Rev 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

In chapter 7:1-8 we studied this hundred forty and four thousand. The four winds were held back until these were sealed with the seal of God. These were not to be scattered (Eze 5:2, 12) nor gathered (Mat 24:31) until sealed. These would be the "few in number" that Ezekiel was told to bind in his skirt (Eze 5:3). These were the remnant of Israel, the true army of God (see discussion 7:1-8). These now were standing on the mount Sion (Zion) with the Lamb. Chapter 13 ends with those marked by the beast. Chapter 14 begins with those marked with those marked by the Father.

In reality the Romans had invaded the land of Philistia. Jesus told his disciples when they saw the armies compass the land (Luk 21:20) flee. They were first sealed by the Spirit and water baptism. When the armies came, they scattered. The Lord gathered them to Zion.

Zion alludes to many Old Testament passages. Zion again became important in the last days of Moses. It was established as the "top" or most important mountain. It was exalted above the hills (Isa 2:2-4). This is a strange prophecy because it is not the highest mountain. Zion was used for the Tabernacle of David. It was not used for the Temple Solomon built. Moriah is a higher mountain in the natural. Yet, in the last days of Moses, it is Zion that will be exalted. This is extremely important.

We see that from Zion the King reigns. Some proclaim this as a time of peace because of Isaiah 2:4. In part that is true. There is peace after total victory. First the Lord shall judge the nations and rebuke many people; then they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

The study of Zion is an interesting study. When Zion is researched we find it is synoptic with the presence and dwelling of God in Jerusalem. It will be established as the mountain that rises above other mountains. Literalist believe Zion will literally grow tall.

Daniel chapter two is concerned with the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation. Interestingly, in this dream the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan 2:35). From Daniel and other prophetic writings John brings the allusion of mount Zion. As we learned, mountains speak of worship. We learned that Zion is a paradox. Zion will be inhabited in the last days, and at the same time Zion will become a wilderness. It will suffer the day of the Lord (Isa 12:6; Joe 3:17; Isa 64:10; Joe 2:1).

We also see when studying Zion that the Lord left and returned to Zion. Zion is to be the seat of the king and those who dwell there will be called holy. Zion will put on beautiful garments and no more will the unclean enter. Zion is to be called the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Those who despised Zion will bow at Zion's feet (Zec 8:3; Psa 2:6; Isa 4:3; 52:1; 60:14).

It is as though we are given two different Zions. That is exactly correct. We are also given two Jerusalems. Zion is synoptic with Jerusalem. Zion is within Jerusalem. If there are two Jerusalems, then there must be two Zions. The truth of the two Zions and two Jerusalems are made very clear by the apostle Paul (Gal 4:22-31). Teaching of the two covenants, Old and New, Paul taught a Jerusalem which now is (prior to A.D. 70) and a Jerusalem which is above (after A.D. 70). The Jerusalem which is above is free, which IS the mother of us all (Gal 4:26). As the Lord did with Hagar and her son, he cast out the Old Covenant and the Jerusalem that then was (Gal 4:30-31).

There are two Jerusalems, thus two Zions, one earthly and one heavenly. One was laid desolate. The other continues to and worship the Lamb. We find this same thought throughout the New Testament. Believers are now a part of the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:18-24). The writer of Hebrews said, But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God (Heb 12:22). This is not a place we will go one day. The children of God, those who worship
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the Lamb, dwell there now.

We are given this same teaching in the Revelation chapter 21:2, 9-11. We are taught that the new Jerusalem is the Lamb’s wife which is the holy city that is descending out of heaven from God.

If we look at Hebrews 12:22 we see the identity of these one hundred and forty four thousand with the Lord on Zion. The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers who were the early church. This Zion cannot be touched (Heb 12:18). It is a sign and portrait of the early church on Zion with the Lamb.

It is upon the heavenly Zion the Lamb stands or abides. There the hundred forty and four thousand worship.

Revelation 8:8 tells us of a great mountain burning with fire that was cast into the sea. Mountains speak of the place of worship to the Lord God or to idols (see discussion 8:8-9). That mountain (8:8) thrown into the sea spoke of Israel’s idolatrous worship. Natural Jerusalem and the land literally burned with fire. The religion was cast into the sea of humanity (17:15; Isa 17:12, 13). That mount Zion experienced the day of the Lord. This mount Zion (Rev 14:1) remains. These hundred forty and four thousand worship the Lamb on mount Zion.

