

FALL 2026

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 3

FULFILLED! *Magazine*

EXPLORING AND PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST



Satan

Spiritual Being

OR

Human Adversary

Editor's Note...

JUST THE OTHER DAY, a friend sent me a text and wished me a Happy Easter. He was teasing, and I didn't quite get it at first, but it turned out that his joke had a point. This year has been going by so quickly that it really does feel like it should only be April. Instead, summer breaks are over, schools are back in session, and 54% of Americans are currently craving pumpkin spice (according to a stat that I saw recently).

This school term is looking different so far compared to last year. My six-year-old daughter is once again homeschooling, but for this school year (first grade), we joined a co-op that gained national recognition earlier this year. A Forbes Magazine article highlighted their unique approach of holding all classes outdoors, weather permitting. This co-op was founded in Myrtle Beach, and the original group actually held classes at the beach when they first got started; my daughter's group in Greenville, South Carolina meets at a park most of the time. They have also brought me on as an ELA (English Language Arts) instructor, on a contract basis, with possibly other roles to come if my schedule allows.

Everyone can relate, of course, to facing challenges in this life. In this issue, new contributor Maurice Rogers takes on this topic and discusses ways to overcome them and to walk in victory through faith. In particular, he points to hardships as opportunities to learn lessons, experience transformation, and continually discover what it means to walk in the reality and the ways of God's Kingdom.

Robert Cruickshank Jr. continues his commentary on Zechariah 14, this time covering verses 5-11. Robert sees the fulfillment of these verses in the first century AD, with clear parallels to Jesus' words in the Olivet Discourse. Other connections are made with Jude, Revelation, the works of Josephus, and more. As before, Robert concludes his article with a number of takeaways, lessons from the word of the Lord that came to Zechariah which can be applied to our lives today.

Patricia Bailey returns with an article on the dragon of the book of Revelation. Her article draws on a number of Old Testament texts regarding the dragon, discussing whether it is representative of spiritual beings or human rulers. Patricia also deliberates over the role of Satan, the devil, and the serpent – all connected with the dragon in Revelation 12.

Are the two witnesses preparing to fulfill Revelation 11 in the near future? The average reader of Fulfilled! Magazine will agree that this is not the case, but within the preterist community, opinions vary on their identity. Were they individuals? Entities? In this issue, I propose that they were two former high priests who were killed just before the Feast of Purim in early AD 68. This is a verse-by-verse commentary that discusses details such as their bodies lying in the street without burial, their enemies rejoicing over them and exchanging gifts, and an earthquake that killed 7000 people – with apparent parallels in The Wars of the Jews by Josephus. Yet, I don't have a solid explanation for a 2-verse section in this passage, and I especially welcome your thoughts on those details.

TJ Smith closes out this issue by picking up where he left off in the Summer 2026 issue. He discusses the parable of Jesus regarding those who tragically saw but didn't perceive and heard but didn't understand. Those words of Jesus echo Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, as TJ points out. After referencing Michael Jordan and Clint Eastwood, TJ concludes with a thought on the doors that were opened to others due to this lack of perceiving and understanding.

Brian Martin shared with me (and I will share with you) that the preterist community giving portal on Samaritan's Purse has now received nearly \$28,000 since it was established in the spring of 2020. As Brian went on to express, "When preterists engage in real-life, current events ministry like this," it shows that "we do more than just debate futurists." It is also "a demonstration that we have a desire to share the good news and spread the kingdom of God." Amen, and let's keep up the good work. The giving link is: <https://fundraiser.samaritanspurse.org/team/295437>.

Blessings in Christ,

Adam Maarschalk



Adam Maarschalk
Editor
editor@fulfilledcg.com

2. Editor's Note
An update from the editor's desk

4. Perspectives - Robert Cruickshank, Jr.
Zechariah 14 Part 2

10. Perspectives - Adam Maarschalk
A Case for the Death of the Two Witnesses
During the Purim Festival of AD 68

16. Perspectives - Patricia Bailey
The Dragon of Revelation

18. Life in the Kingdom - Maurice Jordan
Overcoming Life's Challenges:
Finding Victory through Faith

22. Parting Thoughts - TJ Smith
Seeing and Hearing but not
Perceiving and Understanding

Reader Beware!

The views expressed in these pages are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FCG or other contributors. FCG does not tell readers what to believe; rather, FCG provides readers with resources intended to aid in discovering biblical foundations informing what they believe. FCG strives to give readers something worthwhile to think about—we avoid telling them what to think. Please understand that we cannot vet every contributor's various doctrinal positions or read every advertised book. We rely on you, the reader, to be a Berean: prayerfully discuss and examine all positions presented according to Scripture to establish any truth or application as you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

General Editor
Adam Maarschalk

Copy Editor
Kayla F. Martin

Design & Layout
Brian L. Martin
Kayla F. Martin

Published by
FULFILLED
COMMUNICATIONS
GROUP

Subscriptions
We offer subscriptions free of charge, subsisting solely on donations from those who share a vision to share preterism.

Contributions
FULFILLED COMMUNICATIONS GROUP is a 501 (c) (3) religious nonprofit corporation, and all donations are fully tax-deductible. Please make any contributions payable to:

FCG
3784 Camanche Pkwy N.
Ione, CA 95640-9614

How to contact us:
FCG
3784 Camanche Pkwy N.
Ione, CA 95640-9614
admin@fulfilledcg.com

(530) FCG-AD70 [324-2370]
Please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

www.FulfilledCG.com
www.FulfilledMagazine.com

“And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach Azal. And you shall the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.” (Zechariah

AMIDST THE CALAMITIES THAT come upon Jerusalem when the city is taken (Zech 14:2), God’s people are to **flee to the valley of His mountains**. Zechariah’s words here are strikingly similar to Jesus’ instructions to His disciples in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21). He said they were to “*flee to the mountains*” (Luke 21:21) when they saw Jerusalem “*surrounded by armies*” (Luke 21:20).

According to the Church historian Eusebius, the believers in Jerusalem did in fact escape the horrors of the Roman siege and “fled to a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella.”¹ Zechariah’s phrase, **the valley of the mountains**, is an apt description of Pella, as the “site of ancient Pella lies among rugged hills and sharp valleys in the modern country of Jordan” while Pella itself “stood on two mounds.”²

Zechariah says that **the valley of the mountains**, to which they were to flee, **shall reach Azal**. The significance of the term *Azal* is not as much topographical as it is theological. Commenting on this, Mike Bull observes: “The mention of Azal possibly links this event with the ‘Azēl’ goat on the Day of Atonement.”³ This makes sense since “many commentators believe that Azazel originates from Azal.”⁴ According to Thomas Douglas, Azazel is simply the “reduplicated form” of Azal.⁵

Consequently, the reference to *Azal* would make a conceptual connection to the Day of Atonement in the minds of Zechariah’s original audience. The theological messaging is that those who heeded Jesus’ words, and fled to the mountains, would find true salvation — as typified in the atonement rituals. This contrasts with those who clung to the city, remained in the city, and went down with the flames of the city.

This flight to the mountains is compared to the flight **from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah**. Fittingly, on the night that the Idumeans and the Zealots gained control of the temple, Josephus speaks of “...amazing concussions and bellows of the earth, that was in an earthquake” (Josephus, *Wars*, 4.4.5). The combined signals of the Zealots standing in the temple and the Romans surrounding the city would be the believers’ cue to flee (cf. Matt 24:15-18; Luke 21:20-21) — just as in the days of the earthquake at the time of King Uzziah.

Verse 5 concludes with the statement: “**Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.**” This language is similar to Jude 14 and the Lord coming “*with many thousands of His holy ones.*” With that said, this coming of the Lord concerns Jude’s readers’ own day and time. Jude’s prophecy pertained to a judgment of certain men (Jude 14) who had “*crept in unaware*” (Jude 4) among the assemblies of the first-century believers (Jude 12).

Likewise, Jesus speaks of His cloud-coming in judgment, accompanied by His angels (Matt 24:30-31), before the first-century generation passed away (Matt 24:34). Earlier, He had told His disciples that He would come “*in the glory of His Father with His angels*” before the last of His disciples died (Matt 16:27-28).

In short, Zechariah’s words coincide with the language of Jesus’ judgment-coming in the first century. He came in judgment with His angels — with all His holy ones. There is no need to catapult the words of Zechariah, Jesus, or Jude into the far-distant future — or to the end of history.

“On that day there will be no light; the luminaries will die out. For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come

“Zechariah’s phrase, the valley of the mountains, is an apt description of Pella . . .”

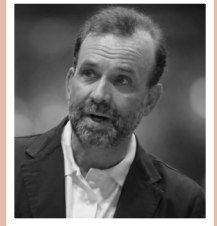
Zechariah 14 - Part 2

Robert Cruickshank, Jr.

Robert is a member of the extended family of Berean Bible Church (VA) and a conference speaker and blogger at:

<https://burrosofBerea.com/>

recjrboss@gmail.com



you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in Zechariah 14:5 ESV).

about that at the time of evening there will be light” (Zech 14:6-7).

The prophet speaks of a **unique day** wherein **there will be no light**, and the created order is in disarray. It’s an ominous time of cosmic portents that will bring **light** at **the time of the evening**. In these verses, Zechariah is echoing the words of an earlier prophet who spoke of the same cosmic role reversal and what this meant for old covenant Israel:

“This is what the Lord says, He who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— The Lord of armies is His name: ‘If this fixed order departs From Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘Then the descendants of Israel also will cease to be a nation before Me forever’” (Jer 31:36-37).

According to Jeremiah, this role reversal of night and day would be an omen to ethnic Israel that God’s unique relationship with them was over. Zechariah is tracking on the same theme as the former prophet and letting his readers know that Jeremiah’s warning would in fact become a reality.

Accordingly, during the 40-year transition period in the first century, God providentially made sure that both portents couldn’t possibly be missed by those who rejected their Messiah. The first premonition came when they hung Jesus on the cross:

“And when it was about the sixth hour, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. The sun being obscured, the veil of the temple was torn in two” (Luke 23:44-45).

Day had turned to night when they sealed their own fate by crucifying the Lord of glory. Next, night turned into day as the events of the Roman-Jewish war began. Josephus writes:

“Thus also before the Jews’ rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus [Nisan], and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which lasted for half an hour” (Josephus, *Wars*, 6.5.3).

