

Ants Publications!



Copyright © Jarmo Koskinen, 2012*

<http://antspub.com>

The Templegate Crisis & the Failed Second Coming

by Ken Koskinen

* Conditions of Copyright *

Individuals and organizations may make electronic or print medium copies of this document/file providing: (1) No alterations or changes are made. (2) It includes the document must be reproduced in whole i.e. you cannot cut or copy and/or reproduce parts of this document.** (3) As an electronic document this file should **not** be saved in or **converted** to another computer file or electronic format i.e. **it must remain in Portable Document Format i.e. PDF**. (4) All copies must be freely given (i.e. no charges). (5) No one or organization can post the document on any medium or offer it on any occasion if/when donations (in addition to that within the document) are requested without **the written permission of Ants Publications**.

** Short excerpts published for the purpose of review are the exception, provided <http://antspub.com> is included. **(This essay was edited and new sections were added to an earlier version on May 28, 2012).**



Donations

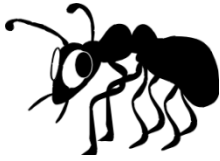


Ants Publications freely distributes all downloads posted on their website and relies on **donations** from those who are able. **Donations can be made by via our website: <http://antspub.com>** There you may also view and/or download other writings, leave comments and/or participate in our Ants Forum.

Table of Contents

Conditions of Copyright (page 1)	The Persecution (page 10 – 12)
Donations (page 1)	The Transfiguration (page 12 – 14)
About Ants Publications (page 2)	Jesus & the OT (page 14 – 17)
About the Author (page 3)	Post Mortem Stories (page 17 – 19)
Stern Warning (page 4)	Revelation (page 19 – 24)
Introduction (page 4 – 5)	Templegate Begins (page 24 – 25)
The Gospels (page 5)	The Gospel of John (page 25 – 27)
End Time Predictions (page 5 – 10)	Conclusion (page 27 – 28)

Navigation Tips: There are several ways to move about this PDF document. (1) You can **use the scroll bar** on the right of the screen. (2) **Turn on the thumbnails** by clicking the pages icon at the upper left-side of the screen. Then you can click on any thumbnail page image and it will take you to the page. (3) If they aren't already on, **turn on bookmarks**. The icon is also at the upper left-side of the screen. The bookmark list acts like a navigation table of contents. Click on an the **text** i.e. a bookmark and it takes you the page/location. (4) You can also press the “**page up**” & “**page down**” keys on your keyboard. (5) You can click on and go to any heading in the **Table of Contents** above.



Ants Publications!



Copyright © Jarmo Koskinen, 2012*
<http://antspub.com> *See Conditions of Copyright



"Hi, I'm Ken Koskinen. Welcome to the world of **Ants Publications**. Much on this page was taken from my home web page: <http://antspub.com>

NEW & COMING

Check this box out on my website. It's intended to inform visitors of any new additions to the site and to keep you up-to-date on what's on the planning boards. It also keeps repeat visitors, who have surfed all the sections before, informed. They can simply go to the new additions. You can also subscribe to our website RSS Feed. 

A GRAND BEGINNING!

To celebrate the launching of my website I've posted my ebook *"What I Told My Son About the Bible: Things the Clergy Doesn't Want You to Know."* It's about 185 pages of entertaining and

About Ants Publications

Ants stands for (**A**)nswers (**N**)onsense (**T**)ruthfully and the "s" pluralize(s) and stands for repeatedly. Ken Koskinen is the founder of **Ants Publications** and this site is currently a vehicle to post his writings; but eventually others may also be able to contribute. Ken writes academic essays, books, poetry and some short comedy pieces. His writing is not well suited for certain individuals. He does **not** for example accept the teachings of **any** major world religion. There are many myths and teachings that are nonsense and he writes factual rebuttals. He exercises **the freedom of the press** but it isn't **his intention to offend others**. **Please do not read his material if you aren't open-minded.**

Ken primarily writes from a scientific mode of mind. This means his information processing leads with reason and observation but intuition and emotion assist. When he writes serious essays and books he uses the persona, "**Ken Koskinen**." When he writes poetry he's "**The Naked Psalmist**." When he writes comedy he takes on one of several personae such as "**Ken the Wildman**" or "**SureFoot Helms**."

People who want to discuss the issues and themes raised on this site are invited to log on to the **Ants FORUM**. It might take time to attract some traffic to the venue but "big things always grow from small beginnings." You can also post your opinions and/or questions in **Comments**.

All downloads are **free** of charge. The plan is to make all posted writings available to anyone who wants them. Even if some people are short of cash they can still learn from and enjoy them. Hopefully others will make **donations**. Keep in mind **Ants Publications** isn't a registered charity and therefore cannot send receipts for tax deduction purposes.

[How to Make a Donation](#)

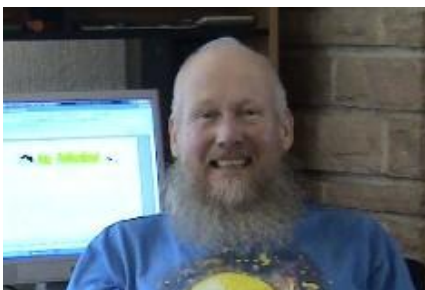


informative discussions between a scholarly Father "Dad" and his intellectually gifted son, an early teen named "Charlie." When Charlie asks Dad about the Bible the fun begins.

Dad informs him of the opposite point-of-view of the modern clergy. You will encounter scriptural contradictions, failed prophecies, historic and archaeological evidence that doesn't support the Bible. You will also learn how the clergy tries to make their religions more believable by taking verses out-of-context, ignoring modern science & reforming the data to conform to their ideas about the Bible.

In the process readers will also learn about how the Bible came into being. It's written from Dad's perceptive and he is a tenured professor, teaching Biblical studies from a rational and scientific perspective at "Forevermore College!" Down loaders be forewarned ... this ebook is a mind blower!

To stay abreast of new poetry, comedy & science articles: **Go To:** <http://antspub.com>



About the Author

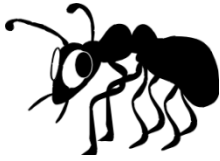
I was born in Helsinki, Finland but immigrated with my family to Toronto, Canada when I was about 2 -1/3 years old. My Finnish given name is "Jarmo Olavi Koskinen" but I use the English nickname "Ken" Koskinen. I'm a naturalized Canadian and have lived most of my life in Ontario, Canada. I studied at Centennial & Niagara Colleges in Ontario but earned my BSc. at Ambassador College in Pasadena, California. I majored in psychology but also studied history and biblical subjects.

I love to write. As a writer my goals are to **inform/educate**, **stimulate/challenge** and **inspire/entertain** readers. I write serious pieces as well as some comedy. Over the last several years I have taken a great interest in science with an emphasis on physics & cosmology. I am currently writing my first science book, **"The Big Vibe: Steps Towards a Theory of Everything."** In this work I hope to add to the quilt of theoretical science. I do not currently plan to make it available on this site since I hope to publish with a scientific book publisher. However you can learn more about current unsolved scientific mysteries by reading my posted essays.

I enjoy working out with the 1/2" thick steel cable skipping rope I invented, **"The Skip Walker/Jogger."** I use it to skip walk; that is, I skip rope while walking for several miles. You can view my video of me skip walking. I've also written the lyrics to a light country/rock song **"The Unemployment Line."** I'm neither a musician nor a good singer but you can view me singing the song, without accompaniment. I hope somebody with some real talent, like Billy Ray Cyrus, contacts me and puts music to it and turns it into the next big hit! I've also invented a very good carpet cleaning detergent and a skin cream that helps to clear up blemishes and outbreaks. It is also a good topical dressing on burns. Both of these products are in the research and development stage.

I also love nature, comedy, good food and beer. I love to learn and enjoy the mystical awareness and feeling of being alive while exploring & experiencing life within **"All That Is!"** It is the **"everything"** in which we have our being!





Ants Publications!



Copyright © Jarmo Koskinen, 2012*
<http://antspub.com> *See Conditions of Copyright

Faith readers beware! This is not an essay about beliefs but rather is a rational analysis of NT prophecy that points out failures and flaws. There is a lot of other literature that is more suitable for you to read. Please do not read any further.

The Templegate Crisis & the Failed Second Coming

This is the second essay on biblical prophecy of a planned series. "Pseudo Prophecies in the New Testament" is the first. You can freely download it on my website: <http://antspub.com>

The 1970's Watergate scandal or crisis is a well known dark chapter in American politics. On June 17, 1972 five men were arrested for breaking and entering into the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate complex in Washington DC. The building's fame was increased by the infamy. It was soon discovered the burglars had been paid from a slush fund used by the Committee for the Re-Election of the President. The FBI and media investigations showed how widespread the original plot really was. Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, using some unanimous sources, uncovered information that suggested knowledge of the break-in, and attempts to cover it up, led deep into the Justice Department, the FBI, the CIA, and the White House. The attempted cover up simply did not work. It resulted in President Richard Nixon's resignation and prison terms for not only the burglars but for some of his high ranking aids. Nixon was pardoned of any wrong doing by his chosen successor Gerald Ford. If there were others who were criminally answerable in the scandal, then they escaped the justice system.