We discussed the mark of the beast in chapter 13:17. We have also discussed the mark, or seal of the Lord. It was placed upon these hundred forty and four thousand (7:3). We saw that the seal marked the authenticity and preservation of those who cried and sighed because of the abominations of the land (see discussion 7:3). Let’s note again that there is equal emphasis (if not more) on the mark and seal of the Lord than upon the mark of the beast. Amazingly, though, we hear little about the mark of the Lord. If we will acquire the mark of the Lord we will not need to concern ourselves with the mark of the beast.

Rev 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.

Rev 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

2, 3 Verse 2 gives us another paradox. We have the voice from heaven as of a great thunder and many waters. We also have the voice of harpers harping with their harps. These with the harps sang a song before the throne. We see prophetic anger -- great thunder -- and the loud voice of heaven. We also see prophetic worship -- harps and song before the throne. We are given destruction and praise. One Zion is destroyed and its Jerusalem laid desolate. The other Zion is protected and preserved as it bows to the Lamb. It must be remembered that natural Jerusalem and natural Zion rejected our Lord Jesus. They crucified him. They had him not only killed, but humiliated publicly the son of God. They executed the son of God in the most horrible way they could. However, heavenly Zion received the Lord Jesus, the Lamb. By doing so they received the mark and were preserved. Heavenly Zion and heavenly Jerusalem are before the throne of God singing a new song.

We have seen again and again how the voice of the Lord when it is as the voice of many waters, thunder, lightening, earthquakes, etc. is prophetic language. This is meant to display the Lord in His glory cloud. He is speaking and coming in judgment (see discussion 4:5; 6:1; 8:5, 11:9). Over and over the scriptures teach this prophetic language (1Sa 2:10; Exo 9:23; Isa 29:6; Psa 18:13, 14).

As the thunder was happening to Jerusalem, John tells us that those with the Lamb sung as it were a new song before the throne. They were actually worshiping the Lord as he destroyed Jerusalem and natural Israel! As the Lamb laid it desolate they harped and sang before the throne. They worshiped as he laid desolate natural Zion. That sounds so contradictory to modern Dispensational “Christianity.” This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We are receiving His apokalupsis. The curtain opens and we see the Lord in ways we have not seen him before.

John says they sung as it were a new song. A new song always accompanies a new message. It did here, and it has through biblical and church history. After Moses brought the people through the Red Sea a new song was sang (Exo 15). It praised the Lord for destroying the Egyptians. Here we have a similar new song. The last days of Moses had come. The one hundred forty four thousand praised the Lord as he destroyed the
enemies of Jesus Christ.

Throughout church history a new song accompanied the new move of God. Martin Luther’s, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” was a new song. The message of Martin Luther was placed into a tune borrowed from a popular song of its day. The words were the message of Martin Luther. Today that song is a classic. Charles Wesley wrote the message of John Wesley in music. From that came the Methodist movement. Songs like “Blessed Assurance,” “Hark the Harold Angels Sing,” “God of my Life,” “O For a Thousand Tongues To Sing,” “Jesus Lover of My Soul,” and “It is Well With My Soul” are old songs today. In their day they were new songs.

A new song indicates a new ministry. John said it was as it were a new song. This is not the first time John has referred to the new song. John spoke of the new song in 5:9. It then was in conjunction with the opening of the seals of judgment.

Once again we see the same aspect of the new song. It follows as a response of God’s people for His deliverance and vengeance upon those who war with him and his people. Though the new song is mentioned several times in scriptures, it seems that John’s allusion here is from Psalm 33. Psalm 33:2-5 combines the new song, the harp, and the loud sound.

As we investigate other new song passages we discover they come as a praise, as the right hand of the Lord destroyed. He destroyed his and our adversaries (see discussion on right hand 5:1). There are many of these type new songs (Psa 98:1; 40:3; 144:9-11).

The Revelation showed an imagery. The imagery was the true people of Zion within the heavenly new Jerusalem singing a song of praise. The Lamb gives salvation. The right hand of the Lord destroyed His enemies. The praise was because the loud voice of thunder had come against natural Jerusalem and natural Zion. The one hundred forty four thousand Jewish saints have been delivered. They sang a song. This song no man could learn but the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. Again earth is ge (Greek) meaning “soil or region.” These hundred forty and four thousand were not redeemed from the planet, but rather redeemed from the soil or region of Philistia.

We have already discussed the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem that began in A.D. 66. The believers fled as the Lord had told them (Luk 21:20-22). No person could understand the thankfulness to God for their deliverance except those Jews that escaped the horror. No man could learn that song but the hundred forty four thousand. These were redeemed from the siege. Jesus describe its horror. He said, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” (Mat 24:21, 22) There had been nothing like it from the beginning of time. There will never be anything like it again. Those hundred forty four thousand sang a song of gratitude that only they understood. Only they witnessed that tribulation. One million one hundred thousand died, and ninety seven thousand were carried away captive during that war. Yet a few hairs (Eze 5:3), actually a hundred forty and four thousand, were redeemed. These sang a new song!