The strange phenomenon emanating from the temple, on that fateful night, was completely misinterpreted by those who should have known better. Josephus informs us that “this light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful,” and they completely missed the fact that “the signal foreshadowed the desolation that was coming upon them.”

They should have read Jeremiah. They should have read Zechariah. They should have known what this meant, but they didn’t.

Jesus’ followers did.

They were living during this unique time between the “night” of the vanishing old covenant era and the “day” of the unending new covenant age that both Jeremiah and Zechariah had prophesied about in ages past. Accordingly, Paul wrote to the first-century believers: “*The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand*” (Rom 13:12). Likewise, Peter tells his readers to “*pay attention*” to the “*prophetic word*” as “*to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your heart*” (2 Pet 1:19). The light of that morning star

“The strange phenomenon emanating from the temple, on that fateful night, was completely misinterpreted by those who should have known better.”

...continued on page 6

shines forevermore in the hearts of true believers who live in the everlasting “day” of the new covenant. There is “no more night” in the city (Rev 22:5).⁶

Zechariah 14

Robert Cruickshank, Jr.

... continued from page 5

“And on that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter” (Zech 14:8).

In the everlasting day of the new covenant, **living waters will flow out of Jerusalem**. It’s impossible not to hear Zechariah’s reference to “living waters” being echoed in the words of Jesus on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles:

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, from his belly being will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37-38).

The fact that Jesus spoke these words during the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:37) is significant. Zechariah 12-14 was “a central passage in the Feast’s liturgy” with “Zechariah 14 being one of its prophetic *Haphtaroth*.”⁷ The *Haphtaroth* was the reading from the Prophets that followed the reading from the Law. In other words, Zechariah’s words would have been fresh on the minds of Jesus’ listeners when He uttered His own words on “the last day of the great feast” (John 7:37).

Jesus said that these living waters would flow from believers’ bellies (*koilia*), or from their central being. In the Bible, Jerusalem was regarded as the navel of the earth and the center of the world (Ezek 5:5; 38:12). With “John 7:38 being a quotation primarily of Zechariah 14:8,” writes Glenn Balfour, the “imagery opens up,”⁸ and the prophecy was “transferred from Jerusalem to the believer.”⁹ Simply put, Zechariah’s living waters flowing from Jerusalem find their fulfillment in Jesus’ living waters flowing from His people, who comprise the New Jerusalem.

The references to the **eastern sea** and **western sea** telegraph the idea that the “living waters” would flow in

every direction, unlimited by geographical boundaries. The references to **summer** and **winter** telegraph the idea that the life-giving restoration is unbound by time. Both images combined telegraph the idea that the living waters, flowing to and through Jesus’ followers, are available to all people everywhere at all times (cf. Rev 22:17).

“And the Lord will be king over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one” (Zech 14:9).

Throughout old covenant Israel’s history, God’s people had a problem, and it wouldn’t go away. They had a problem with the second commandment: “*You shall have no other gods besides me*” (Exod 20:3).

Despite all that the Lord had done for them, time and again, the ancient Israelites constantly reverted back to worshipping false gods. It started right away with the golden calf (Exod 32:1-10) and the goat demons in the wilderness (Lev 17:7), and it continued until it sent them into exile (Zeph 4:1-6). By the time of the New Testament, Stephen informs us that nothing had changed. When he was dragged before the high priest and the synagogue council, Stephen recounted the apostate deeds of their ancestors and told them, “*You are doing just as your fathers did*” (Acts 7:40-43; Acts 7:51). In other words, rejecting Jesus was equivalent to idolatry.

Unlike the old covenant, the writer to the Hebrews tells us that everything would change under the new covenant — specifically with regard to the matter of worshipping other gods: “*...I will put My laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people*” (Heb 8:10b). The last line of this verse from Hebrews is nearly identical to the words of Revelation 21:3, describing the New Jerusalem: “*Behold the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God.*”

This echoes what Zechariah says. For the new covenant believer, the Lord alone is **King**. He is the **only one**, and **His name is the only one**. And His name is Jesus. No more false gods.

“All the land will change into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise

and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses" (Zech 14:10).

Christ's kingship, as it is manifested through His people (the members of the New Jerusalem), is portrayed in this verse as Jerusalem being elevated while the surrounding land is leveled. This language is similar to the words of John the Baptist, where geographical movements and tectonic shifts are clearly *not* meant to be understood literally (Luke 3:5). The prophets frequently used the imagery of geological transformation as a symbolic portrayal of God's redemptive work and the prominence of His kingdom. As Ken Gentry writes:

"The mountain of the house of the LORD. The 'house of the LORD' refers to the new covenant church (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5), which was 'established' (Hebrew, *kun* implies of permanent duration) on earth 'in the last days'... It is a 'mountain' in that it is a city set on a hill (Matt 5:14; Heb 12:22). It is to be "the chief of the mountains" (v. 2d) in that it will eventually be the world's leading influence. Contrary to dispensationalism, this is not to be taken literalistically, as if Jerusalem will physically be elevated higher than Mount Everest (with all the health difficulties that would bring)."¹⁰

The rising of the mountain is simply imagery meant to capture the preeminence and prominence of the work accomplished by Jesus Christ in and through His people. The prophets frequently used these visual geographical illustrations to paint a picture of the wonder of the reality of fulfillment in Christ. Here in chapter 14, Zechariah is employing familiar prophetic imagery to communicate the elevation of God's people. The work of Christ takes His people to new levels, and everything else is like a flat plain beneath them.

"People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will live in security" (Zech 14:11).

In verse 11, Zechariah says of the New Jerusalem: "People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will live in security." Due to the wording of this verse in the English (NASB), the natural inclination is to recall the "curses" of Genesis 3. However, this is not the same word for "curse" that is used in Genesis,¹¹ and Zechariah is not promising that snakes will start walking upright (Gen 3:14) or that the ground will stop producing thorns and thistles (Gen 3:17).¹²

The word translated "curse" in Zechariah 14:11 is *cherem*, and it refers to "a devoted thing" that is "put under a ban."¹³ Deuteronomy 7:25-26 is the key verse in understanding the meaning of this word and the concept behind it:

"The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire.

You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. And you shall not bring an abominable thing (cherem) into your house and become devoted

to destruction (cherem) like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction" (cherem) (Deut 7:25-26, ESV).

Zechariah is saying that under the new covenant, in the New Jerusalem, there will be no *cherem*. Graven images, idols, and false gods have no place in the life of a true believer. Whatever we "worshiped" before coming to Christ is to be "devoted to destruction." He and He alone is first and foremost in our lives, and we do all that we do unto the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31). This ties in perfectly with the theme of the exclusivity of the Lord introduced in verse 9, and this is what it is all about.

The "old things are passed away, and all things become new" (2 Cor 5:17). We turn our backs on the gods of men and the idols that we worshiped before turning to the Lord. For the believer, "the Lord" is "the only one, and His name is the only one" (Zech 14:9).

This is identical to what John says regarding the New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation:

...continued on page 8

“No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads” (Rev 22:3-4).

Zechariah 14

Robert Cruickshank, Jr.

... continued from page 7

The word translated “accursed” is *katanáthema*, and it refers to a thing “which is devoted or given

over to a deity, accursed thing,” according to BDAG.¹⁴ According to Thayer, it is “specifically, an offering resulting from a vow, which after being consecrated to a god was hung upon the walls or columns of the temple, or put in some other conspicuous place.”¹⁵

Thus, John and Zechariah are both tracking on the same idea. The meaning is not the reverse or removal of the Genesis curses, but the removal of anything that is “accursed” in the life of a true believer. As members of the new covenant community, we don’t worship false gods anymore, nor do we make a false god out of anything in our lives. For us, every aspect of our lives and all that we do is sacred, holy, and devoted to the Lord. The people of the New Jerusalem “*dwell securely*” by removing everything “*devoted to destruction*,” as to not incur God’s anger and to ensure His blessing in our lives.

Recap and Takeaways

Zechariah 14:5

When judgment fell on first-century Jerusalem, God’s people fled to the valley of His mountains in Pella. They found deliverance and true salvation, while the Lord came in judgment against those who clung to the old ways, accompanied by His holy ones.

Takeaway: Like those who heeded Jesus’ words, we need to listen to the wisdom of God’s Word, rather than stubbornly clinging to anything that would hinder us from following and obeying Him.

Zechariah 14:6-7

A unique transition period is described using cosmic imagery — darkness and light reversing roles. The old order was passing away, and a new day was dawning.

Takeaway: This reminds us that God often works through periods of upheaval and uncertainty to bring about something better in our lives. Even when circumstances seem dark, the light of His love breaks through.

Zechariah 14:8

Living waters flow from Jerusalem in every direction and in every season. This points to the unlimited life-giving work of Christ flowing through His people to the world.

Takeaway: This means that the gospel is not limited by geography, culture, or time. As believers, we are called to be the channels through which God’s love and blessings flow to others, and there are no limitations as to where or when His living waters flow.

Zechariah 14:9

The Lord alone is King, and His name alone is supreme. The divided loyalties that plagued old covenant Israel are replaced by wholehearted devotion to God under the new covenant.

Takeaway: Christ deserves first place in our lives. Anything competing for that place needs to be demoted.

Zechariah 14:10

Jerusalem is pictured as being elevated above the surrounding land. The imagery highlights the prominence and glory of God’s redeemed people under Christ’s reign.

Takeaway: Our identity and significance are found in Christ and His kingdom rather than worldly status. God takes His people to new levels when our focus is on Him, and everything else flattens out and falls aside when we rise to be all that He has called us to be.