There have been many cover ups but none have been more successful over the centuries than the one I am about to reveal and discuss in detail. It relates to the failed New Testament (NT) prophecies about Jesus Christ's second coming. In this essay we will look at what was really predicted, what happened and how the cover up ensued.

The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans under the then Commander Titus in the wake of the first Jewish revolt from 66 to 70 AD. The rebellion occurred in both Galilee and Judea. The Romans surrounded and blockaded Jerusalem for about the two last two years. The resistance was brutal and in the end much of the city was damaged, burned and the Temple was torn down, some people were executed by crucifixion and many others were sold into slavery. All that is left of the physical structure of the temple is a part of its outer retaining wall. It is called the Western or Wailing Wall and Jews still gather and pray there to this day.

This destruction was seemingly predicted by Jesus of Nazareth, an upstart Galilean rabbi who had himself, some decades earlier, been crucified by the Romans. He had apparently also predicted that he would triumphantly come back before his generation of people died out. He would come back as a renewed Son of Man, a spirit being, who comes amongst clouds and angels. He would conquer the Romans and establish the God's Kingdom on Earth! This failed to happen.

This essay is about the details of those predictions and those of the history up to and after the Temple was destroyed and even after Jesus' second coming failed to arrive on schedule. It is

also about, how the church has clearly denied the failure and what was done to save the then highly challenged new religion during what I have dubbed “The Templegate Crisis.” It was a crisis of faith that followed in the wake of the failed Son of Man prophecies. In a very real way, modern Christians are still living in denial of the aftermath of that crisis. Many do not know they are still under the sway of the most efficient cover up in history.

Introduction to The Gospels

Had it not been for the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth I would not be writing this essay. The only accounts we have of his life are the four Gospels in the New Testament (NT). Sure there are other stories about him in the collection of literature called the Apocrypha, such as the Gospel of St. Thomas but these are thought to have been written later, perhaps in the second century AD, and contain very different perspectives. In any case this essay is based on the NT and its associated history.

Jesus started his ministry in Galilee and it is here where he recruited his inner core group of disciples. There were twelve of them, a significant number in Judaism as Jacob, a patriarch had twelve sons. There were twelve tribes of Israel, but one became two and the number expanded to thirteen. There were also twelve months in the Judaic lunar calendar although the priests had to occasionally add days to keep the months in line with the changing seasons. The number twelve stuck in the common Judaic mind as a number of completions. In any case Jesus started his public ministry with the aid of his twelve chosen disciples.

Jesus was all about preaching the soon coming kingdom of God and it is clear that he believed he was living in the end times as predicted in the Jewish scriptures. The idea was that God would intervene in human affairs and send his anointed one or Christ to conquer Israel/Judea. This would be a military take over; and it and even the time before it would be one of great calamities; referred to as the Day of the Lord. All nations would eventually become subservient to the new government.

However these end time OT prophecies are not neatly collected together. There is not one outstanding summary or synopsis of specific expected events. Nor are there specific dates or even time frames associated with these predictions. They are scattered through the Psalms and the writings of the prophets and have been subjected to differing interpretations.

Jesus thought he had a clear understanding of the prophetic plan and boldly preached the soon coming kingdom of God in Galilee and in Judea. Publically he preached the general idea and many times taught confusing parables that left people wondering. However he did reveal the finer nuances of his prophetic understanding to his inner group. We have a record of what he told them in the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. These three when compared contain differences and even contradictions but they do give us at least similar accounts on Jesus' prophecies. It is for this reason that I will start our study with them. John's Gospel was the last account of Jesus' life to have been written and it is probably a late 1st century AD document. This last account is very different and will come into our study later.

Jesus' End Time Predictions

Scholars widely accept that Mark's Gospel was the first to have been written. It says that after John the Baptist was imprisoned Jesus began preaching in Galilee saying: *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel”* (Mk. 1:14-15). He meant they were living in last days or end time as the kingdom was about to come into the world and people should believe the good news and prepare by repenting. He was talking about a literal divine government that was going to conquer the world. There were going to be positions of

authority in the new administration and his twelve disciples questioned and sometimes argued amongst themselves who was going to be the greatest (Mk. 8:33-37; Mt. 18:1-5; Lk. 9:46-48, 22:24-27). It should be noted that in Matthew's gospel the term "kingdom of Heaven" is used instead of, but means the same as, "the kingdom of God."

Jesus even sent his disciples out on preaching missions to spread the good news that the kingdom of Heaven was about to arrive. They were to also heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead and cast out demons (Mt. 10:5-15). In the midst of this he also told them "the Son of Man" must be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again (Mk. 8:31). The Son of Man was a title that Jesus often used to refer to himself. It was also used in the OT to sometimes refer to a prophet and one example is used in the Book of Daniel (Dn. 7:13). We will shortly see the book of Daniel had a profound influence on Jesus' worldview.

Over time Jesus revealed more of his prophetic understanding to his disciples. The most complete description was recorded within three similar accounts in the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. This is sometimes referred to as the Olivet Prophecies since Jesus in Matthew and Mark's account speaks to some of his disciples while they sat on the Mount of Olives just outside Jerusalem. Luke does not say where they were during this discussion but all three gospels agree it started from Jesus' earlier prediction that the temple buildings would be destroyed (Mt. 24:1-2; Mk. 13:1-2; Lk. 21:5-6). All these accounts also claim Jesus spoke to his disciples after they came to him and privately asked him when will these things happen? They were obviously referring to when the temple buildings would be destroyed. Matthew expanded the inquiry by adding they also asked, "And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Mt. 24: 3). Mark alone says Jesus spoke only with Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mk. 13:3-4). Jesus answered by giving them a talk on what he claimed would happen in the near future. What he said is unbelievable.

Jesus predicted deceiving representatives would claim they spoke in his name, saying that I (meaning Jesus) am the Christ. He did not mention his own presence and perhaps this hints that he would have already been killed as he had earlier predicted. In any case these representatives would mislead many people (Mt. 24:4-5; Mk. 13:5-6; Lk. 21:8).

He then claimed there would be wars amongst nations and kingdoms. There would also be earthquakes in different places, famines and pestilences (Mt. 24:6-7; Mk. 13:7-8; Lk. 21:9-11). Mark does not include pestilences but used "troubles" instead. Luke adds fearful sights and signs from heaven (Lk. 21:11) but was not very specific. It is also puzzling since all three accounts include strange heavenly sights but later in the sequence of events. Whatever he meant it was early in the sequence of events compared to the other two accounts. In any case, Matthew and Mark claim these early events were "the beginning of sorrows." Luke does not use that division or characterization of the early period.

Jesus then predicted his followers would suffer during an early persecution, some would be killed and they would be hated by all nations. Matthew claims this persecution would include many followers betraying and hating one another. False prophets would rise up and deceive people and there would be a time of lawlessness and that people's hearts would grow cold. The gospel of the kingdom would be preached in the world as a witness to all nations and then the end will come (Mt. 24:9-14). Mark pretty much agrees with Matthew only he adds they would be taken before councils, kings and rulers and beaten in synagogues. One has to keep in mind that since Mark used the personal pronoun "you" Jesus meant Peter, James, John and Andrew would be the ones who would suffer these things. He also did not mention the rise of false prophets at this point (Mk. 13:3, 9-13). Luke differs again. He claims this early persecution would start even

before the wars, earthquakes, famines and pestilences. Nor does he mention false prophets or even the preaching of the kingdom of God to the nations (Lk. 21:12-19). I will have much more to say about this early persecution and the preaching of the gospel shortly but for now consider these comments:

History and the NT shows the earliest persecution of the Christians was carried out by the Jews, starting in Jerusalem and in time the Romans got involved and it firstly became very bloody in Rome under the Emperor Nero. He had blamed the Christians for starting the great fire in the city and used it to justify his evil.

Starting in the 4th century AD Christianity became the official religion in the Roman Empire and this is something else that Jesus did not predict. After much time the Roman Empire broke up and Christianity splintered into different groups or churches that varied widely in doctrine and practice. Collectively it has become the largest religion in the world. Jesus did not see any of this coming. Instead he spoke of his followers as if they would be a relatively small persecuted and hated group when he came back to end the age and usher in the kingdom of God. The reason why Jesus missed all of these later historical events will become clear shortly.

In any case a major point in the prophecy is *the destruction of the temple buildings in Jerusalem* that Jesus had predicted earlier. Matthew says the sign of this impending event was given by the prophet Daniel. He had predicted an abomination of desolation would be erected in the holy place or temple. It reads like some pagan or offensive ritual would be practiced within the temple and if that is the case it would have upset the religious sensitivities of all the city's inhabitants. When his followers saw it they should immediately flee and by implication he meant out of Jerusalem.