Rev 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Rev 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

4, 5 We come to a passage that has puzzled teachers and expositors for centuries. Is John being literal with these verses or is he being figurative? It is with verses like this we need to remind ourselves of the very first verse of the Revelation. John tells us who the Revelation was of, who gave the Revelation, and why the Revelation was given. We are also told how it was given, thus how to interpret it. Let us read again the very first verse. The Revelation is of and about Jesus Christ, not antichrist. It was given by God. It was given to show God’s servants things that would shortly come to pass. It was signified or given by signs (see discussion 1:1).

We have found that most of the significations are allusions to what we call the Old Testament Scriptures. What we must remember is that John did not call scriptures “Old Testament Scriptures” or “New Testament Scriptures.” They were the
only scriptures. John worked with the Scriptures he had.

If we take these verses we now study (Rev 14:4, 5) literal we end with a very strange interpretation. We have a 144,000 ‘men’s only’ club who believe that women defile men. These 144,000 men are rewarded for this thinking by being allowed before the throne of God. Does that mean that a married man with children cannot approach the throne of God? Does this mean they have a fault because they were with a woman? Peter was married. Peter was definitely one of the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. Was Peter defiled? Will marriage defile a man? Will women defile? When a person interprets the Revelation with a literalist or Dispensational approach, this is the mentality they must deal with.

A far better approach is to understand that the Revelation is “signified.” These signs help us establish meaning to the apocalyptic writing. They are to help us understand things that were to shortly come to pass. We have approached every verse this way and will approach these verses that way also.

First, let’s remember our context is 144,000 on Zion. We know that John is not seeing natural Zion, but rather heavenly Zion (Heb 12:22). So, if we can locate passages concerning Zion and virgins we will probably be on track. We find such a Scripture. Interestingly enough it also deals with God’s rejection of Jerusalem and its destruction (Lam 1:4-18).

We noted that John has us in a paradox. As we noted Hagar speaks of the bondwoman -- the Old Covenant and natural Jerusalem (Gal 4:21-31). The bondwoman and her children were cast out. The seed of the promise are protected and dwell in Jerusalem and Zion which is above.

Another interesting aspect is the word John used in Revelation 14:4 for virgins, parthenos, which is actually a feminine form. The word means “a maiden.” The 144,000 are not a bunch of guys. They were a depiction of a non-defiled people who had not gone after the harlot (Jerusalem). They are not defiled with ‘Hagar’ the Jerusalem and Zion below. As we will see in chapter 17 “the great whore” (17:1) was, without doubt, Jerusalem. The hundred forty four thousand were not defiled with that woman. They were not defiled with any religious idolatry. The Scriptures project false religion as adultery. These were not defiled with women for they are virgins. What made them virgins is these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. They were not virgins because they were not married. They were not defiled because they were not married. False religion is projected in the Scriptures synoptic with the seduction of a woman (Rev 2:20).

When we search for scriptures looking for those that associate defilement with intercourse we see an interesting truth. The following is not pleasant to speak of. However it probably does play a part in the interpretation. Intercourse is not taught as defiling a man unless the woman was in her menstrual cycle, or it was adultery (Lev 18:29, 20).

Idolatry is associated with adultery and a man defiling himself by intercourse with a “menstruous woman” (Eze 18:6; Isa 30:22; Lam 1:17). Jeremiah writing the Lamentation says Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman.

Lam 1:17 Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them. (emphasis added)

The scriptures warn not to become intimate with Jerusalem’s religion. Those who did were defiled. Our 144,000 did not.

Because of this abstinence they were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. These hundred forty four thousand were firstfruits. Firstfruits are simply the first of the harvest. To project these into the future would be to say that no productivity came from the labors of Jesus Christ. It would be saying that the apostles had no success in their ministry. These were not “lastfruits.” These are firstfruits. These were the first to receive salvation. The first to receive were Jews in and around Jerusalem!

If we properly interpret the passage and know that John was writing of things which would shortly come to pass (1:1), then we would know these hundred forty four thousand gathered to Zion had already happened. They were the firstfruits that rejected Hagar and followed the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These would be Peter, James, John and nearly a hundred forty four thousand other first century believers. These fled Jerusalem and Philistia when they saw the
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abomination of desolation coming (Mat 24:15; Luke 21:20). Is the hundred forty and four thousand a literal number? Most likely it is not, but it could be. If it is the same hundred forty and four thousand of Revelation chapter seven we know it is not. There never was a tribe of Joseph (Rev 7:8).