Zechariah 14:11

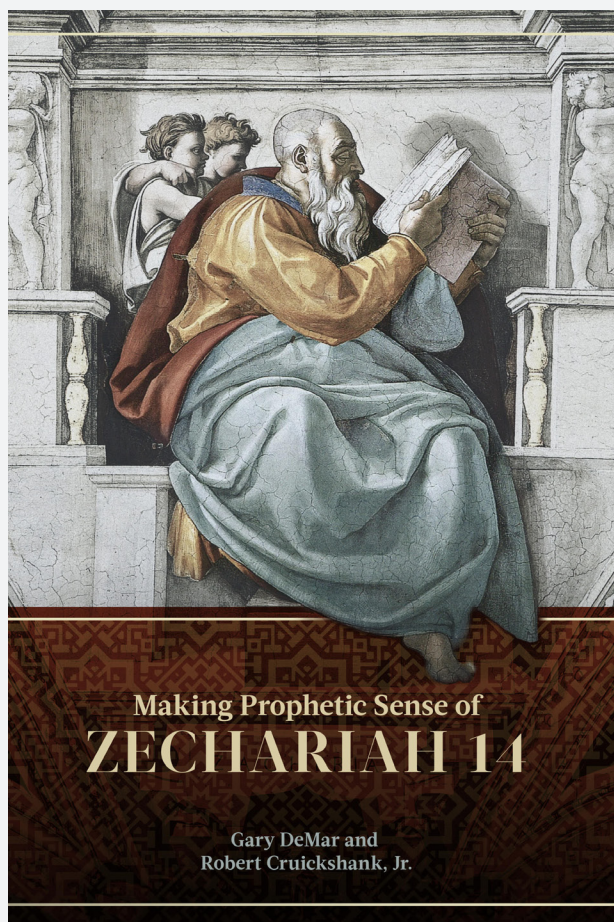
The New Jerusalem is secure because there is no longer anything devoted to false worship or destruction within it. God’s people are devoted wholly to Him.

Takeaway: Following Christ means putting away the idols that once ruled our lives. Every part of life becomes holy when it is devoted to God. Every sin that hinders us needs to be devoted to destruction. †

(For a more in-depth treatment of these verses, see: Gary DeMar and Robert Cruickshank, Jr., *Making Prophetic Sense of Zechariah 14*,

[The American Vision: 2026], <https://store.americanvision.org/products/making-prophetic-sense-of-zechariah-14>.)

1. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:5.
2. J. Julius Scott, Jr., *Did Jerusalem Christians Flee to Pella?* | Godawa.com, <https://bit.ly/3R3KZB2>, 3.
3. Mike Bull, “The Festal Structure of Zechariah 12-14,” *Bible Matrix*, <https://bit.ly/3F3eVXy>
4. Andrew Paul Ward, *The One That Got Away: An Analysis of the Goat Sacrifice in Leviticus 16* | Academia, <https://bit.ly/3T3JLX7>, 6.
5. Tom Douglas, *Scapegoats: Transferring Blame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 7.
6. Garrick Allen identifies the correlation between Zechariah 14:7 and Revelation 22:5 as being among the “numerous texts from Rev 19–22 that use material from Zech 14.7–11” (Garrick V. Allen, *The Book of Revelation and Early Jewish textual culture*. Vol. 168. Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 208).
7. Glenn Balfour, “The Jewishness of John’s Use of the Scriptures in John 6:31 and 7:37-38” (*Tyndale Bulletin* 46.2 [1995]), 376, <https://bit.ly/4hZFqM4>; see also: J. Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship: A Study in Origins* (London, Milford: OUP, 1920), pp. 64-67.
8. Balfour, “The Jewishness of John’s Use,” 374-375.
9. Balfour, “The Jewishness of John’s Use,” 374.
10. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., A QUICK SUMMARY OF ISAIAH 2 | Postmillennial Worldview, <https://bit.ly/4fmBSol>
11. The word in Zechariah is *cherem* while the word in Genesis is *arar*. These are two completely different terms and are unrelated to each other.
12. These are the only two things that are cursed in Genesis 3. No curses are pronounced against Adam and Eve, per se. While the ground is cursed because of Adam, Adam himself is not cursed.
13. מְרִירָה (che.rem) ‘ in the STEP Bible App.
14. BDAG Lexicon, κατανάθεμα, 463.
15. G331 ἀνάθεμα - Strong’s Greek Lexicon | Study Bible Info <https://bit.ly/4yFKg9S>



There was a first audience to receive what was revealed to Zechariah, and much interpretive difficulty arises from failing to understand Scripture as the original readers would have. Can you imagine someone saying, “This is not for us; we can rest easy. It’s really meant for a single generation thousands of years in the future”? The better approach is to investigate the prophecies in terms of their time and place in redemptive history.

Zechariah 14 has been interpreted in various ways throughout history. The chapter describes a future “Day of the Lord.” How far in the future is that time, and what events does the final chapter of Zechariah describe?

Making Prophetic Sense of Zechariah 14 covers a lot of ground, including the history of interpretation going back centuries. As this volume points out, interpretations vary, and some are radically different, even when they agree on the time of fulfillment. There is no consensus, given the fact that it’s one of the most difficult prophetic sections found in Scripture, as many well-known and respected commentators have admitted.

The unique feature of this work is that it contains commentaries by two people, Robert Cruickshank, Jr., and Gary DeMar. While they may differ along the way, they both agree that the prophecy has been fulfilled.

Available at *The American Vision*
www.store.americanvision.org

A Case for the Death of the Two Witnesses During the Purim Festival of AD 68

NUMEROUS SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN made for the identity of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. Proposals include Moses and Elijah, Enoch and Elijah, Peter and Paul, the old covenant and the new covenant, and the law and the prophets. Based on the context given in Revelation 11:1-13, it was necessary for the two witnesses to have a connection with the high priesthood, to prophesy for 3.5 years, to have protection from enemies who wanted to harm them, to have power over the sky and the waters, to be killed by the beast in Jerusalem, to not be allowed burial, to be celebrated in death for 3.5 days, and to be caught up to heaven in a cloud; additionally, these events would take place at the time of a great earthquake that killed 7,000 people (10 percent of Jerusalem's population).

In this verse-by-verse study (all Scripture quotes from the NASB), I will propose that the two witnesses were two former high priests who were killed at the time of the Festival of Purim in early AD 68, coinciding with the Zealot Temple Siege. Their deaths occurred within 24 hours of an earthquake that killed thousands in Jerusalem, they were not allowed to be buried, and their enemies rejoiced over their demise. Before looking at these details, however, let's consider why two witnesses were needed in the first place. According to the law of Moses, a matter of sin or wrongdoing could only be confirmed if there were two or three witnesses:

"A single witness shall not rise up against a person regarding any wrongdoing or any sin that he commits; on the testimony of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed" (Deut 19:15).

Likewise, the condemned could only be put to death if there was testimony from two or three witnesses:

"On the testimony of two witnesses or three witnesses, the condemned shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of only one witness" (Deut 17:6).

With this in mind, two witnesses prophesying against "the great city" in Revelation 11 (later also called "the harlot") further confirms that this city/harlot was under the jurisdiction of the law of Moses. This is not true of 21st-century New York City, Vatican City, Las Vegas, or any other modern city. It was first-century Jerusalem that came under judgment, after first being condemned by two witnesses in accordance with Mosaic law.

The two witnesses are first introduced in Revelation 11:3. We will begin, though, by looking at verses 1-2, which provide the setting and other background information for the activity of the two witnesses.

Revelation 11:1

"Then there was given to me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, 'Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it'" (Rev 11:1).

John was told to measure a temple which clearly still existed. This was the famous "Herod's temple" in Jerusalem. The downfall of this temple is one of the most clearly marked out events in all of ancient history, taking place in AD 70. Yet, John was told to measure it prior to its downfall.

If John wrote the book of Revelation in AD 95 or AD 96, as the popular idea goes, the temple would have fallen about 25 years earlier. Yet John didn't mention the downfall of the temple as a past event, nor did he question why the angel asked him to measure a monumentally significant temple that had just recently been destroyed. Instead, John was told to measure a temple that was still present, had an altar, and hosted worshipers. This, of course, is compelling evidence that the book of Revelation was written before Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70.

Revelation 11:2

"Leave out the courtyard which is outside the temple and do not measure it, because it has been given to the nations; and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months" (Rev 11:2).

John was told that the nations would capture the temple's outer court and that the holy city was going to be trampled for 42 months (3.5 years). This is a clear echo of what Jesus had predicted almost 40 years earlier. In Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus declared that the temple would be torn down with no stone left upon another (Luke 21:1-6). He added that there would be "great distress upon the land" of Judea and wrath toward the people of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-23). One feature of this distress would involve Jerusalem being trampled underfoot by the Gentiles (Luke 21:24).

"... for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people; and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:23-24).

Here in Revelation 11, John was told how long that trampling would last – 42 months. I would submit that the 42 months of trampling the city took place from the fall of AD 66 until the spring of AD 70. A careful look at *The Wars of the Jews* by Josephus reveals that this was the period of time when the

Death of the Two Witnesses

Romans were absent from Jerusalem and the Jewish Zealots had control of the city. In early AD 68, Jesus ben Gamala, a former high priest, gave a speech in which he described how the Zealots were trampling the city like wild beasts:

“And this place, which is adored by the habitable world, and honored by such as only know it by report, as far as the ends of the earth, is trampled upon by these wild beasts born among ourselves” (*Wars* 4.4.3).¹

In what sense were the Zealots Gentiles? First, the primary meaning of “Gentiles” is “nations.” Two of the three main Zealot leaders (Eleazar ben Simon, John Levi, and Simon Bar Giora) who orchestrated so much bloodshed in Jerusalem were not from Judea, but from other nations.

Simon was from Gerasa (*Wars* 4.9.3), which at the time was one of the cities of the Roman Decapolis and today is in Jordan. By the time that Simon “got possession of Jerusalem” in April AD 69 (*Wars* 4.9.12), he had an army of more than 40,000 people, including Idumeans, who he had gathered from the countryside.

John was from Gischala (Galilee). In early AD 68, he invited the Idumeans (Edomites) to come up to Jerusalem. They came as an army of 20,000, led by four generals, and slaughtered thousands of people within the gates of Jerusalem (*Wars* 4.5). Josephus referred to their actions as “foreign assistance” to the Zealot cause (*Wars* 4.4).