One has to wonder about the logistics of such an occurrence. How could anyone perform such an act if the city had not already been under siege by a foreign force? It is inconceivable that the Jewish leadership would have willfully performed such an act. It would have sparked a citywide rebellion against the High Priest and the clergy! In other words this kind of insulting act would be performed only after the city had been conquered. However even after the Romans entered into the city and put down the rebellion they did not profane the altar in this manner. They also did not allow anyone to leave or flee from the still surrounded city. In other words the abomination of desolation did not happen in this period. The Romans did not leave any offensive things standing in the temple. They simply tore down the buildings.

Putting these objections aside, Jesus went on to speak of an immediate and great urgency to flee when this sign appeared. He meant it signaled an unprecedented and terrible time of trouble and destruction was about to occur in the city. He even said the women who were pregnant or nursing would be greatly distressed. He said pray that your flight would not be in winter or fall on a Sabbath. The later point would only have been a problem for people trying to immediately leave the city on a Sabbath. One question is if the sign fell on a holy day of rest why couldn't they have waited until the Sabbath was over?

As I suggested earlier, if this offensive ritual had occurred on the Sabbath the whole city would have been in disarray. It would have been akin to the breakdown or major challenge to their socio-religious system. Such a sudden event is unlikely to have been a hindrance to anyone fleeing during such chaos. The only thing that could have prevented it would be if an occupying army was in the city. There were strict rules about how far one could walk on a Sabbath and it was enforced by the city's religious system. Those in the country side were not subject to such policing. In this scenario only the system in the city would have been in disarray. Another block preventing people from fleeing on the Sabbath would have been due to the acceptance of the

strong taboo to not break the Sabbath rules. In any case it is highly unlikely that such a scenario could even have happened for the reasons I have already stated.

Jesus went on to say those who were in Judea should flee to the safety of the mountains but it must mean only after they heard of the trouble at the temple. Of course it would take some time for the news of the abomination in the temple to get to people outside the city. Jesus also said this trying time would be shortened for the sake of the elect as without divine intervention no one would survive. This has to be read in context and he clearly was referring to the Jews and Christians within the city and the country. It does not mean all humans on earth as some have misleadingly suggested. He also went on to say false christs and prophets would arise and perform miracles that could possibly even deceive his elect or followers (Mt. 24:15-24).

In this section Mark agrees with Mathew's account (Mk. 13:14-23) but again Luke deviates. He does not mention Daniel's abomination of desolation. Rather he says the sign is when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, then the disciples would know its desolation or destruction is near. This is a much more realistic scenario. He only says that those in Judea are warned to flee to the mountains and those in the country should leave, and no one should enter into Jerusalem. He does not mention anyone in the city fleeing as they could not leave since the city is depicted as being surrounded. He goes onto say that not only would many be killed by the sword but survivors would be taken captive into all nations. He concludes that Jerusalem would be trampled by the Gentiles but only for a time (Lk. 21:20-24). Luke's account is clearest in implying the events are in the wake of a successful military siege of the city. His account is at least the most realistic.

Luke, like other gospel writers, refrained from directly portraying the Romans in any negative light. Instead in reference to the temple's destruction he used the more general and concealing term "Gentiles." It would have been risky to have done otherwise since a direct identification could be interpreted as an attempt to stir up rebellion. Many NT scholars claim the synoptic gospels were all written after 70 AD since they all predict the temple's destruction. This would make the gospels look like they had "predicted" an already past event. I think if that were the case Luke would not have feared citing the Romans as everyone knew they had destroyed the temple.

Some Christians take great pains to alienate the destruction of the temple from the rest of the prophecy. Such a division of the text creates an artificial long time gap between the temple's demise and the rest of the events. To date it has been almost 1950 years since the temple was destroyed, and the rest of the predicted events have yet to occur. As time continues to pass we the gap increases! The problem is, it is not warranted by the text as the prophecy proceeds seamlessly. Since the Romans destroyed the temple the rest of prophecy also has to refer to the same time period. This will soon become even clearer.

Matthew also makes it clear that the coming of the Son of Man will be a highly visible event. Jesus said it would be "*as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west*" (Mt. 24:27). The other two do not include this characterization in their parallel accounts. However, Luke does have Jesus saying the same thing in an earlier section of his gospel (Lk. 17: 23-25).

Matthew then says after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven and its celestial powers would be shaken. *When Matthew says "after the tribulation" he means after the destruction of the temple buildings and city and of course the terrible loss of life and suffering. This tells us just how immediately the celestial show was supposed to occur in the aftermath of the tribulation. This is why I said the prophecy was written seamlessly.*

In any case, the prediction goes to the survivors who would not only see strange things in the sky but also the Son of Man coming on clouds. Jesus would send his angels with the sound of a trumpet to gather his elect from the all directions, from one end of heaven to the other. He then promised that *this generation would by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled*. He was so certain that he asserted, *“Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will by no means pass away.”* (Mt. 24:29-35).

Jesus expressed his certainty that everything he predicted would occur before all the people of his time had died. This puts the nail into the coffin of trying to break up the prophecy into two parts. Jesus' made a brave prediction as he was not only clearly saying what would happen but also put down a definitive time post. These are both requirements of a clear prediction. Many biblical prophecies are very vague about the events and/or do not give either a date or even a time frame for their fulfillment. When these vagaries are present the so-called prediction can be said to fit into almost any shoe. I have to give Jesus credit for at least being clear about what he predicted and when it would happen. However the last parts of the prophecy failed to occur.

Jesus went on to say the specific day and hour of his return as the Son of Man was only known by his Father (Mt. 24:36-44). *Some people take this out of context and say it means Jesus was telling his disciples they could not know anything about that time. This is not so. He had just told them, it all had to happen within his generation. Jesus meant the general time frame is certain but they would not know the specific day and hour.*

Mark again agrees with Matthew but he did not mention the trumpet that was supposed to signal the angels to gather the elect (Mk. 13:24-31). Luke only says there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. He does not give any details such as the stars will fall. Of course the later is complete nonsense. They did not know what the stars they saw even were and they certainly cannot fall. Luke adds a catastrophe that the others did not mention. He says there will be disturbances in the seas as waves would roar. He also speaks of the nations being perplexed and men's hearts failing them due to fear of the unusual things they would see in sky. Luke does not mention anything about angels, the trumpet and the gathering of the elect. However, he agrees about the lifespan of Jesus' generation marking the time frame of all of the predicted events, including the coming of the Son of Man (Lk. 21:25-33).

It is Jesus' expected early prophetic time frame that made it impossible for him to have predicted any of later events that happened after this generation died out. His kingdom failed to manifest but the new religion went on to become the official religion of the Roman Empire, splinter but collectively become the largest in the world. None of these events and many others was not even on Jesus' radar.

As events unfolded Christians were persecuted as is evidenced in the Book of Acts. Stephen was martyred; Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin or Jewish court. Saul, who later became Paul the Apostle, arrested and persecuted Christians around Jerusalem and was on his way to Damascus to do the same. He even had letters from the temple leadership in hand but had a vision and soon after converted to Christianity. The Apostle Paul was later arrested in Jerusalem and was eventually shipped off to Rome to be tried. It is believed that both he and Peter died during Nero's persecution around 64 - 68 AD. The Jews did start a rebellion in Galilee and Judea but the Romans as I mentioned earlier did surround the city in 68 AD. By 70 AD the resistance crumbled and they destroyed the temple, crucified hundreds of people and sold survivors into slavery. However there was not any abomination that makes desolate erected in the holy place prior to the temple's destruction. There weren't any miracle working false prophets deceiving people. Nor were there any heavenly signs or disturbances in the seas, and most importantly Jesus as the Son of Man failed to show up on clouds.

There were a few hits in the Olivet prophecies but as we saw many details failed, especially noted is they did not culminate in the arrival of the kingdom of God. Some people still believe Jesus will come back in our day but it is not predicted in the Bible. Jesus connected his coming with many events but notably with the destruction of the then standing temple in Jerusalem. This makes it impossible to reconcile and/or repair these prophecies in any way. There are those who say a new temple will be built and it will be destroyed but this is not what the NT says. Jesus made it very clear that it was the then standing temple that would be destroyed (Mt. 24:1-2). The prophecy in the 1st century AD clearly failed.