In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. False religious belief will cause our mouths to produce guile. Guile is dolos (Greek) and means “a trick.” False religion is a trick! I fear that so much of what we are told, taught, and preached today is guile. What we are taught and believe is vital. We must believe that it is of extreme and utter importance to reject the trick of the menstrual woman. We must only know intimately the Lamb. That is what Zion is and was about.

Rev 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

6 We observe six angels in this chapter (v. 6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18, 19). We have seen angels as the messengers of God. The seven letters written to the seven churches (2:1-3:22) were actually written to the angel / messenger of that church. We noted that these angel people would be the ones primarily responsible for correcting the situations for that church (see discussion on 1:20). When the word used for angel is traced to its root, ago , we discover it means “to lead; bring; drive; go; induce.” The angel is a leader and a driver (see discussion 2:1). We recognize the angel. He or she is the messenger who brings and drives us to the Son of man. These six angels have six purposes which give us six aspects of the message from Zion.

John saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven. We do not need to teach again that heaven in scripture is God’s throne (see discussion 12:6, 7). Scripturally heaven relates to the throne of God (Isa 66:1; Act 7:49). The message from heaven this angel was to preach was the everlasting gospel. This everlasting gospel was not only preached to Israel. This messenger was to preach the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

It is interesting that Jehovah only expected Israel to serve him. That was the Old Covenant gospel. Other nations were to fear Jehovah for he would judge them, but the nations were not expected to serve him. This gospel is to go to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Jesus instructed his disciples to do exactly that (Mat 28:19, 20; Act 1:8). That was the message from the throne.

We understand that the angel(s) is the messenger(s) sent with the everlasting gospel. With this we stop looking into heaven for a winged creature to tell us something from God. We instead look for and listen to the angel sent as a gift (Eph 4:8, 11, 12).

Jesus did not instruct his disciples to go knock on doors and ask people to pray the sinners prayer. His messengers were to preach the gospel that Jesus is King. They were to be witnesses unto him. They were to tell people the end of the age is coming. Repent, they said. Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ they said. Receive the seal of the Holy Spirit (Act 2:32-38). Have you ever noticed what the “last straw” was that caused Stephen’s stoning? It was when Stephen said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God (Act 7:56) that they stoned him. He had preached the everlasting gospel. Jesus was then and is now King. That means Jesus Christ is the instrument that God will use to bring judgment and destruction upon Jerusalem and the temple.

The everlasting gospel is that Jesus is now the Son of man and King forever. He laid desolate Jerusalem and all that resisted. The angel preached unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. As we well know earth is ge (Greek) meaning “soil and region.” It does not mean planet. This is important to this verse. The message of the everlasting gospel began with them that dwelt at ge.. Then it would go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. This is exactly what Jesus instructed His angel messengers to do. “... ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Rev 14:7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

7 This everlasting gospel says Fear God, and
Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem one event must happen. Jesus told the disciples that one event was necessary before the end of the age could come. The gospel of the kingdom, or as Revelation 14 says, the everlasting gospel must be preached to all the world (Mat 24:14).

World in Matthew 24:14 is not ge (Greek). The word used by Jesus here is oikoumene meaning “land.” Every land must hear the gospel of the kingdom preached. The gospel must go into all the nations. This would be a witness for or against the nations. This sounds impossible. Many believe it nullifies what we are saying the Revelation is actually about. That is not true. Every nation, every land, every oikoumene had heard the gospel before Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70.

Col 1:5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;
Col 1:6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: (emphasis added)
Rom 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. (emphasis added)
Rom 10:18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (oikoumene). (emphasis added)

This is what Revelation 14:6, 7 is about. The messenger angel went out preaching the everlasting gospel. The hour of his judgment is come. The first aspect of the message of the warring church upon Zion is to preach the everlasting gospel.

Rev 14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

8 This verse adds validity to what has been said previously. John gives one verse about Babylon. Obviously John’s readers understood what he meant by Babylon. As we have learned, the Revelation is given in signs (1:1). This means we are not speaking of natural Babylon. Literalist's believe in the reconstruction of Babylon. It will one day be a great city. That “Babylon to be” is not what John was portraying.