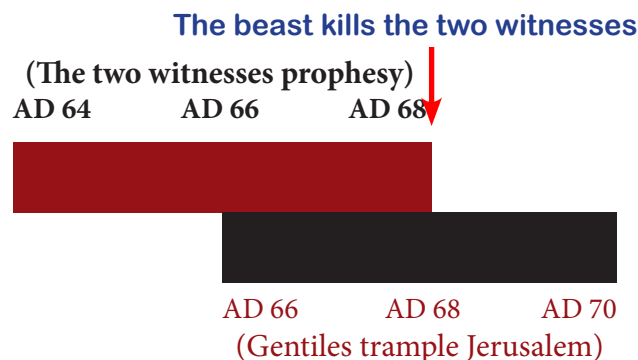
There’s a second sense in which even the Jews could be described as “the Gentiles.” Among the given meanings for the Greek word “ethnos,” translated as “Gentiles” (Strong’s Greek: 1484)², are the words “heathens” and “pagans.” In the book of Revelation, John no doubt describes a great deal of pagan and heathen activity in Jerusalem. Anyone who reads the descriptions of the Zealots given by Josephus will quickly see that their behavior was lawless, pagan, and heathen. Collectively, said Josephus, they made Jerusalem and the temple into their own “shop of tyranny” (*Wars* 4.3.7).

Revelation 11:3

“And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth” (Rev 11:3).

Here, we see the designation of another time period equal to 3.5 years. Instead of 42 months (verse 2), this time period is said to last 1,260 days. These time periods were identical in length, but did they begin and end at the same time? I don’t believe they did, and this may be the reason for the two different ways of labeling these time periods. After the two

witnesses were eliminated, the city continued to be trampled before ultimately being judged. Therefore, the 1,260 days of the two witnesses began before the nations began to trample the city for 42 months. My proposal of these overlapping timelines is as follows:



The two witnesses were to be clothed in sackcloth while they prophesied. Sackcloth, according to Bible Gateway’s Dictionary of Bible Themes, was “a coarse, black cloth made from goat’s hair that was worn together with the burnt ashes of wood as a sign of mourning for personal and national disaster, as a sign of repentance and at times of prayer for deliverance.”³ The first instance of sackcloth in the Bible was when Jacob wore sackcloth and mourned, after being falsely convinced that his son Joseph was dead (Gen 37:34). Other instances included the people and animals of Nineveh wearing sackcloth while repenting of sin (Jonah 3:5-9) and Daniel wearing sackcloth while praying and pleading with God to forgive and restore Judah, Jerusalem, and all Israel (Dan 9:3). Wearing sackcloth was an ancient practice, but it is not a modern one, which further confirms that the two witnesses belonged to the first century rather than to this present era.

Revelation 11:4

“These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth” (Rev 11:4).

Adam Maarschalk

Adam is the editor of *Fulfilled!* Magazine, and has maintained a website on fulfilled eschatology since 2009. He also has a YouTube channel which includes some videos on fulfilled eschatology that are not found at his website, and has been a speaker at preterist conferences in New York and Texas. Adam is certified in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), and does proofreading and editing work on the side (www.adamsproofreadingandmore.com).

editor@fulfilledcg.com

www.adammaarschalk.com



continued on page 12

This description of the two witnesses as olive trees and lampstands directly parallels Zechariah's "Vision of the Lampstand and Olive Trees":

The Two Witnesses

Adam Maarschalk

... continued from page 11

"Then the angel who had been speaking with me returned and woke me, like a person who is awakened from his sleep. And he said to me, 'What do you see?' And I said, 'I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven

lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.' ... Then I said to him, 'What are these two olive trees...?' ... Then he said, 'These are the two anointed ones, who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth'" (Zech 4:1-3, 11, 14).

This vision came on the heels of Zechariah's "Vision of the High Priest," concerning the high priest, Joshua (Zechariah 3), who served alongside the governor, Zerubbabel (Zechariah 4). In Zechariah's vision, he saw one lampstand (Zech. 4:2), representing the high priest, Joshua. In Revelation 1:12, John saw seven lampstands, which he was told were the seven churches (Rev. 1:20). Here in Revelation 11:4, there were two lampstands, the two witnesses. This representation suggests a connection between the office of the high priest and the two witnesses.

Zechariah 4 compares very nicely with Revelation 11. The context of Zechariah 4 was the building of the temple in Jerusalem after the Assyrian and Babylonian exile. The context here in Revelation 11 is the impending destruction of that same temple.

Olive Trees, Lampstands, Standing by the Lord	
Zechariah 4	Revelation 11
"a lampstand all of gold"	"the two lampstands"
"these two olive trees"	"the two olive trees"
"the two anointed ones"	"My two witnesses"
"that stand before the Lord of the earth"	"who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth"

Ananus ben Ananus and Jesus ben Gamala

I would like to propose that the two witnesses were two first-century high priests, Ananus ben Ananus and Jesus ben Gamala (also known as Joshua). According to Josephus, they led the peace movement in Jerusalem when the Zealots were determined to rebel and incite war with the Romans, hoping to gain full independence for Israel. As we will see, their roles, their deaths, the circumstances and aftermath of their deaths, and the timing of their deaths line up with a number of details

that John saw in Revelation 11. Here is a short summary of these two men.

1. Ananus ben Ananus: The appointment of Ananus as high priest is recorded in Antiquities 20.9.1. He was appointed in AD 62, but only served for about three months. Josephus called him "the ancientest of the high priests" and "a very prudent man" (Wars 4.3.7), "a prodigious lover of liberty" who "preferred peace above all things," and "a shrewd man in speaking and persuading the people" (Wars 4.5.2). A long speech given by Ananus against the Zealots is recorded in Wars 4.3.10.

2. Jesus ben Gamala: The appointment of Jesus as high priest is recorded in Antiquities 20.9.4. He was appointed around AD 63, but only for about a year (Antiquities 20.9.7). Josephus referred to Jesus as "a friend and companion" (Life 41.204)⁴, and called him "the eldest of the high priests next to Ananus." Josephus added that "although he was inferior to [Ananus] upon the comparison, he was superior to the rest" (Wars 4.5.2). Jesus also gave a long speech against the Zealots, which is recorded in Wars 4.4.3.

Revelation 11:5

"And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way" (Rev 11:5).

Compare the language in this verse to what Jeremiah and Hosea were told about the impact of their prophetic words:

*"Behold, I am making My words **fire** in your mouth, and this people wood, and it will **consume** them" (Jer 5:14).*

*"Is My word not like **fire**?" declares the Lord, 'and like a hammer which **shatters** a rock?'" (Jer 23:29).*

*"Therefore I have **cut them in pieces** by the prophets; I have **slain** them by the words of My mouth; and the judgments on you are like the light that shines" (Hos 6:5).*

Revelation 11:6

"These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire" (Rev 11:6).

By way of comparison, during the days of Elijah, "it did not rain for three years and six months" (James 5:17; Luke 4:25). Interestingly, this matches the duration of time that the two witnesses would prophesy (Rev 11:3). During the Roman siege in AD 70, Josephus gave a speech to the Zealots in which he pointed out that the springs of water were "almost dried up" while Jerusalem was in the hands of the Zealots but suddenly had more than enough water once the Romans arrived:

"...and as for Titus, those springs that were formerly almost dried up when they were under your power since he is come, run more plentifully than they did before; accordingly, you know that Siloam, as well as all the other springs that were without the city, did so far fail, that water was sold by distinct measures; whereas they now have such a great quantity of water for your enemies, as is sufficient not only for drink both for themselves and their cattle, but for watering their gardens also" (Wars 5.9.4.409-410).

Josephus said that Ananus had “the mastery of those that opposed his designs, or were for the war” (*Wars* 4.5.2). Josephus didn’t give many details about how he mastered his opponents, but this indicates that Ananus remained untouchable for a period of time. At the same time, as Josephus explains in great detail, the Zealots were having their way in Jerusalem and eliminating others who threatened their agenda.

Revelation 11:7

“When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them” (Rev 11:7).

Although the two witnesses had the upper hand and God’s protection during the giving of their testimony, once it was finished, they were allowed to be killed. Ananus and Jesus were both killed simultaneously during what was called the Zealot Temple Siege of February-March AD 68, roughly 1.5 years after the Jewish-Roman War began.

The Zealot Temple Siege

This siege took place after the Zealots appointed a fake high priest, Phannias, who “did not well know what the high priesthood was” (*Wars* 4.3.6-8), and he unworthily presided over that post until Jerusalem was destroyed. Phannias was a fraud, and the people of Jerusalem finally had enough of the Zealots. Ananus and Jesus led them in an uprising:

“And now the people could no longer bear the insolence of this procedure, but did altogether run zealously, in order to overthrow that tyranny... The best esteemed also of the high priests, Jesus the son of Gamala, and Ananus the son of Ananus, when they were at their assemblies, bitterly reproached the people for their sloth, and excited them against the zealots...” (*Wars* 4.3.9).

In his speech (*Wars* 4.3.10), Ananus said that he would lead the people in an all-or-nothing attack against the Zealots, and that he would not spare his own body in that effort. In that battle, Ananus and his followers actually gained the upper hand against the Zealots, forcing them into the inner temple and gaining control of the rest of the city (*Wars* 4.3.12). Ananus then chose 6000 armed men to keep the Zealots surrounded and under guard. Unfortunately, this strategy came undone because of the trickery of John Levi of Gischala (*Wars* 4.3.13-14).

John Levi of Gischala was a Zealot leader who had recently come to Jerusalem, but he pretended to be on the side of Ananus and was invited to be an ambassador to the Zealots (*Wars* 4.3.13). John quickly betrayed Ananus and falsely claimed that he had invited the Roman general Vespasian to conquer Jerusalem (*Wars* 4.3.14).

In response, the Zealot leaders Eleazar ben Simon and Zacharias ben Phalek requested help from the Idumeans, who lived south of Judea. The Zealots told the Idumeans that “unless they would come immediately to their assistance... the city would be in the power of the Romans.” Even though the Zealots were trapped in the inner temple, they somehow managed to sneak out two messengers to deliver a letter to the Idumeans (*Wars* 4.4.2-3). In fulfillment of Revelation 9:13-16,

the Idumeans quickly prepared an army of 20,000 directed by four commanders (*Wars* 4.4.2):

“Now these [Idumean] rulers were greatly surprised at the contents of the letter, and at what those that came with it further told them; whereupon they ran about the nation like madmen, and made proclamation that the people should come to war; so a multitude was suddenly got together... and twenty thousand of them were put into battle-array, and came to Jerusalem, under four commanders...”