The Early Persecution and Preaching the Gospel

Some modern Christians claim the Olivet Prophecies say that end will not come until the gospel the kingdom of God is preached in all of the world (Mt. 24:14) and this has not yet been done. However Matthew connects this preaching of the gospel to *an early or initial time of terrible persecution and martyrdom* (Mt. 24:9-14). Luke also speaks to the same persecution but makes no mention of the preaching of the gospel in this context (Lk. 21:12-19). Mark's account is essentially the same as Mathew's as it also implies the end comes in the wake of this initial persecution. People will be arrested but they are advised not to worry or premeditate what to say as the Holy Spirit will tell them (also implied in Luke 21:13-15). This time of persecution will become more intense as *"brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death"* (also implied in Luke 21:16) However Mark agrees with Mathew that the gospel must be preached to the nations and Jesus' followers will be hated by all men during these troubled last days (Mk. 13:10-13).

We have two themes to look at in greater depth. The first is the initial or early persecution that was predicted to culminate in the end. The second is the preaching of the gospel to the nations in world, also before the end. As we have seen these two themes or events were predicted to occur more or less simultaneously in the time just before the end.

The first problem is when we look at the Book of Acts and history we see that after the initial persecution began in Jerusalem it did not go to the scale Jesus predicted. Peter and John were arrested and faced the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem for preaching Jesus was the Christ in an area on the temple grounds called Solomon's Portico. They were released (Acts 3:11 – 4:23) but Peter and other apostles were again arrested, tried, beaten but again released (Acts 5:17 – 42). Stephen was later stoned to death and became the first Christian martyr (Acts 6:8 – 7:60). Saul, who later converted to Christianity and became the Apostle Paul, was amongst the Jews who persecuted the Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1 – 9:22).

However, things settled down and James became the Christian leader in Jerusalem. According to other records James was even accepted and respected by the Jewish leaders for a time. In Acts 15 we see that Paul, Barnabas and some others freely travelled to Jerusalem and conferred with James, Peter and the others about the controversy of needing to circumcise Gentile converts to Christianity. There isn't any mention of the fear of persecution at this time and they are depicted as freely talking to Pharisees who were the Jewish popular party (Acts 15:5). The meeting could have been around 49 – 50 AD but there isn't even a hint of any persecution!

Unfortunately the Jewish leader turned against James and he was killed around 62 AD. There are two surviving accounts of his death and both are contradictory in details but agree James was murdered by the Jewish leadership for not prohibiting the preaching of Jesus Christ. Things settled down again. The next period of persecution occurred in Rome under the Emperor Nero (64 – 68 AD). A great fire had destroyed much of the city and many citizens perished. Nero laid

the blame on the Christians and started a cruel persecution and martyrdom of Christians who were innocent scapegoats. It is said he even had dinner parties while Christians were burned nearby at the stake to light up the night. There are records that claim that Peter and Paul both perished during Nero's martyrdom.

We can see there were several different periods of Christian persecution and not just one that led to the end as Jesus falsely predicted. Nor has there been almost 2,000 years of continual persecution and martyrdom of Christians. Secondly after the initial period of persecution that we know of, the end of the age did not come. Thirdly modern Christians are not hated by all men for His name sake (Mk. 13:13). In fact it is the opposite. Christianity is the largest religion in the world today! So we can rationally say the initial persecution that led to the end did not happen and Christians today are not hated by all men or people. Jesus actually implied his followers would be a relatively small group who he thought or hoped would keep enduring while being persecuted by the majority of their contemporaries! He expected the persecution would be amongst the events that would happen before the people of his generation had all died (Mt. 24: 30-35). Jesus could have easily predicted there would be different periods of persecution in Jerusalem, Rome and elsewhere but he didn't. What he said, does not match subsequent events.

We also have to discuss Jesus' statement, *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come"* next (Mt. 24:14; Mk. 13:10). There are some modern Christians who claim every tribe and nation has to be reached before JC comes back. However, there are still tribes in the rain forests of South America (and other environments elsewhere) that have not yet had contact with modern people. Some are known to have had only limited contact where they have been given clothing, metal machetes, cooking pots and other things but there is a language barrier. No one has been able to communicate very much with them and certainly they haven't heard the gospel. Religious conversion can follow in the wake of cultural and social interaction but communication has to be established. This means people have to learn the native language and sometimes vice versa.

Some of these remote groups shun contact with outsiders and have even killed modern people who have tried to interact with them. The idea that the gospel has to reach every tribe in the modern world and that this is what has held back the second coming is nonsense. The modern interpretation is almost never fulfilling as some remote peoples are hardly interested in associating with outsiders. It also ignores Jesus' clear prediction that all the things he predicted would be fulfilled before all the people of his generation died (Mt. 24:30-35).

We also have to look to how the term "world" was used in the NT era. Here are some examples of how the Apostle Paul used it **in relationship to the preaching of the gospel:**

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rm. 1:8).

Also of the gospel Paul says, *"But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: (and the he quotes Isaiah) 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world'"* (Rm. 10:16-18).

Again of the gospel Paul wrote: *"... which of you have heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth."* (Col. 1:6).

We see that Paul used the term “world” in context to preaching the gospel in a way modern people do not. He meant the gospel had been preached throughout much of the then Roman world or empire. He also wrote:

“if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister” (Col.1:23).

By this statement Paul does not literally mean the gospel had been preached to “every creature under heaven.” Again, he only meant it had already been preached in a wide area within his “world.”

The Transfiguration Misunderstanding

Each of the Synoptic Gospels contains a strange account of Jesus taking some of his disciples up on a mountain and transfiguring before them. Here is a summary containing the main elements. Jesus’ clothes became shining white and Elijah and Moses appeared and talked to him. Then Peter spoke out to Jesus suggesting that they make three tabernacles, one for each of them. Suddenly, a cloud appeared and over shadowed the disciples and they heard a voice saying, “*This is my beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (Mt. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-13; Lk. 9:28-36).

Matthew added Jesus’ face shown like the sun and Luke only says his face was altered. Matthew alone adds a phrase to what the voice in the cloud said, “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!*” (Mt. 17:2). Matthew indicates that Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus about the things that would befall him in Jerusalem while Luke is more specific and says they spoke of his death (Mt. 17:5 & Lk. 9:31). Mark does not contain these slight diversions. Luke stands out by claiming ... it came to pass, *about eight* days after these sayings that He took Peter, John and James and went up on the mountain *to pray* (Lk. 9:28). The other two gospels say it was after *six days*, not *about eight days*. So we have a slight timing difference and I will discuss it after we look at *these sayings*.

Matthew’s account of what Jesus had said prior to the transfiguration story contains the most information while the other two leave out a detail. Here is what Mathew says:

²⁷ For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. ²⁸ “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” (Mt. 17:27-28).

Mark and Luke do not include the phrase, “and then He will reward each according to his works” but otherwise agree with Matthew. In any case we have to conclude that some number of days later after Jesus said this, three of his disciples witnessed the transfiguration on the mountain. The problems result when some modern Christians claim the transfiguration negates what Jesus had said in the Olivet prophecies about the coming of the Son of Man within the lifespan of his generation (Mt. 24:29-35). This is not the case and here is why. Notice that in his talk just prior to the transfiguration says the Son of Man will come with His angels but no angels are mentioned in this story. Also Matthew writes that after his coming he will reward each according to his works. This did not happen after the transfiguration! It was not the coming of the kingdom of God and cannot be used to claim that it fulfilled Jesus’ statement that some of his disciples would not die before it arrived. The transfiguration story is all and only about a vision that the disciples supposedly had experienced and nothing more.

Of course the timing problem remains to be discussed as only Luke implies the transfiguration

occurred about eight days after Jesus spoke to his disciples. It clearly contradicts Matthew and Mark by about two days and perhaps is not very significant but there are some who completely deny it. They claim that Luke used Roman time reckoning while the other two used Jewish. This is very unlikely as all three of the Synoptic Gospels are in time/event agreement on details when timing is cited.

Only John's Gospel is out of step as per timing major events such as how long Jesus' ministry lasted. His account implies a much longer span than the year or so suggested in the Synoptic Gospels. John's longer ministry is seen by the mention of Jesus observing more Jewish Holy Days. John's Gospel also has Jesus overturning the money changers tables in the temple complex early in his ministry and not during his last days in Jerusalem (Jn. 2: 3-22; Mt. 21:45-48; Mk. 11:15-19; Lk. 19:45- 48). John has Jesus being crucified on the preparation day or about a day earlier than implied in the Synoptics (Jn. 19:31; Mt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-8).

The six/eight day contradiction still stands even if it is not particularly important. There are plausible reasons why it exists. It is often suggested by scholars that Matthew and Luke used Mark as one of their earlier source documents and perhaps Luke entered "eight" instead of "six" in his original manuscript. It could also have been there was an early scribal copying error. It could have been overlooked and repeated in some lineages and the surviving copies contained the error. Human error cannot be overlooked even though many religious people do not want to admit it within the confines of their beliefs about the Bible.

The Invisible Kingdom

There are also a few references to an invisible kingdom of God in the New Testament. Some people have tried to use it to negate the highly visible second coming predicted by Jesus. Here is one such account in the Gospel of Luke:

²⁰ Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." ²² Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*. ²³ And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. ²⁴ For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day (Lk. 17:20-22).