Prior to the writing of the Revelation, the apostle Peter wrote 1 Peter. He wrote the epistle to the churches in Asia. Peter mentions Silvanus and Mark who dwelled at Jerusalem. In conjunction with these two men Peter says the church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you


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(1Pe 5:13). What does Peter mean when he said, “the church that is at Babylon”? He was writing to Silvanus and Mark who were in Jerusalem. Peter was referring to Jerusalem as Babylon. In chapter 18 of the Revelation, Babylon was destroyed. It is in that chapter we find these words “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (18:4) Babylon is a portrait of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem that Jesus said would be laid desolate.

The thought that “Babylon” portrays was one of holding captive the people of God. Babylon was where the people of God were led away at the first desolation of Jerusalem. This was under the siege by Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki 24:10, 15). It gives projections of destruction and worship of false gods and captivity. It is definitely a negative projection. John used evil, wicked, and negative nations earlier to clearly describe Jerusalem. For example, in Revelation 11:8 Sodom and Egypt are used to describe Jerusalem.

Later in chapters 17 and 18 we will study more in-depth about the prophetic relation of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is Babylon the great whore. For now, another angel brings the next part of the message. The message is Babylon is fallen. The reason it is fallen is she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. At the time of the writing of Revelation, Babylon was not a great city. We know John was not literally speaking about natural Babylon. At one time it had been the greatest of all cities. It was the very first kingdom to totally conquer and oppress the people of God. It was the head of gold (Dan 2:38). After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. Babylon declined. The Lord God judged natural Babylon. He was not interested in natural Babylon’s fornication. At the time John wrote the Revelation, Babylon had no influence upon the nations. However, Jerusalem did. Jews lived in all nations. They influenced the nations with their religion which is indeed idolatry.

She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. It must be understood that Israel was the wife of God. (We will develop this much more later.) Yet she became a whore and fornicated with the nations. Because of her fornication God left her. He allowed those she fornicated with to destroy her (Rev 17:2, 16).

The Revelation Of Jesus Christ Chapter 14

The message of the second angel is the destruction of Israel bringing the end of the marriage covenant with God. The message from Zion proclaimed, “Babylon has fallen!”

Rev 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand

Rev 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

9, 10 Here we have the third aspect of the proclaiming of the everlasting gospel. The messenger angel came. With a loud voice he was saying, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. Notice there is no begging to convince any man to receive Jesus. It is simply an announcement of his terms. They are simply this: if any person takes the mark and worships the beast they will experience the wrath of God. This is to be proclaimed with a loud voice.

Jesus sent a message used his messengers. It was the message that the gospel of the kingdom was at hand (Mat 10:7). Jesus Christ himself preached this in all the synagogues (Mat 4:23; 9:35). This message is simply that the Lamb is King. If any man refuses him, the pure wrath of God without mixture will be poured out upon that person. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels.

This judgment is not at the end of time. This wrath of God and torment with fire is in the presence of the angels. Fire and torment came upon Jerusalem and the land of Philistia. The Lord’s angel messengers were alive and saw it (Mat 16:28; Mar 9:1).

These messenger angels proclaimed the coming. Then the enemy of Jesus was tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels. Again we make sure we clarify that we absolutely believe in angelic beings. These angelic beings are referred to in scriptures as angels. Obviously in the Revelation angels speak of more than only beings with wings and feathers.
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In this passage those who rejected Jesus and His angels were judged in the presence of those they rejected. The church lived as Jerusalem and Philistia burned. It was as if fire and brimstone came upon the temple. It burned. The pure wrath of God was poured out without mixture.

We have here a definite allusion to hell. Yet we must remember the torment the people who rejected Jesus Christ experienced in A.D. 70. It was a tribulation unlike anything ever experienced by man before or since. Murder, starvation, disease, pestilence, rape, stealing, any vile act that could come did come (Mat 24:21). It was a horrible living hell full of dead bodies everywhere. Flies and stench and the wrath of God was poured out. Josephus said,

“...So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together
with their liberty of going out of the city. Then did the famine widen
its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and
families; the upper rooms were full of women and children that were
dying by famine; and the lanes of the city were full of the dead
bodies of the aged; the children also and the young men wandered
about the market-places like shadows, all swelled with famine, and
fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them. As for
burying them, those that were sick themselves were not able to do
it; and those that were hearty and well were deterred from doing it
by the great multitude of those dead bodies, and by the uncertainty
there was now soon they should die themselves. A deep silence
also, and a kind of deadly night, had seized upon the city; while yet
the robbers were still more terrible than these miseries were
themselves; for they brake open those houses which were no other
than graves of dead bodies, and plundered them of what they had;
and carrying off the coverings of their bodies, went out laughing,
and tried the points of their swords on their dead bodies; and, in
order to prove what mettle they were made of, they thrust some of
those through that still lay alive upon the ground. . . Now every one
of these died with their eyes fixed upon the temple, and left the
seditionous alive behind them. Now the seditionists at first gave orders
that the dead should be buried out of the public treasury, as not
enduring the stench of their dead bodies. But afterwards, when they
could not do that, they had them cast down from the walls into the
valleys beneath.”