When the Idumeans came to Jerusalem, Jesus invited the Idumeans to help deliver the city from the real enemies, the Zealots, but the Idumeans were not persuaded (*Wars* 4.4.3-4). In the midst of a terrible storm and an earthquake that night, the Zealots managed to come out of the temple and use saws to cut through the gates. This allowed the Idumeans to enter the city, and the Zealots joined them in slaughtering the guards (*Wars* 4.5.1). The next day, the Idumeans, working on behalf of the Zealots, hunted down and killed Ananus and Jesus, who had long tormented the Zealots by opposing their war and working for peace:

“[The Idumeans] sought for the high priests, and...went with the greatest zeal against them; and as soon as they caught them they slew them, and then standing upon their dead bodies, in way of jest, upbraided Ananus with his kindness to the people, and Jesus with his speech made to them from the wall...” (*Wars* 4.5.2).

Revelation 11:8

“And their dead bodies will lie on the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified” (Rev 11:8).

Here is the first mention in the book of Revelation of “the great city” (later mentioned in Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18-19, 21). “The great city” is clearly defined as Jerusalem, the place where Jesus was crucified (e.g., Luke 9:31).

It’s significant that the beast oversees the deaths of the two witnesses in Jerusalem (verse 7). The Romans were not in Jerusalem from the fall of AD 66 until April AD 70. If the events of Revelation 11 took place any time between late AD 66 and the spring of AD 70, the beast that overcame the two witnesses was Jewish, not Roman. The deaths of Ananus ben Ananus and Jesus ben Gamala took place in February-March AD 68, in the middle of the time period during which the Romans had no access to Jerusalem.

Revelation 11:9

“Those from the peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not allow their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb” (Rev 11:9).

This is how Josephus described the actions of the Idumeans and the Zealots after they succeeded in killing Ananus ben Ananus and Jesus ben Gamala:

“Nay, they proceeded to that degree of impiety, **as to cast away their dead bodies without burial**... I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city... He...preferred peace above all things; ...he was a shrewd man in speaking and persuading the people, and **had already gotten the mastery**

continued on page 14

of those that opposed his designs, or were for the war... And this at last was the end of Ananus and Jesus" (*Wars* 4.5.2).

So, John and Josephus both described two individuals in Jerusalem who were hated, virtually invincible for a period of time, finally killed, and not allowed to be buried.

The Two Witnesses

Adam Maarschalk

... continued from page 13

they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who live on the earth" (Rev 11:10).

The expression translated here as "the earth" is translated in the literal translations as "the land," i.e., the land of Israel. This is a regular pattern in the book of Revelation (and beyond)⁵, but an understanding of this expression as referring to the land of Israel is certainly fitting here, as the two witnesses were killed in Jerusalem.

In verse 9, we read that "peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations" would see the dead bodies of the two witnesses. Why was there such a diverse population in Jerusalem at that time? This was often the case when a festival or feast day, like Passover, took place in the city, and Jews from various nations gathered there.

The details given in verses 9 and 10, when put together, reflect the festival of Purim, the Jewish holiday that recalls and celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from Haman who plotted to kill them. This celebration became a time of feasting, rejoicing, sending gifts to one another, etc. (*Esther* 9:22). This festival is still celebrated in this way.⁶

The deaths of Ananus and Jesus are commonly said to have taken place in February or March AD 68. The Fast of Esther and Purim are typically celebrated from the 13th – 16th of Adar. In the year AD 68, the last day of Adar was March 22nd, according to our modern calendar.⁷ Therefore, since each Jewish month was 29 or 30 days, we can know that the Fast of Esther and Purim took place around March 4-7 in AD 68.

It seems possible that when the Zealots and their followers celebrated Purim in March AD 68, they not only recognized the deliverance from Haman that took place in Esther's day, but they also celebrated being free from Ananus and Jesus and all of their efforts toward peace with Rome. After all, the people believed the lie told by John of Gischala — that Ananus had invited Vespasian to capture Jerusalem and to deliver them to the Romans.

A short while later, another Zealot leader, Simon Bar Giora, found out that Ananus was dead. He was at Masada, about 80 miles from Jerusalem (*Wars* 2.22.1-2). When Simon "heard of the death of Ananus, he... went into the mountainous part of the country. **So he proclaimed liberty to those in slavery, and a reward to those already free**, and got together a set of wicked men from all quarters" (*Wars* 4.9.3). Like the Zealots

in Jerusalem, Simon rejoiced and promised gifts to others because of the elimination of Ananus and Jesus.

Revelation 11:11-12

"And after the three and a half days the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.' And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them" (Rev 11:11-12).

Here (and also in verse 9), John is told that the celebration over the deaths of the two witnesses would last for "three and a half days." Typically, Purim is celebrated for two days. However, from time to time, there is a Triple Purim (*Purim Meshulash*). If the 15th of Adar happens to fall on the Sabbath, "the days of Purim are spread over the course of three days, as opposed to two."⁸ This was perhaps also the case in March AD 68.

For the remainder of the text in verses 11-12, I admittedly do not have an explanation at this time that I feel is adequate. I'm not aware of any parallels in the writings of Josephus (or elsewhere) that seem to depict two individuals (or entities) rising up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies observed them. That is, I'm not able to point to any obvious parallel in history to most of the language expressed in Revelation 11:11-12. Is the picture of rising "up into heaven in the cloud" symbolic of vindication, an enduring legacy, heaven's validation of their message, or something else? Did Ananus and Jesus embrace the gospel and become followers of Christ (something that we shouldn't expect, in any case, for Josephus to mention)? Hopefully, they did. Ananus, after all, is the one who earlier had ordered the execution of James, the brother of Jesus, in AD 62 (*Antiquities* 20.9.1). Whether or not our readers agree that Ananus ben Ananus and Jesus ben Gamala were the two witnesses, your thoughts and insights on these two verses (and anything else) are most welcome.

Revelation 11:13

"And at that time there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven" (Rev 11:13).

In *Wars* 4.4.5, Josephus described an earthquake that took place the night the Idumeans broke into Jerusalem, shortly before Ananus and Jesus were killed:

"[F]or there broke out a prodigious storm in the night, with the utmost violence, and very strong winds, with the largest showers of rain, with continued lightnings, terrible thunderings, and amazing concussions and bellowings of the earth, that was in an earthquake... anyone would guess that these wonders foreshowed some grand calamities that were coming."

That same night, in the midst of the storm, the Idumeans slaughtered those who had tried to prevent them from coming in:

"Ananus and Jesus were high priests. . . . The w Idumeans . . . were no buried, and their enem their deaths."

“The zealots also joined in the shouts raised by the Idumeans; and the storm itself rendered the cry more terrible; nor did the Idumeans spare anybody; for as they are naturally a most barbarous and bloody nation, and had been distressed by the tempest, they made use of their weapons against those that had shut the gates against them... Now there was at present neither any place for flight, nor any hope of preservation; but as they were driven one upon another in heaps, so were they slain... And now the outer temple was all of it overflowed with blood; and that day, as it came on, they saw **eight thousand five hundred dead bodies** there” (*Wars* 4.5.1).

What John was told concerning 7,000 deaths is very close to the 8,500 deaths recorded by Josephus. It's possible that 7,000 died in the earthquake and that another 1,500 died at the hands of the Idumeans. Furthermore, this earthquake and the deaths of Ananus and Jesus were less than 24 hours apart, making them eligible to be the two witnesses who died “*at that time*.” Typically, estimates of Jerusalem's population in the first century range from 30,000⁹ to 100,000¹⁰ people, so it's very reasonable to conclude that 7,000 deaths in AD 68 represented a tenth of the city falling. Even if the normal population was closer to 30,000, it would have been higher at the time of that earthquake if it took place around the Festival of Purim. This was a minor festival, so the population may have doubled, but it wouldn't have swollen to 250,000 or more as it did during the major festivals.

Jesus were two former
The were killed by the
were not allowed to be
enemies rejoiced over

Jerusalem Took a Turn for the Worse

The deaths of Ananus and Jesus marked a significant turning point for Jerusalem, according to Josephus:

“I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow

of her wall, and the ruin of her affairs, whereon they saw their high priest, and the procurer of their preservation, slain in the midst of their city... to say all in a word, if Ananus had survived they had certainly compounded matters... And the Jews had then put abundance of delays in the way of the Romans, if they had had such a general as he was” (*Wars* 4.5.2).

After their deaths, the Zealots and the Idumeans “fell upon the people as upon a flock of profane animals, and cut their throats.” Others endured “terrible torments” before finally meeting their deaths. At least 12,000 died in that massacre (*Wars* 4.5.3).

Then one of the Zealots told the Idumeans that they had been tricked and that Ananus and the high priests never did plot to betray Jerusalem to the Romans. So, the Idumeans regretted their actions, saw “the horrid barbarity of [the Zealots who] had invited them,” and left Jerusalem (*Wars* 4.5.5). The Zealots, no longer hindered by the high priests or even the Idumeans, then increased their wickedness:

“[T]he zealots grew more insolent, not as deserted by their confederates, but as freed from such men as might hinder their designs, and put some stop to their wickedness.

Accordingly they made no longer any delay, nor took any deliberation in their enormous practices, but made use of the shortest methods for all their executions, and what they had once resolved upon, they put in practice sooner than anyone could imagine...” (*Wars* 4.6.1).