The first point is that Jesus did not answer the question. He was asked *when* the kingdom of God would come and his answer skirted the question. Instead he replied with a confusing answer. Some interpreters think he meant that he was present as the emissary and future king of the kingdom and therefore it was in some sense in their midst. Whatever he meant he went on later to tell his disciples about the highly visible coming of the Son of Man. The account cannot be used to negate what he said in Luke 17 or later in Luke 21 and elsewhere.

There is also the account of a discussion Jesus had with Nicodemus in John's later gospel. Here is what it says:

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you

hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

What one has to realize is the John's Gospel is a remake or inventive retelling of the life of Jesus. It emphasizes Jesus as personal savior and compared to the Synoptic Gospels it largely neglects the second coming theme. However in its last chapter it does contain a reference to the second coming. Jesus speaks to Peter and says:

²¹ Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what *about* this man?” ²² Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.” (Jn. 21:3-4).

It is widely recognized that Peter was asking him about the fate of John, the disciple Jesus loved. In Jesus reply he referred to his second coming and hence it does not negate his teachings about his triumphant and highly visible return as the Son of Man on clouds and with his angels. I will have much more to say about John's renegade gospel later.

Jesus & the Old Testament

We have looked at Jesus' prophetic understanding of the events of the end of the age and those of the expected arrival of the kingdom of God. It is clear that Jesus believed he was living in the end time and within the last generation of humans before God intervened into the affair of humans. He thought he was the Messiah or anointed one who would be executed, resurrected and then come back as the triumphant Son of Man. The question is why did he believe what he preached to the public and taught in greater detail to his inner circle students?

The Holy Scriptures to the Jews of Jesus' day was what Christians call the Old Testament and the Jews simply call the Bible. There were different contemporary parties who had their own understanding about what constituted the Bible. The Sadducees were a ruling party who only accepted the five Books of Moses also called the Torah, Law or Pentateuch. The Pharisees were the popular and largest party and accepted the law, writings and the prophets. There were other smaller groups such as the Essenes who also accepted the larger canon and some other writings. Jesus, who was neither a Pharisee nor an Essene, also accepted the larger canon of the Bible. He was very much influenced by the Psalms and the Prophets.

Jesus' followers came to be known as Christians and the earliest ones were Jews. The Jewish Christians became just another party in Jerusalem. They kept the Law of Moses, attended the Temple or synagogues and observed all the customs, including offering sacrifices. They differed from the mainstream only in that they believed the messiah had already come in the personage of Jesus. He would come back on clouds as the Son of Man and soon defeat the Romans. The Bible to them was solely the Jewish Bible, as this was Holy Scripture. Recall that according to the Book of Acts there was an early persecution of the Jewish Christians by other Jews. There was also a time of relative calm as James, the brother of Jesus, became their leader. According to a few records he was accepted for a time by the Jewish leadership but was killed around 62 AD but there are contradictory stories as per the details.¹

When Gentiles converted to Christianity it was decided not to bind them to the Law of Moses but to abstain from things offered to idols, from blood and things strangled, and sexual immorality (Acts 15:1-29). However they also revered the Jewish Bible as they thought many verses spoke of Jesus of Nazareth and of their days or end times. (Download my essay “*Pseudo Prophecies in the New Testament*,” <http://antsput.com>). The Gentile Christians became the dominant form of

¹ “James the Just” From Wikipedia the free encyclopedia (see “Death”) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_the_Just

Christianity as the pure Jewish form was impacted after the destruction of the temple. This of course was also the changing point for Judaism at large since the sacrificial system ceased. However various small groups over time did maintain a Jewish Christian identity and even today some still follow at least some traditional Jewish practices.²

During his lifetime Jesus was not alone in the belief that they were living in the end time. Studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows evidence, like the War Scroll, that some contemporary groups also expected a soon final battle with their evil oppressors. Some thought once the battle ensued God would bless their inferior forces and they would be victorious. A messiah or Christ was expected to lead the uprising and be victorious. The Romans up to this time had always succeeded in brutally putting down such insurgents. However the belief in the inevitable success of a militant messiah simply did not die out.

Jesus was unusual in that he was not a militant messiah who attempted to lead an uprising. Instead, as we have seen, he thought he would only become empowered after his execution and resurrection (Lk. 9:22; 23:6-8). I think he was influenced by the Book of Daniel and in particular the Son of Man prophecy that reads:

¹³ I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).

When you read this prophecy it echoes Jesus' teaching in the NT Olivet prophecies about the Son of Man coming with clouds and instituting the kingdom of God. In Daniel's prophecy the Son of Man is depicted as going to a god-like being, "The Ancient of Days," and is given a divine kingdom. Jesus knew this prophecy had never been fulfilled but he apparently thought it was about to be within the lifespan of his generation. He believed that he was literally going to become this Son of Man.

Jesus thought he was a messiah or Christ but why did he think he had to be executed? Also why did Jesus think the abomination that makes desolate would stand in the temple and that Jerusalem would be destroyed? Once again there is another passage in Daniel that I think influenced him:

²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week

² "Jewish Christian" From Wikipedia the free encyclopedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Christian

He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate (Dan. 9:26-27).

Notice it speaks of the Messiah being cut off or killed, the city and sanctuary being destroyed and the abominations that make desolate is set up during the middle of the week. The later means it would happen before the temple was destroyed since it would stand in the wing of the temple. It sure sounds like what Jesus told his disciples. It makes sense to say that he interpreted these passages in Daniel to apply to himself and to his time.

It should be noted that any mention of a messiah or Christ in the OT does not have to mean anyone specifically, such as Jesus. It was a title and could apply to any one who was anointed to an office like a king, prophet or priest. It was even projected onto military leaders who had some success in repelling enemy armies and gaining the freedom of the people. Even Cyrus the Great, 576 to 530 BC, who was the Persian leader who allowed the captured peoples, including the Jews, to return to their homelands was also referred to as a messiah or Christ (Isa. 45:1-2).

Jesus and his educated contemporaries were well aware of the history of Judea. In the second century BC Judea lay between the Ptolemaic kingdom based in Egypt and the Seleucid kingdom based in Syria. These kingdoms were formed after Alexander the Great's death in 323 BC. Around 200 BC the nation had fallen under Seleucid control. In 175 BC Antiochus IV Epiphanes became the Seleucid ruler. After an attempt to conquer Egypt failed due to an intervention by the Romans he ordered his troops to attack the Jerusalem. They pillaged the temple, killed many people and sold some survivors into slavery. After this he instituted a zealous Hellenizing policy. The possession of the Torah became a capital offense and all copies were burned. He banned Jewish sacrifices, the keeping of the Sabbaths and feasts. Circumcision was outlawed and those who disobeyed were killed, along with their families. Altars to Zeus were set up and unclean animals were sacrificed. An idol of Zeus was placed on the altar of the temple. This was an abomination that made desolate since the Jewish sacrifice had ceased.

All of this led to the successful Maccabean revolt that began in 167 BC and they were able to establish a largely independent Jewish state. The Maccabees founded the Hasmonean dynasty was but it eventually fell to overrule by the Romans in 63 BC. The Hasmonean dynasty came to a complete end when Herod, an Idumaeen was given power in 37 BC as another Roman client king. He started the Herodian dynasty and was the king who according to Matthew had tried to kill the baby Jesus. He was also a noted builder such as having expanded the Temple in Jerusalem. The temple therefore had not been destroyed and so in Jesus' mind Daniel's prophecy had not been fulfilled. He obviously thought the real abomination that makes desolate, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, was going to occur before the Romans destroyed the temple buildings.

There are several Day of the Lord prophecies in the OT and these speak to a time of terrible trouble and the supernatural intervention of the Lord. Here are two interesting prophecies in the Book of Joel which I think also influenced Jesus' view of the end time.

¹⁰ The earth quakes before them,
The heavens tremble;
The sun and moon grow dark,
And the stars diminish their brightness.

¹¹ The LORD gives voice before His army,
For His camp is very great;
For strong is the One who executes His word.

For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible;
Who can endure it? (Joel 2:11-12)

¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision.

¹⁵ The sun and moon will grow dark,
And the stars will diminish their brightness.

¹⁶ The LORD also will roar from Zion,
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake;
But the LORD will be a shelter for His people,
And the strength of the children of Israel.

¹⁷ “So you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God,
Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain.
Then Jerusalem shall be holy,
And no aliens shall ever pass through her again” (Joel 3:14-17)

The key point is the obvious references to the heavenly signs that Jesus said would occur before his coming as the Son of Man. There is little doubt the OT influenced Jesus in his prophetic understanding and worldview. I would say the unfulfilled prophecies in Daniel are reasons why Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple and his second coming as the Son of Man, a spirit being who comes on clouds. It turned out he was right about the temple's demise but wrong about his expected supernatural conquering of the Romans and the rest of the world.