This judgment was to ascend up for ever and ever. What did the smoke ascendeth up for ever and ever mean? It meant we can forget about that worship system ever being reinstated. The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. What was destroyed then was destroyed forever and ever. It will burn forever and ever. The torment of it will be for ever and ever. The worship system that the Dispensationalist await will never come. It will burn forever!

This is to be proclaimed to all who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveveth the mark of his name. This is to be constantly proclaimed. Babylon has fallen! It burns forever!

Rev 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they
that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Rev 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me,
Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their
labours; and their works do follow them.

12, 13 The patience of the saints rested only in faith of Jesus. The saints were in a time of persecution. Christians were being fed to beasts and martyred in every way. It appeared Christians were the ones being judged and rejected by God. John’s writings clarify that. If they keep the commandments and the faith of Jesus their patience will pay off.

Then John encouraged them concerning those who had died. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Jesus had made the way. Death was not bad. John said blessed are the dead. They can now rest from their labors.

During the time of the persecutions history records marvelous and chilling illustrations of Christian martyrs. Of course all the apostles that were martyred died brilliantly.

Bishop Eusebius, the great Church historian, was an eyewitness of many early martyrs, and recorded what often took place when Christians were placed on trial: ‘We were witnesses to the most admirable ardor of mind, and the truly divine energy and alacrity of those who believed in the Christ of God. For as soon as the sentence was pronounced against the first, others rushed forward from other parts to the tribunal before the judge, confessing they were Christians, most indifferent to the dreadful and multiform tortures that awaited them, but declaring themselves fully and in the most undaunted manner on the religion which acknowledges only the one Supreme God. They received, indeed, the final sentence of death with gladness and exultation, so far as even to sing and send up hymns of praise and thanksgiving, until they breathed their last.”

These truly had received the revelation of the victory over death. To them it was a blessing.

Rev 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon
the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head
a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

Rev 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying
with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy
sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the
harvest of the earth is ripe.

1 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book V, XII, 3

14, 15, 16 Once again we see the Son of man upon the cloud. He was not going to receive His kingdom (Dan 7:13, 14). That event had taken place (chapter 5). The Son of man had on his head a golden crown. He had received his kingdom! He now functioned upon the glory cloud (see discussion 1:7). The throne of God is associated with the cloud (see discussion 4:2, 5). The giving and receiving of the covenants (Old and New) are associated with the cloud (see discussion 4:5). We noted that the throne room of chapter four was the cloud. The crowned Son of man was upon the cloud.

When we read about the cloud, we find that it often speaks of God’s protection. The cloud protects one group of people as it destroyed another. An example is when Israel was delivered from Egypt. The people of God were protected by the cloud as the Egyptians were destroyed. It is necessary to point out that the cloud itself did not destroy. The sea fell upon the Egyptians. However, the cloud was in total oversight of the destruction. This is exactly what we have here. One group will be harvested as another group is crushed. The Son of man is on the cloud, and in his hand is a sharp sickle. He is in oversight.

Seven times the word sickle is used in this section. John used sevens very frequently. It was one of the trademarks of his writings. Three times the sickle is mentioned to harvest the ge translated earth. We know ge means “soil and region” not planet as we think when we read “earth.” Three times sickle is used with the Son of man harvesting the ge. Four times sickle is used in conjunction with the angel harvesting the vine (v.18-20).

When we see the cloud we can look for one people being protected (saved) and another people being doomed. The sickle is similar in that some will be harvested and some will be crushed. It is like the two-edged sword. One edge saves as the other edge destroys. Those who received the mark were warned. They would experience the wrath of God.

The Lord came on the cloud to remove the remnant and protect them. These were delivered from Jerusalem (Egypt) and the region. At the same time that he thrust in the sickle and gathered his, another sickle was brought to crush the vine. It is interesting that the Son of man Himself did this harvest. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Act 4:12)

The fourth angel messenger proclaimed the harvest of the everlasting gospel.