In summary, Ananus and Jesus were two former high priests and the most prominent of the high priests during the Jewish-Roman War. As such, they fit the Old Testament imagery of olive trees and lampstands representing those who stood before the Lord in the service of the temple. Until the time of their deaths, they were immune to the harm that their enemies wanted to inflict upon them. They gave speeches predicting the destruction that would come to Jerusalem because of the Zealots and due to the rejection of their message of peace. Jerusalem experienced a drought during that time. They were killed by the Idumeans under the order of the Zealots, their enemies. They were not allowed to be buried, and their enemies rejoiced over their deaths. This happened at the same time as an earthquake and the deaths of 8,500 people, some from the earthquake itself and some by the sword. These events, their role as high priests, and their prophetic warning against the city of Jerusalem line up very well with the details given in Revelation 11:3-13 concerning the two witnesses who would precede the culmination of judgment against that city. ✚

1. This and other citations from *The Works of Josephus* can be found online: *Flavius Josephus - Complete Works and Writings*. (n.d.). Bible Study Tools. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/>
2. *Strong's Greek: 1484. ἔθνος (ethnos) — Nation, Gentile, people*. (n.d.). Bible Hub. <https://biblehub.com/greek/1484.htm>
3. Manser, M. (Ed.). (2009). *6742 sackcloth and ashes - Dictionary of Bible Themes*. Bible Gateway. <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/dictionary-of-bible-themes/6742-sackcloth-ashes>
4. Josephus, Life 41.204, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/autobiog.htm>
5. A 3-part study on this pattern can be seen here: [1] <https://adammaarschalk.com/2010/02/19/the-earth-as-a-common-reference-to-israel-in-revelation-part-1/> [2] <https://adammaarschalk.com/2010/02/19/the-earth-as-a-common-reference-to-israel-in-revelation-part-2/> [3] <https://adammaarschalk.com/2010/02/20/the-earth-as-a-common-reference-to-israel-in-revelation-part-3/>
6. Chabad.org. (2000, February 23). *How to Celebrate Purim - Your Purim 2025 guide contains the story of Purim, and all you need to know about the 4 mitzvahs of Purim and the other observances of the day*. Chabad.Org. https://www.chabad.org/holidays/purim/article_cdo/aid/1362/jewish/How-to-Celebrate-Purim.htm
7. Taylor, I. (Ed.). (1851). *The Jewish war: a new tr., by R. Traill, ed. with notes by I. Taylor*. Houlston & Stoneman, p. 191. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9OcCAAAQAQAJ>
8. Mostov, A. (2025, March 11). *Moishe Moment - Last Triple Purim for 20 Years*. Mem Global. <https://memglobal.org/news/moishe-moment-last-triple-purim-for-20-years/>
9. Ross, A. (2006). *Daily Life in The Time of Jesus*. Bible.Org. <https://bible.org/article/daily-life-time-jesus>
10. Chancey, M. A. (2017, June 20). *Jerusalem in the New Testament Period*. Bible Odyssey. <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/articles/jerusalem-in-the-new-testament-period/>

INTRODUCTION: THE DRAGON IS an enigmatic character that shows up sporadically in the book of Revelation. Because Revelation is the only New Testament book that mentions the dragon, we need to consult the Old Testament for understanding. As usual, we have adhered to our principle of interpretation, letting Scripture interpret Scripture and not forcing our assumptions on the text. We will seek to show that “the dragon” is a symbol for destructive, terror-inducing human rulers. It is not the name of a spiritual being.

1. THE OLD TESTAMENT INFORMS OUR INQUIRY INTO THE DRAGON.

A. The dragon in the Old Testament is Strong’s Hebrew word #8577, “tannin,” and occurs 27 times.

B. “Tannin” is translated variously as dragon, serpent, great creature, and monster.

C. Unfortunately, in newer translations, “tannin” is often translated “jackal,” which perhaps springs from embarrassment at the “unscientific” dragon reference. However, this mistranslation fails to convey the dread and danger that the word is meant to evoke.

2. “DRAGON” IS A REFERENCE TO LITERAL DANGEROUS, WILD CREATURES.

A. “God created the great sea creatures [dragons #8577] and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed” (Gen 1:21).

B. “Praise Yahweh from the earth, you great sea creatures [dragons #8577] and all depths” (Ps 148:7).

C. “Thorns will come up in its palaces, nettles and thistles... and it will be a habitation of dragons [#8577] . . .” (Isa 34:13).

D. “I will make Jerusalem heaps, a dwelling place of dragons [#8577]. I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant” (Jer 9:11).

E. “The voice of news, behold, it comes, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah a desolation, a dwelling place of dragons [#8577]” (Jer 10:22).

3. “DRAGON” IS A METAPHOR FOR POWERFUL, CONQUERING RULERS.

A. The proud and mighty Pharaoh was a dragon: “Behold, I [Yahweh] am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great

monster [dragon #8577] that lies in the middle of his rivers, that has said, ‘My river is my own, and I have made it for myself’” (Ezek 29:3).

B. As a powerful dragon, Pharaoh destroyed many nations: “Take up a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt, and tell him, ‘You were likened to a young lion of the nations; yet you are as a monster [dragon #8577] in the seas. You broke out with your rivers, and troubled the waters with your feet, and fouled their rivers’” (Ezek 32:2).

C. Nebuchadnezzar was a devouring, crushing, swallowing dragon: “Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has devoured me [Jeremiah speaking for Judah]. He has crushed me. He has made me an empty vessel. He has, like a monster [dragon #8577], swallowed me up. He has filled his mouth with my delicacies. He has cast me out” (Jer 51:34).

4. THE DRAGON POWERS ARE DEFEATED BY YAHWEH.

A. Pharaoh/his army was a dragon: “You [Yahweh] divided the [Red] sea by your strength. You broke the heads of the sea monsters [dragons #8577] in the waters” (Ps 74:13).

B. David’s enemy was a dragon: “You [Yahweh] will tread on the lion and cobra; you will trample the fierce lion and the dragon [#8577] underfoot” (Ps 91:13).

C. A proud nation was a dragon: “In that day, Yahweh, with his hard and great and strong sword, will punish leviathan, the fleeing serpent, and leviathan, the twisted serpent; and he will kill the dragon [#8577] that is in the sea” (Isa 27:1).

D. Pharaoh/Egypt was a dragon: “Awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Isn’t it you [Yahweh] who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the monster [dragon #8577]?” (Isa 51:9).

5. THE DRAGON IS A HUMAN ROLE, NOT THE NAME OF A SPIRITUAL BEING.

Our study of the passages in #3 demonstrates that the dragon is a function or role and not the name of a spiritual being. With their ruthless, unbridled conquests, both the Egyptian Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, acted as dragons. The Scriptures in #4 further establish the use of the dragon as a symbol and assure us that it is Yahweh who subdues the fearful, overweening dragon powers.

6. TWO KEY REVELATION PASSAGES REGARDING THE DRAGON BROADEN OUR UNDERSTANDING.

The Dragon of Revelation

Patricia Bailey

Patricia is the content creator for preteristpapers.com and Preterist Papers on YouTube and Rumble.



A. *“The great dragon was thrown down, the old serpent, he who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown down to the land, and his messengers were thrown down with him” (Rev 12:9).*

B. *“He seized the dragon, the old serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years” (Rev 20:2).*

7. REVELATION 12 AND 20 REVEAL THAT THE DRAGON=SATAN=DEVIL=Serpent.

Because Rev 12:9 and 20:2 show the dragon, devil, Satan and old serpent (Genesis 3) to be synonymous, we have logical, contextual proof of the meaning of all these words. They are human roles, not names of spiritual beings. As fear-inspiring human rulers, both Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh were dragons. Now we can entertain the possibility that perhaps, when the word “dragon” is used in Revelation, it may pertain to the High Priest, the temple authorities, the Pharisees, the army and four angels in chapter 9, or the zealots, all of whom played the terrifying “dragon” role at some point. Logically, they would be suited for the role of the devil, the serpent and the Satan as well.

8. SATAN IS A HUMAN ROLE, NOT THE NAME OF A SPIRITUAL BEING.

A. Peter was Satan: *“But he [Jesus]...rebuked Peter, and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan! For you have in mind not the things of God, but the things of men’ (Mark 8:33).*

B. Judas was Satan: *“Satan entered into Judas, who was also called Iscariot, who was counted with the twelve” (Luke 22:3).*

C. Unbelieving Jews were Satan: *“Behold, I make some of the synagogue of Satan, of those who say they are Jews, and they are not, but lie...” (Rev 3:9).*

9. THE DEVIL IS A HUMAN ROLE, NOT THE NAME OF A SPIRITUAL BEING.

A. Persecuting Jews were devils: *“Don’t be afraid of the things which you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil [diabolos #1228] is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested; and you will have oppression for ten days. Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev 2:10).*

B. Women were warned not to be devils: *“Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slanderous [diabolos #1228]” (Titus 2:3).*

C. Judas was a devil: *“Jesus said, ‘Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil [diabolos #1228]?’” (John 6:70).*

D. Note: Diabolos means slanderous, an adjective, but is used as a noun, similar to “the wicked.”

10. THE SERPENT IS A HUMAN ROLE, NOT THE NAME OF A SPIRITUAL BEING.

A. Israel deteriorated into serpents: *“Their wine is the poison of serpents, the cruel venom of asps” (Deut 32:33).*

B. David’s enemies were serpents: *“Rescue me, O Yahweh, from the evil man; from the man of violence guard me . . . They sharpen their tongues like a snake; the venom of a viper is under their lips” (Ps 140:1-3).*

C. The Pharisees and Sadducees were serpents: *“When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, ‘You offspring of vipers...” (Matt 3:7).*

D. The Pharisees were serpents: *“You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks” (Matt 12:34).*

E. The scribes and Pharisees were serpents: *“You serpents, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the judgment of Gehenna?” (Matt 23:33).*

11. WE MIGHT FRAME THESE FOUR HUMAN ROLES THUS:

A. The dragon is the spirit of tyranny, using force and violence to gain and maintain power.

B. The Satan is the spirit of material man who does not have in mind the things of God.

C. The devil is the spirit that accuses falsely.

D. The serpent is the obsequious, treacherous spirit of the deliberate deceiver.

E. These all interpenetrate and are under the broad class of the spirit of anti-Christ.

12. CLOSING THOUGHTS: THE FALSE CONCEPT OF “SATAN” DISTORTS THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE.

A. The dragon is not a spiritual entity: The dragon of Revelation is most often interpreted by commentators as Satan, the cosmic enemy of Yahweh. This excludes the clear

continued on page 21

EVERY GENERATION HAS FACED its own unique challenges. Some have endured wars, economic collapse, political upheaval, or devastating disease. Others have wrestled with loneliness, broken relationships, uncertainty about the future, or the quiet burdens that remain hidden behind smiling faces. While the circumstances may differ, the human experience remains remarkably consistent. Every person encounters obstacles that test courage, challenge faith, and raise difficult questions about God's presence and purpose.

