is hastening The Day of His return.

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.  
Prophecy Viewpoint*

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## ADDENDUM

Some argue the decree by **Artaxerxes I**, was NOT a command to rebuild either Jerusalem or the Temple. It was a decree granting self governance, under the priesthood (led by Ezra). Others point to **the request of Nehemiah**, "**send me to Judah**, to the city of my fathers' tombs, **that I may rebuild it**" (*Neh 2:5*).

Nehemiah also asked for "a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must **give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which pertains to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy**." The king granted his requests (*Neh 2:8*). When Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem, the City still lay mostly in ruins (*Neh 2:17*).

## PROPHECIES OF RETURN

Isaiah 44:28 [Prophecy of Isaiah, written 100 years before Cyrus came to power] “Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure,’ Saying to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be built,’ And to the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”

Jeremiah 29:10 “For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.”

## THE DECREE OF CYRUS

2 Chronicles 36:22-23 “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 23 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me **to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah**. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!”

Ezra 1:1-5 “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to **build Him a house** at Jerusalem which is in Judah. 3 Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and **build the house of the LORD God of Israel** (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem. 5 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to **go up and build the house of the LORD** which is in Jerusalem.”

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