Rev 14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

Rev 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

Rev 14:19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

17, 18, 19 The fifth angel came out of the temple in heaven. This is the temple in heaven which is Zion (Jerusalem) above. It is directly opposite to the temple (Zion / Jerusalem) on earth. This fifth angel had a sharp sickle and was the messenger that actually reaped the vine. Rome harvested Israel crushing it like grapes in a wine press. The thought is that Rome was the instrument sent from heaven. But even Rome could not do its crushing until the sixth angel said, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth. We see another aspect of the everlasting gospel. It is asking the Lord to thrust in His sickle and gather into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

The sixth angel came out of the altar. Which altar would this be? Remember the tabernacle had two altars. This altar was the altar of incense. This altar was where the prayers of the saints were made (see discussion 8:3-5). It is from prayers the angel came. He came with power over fire. This is an interesting thought.

During the siege of Jerusalem Titus had no intention of destroying the temple nor the city.

“Now Caesar took this wall there on the fifth day after he had taken the first; and when the Jews had fled from him, he entered into it with a thousand armed men. . . When therefore he come in, he did not permit of his soldiers to kill any of those they caught, not to set fire to their houses neither. . . for he was very desirous to preserve the city for his own sake, and the temple for the sake of the city.”

Though Titus did not want to destroy the temple the Lord God wanted the temple destroyed. Jesus said both the city and the temple would be

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3 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book V, VIII, 1
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destroyed. The city and house of Israel would be laid desolate. The temple would not have one stone left standing upon another (Mat 23:38; 24:2). Titus tried not to destroy either. Both were destroyed. Below we record what happened according to the eye witness Josephus.

“One of the soldiers, with out staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatcheth somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward the Jews made a great clamor... Titus supposing that the fact was, that the house itself might yet be saved, he came in haste and endeavored to persuade the soldiers to quench the fire... whereby the flame burst out from within the holy house itself immediately, when the commanders retired, and Caesar with them, and when nobody any longer forbade those that were without to set fire to it; and thus was the holy house burnt down, without Caesar's approbation.”

“And now the Romans, judging that it was in vain to spare what was round about the holy house, burnt all those places, as also the remains of the cloisters and the gates... They also burnt down the treasury-chambers, in which was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments, and other precious goods, there deposited; and to speak all in a few words, there it was that the entire riches of the Jews were heaped up together.”

The angel did not only have the power of fire. This angel had power over fire. A Roman soldier moved by some “divine fury” was used to fire the temple. The “divine fury” would be the angel. Eventually Jerusalem also burned. Just as the Lord Jesus said, both natural Jerusalem and the natural temple were destroyed.

John’s readers had no problem understanding who this vine was. Repeatedly the scriptures use the vine as a type of Israel. Israel was the vine. This is why Jesus said he is the true vine. Jesus was not merely the vine. He is the true vine. Israel was the vine given to the fire for fuel (Eze 15:6). John’s allusion to the vine was none other than natural Juda (Psalm 80:8; Hos 10:1; Isa 57; Jer 2:21; Eze 15:6).

The Allusion was natural Israel and it even goes further. We see the resemblance to the works and words of Jeremiah chapter six concerning the context of this entire chapter (Jer 6:1-15).

There is no doubt about the imagery here. Totally and absolutely John is speaking of the destruction of the vine Israel. It was cast into the great

winepress of the wrath of God.

Rev 14:20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

20 The winepress goes to work and Israel was trodden under. The thought of, to the horse bridles, was a picture of the massive bloodshed and death that took place. They rejected the Christ. They killed the Son of God, without the city, upon a cross. That cross became a cloud upon which the Son of man came. The cloud became the winepress. The entire area would be drenched in blood as the thousand and six hundred furlongs cover the area.

“Sixteen hundred stadia is slightly more than the length of Palestine: The whole Land of Israel is thus represented as overflowing with the blood in the coming nationwide judgment.”

“The result is a 200-mile-long area soaked with blood, (one thousand six hundred furlongs, in American mathematics, is a distance of 200 miles). Interestingly, the nation of Israel is 200 miles long, from north to south.”

Contemporary Theological View(s)

1. Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Contemporary Dispensationalists believe that God loves the natural Jews more than any other people. They believe God loves natural Zion more than any other place. Van Impe says,

“Did you know that Zion, or Jerusalem, is the place God seems to love most? Today's anti-Zionists should take heed. They are opposing the Almighty himself as they rebel against His city and His people because -- I repeat -- Jerusalem is closest to God's heart.”

I repeat that to God there is neither Jew nor Gentile. There is not even male and female! How can the “Jews” be God’s special people? We believe he loves the Jew very much. However not more than an African or a man from India (Rom 10:12; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11).