For the Christian, however, life's challenges are not merely problems to endure; rather, they are opportunities to discover what it truly means to live in the kingdom of Christ. The fulfilled gospel does not promise a life free from adversity. Instead, it promises something far greater: the assurance that no trial, however severe, can ultimately rob God's children of an already won victory.

This truth is captured beautifully in John's first epistle (the English Standard Version [ESV] is used here and throughout this study):

"For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5).

John's words are striking in their certainty. He does not suggest that believers *might* overcome if their faith is strong enough or their circumstances favorable enough. Nor does he reserve victory for a select group of exceptionally mature Christians. His statement is wonderfully inclusive: **everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. It's a spiritual law.**

That principle immediately raises an important question. If Christians are overcomers, why do they still experience pain, disappointment, temptation, and loss?

The answer lies in understanding how Scripture defines victory. Our culture usually measures success by material ease and comfort. We celebrate those who accumulate wealth, achieve influence, or avoid hardship. God's kingdom measures victory differently. In Scripture, overcoming is not escaping life's difficulties but remaining faithful to Christ in the midst of them. Jesus Himself demonstrated this perfectly. He was misunderstood by His own family, rejected by many of His people, betrayed by a close friend, falsely accused, and crucified by the governing authorities. Yet, through unwavering obedience to His Father and His purpose, what appeared to be defeat became the greatest victory in history.

The Christian life follows that same pattern. Victory is not found in a trouble-free existence but in learning to trust God so completely that external circumstances no longer determine the mood in your internal kingdom. The storms may continue to rage, but the believer discovers an internal peace that many cannot fathom.

This perspective transforms the way we view every challenge. Rather than asking, "How can I escape this difficulty?" we begin asking, "How is God inviting me to grow through it?" We learn to measure 'success' by increased faithfulness, deeper peace, and greater conformity to Christ and His kingdom principles.

Overcoming, therefore, begins in a place many believers overlook: the kingdom within.

The Kingdom Within

"But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever." (Dan 7:18).

When people think about God's Kingdom, they often picture something external – a future heaven, the Church, or Christ's reign over all creation. While these realities are certainly true, Jesus repeatedly taught that God's Kingdom also has a deeply personal dimension – *"for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you"* (Luke 17:21). Christ's reign is manifested throughout the world by being first established within the hearts of His people.

Each believer possesses what might be called an inner kingdom. It is composed of the mind, the heart, the will, the emotions, the imagination, and the conscience. This is the realm in which decisions are made, values are formed, attitudes take root, and character is shaped. It is here that every spiritual battle is first won or lost.

This understanding changes the way we think about overcoming. Many Christians devote enormous energy trying to gain control over their external world. They wish difficult people would change, unfavorable circumstances would improve, or persistent problems would simply disappear. And, if you are a futurist, you may wish to be raptured out of your adverse situation. Scripture, however, consistently directs our attention to something even more important: the condition of the heart.

No earthly ruler can govern a nation effectively while chaos reigns within its own borders. History repeatedly demonstrates that kingdoms often collapse, not because of foreign invasions, but because corruption and disorder have already taken hold internally. The same principle applies spiritually. Before we can exercise a Christlike

Life's Challenges: Finding Victory Through Faith

influence upon the world around us, Christ must first establish His government within us.

This is why Proverbs urges believers to “*guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*” Every word we speak, every decision we make, every relationship we nurture, and every response we offer to life’s challenges springs from the condition of this inner kingdom.

If anxiety governs the heart, anxiety will shape our decisions. If pride occupies the throne, pride will influence our relationships. If anxiety dominates our thinking, peace becomes impossible to sustain. External victories cannot compensate for internal disorder.

God therefore begins His transforming work where it matters most – not by changing our surroundings first, but by changing the ruler of our hearts.

Christ the King and the Believer’s Calling

The Bible opens with humanity receiving a remarkable responsibility. The covenant couple was entrusted with dominion over God’s kingdom. Their authority, however, was never intended to be independent. They were God’s governing ambassadors, representing Him throughout the earth.

Sin shattered that relationship, and the consequences echoed through every generation until Christ came to repair that wound. The gospel announces that this broken relationship has been restored through Jesus Christ. He is also our rightful King, and more than that, He graciously invites His people to share in His reign – not as autonomous rulers, but as faithful co-regents exercising authority under His lordship.

This astonishing promise appears in Christ’s words to the church in Revelation:

“The one overcoming, I will give to him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on his throne.” (Rev 3:21).

This is not so much a promise as a statement of fact. Once we are sons of God, it is in our DNA to overcome. And once we set our minds to overcome, we begin reigning with Christ over our internal kingdom, learning to order every part of our lives according to His example.

No longer are God’s people slaves wandering in the wilderness of covenant transition, but we as sons of God have come to the kingdom at such a time when it has been established in the promised land obtained by Christ. As slaves, God’s people were not allowed to reign, but as sons, we have been given this tremendous privilege.

Maurice E. Rogers



Maurice E. Rogers is a Christian author, self-trained theologian, and content creator from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, dedicated to recovering what he believes is the apostolic teaching on Bible prophecy. His work challenges the futurist and dispensational frameworks that dominate modern Christianity, arguing instead that the New Testament’s prophetic promises — including Christ’s return, the resurrection, and final judgment — were fulfilled in the first century AD. His books include *Why Christ Has Already Come Back*, *Everything Is Temple! REST*, and *This Is the Antichrist*. Writing from a sola scriptura foundation, Maurice brings theological depth and pastoral urgency to some of Christianity’s most contested topics. He produces video content on his YouTube Channel – *The New Kosmos VideoCast* – aimed at helping believers re-examine Scripture with fresh eyes.

Every kingdom has a throne, and every throne has a ruler. The internal kingdom is no different. Every day, something occupies the place of highest authority in our lives. Sometimes it is Christ. At other times, anxiety quietly assumes control. Pride may seize the throne through self-sufficiency. Anxiety may issue its anxious decrees. Anger may demand swift retaliation.

The Christian life is, in many ways, the daily practice of patterning our kingdom reign after Christ’s principles.

The Daily Coronation

This is not accomplished through a single dramatic spiritual experience but through countless ordinary decisions made every day. Each morning presents a fresh opportunity to acknowledge Christ’s lordship. Will we trust His promises more than our anxieties? Will we choose forgiveness instead of resentment? Will we carry out His policy even when it is costly? Will we rest in His sovereignty rather than react according to the flesh?

These seemingly ordinary choices are, in reality, acts of royal allegiance. They determine who governs our internal kingdom.

As believers repeatedly order their thoughts, desires, and ambitions according to Christ’s Kingdom principles, something remarkable begins to happen. Inner stability gradually replaces emotional chaos. Confidence begins to replace insecurity. Peace grows stronger than panic. The King is not merely acknowledged in theory; His rule becomes increasingly evident in everyday life.

This brings us to one of the greatest paradoxes of God’s Kingdom: those who truly reign are those who have first learned to rest.

Ruling from Rest

At first glance, the idea of ruling from a place of rest seems almost contradictory. The world teaches that leadership

continued on page 20

requires relentless effort, constant vigilance, and unending striving. Success, we are told, belongs to those who push harder, work longer, and carry every burden on their own shoulders.

Overcoming

Maurice Rogers

... continued from page 19

God's Kingdom offers a profoundly different picture.

The greatest King who ever lived was never driven by panic or controlled by circumstances.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus moved with remarkable calm. Crowds pressed around Him, opponents plotted against him, and urgent needs surrounded Him wherever He went. Yet He was never hurried by the demands of the moment. He withdrew regularly to commune with His Father, spoke only what the Father gave Him to speak, and acted only in accordance with the Father's will. His life was marked by purposeful activity flowing from perfect rest.

This was not passivity; it was complete confidence in His Father's sovereign care.

The same principle lies at the heart of the Christian life. Spiritual rest is not inactivity, nor is it an excuse for complacency. Rather, it is the settled assurance that God is faithful, His purposes cannot be thwarted, and His presence is sufficient for every challenge we face. From that place of confidence, believers are free to act courageously without being driven by anxiety.

Few biblical figures illustrate this better than Joshua.

For forty years, Joshua had faithfully served under Moses, watching God deliver Israel from Egypt, sustain them in the wilderness, and renew His covenant promises. Then, almost without warning, everything changed.

"Moses My servant is dead." (Josh 1:2).

With those simple words, one era ended, and another began.

The responsibility that now rested upon the shoulders of Joshua – Moses' successor – was overwhelming. He was expected to lead an entire nation across the Jordan River into a land occupied by powerful enemies. The people he was called to shepherd had a long history of anxiety, rebellion, and discouragement. Humanly speaking, the task seemed impossible.

It is significant, therefore, that God's first response was not to provide Joshua with military strategies, political advice, or detailed logistical plans. Instead, God reminded him of something far more important – His own unchanging presence.

"Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the

sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses... No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous..." (Josh 1:2–6)

Notice how God's encouragement unfolds. Before Joshua is told what he must do, he is reminded of God's faithfulness and what God has already accomplished. Before he is commanded to be courageous, he is assured that he will never stand alone. His courage is rooted, not in confidence in himself, but in confidence in God.

We who believe in the fulfilled gospel recognize the typology of this moment. Jesus, whose name was literally Joshua, was Moses' antitypical successor. On the mount of transfiguration where Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the prophets) appeared, God pointed the disciples to the antitypical Joshua and proclaimed, *"This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to him"* (Matt 17:5).

As the physical land that Joshua trod was given to him, so all things in heaven and earth have been given to Jesus. We are reminded by the apostle of what God has already accomplished through, for, and by Christ:

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all" (Eph 1:18-23).

Christ reigns over all things; so, we no longer need to manufacture self-certainty, because our confidence rests in the One who has already conquered all His enemies. We can move forward boldly even when the path ahead is unclear because we know that the One who calls us also walks beside us.

This is what it means to rule from rest.

It is the quiet confidence that allows a believer to face uncertainty without despair, opposition without bitterness, and delay without losing hope. It is not the absence of adversity but the presence of Christ that produces this kind of stability.

Such rest also transforms the way we interpret adversity.