The Second Coming in Post Mortem Stories

There are numerous differences and contradictions in the gospel stories of Jesus last days and the accounts of his post mortem appearances (Download my essay “What Resurrection?” <http://antspub.com>). Luke ends his gospel with the resurrected Jesus leading the disciples out as far as Bethany, a town near Jerusalem. He blessed them and was carried up into heaven (Lk. 24:50-53). However in Acts it is said Jesus tarried on earth, appearing periodically to them over forty days. During his final visitation he told them they would receive the Holy Spirit and then would become witnesses to Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth. He was taken up and a cloud received Him. Two men dressed in white apparel appeared:

¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

So we have a post mortem promise of Jesus' coming on clouds. John's gospel relates the story of Jesus appearing to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberius. They eat a breakfast of cooked fish and bread. Jesus has a discussion with Peter but the subject turned to the fate of the disciple Jesus loved i.e. John.

²² Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me” (John 21:22).

The point is, Jesus is telling Peter he is still planning to come back and fulfill his prophecy. It is another clear post mortem promise of his coming to conquer the world just as he had predicted while he was human.

There is little doubt that the early Christians belief that Jesus was coming back before their generation passed away originated from Jesus. The early church continued to teach that the second coming was imminent and there are several clear references to this theme in the letters or epistles as they have come to be called.

We can see this in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians when he writes that they knew the times and seasons of the Day of the Lord. They would not be surprised as they were sons of light and of the day (**I Thess. 5:1-11**). In his second letter to the Thessalonians Paul reminded them of the things he had previously taught them about the coming of Jesus Christ. He said before Jesus comes back a man of sin will sit in the temple of God and claim he is God. This evil man will deceive many by working with Satan and performing miracles and lying wonders. The lawless one will be destroyed by the Lord at his coming via his breathe and by the brightness of His coming (**II Thess. 2:1-12**).

Although the message is still clearly about a soon second coming there was no one like that who appeared in the temple in Jerusalem before its destruction. Perhaps Paul shared his own understanding of the abomination that makes desolate that stands in the temple before its destruction. Perhaps he somehow blended it with the prediction of miracle workers? However Paul arrived at his idea, it most certainly did not happen and the temple is long gone.

Paul even counseled those who were unmarried to remain as they are. He took the pains to say those who did marry were not sinning but he thought those who remained single were more attentive to the Lord, considering their time. His premise was that the time is short and the form of this world is passing away (**I Cor. 7:25-40**). Paul most certainly expected the Son of Man would soon come on clouds and institute the kingdom of God.

Paul wrote regarding the second coming that:

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord will Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet Of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (**1 Thess. 4:14-17**).

The idea here is simply that some of the Thessalonians would be alive, along with other Christians, at the second coming and be changed in a twinkling of an eye. These individuals, who are now supposedly spirit beings, would meet those who are resurrected from the dead in the air. Matthew depicted some of these details differently. He claimed that when the Son of Man came with clouds, he would send his angels, with the sound of a trumpet – not a shout, and will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (**Mt. 24:31**). Notice there isn't any specific mention of a resurrection of the dead in Christ or of human followers being changed.

James also wrote the coming of the Lord is at hand. He encouraged them not to grumble against one another as the Judge is standing at the door! (**James 4:7-9**). He also meant the second coming event was imminent and they were living in the last days.

Peter wrote of scoffers in the last days who would question, where is the promise of his coming? He wrote in rebuttal:

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of *persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

What is interesting here is not only does he speak the party line but it shows the second coming theme had drifted in meaning. Matthew does not say anything like that would happen when the Lord comes back. He wrote:

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left (Mt. 25:31-33).

When you read the rest of the chapter you will see he speaks of an immediate judgment at Jesus' return and not of the burning and dissolving of the world. Those on his right hand will inherit the kingdom but those on the left are cursed and must depart into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels (Mt. 25:34-41) Revelation complicates the picture as it speaks of a thousand year reign after the Lord comes back. The judgment only occurs after this period is over (Rev. 20:4-15). So the NT contains three contradictory second coming themes. It shows there was not a unity of thought on what would happen at Jesus' second coming.

John wrote his first epistle and said:

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. (1 John 2:18).

We can see that John or the writer of this letter also believed he was living in the last days.

Jude also believed he was living in the end times. He wrote:

¹⁶ These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. ¹⁷ But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: ¹⁸ how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts (Jude 16-18).

At this point I can say that all of the traditional New Testament writers of letters and gospels clearly show they were convinced that Jesus was coming back in their time. I do not mean all the letters refer to the second coming but each NT writer mentions the theme at least once. It also has to be said they got that teaching from the apostles who were taught by Jesus. They were all wrong.

The Second Coming Depicted in Revelation

When we read historical accounts like the Bible we have to firstly try to understand it in the eyes of the writer and his time. It is very easy for us to project our own biased modern interpretation onto the text. The book of Revelation is similar to the OT book of Daniel in that both contain many symbolic verses. Even though the weird symbols in Revelation are confusing the author does

give us the interpretation for some but not all. There are two possibilities; either the writer is playing us and there isn't any real message other than confusion or there is an intended way to solve the puzzles. If it is the earlier case then many different solutions could be suggested but none is right. If it is the later we have to follow the writer's clues and clear statements and use them as constraints in coming to the intended interpretation.

The book of Revelation is unique in that the second coming of Jesus Christ amidst the tribulation of the Day of the Lord is the theme of the book. It starts by telling us:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants – things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John" (Rev. 1:1)

It further says: *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7).*

The second coming is cited in the first chapter and it is characterized as amongst, *"things which must shortly take place."* Not only will every eye see Him but *they also who pierced Him*. The later is a clear reference to the Roman soldiers who pierced Jesus by nailing him to the cross and as John's gospel claims one soldier pierced his side with a spear. The timing is in line with what Jesus taught in the Olivet Prophecies as all the things he predicted would surely occur before his generation died out. Some people from that group would still have to be alive to witness the coming of the Son of Man with clouds and this reference includes some of the Roman soldiers. So we have our first constraint; and it is about the time intended for the prophecies. We cannot interpret any symbol as going beyond the life time of Jesus' generation.

John wrote he was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard a voice of one who said he was the Alpha and the Omega. It is a symbol of Jesus Christ and he tells John to write down the things he sees in a book and give it to the seven churches in Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. The important thing in these messages is some of them include highly contemporary content and in one case a personality. Each church gets a spiritual evaluation and a warning to repent. The Nicolaitans are mentioned in the messages to the churches in Ephesus and Pergamos. They were a short lived group whose leader Nicholas and/or individuals in group allegedly practiced sexual immorality and ate meat offered to idols. The message to the church in Thyatira mentions a woman who is a self proclaimed prophetess named Jezebel. She also taught people to commit sexual immorality and to eat meat offered to idols. These practices are repeatedly mentioned as it was also a problem for the church in Pergamos (Rev. 2 & 3). The point is these were contemporaneous practices noted in their day and it falls in line with the foresaid time constraint. The message to the church in Philadelphia even includes the warning, *"Behold I come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown" (Rev. 3:11)*. The imminence speaks for itself and is in harmony with the second coming message elsewhere in Revelation and other places in the NT.

There are several instances where Christians are criticized for eating meat offered to idols and it was a contemporary issue; but not so in our day. It is also interesting that the Apostle Paul counseled church members that it was okay in some cases to eat such meat. In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul basically argues that an idol is not a god and meat is food. Those with a weak or defiled consciousness eat such meat as if it had been offered to a god. So those who know better have the liberty to eat it, but must ensure their freedom does not become a stumbling block to weaker members. If a weak brother sees one eating in an idol's temple it could lead them to stumble. Such an act would be a sin against the brother and against Christ, so Paul advises caution and even complete avoidance. (I Cor. 8:1-13).

Paul returned to this discussion a few verses later. This time he told the church to avoid idolatry. However they could eat whatever is sold in the market, asking no questions for conscience's sake. If a non-believer invites a Christian to dinner they are free to eat, again asking no questions. However if they are told the meat had been offered to an idol he counseled them to not eat it for the sake of the one who said it. He summarized his point of view as:

²³ All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify (I Cor. 10:23).

Paul's position is based on situation ethics and Revelation seems to imply eating such meat goes against divine decree. In Acts 15 we see James the Jewish Christian leader had proclaimed that although Gentiles need not be bound to the Law of Moses they should abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, things strangled, and from sexual immorality (Acts 15:20, 29). So we have a contradiction regarding a spiritual principle and it shows that it was taught differently to people in differing areas and times.

Revelation also contains pro-Israeli verses as is apparent in the favoritism shown to the 144,000 Israeli Christians. Revelation 7 says this group is sealed on their foreheads as servants of God. They are protected from the calamities of the Day of the Lord. It mentions that there are 12,000 sealed individuals from each of the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:1-8).