Most people instinctively view obstacles as interruptions to their plans. We pray for open doors, smooth paths, and immediate solutions. When difficulties arise, our first question is often, "Why is this happening to me?"

Scripture gently redirects that question.

Rather than seeing every hardship as an obstacle to God's purposes, the believer begins to recognize that many trials are instruments in God's hands. They are not evidence of His absence but opportunities for His transforming work.

A delay may teach patience that success never could.

A disappointment may expose misplaced hopes and redirect our trust toward Christ.

A season of waiting may cultivate humility, perseverance, and deeper dependence upon God.

Even painful failures can become classrooms in which grace is more fully understood.

None of this suggests that suffering is pleasant or that Christians should pretend that pain does not hurt. The Bible never minimizes grief. Jesus Himself wept at the tomb of Lazarus, even though He knew His resurrection was only moments away. Faith does not deny reality; it sees reality through the lens of God's greater purposes.

This shift in perspective changes the questions we ask.

Instead of asking only, "How can I get out of this?" we begin asking, "Lord, what are You teaching me through this?"

That simple change marks the difference between merely enduring life's trials and allowing God to use them for spiritual growth.

Over time, we discover that every challenge presents an opportunity to strengthen the kingdom within. Each difficulty exposes attitudes, desires, and habits that either align with Christ's Kingdom or rebel against it. In this sense, life's trials become faithful messengers, revealing the true condition of our hearts.

The pressures of life do not create our character; they reveal it.

When anxiety surfaces, it reveals where trust still needs to grow. When anger erupts, it uncovers wounds that require healing. When anxiety dominates our thoughts, it exposes places where we have not yet fully rested in God's care. Every trial becomes an invitation for deeper allegiance to Christ and His kingdom principles.

Let's remember that we are not here waiting to be evacuated; we are here to fill the earth with Christ's glory. Everywhere that we tread in His name will be given to us, but we must persevere in order to overcome. ✝

teachings of the Tanakh—that the dragon represents despotic powers, like Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar. Secondly, "satan," which means adversary, refers to human enemies and has nothing to do with a cosmic enemy of Yahweh (see item #8 above).

B. Satan is a common noun: The word "satan," rightly understood, means "adversary." Otherwise, the angel of the Lord in Numbers 22:22 was the supernatural enemy of God along with Peter in Mark 8:33.

C. Listen to Yahweh: *"The inclination of the heart of man [not Satan] is evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21).*

D. Listen to Jeremiah: *"The heart [not Satan] is deceitful above all things and it is exceedingly corrupt" (Jer 17:9).*

E. Listen to Jesus: *"Out of the heart [not from Satan] comes evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual sins, thefts, false testimony, and blasphemies" (Matt 15:19).*

F. Young's highly respected Literal Translation of the Bible does not contain the word "Satan" anywhere in it. ✝

This study is taken from Preterist Paper 93: The Dragon of Revelation (<https://preteristpapers.com/93-the-dragon-of-revelation/>).

Additional Studies about "Satan" at www.preteristpapers.com

P.P. #59 Serpent in the Garden Was Not Satan

P.P. #60 Problems with the Idea of "Satan" in the Old Testament

P.P. #61 Problems with the Word "Satan" in the New Testament

P.P. #62 "Satan" in Job

P.P. #63 Did the Devil Tempt Jesus?

P.P. #64 A Study of Satan by Francis Beffert

P.P. #66 "Ruler of this World" is not Satan

P.P. #68 "War in Heaven—Rev 12"

P.P. #86 A Walk Through Preterist Papers

By Duncan Heaster

"The Real Devil" (book available at <https://heaster.org/rd.pdf>). Not available in print.

Satan

Patricia Bailey

... continued from page 17

HELLO ALL! I HOPE you have been staying cool during this hot summer. I semi-retired back in December and now am helping Maria build custom homes, so I stay inside as much as possible! Ok, in the last issue, we were speaking of Paul, Moses and Isaiah, and who was right or wrong about knowing how to please God. Let's pick up where we left off. By the way, you can read the entire "Kingdom Come" book at www.tjsmithministries.com for like \$4 for the e-book. Just before we start the study in this issue, here's the final paragraph from the last issue, to refresh your memory:

1 Corinthians 2:9 "... according as it has been written, 'Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard,' nor has it risen up into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him" (LITV).

Let's look at the three men's words side-by-side for a better comparison.

Moses: Yet Jehovah has not given to you a **heart** to know, and **eyes** to see, and **ears** to hear, until this day."

Isaiah: "... and say to this people, 'Hearing you **hear**, but do not understand; and seeing you **see**, but do not know."

Paul: "... according as it has been written, 'Eye has not seen, and **ear** has not heard,' nor has it risen up into the **heart** of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him."

There seems to be a disconnect here. Moses wrote 1500 years earlier that *the Hebrews* could know God and please Him. Next Isaiah, 700 years later, wrote that the Israelites were deaf and blind. Finally, Paul agreed with Isaiah, not Moses. What could have happened between the time of Moses and Isaiah that led the people of Israel to break covenant with God and lose the privilege of knowing how to please God?

Even though they still retained the actual Law on tablets of stone, they had continuously sinned against Yahweh through the centuries, killing His prophets, committing idolatry in their worship, sacrificing their children to Molech and Ba'al, and ignoring the command to be a "light on a hill." Paul was telling his readers that something new was coming that would compare to the old covenant, only better. Paul was likely quoting Isaiah 64:4:

*"Even from antiquity men have not heard, they have not given ear, Eye hath not seen a God save Thee, and He doth work for those waiting for Him."*¹

Remember, it was Paul's people to whom the first covenant came. This was the reason Paul persecuted the early believers. He felt they weren't following Torah. Paul understood what a "covering" meant to the Hebrews.

The reason for this perceived contradiction was that Moses was speaking of the first covenant, Isaiah was looking ahead to the second covenant brought by Yeshua Messiah, and Paul was speaking of the new covenant that he and the rest of the Apostles were anticipating and being transferred into.

Think of it like this: Moses said, "Ok, gang, I got great news. Here's the chance we've been waiting for! Yahweh just gave me the instructions for everything we need to do to please Him! Yep, let's just do the things on the tablets and we're good!" Here was the problem: they couldn't keep them. Isaiah was telling them, "Ok, you blew it, again, but I see another Law coming that we will truly be able to follow . . . grace." Paul agreed.

So, here is a 1500-year span where this figure of speech, "to him who has ears to hear," has been used by the Hebrews. When this phrase was used from Isaiah forward, it was tied to the coming Messiah who would bring a new covenant *and* judgment upon the *rebellious house* of Jerusalem. *Rebellious house?* Where

T. J. Smith

TJ Smith writes an ever growing series of books on Interpreting the Bible, and contributed commentary to the *Fulfilled Covenant Bible*.

tjsmithmusic@yahoo.com
www.tjsmithministries.com



am I getting that? Let's look at one more verse before moving on.

"Son of man [Yeshua], you dwell in the middle of a rebellious house [the Jewish leadership], who have eyes to see and don't see, ears to hear and don't hear, for they are a rebellious house" (Ezekiel 12:2, The Kingdom Bible).²

When we read Jesus using this phrase, we have more insight into what He was really saying to the Pharisees and scribes without having to come out and say it.

Part of the Hebrew culture was to reference something and know that the audience understood. For example, if I were going to tell basketball legend Michael Jordan that I was going to dunk the ball on him, he might reply, "Make my day." That would be a reference to Clint Eastwood's character Dirty Harry coaxing a criminal to try to outdraw him. Michael Jordan would know the movie as well, and I would know Michael had no gun, and it was just an allusion to me facing a painful future for trying something foolish. Jesus also used this method of allusion to make the point that He was the Son of Man, that they were the rebellious house, and that the appointed time of judgment had come.

The Jews also knew Scripture and knew what Jesus meant. Imagine being a Pharisee and hearing a man declare that this is **you** and **your** generation. No wonder they were upset!

When He spoke to the masses and Pharisees and said, "... if you have ears to hear," they knew that he was pointing back to Isaiah and Ezekiel and accusing them of being that *rebellious house* and that the rebellious house would not understand, because God had closed their ears and eyes from understanding.

Let's look at another point of interest in this parable. Why did Jesus use parables? I have heard from many, many preachers, authors, theologians, and so-called

experts that the reason Jesus told parables was to "reveal" truth to the people. But that's not what Yeshua said.

Mark 4:11 ***"To you have been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables,***

Mark 4:12 ***"so that 'they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.'"***

There it is! If the Jewish people "outside" of the Kingdom (spiritual) understood the message, they would have repented and been forgiven. Gee, what's wrong with that? Wouldn't that have been a good thing? Sure, if you are ok with God not extending redemption to us. It was only because of the Jews' rejection of Jesus that the new covenant was offered to the Gentiles and Jewish remnant. I have heard teachers poo-poo this logic and disregard Scriptural context.

This was all part of God's plan to establish His true Israel, which is believers in Christ. (Notice how Satan was not credited with doing the "blinding or deceiving.")

Ok, that wraps up this issue. I hope you got something out of the articles contributed. This is the best resource for sharing the fulfilled covenant view, and big shoutouts to Brian and Kayla for 20 years of hard work and devotion, as well as Mike and now Adam steering the ship. Thank you to all of you for seeing the need and bringing us all into conversation and learning. ✚

1. Young's Literal Translation
2. TJ submitted seven commentaries in this new accurate Biblical translation. To order a copy, visit www.bibleprophecyfulfilled.org.

In This Issue:

Perspectives

Zechariah 14 Part 2

Perspectives

*The Death of the Two
Witnesses*

Perspectives

The Dragon of Revelation

Life in the Kingdom

Overcoming Life's Challenges

Parting Thoughts

*Seeing and Hearing but not
Perceiving and Understanding*

Fulfilled Communications Group
3784 Camanche Pkwy N.
Ione, CA 95640-9614

Preterism . . . *it's about time!*

It's about the time Jesus told His disciples that He would return—this (His) generation!

*It's about the time the New Testament authors told their readers Jesus would return—
soon, near, at hand, shortly!*

It's about time for a scriptural explanation other than delay!

It's about time for a “last days” view that doesn't conjure up gaps and parenthetical ages!



Preterism
Preterism

. . . maybe it's about time you looked into it!