In Revelation 14 this group is further identified as having Christ's Father's name written on their foreheads. They also sing a song that others could not learn and were redeemed from the earth. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes and are without fault before the throne of God. They are first fruits to God and to the Lamb and are virgins who were not defiled with women (Rev. 14); so it seems to also show a pro-male bias and only to those who remained celibate and never married.

Paul does not mention anything like this. He taught that those who were alive when Christ returned would be changed into spirit beings and caught up in the air to meet the dead in Christ who were resurrected (I Cor. 15:50-58). He says it is this group who will always be with the Lord and claimed he has the word of the Lord on this matter (I Thess. 4:15-18). Paul did not mention any celibate Israeli-Christian males as he was an apostle to the Gentiles. His followers were primarily Gentile Christians, both male and female, and we see another contradiction in comparative end time themes.

I am not going to go over all the details in Revelation that relate to all of the destruction portrayed as I am primarily interested in the writer's timetable. However it should be noted that the writer speaks of a much wider destruction and massive killings compared to the Jesus' Olivet prophecies. The later speaks to devastation in Jerusalem and Judea but Revelation takes it to a global level. When the fourth seal is opened, for example, a pale horse that was ridden by a being called Death and has the power over a fourth of the earth to kill with sword, hunger, and by beasts (Rev. 6:7-8). When an angel sounded the first trumpet, hail and fire mingled with blood rained down on the earth. A third of the trees were burned and all of the green grass. When the second trumpet sounded something like a great mountain on fire was tossed into the sea. A third of the sea became blood and a third of sea creatures died and a third of ships were destroyed (Rev. 8:7-9). Later, when the sixth angel sounded a trumpet four angels were released from the river Euphrates to kill a third of mankind (Rev. 9:13-18). The scenarios depict constant bloodshed and suffering on a huge scale. This is a significant departure and it indicates that there has been considerable story drifting and new development in the creation of this book of prophecies.

The only temple mentioned in Revelation is a heavenly one and the abode of God. The book makes no mention of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. This is a clue and it is reasonable to assume it must have been written after its destruction began in 70 AD. It probably took a year or so to finish breaking it down and moving the stones. This means there could have been about four decades between the time of Jesus' predictions and John's Revelation. The destruction of the temple is such a key point in the Olivet prophecies that it leads directly to the second coming scenario. The writer of Revelation did not have that prime event as a pivot point; after all, the temple was long gone and nothing further happened. I think this unexpected quiet gap required a new fill in and a new enlarged theme was impressed onto the second coming scenario. It went from a local event in Judea to a global one with greater devastation.

John also enlarged on the heavenly signs theme of strange things occurring in the sky. We firstly read this when the sixth seal was opened:

¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:12-17).

This looks very much like the heavenly signs mentioned in the synoptic gospels. However there is another round of heavenly signs.

¹² Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. ¹³ And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" (Rev. 8:12-13).

It is somewhat puzzling as all the stars had previously been depicted as having already crashed into the earth. The event itself is completely impossible but even so you can't have destroyed the stars on the first hand and then on the second hand say that a third of them were darkened again. But, that is what it says.

So far the clues have led us to a date sometime later than the 70 AD; but can we go any further in understanding John's mindset? Recall how I earlier said that Luke deliberately called the army predicted to conquer Jerusalem "Gentiles" when it really turned out to be Romans. John in a similar manner speaks of a city in his day as Babylon the Great. However Babylon had long lost its glory as the one time capital city of the Babylonian empire that had long since perished. The Persian Empire conquered it and then Alexander the Great's Greek Empire had its day. It was divided into four regions but the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria were only really important to the history of Judea. Finally the Roman Empire took over and was still in control of Judea in John's day.

In Revelation a woman is described as riding a beast with seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are seven mountains and the woman is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:9, 18). Of course Rome is a city literally built on seven major hills and clearly is the one John really spoke of. The woman or city is also described as *drunk with the blood of the*

saints and of the martyrs of Jesus (Rev. 17:6). This is another clue that Rome is implied since this is where Nero's bloody persecution of the Christians occurred during 64 – 68 AD. It was the place of the first major Roman persecution of Christians!

As it turns out the seven heads are also seven kings and John tells us that *five have fallen, one is and the other is yet to come. When he comes he must continue a short time (Rev. 17:10)*. The clue is embedded in the identity of these kings and of the one who was in power when John wrote his account i.e. *"one is."* Another problem is who the so-called eighth beast, *one who was but is not, and is of the seven?* (Rev. 17:11). There is also an earlier portrayal of a beast with seven heads and ten horns in chapter thirteen. It says: *"And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast"* (Rev. 13:3). And so this is the eighth beast that was, is not and is of the seven. John's clues are telling us there is a dynasty of kings whereby one will be taken out and yet will come back to power as an eighth king who was one of the former seven.

The question is who is this king? Revelation 13 continues on to describe another beast that has the power to tell others to make an image to the first beast that was wounded by the sword and lived. He also makes others receive a mark on their forehead or right hand and decrees that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark. The mark is the name of this beast or the number of his name. John then gave us a riddle by saying we can calculate the number of the beast and it is the number of a man and it is 666. It turns out when Nero's name in Greek (i.e. "Caesar Nero" in English) is transliterated into Hebrew, it is numerically equivalent to 666.

Nero's name in Greek (*Kaiser Neron*) represented by Hebrew letters (*qsr nrwn*), which also function as numbers:

- q = 60
- s = 100
- r = 200
- n = 50
- w = 6

qsr nrwn (60 + 100 + 200 + 50 + 200 + 6 + 50) = 666

The mystery persona or king is the Emperor Nero! After his death a fearful rumor arose amongst Christians and others that Nero did not really die and he would come back and retake his throne and restart his persecution. The legend is called "Nero redivivus" and some thought Nero's death was staged or faked and he just went into hiding. This story circulated and is the likely inspiration to this outlandish prediction as it also jives with the imagery of the beast's head being mortally wounded but yet healed! It also explains how Nero could be thought of as becoming the eight beast and yet still be of the seven.³

If we go to the dynasty of seven Roman Emperors that begins with Nero it looks like this:

1. Nero 54-68 A.D.
2. Galba 68-69 A.D.
3. Otho 69 A.D.

³ http://www.thatreligiousstudieswebsite.com/Religious_Studies/Angels_and_Demons/666_origin_meaning.php

4. Vitellius 69 A.D.
5. Vespasian 69-79 A.D.
6. Titus 79-81 A.D.
7. Domitian 81-96 A.D.

This still fits within the time constraints in Revelation and in other places in the NT. So if five are fallen and one is (Rev. 17:10), it means John wrote Revelation during the reign of Titus and so it would have been around 80 AD. He also thought that there had to be one more emperor to come but he would only last for a short time but then Nero would come back into power. It did not turn out that way. Domitian reigned for about 15 years and Nero stayed dead and so the beast did not come back to life as John had predicted. It matters little since the last chapter in the book repeats the same failed theme three times.

⁷ “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book” (Rev. 22:7).

¹² “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work” (Rev. 22:12).

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen (Rev. 22:20-21).

It doesn't get much clearer than that. It echoes Revelation's opening verse that it was all about “*things which must shortly take place*” (Rev. 1:1). Our detective work is sound but it matters little how you interpret any specific symbolic verse; that is if you read it all in context. You have to let the clear statements guide you in interpreting the unclear. As we have seen, the predictions in Revelation share the same general theme as those in the Olivet prophecies but differ in details. Both sets of predictions failed in many ways and most notably that Jesus did not return within the clear time constraints given in the New Testament.

The Templegate Crisis Begins

The early church had to wait a long time before anything happened that Jesus had predicted. Some people were already expressing their doubts as is witnessed in Peter's second epistle that speaks of scoffers in the end time who asked, “*Where is the promise of his coming?*” (2 Peter 3:4-5). Nearly 40 years after Jesus' death the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. As terrible as it was, when Christians heard of it, it gave them hope that the Lord's coming was near. After all he had predicted it; even if there weren't any abomination that makes desolate and miracle workers. After the initial elation, and as time passed the Templegate Crisis set in. Jerusalem had been surrounded by armies; the temple is gone but how much longer before the heavenly signs and the coming of the Son of Man?

This is the general atmosphere within which I think Revelation was written and as I implied, about ten years had passed since the temple was destroyed. It reassured readers of “*things which must shortly take place*” (Rev. 1:1). It spoke in detail about the terrible day of the Lord and of worldwide suffering but offered hope that Jesus would come back and reward his faithful! Unfortunately it also failed since nothing else happened. The church was in a difficult position. How do you deal with the failure of Jesus and his kingdom to show up as expected?

One thing that had already happened was that Christianity shifted from an oral religion to one that developed its own esteemed writings. Prior to this the only text that was revered was the OT; however their specific new teachings had to be spoken. Even though the canonization of the NT

took several centuries the three synoptic gospels, Acts, letters, Revelation and others writings were circulating in the 1st century. As time moved on there was a serious need for something in writing to reset the religion on new rails.

The Gospel of John to the Rescue

It is widely accepted that the Gospel of John is the latest one of the four we have in our canon. It could have been written during the final decade of the 1st century AD, perhaps around the year 96. It is also very different when compared to the other three. The account opens by revealing the divinity of Jesus by stating that in the beginning the Logos or Word was with God and was God. He was a member of the godhead who made the world and thereby was the acting creator. And the Word became flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (Jn. 1:1-6; 14, 18). It is quite a statement, completely absent in the Synoptic Gospels.

There are numerous differences in details and in the events depicted but this is not my subject. John's gospel is actually a rewrite of the history of Jesus. It shows us a very different character, who had a different message than the one portrayed in the other gospels. In the Synoptics, as we have seen, Jesus preached the gospel of the soon coming kingdom of God. Jesus predicted he would come back as a supernatural conquering messiah. In John the emphasis is on Jesus as a messiah of salvation or a personal savior and this is a very different characterization. In John's gospel Jesus taught the necessity of believing in him to obtain eternal life. He told Nicodemus:

¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (Jn. 3:15-17).

This pretty much sums up a large part of the message in John's account. It also includes some very bold and hard to believe statements that Jesus made to people *outside his inner circle*. Jesus even said these very far out things to the Jews who already wanted to kill him for allegedly breaking the Sabbath and for claiming he was equal to God:

²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ²⁵ Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. (Jn. 5:23-25).

I could go on citing other similar verses but John depicts Jesus making several such statements and on different occasions to the Jews. He equates a belief in Him as being essential to gaining eternal life and how he and his Father are one and how he has the keys or is the agent of the resurrection of the dead. This is a very different message than the preaching of the gospel of the coming kingdom of God and the reasons for this will be forthcoming.

It is not only what John claims Jesus said but to whom he spoke to. It is really hard to believe the Jesus of the Synoptics would have said these kinds of things to his enemies. You really have to understand what one could and could not say in their day. One could, like the Sadducees, not accept the books of the writings and the prophets but no one could speak against the Law of Moses. However you could debate the Law of Moses and even express dissenting opinions. No one could profane the temple or take the name of the Lord in vain. No one most certainly could claim to be God or even in anyway claim to be equivalent. If anyone even implied the later they

would have been killed for blasphemy and in many cases it would be without trial and on the spot. Of course this was illegal but it happened just the same.

The writer of John was well aware of this and on two occasions the Jews are depicted as attempting to stone Jesus. The first occasion he is in the temple and had told them that *“before Abraham was I AM”* (Jn. 8:48-59) and this is paramount to claiming to be God. On the second occasion he claimed to be one with the Father and would give his followers eternal life (Jn. 10:22-39). Jesus managed to escape but it is the number of occasions when he made these needless and provocative statements that calls this theme’s believability into question. It is difficult to see how he could have even walked around Jerusalem without encountering an angry mob of zealous Jews of every stripe. *Instead Jesus was accepted as the common people’s popular star, a healer and prophet from Galilee.*

Not only is the message in John different but so is his portrayal of the protagonist, Jesus. All the synoptics show Jesus as a secretive messiah who did not *publically* proclaim or admit to being the Christ, until the very end when he was in custody of the Sanhedrin and very soon after with Pontius Pilate. There is the famous story of Jesus asking Peter who the public said he was. Peter answered *some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.* When Jesus asked him who he thought he was, Peter answered, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* However Jesus commanded his disciples that they should not tell anyone that he was the Christ (Mt. 16:13-20; Mk. 8:27-30; Lk. 9:18-20). John shows Jesus being asked by his Jewish enemies if he was the Christ and he replied the works he did, bore witness. In the same breath he implied to be the son of God as he did his works in his Father’s name. He went on to say, as I just shared, they did not believe since they were not his sheep, but to his followers he will give eternal life. He concluded that, *“I and My Father are one.”* (Jn. 10:24-30). Jesus not only implied he was the Christ but also God. I almost cannot tell you how far the drift is between John’s depiction and that of the Synoptic gospels. They cannot be talking about the same man!

The differences are so dire one cannot say that John merely shows another side of the same person. John portrays a different personality who made the boldest possible statements to his enemies and had a very different public message. It is clear that John tried to focus the attention off the Templegate Crisis and onto a message of personal salvation via the belief in Jesus Christ. The final chapter of the book also hints at this obvious diversion. When you read the *second last chapter’s final remarks* one could not think of how to write a better conclusion for the book:

³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name (Jn. 20:30-31).

However the book does not end there; as the final chapter reads like an add-on. We encountered it earlier, so recall it is about the resurrected Jesus appearing to his disciples on the shores of the Sea of Tiberius or Galilee. After a short discussion the disciples come to shore after catching a huge net full of fish. They eat breakfast and Jesus talks to Peter and they finally discuss the fate of the disciple John. Jesus says:

²² Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me” ²³ Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?” (Jn. 21:22-23).

We can see the Templegate Crisis poked its way into John’s last chapter. If John remained alive until Jesus returned, as the rumor asserted, then his second coming had to have been very soon.

Even if John was a young man when Jesus initially recruited him he would have most certainly been elderly by the time John's gospel was written. So how much longer could he have remained alive? However the writer inserted the fix that John could die before the second coming, so his death would not have been a direct issue. However at this point we are still looking at the last possible days that anyone of Jesus' generation could have still been alive. This story cuts close to the bone of the Templegate Crisis and shows it was still a very dicey issue. In any case John's newer brand of Christianity caught on and so the rouse was successful! The personal salvation message is still front and center in the doctrines of many Christian professing churches today. In many of these groups the failed second coming prophecies have largely been swept under the carpet.

Conclusion

I am well aware what I have written is at odds with the themes in countless modern articles, books and sermons about the second coming. These people ignore the clear statements and constraints in the NT and imagine the second coming is a soon coming future event. The problem is one cannot use failed prophecies to predict the future in our day. Some see the Roman Catholic Church as the evil women in Revelation 17. They often make allusions to six historic resurrections of the Roman Empire and how a modern unified Europe will be the seventh or final one. Others imagine the United States, Britain and other modern countries like Russia and China are embedded within Revelation's imagery. They think there will be a modern limited nuclear war that devastates large populations and causes much suffering. Much is also said of the final battle of Armageddon before Jesus appears on clouds in the sky to put a stop to the havoc in the nick of time. It is all nonsense and totally outside the clear text in the NT.

Much of this stems from the false characterization that the Bible is the word of God or the Lord and therefore is thought to be infallible. The terms in the literature only apply to words the deity spoke or the divine messages that prophets received. In the NT it also refers to the gospel and in a few instances are metaphorical references to Jesus Christ ([Jn. 1:1](#), [Rev. 19:11-13](#)). It never refers to a collection of books and that is what the Bible is. In any case if you think the Bible is inerrant then one has to cherry pick texts ignore others and twist things to make it appear so. Even in this essay I have shown a number of contradictions in biblical themes and details but there are many others. The Bible is simply not what many people think it is. It clearly contains contradictions, failed and pseudo prophecies, historical inconsistencies and scientifically absurd depictions and events.

We have already seen some of the mechanisms that have been used to avoid or deny the Templegate Crisis. I wrote of people imagining the Olivet prophecies are in two parts and the first only applies to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. The rest of the chapters and the other clear NT references are discounted or delegated to the distant unknown future. This is not what the text says. We have also seen how the idea that the gospel has to literally go to all nations and tribes in the modern world is an incorrect characterization of the text. Others also say the kingdom of God is symbolic of the Christian church as it is what survived. This is also not what the text says. Yet many churches focus on the message of salvation in John's Gospel and claim it trumps everything. This has been used along with the spiritual teachings and moral principles to create a religion that serves their needs. The kingdom of God for them might as well be eternal life in heaven with Jesus; even if he never comes back to this decrepit world.

Clearly I am also fully aware that it isn't a matter of intelligence or even education as there are many smart and highly educated true believers who ignore the clear textual evidence as if it does not exist. They cling to minor and distorted points and think they have made their case. When it comes to religion, reason and evidence is often second to religious belief and the most honest

believers even admit it. We are in the realm of the human need or will to find meaning in life and once a theme is accepted, it sticks like glue. It also often includes emotional factors that can and does distort perceptions.

Many Christians are unaware these biblical issues and problems even exist. This is because the clergy is good at avoiding the pot holes on the road they travel. The Templegate Crisis of course lurks behind the scenes and it is real; even if it is ignored. In the end, I know that no attempt can convince anyone who does not respect reason and evidence over faith. However I am thankful that we live in a democratic nation and we all have the right to speak and publish.

Good luck on your human life adventure!



Ken Koskinen

[Click here to find out how to make a donation!](#)