Dake is extremely confusing about these one hundred forty four thousand. He says they were the ones sealed in chapter 7 to evangelize the world. Somehow they have gotten to “heaven.” Dake says,

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4 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book VI, IV, 7

5 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book VI, V, 2

6 Chilton, The Days of Vengeance, page 376

7 Dr. Jack Van Impe, Revelation Revealed, page 203

8 Dr. Jack Van Impe, Revelation Revealed, page 190
from the world because of this verse. Cohen seems to lean to the physical side. He says,

“We live in a day of rising immorality; what will the last days be like? They will be Sodom and Gomorrah days! Despite such evil days and temptations, the 144,000 -- by God’s gracious enablement --‘have not made themselves impure...’These, in fact, ‘are virgins.’ Does this mean that spiritually they are virgins in that they have not joined the world in its sinfulness? Or does it mean that these, all 144,000, are unmarried? Personally, I find it hard to be sure.”

These came out of Babylon and did not partake of her sin (Rev 18:4). Babylon was Jerusalem and Judaism. Peter said save yourselves from this wicked generation (Act 2:40). These were not defiled by that demonic system.

3. Revelation 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

Revelation 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

Revelation 14:16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Revelation 14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

Revelation 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

Revelation 14:19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Interestingly many Dispensationalists see one harvesting in these verses. We see two. We see one sickle thrust in by the Son of man on the cloud. We see another thrust in by an angel with a sharp sickle. Also Dispensationalists relate this harvest to death. Dake says,

“This ‘harvest of the earth’ will not be the above martyrs [v.13] who ‘die in the Lord.’ This is entirely a different message... this pictures those who will die for the sake of Antichrist at Armageddon.”

“The expression, ‘time is come for thee to reap,’ shows that Christ has delayed reaping and that now the time is approaching for him to take vengeance on them which dwell on the earth as foretold by the prophets in connection with Armageddon.”

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10 John Phillips, Exploring Revelation, page 178-179
11 John R. Rice, Behold He Cometh, page 219
12 Dr. Gary G. Cohen, Revelation Visualized, page 225
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“Here it is the end of the world, as the harvest of the earth makes clear. Is ripe points to the drying off of plants when the crop is fully ripe. The time for the intervention of him who bore the sickle is not chosen arbitrarily... Some take this to refer to the gathering in of the righteous with the symbolism of wheat harvest. They see the wicked in the next section where the grape harvest, with its treading out of the grapes, is more suitable imagery for the judgment of the wicked. This is possible. But it is usually supported by seeing Christ as the Reaper who gathers in the saints, a suggestion which, as we have noticed, is not soundly based. Moreover there is nothing in the context to how that the righteous are in view. Wheat is not even mentioned, for example. It is better to see the harvest as general.”  

One reason only one harvest is projected by the Dispensationalists is because it would mean yet another “rapture.” If we have another harvest they need another rapture. This one, more obvious than any other, is ignored.

4. Revelation 14:20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Though Armageddon is not mentioned in this verse it is mentioned by the Dispensationalist. This teaching is taken from the third chapter of Joel. It is from this chapter of Joel the Dispensationalists link the sickle, the blood to the horses bridles, and Armageddon. Dispensationalists teach this is the fulfillment of the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joe 3:1-13). They say that John is referring to natural Jerusalem and natural Zion in Revelation 14:20. They say the Lord God will deliver the natural again. If this is true then John and the New Testament writers are extremely confused.

Paul gives an allegory in Galatians 4. He uses Hagar and Sarah to explain natural Jerusalem and heavenly (spiritual) Jerusalem Gal 4:22-31). First Paul showed us that Hagar answers the question concerning natural Jerusalem (see previous). This was the Jerusalem that existed as Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians. He next explains heavenly or spiritual Jerusalem. Sarah answered the question of the Jerusalem that is above. She, Jerusalem above, is our mother. The reason for this given. Paul, writing to a Gentile church in Galatia, said, Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise (Gal 4:28). Sarah is our mother. We are as Isaac. We are the children of promise. The natural Jews are not the children of promise. Actually they are Ishmaels in the mind of God. Both Ishmael and Hagar were cast out (Gen 21:14). Paul wrote, Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman (Gal 4:30).

Judaism persecuted the promise. The church is the promise. The natural persecuted that born after the Spirit. Paul said, “EVEN SO IT IS NOW.” Because of this natural Jerusalem is cast out.

There is no way that the natural will be heir. Natural Jerusalem was Hagar. The Jews were Ishmael. We are not of the bondwoman. Those of Judaism and natural Jerusalem are of the bondwoman. We are of Sarah and the promise. If Joel 3 is speaking about natural Jerusalem and natural Judah then Paul has misinterpreted Joel 3.

The writer of Hebrews also is confused if Joel 3 is speaking about the natural. The writer of Hebrews says we have not come to the natural. We have come to the spiritual or heavenly (Heb 12:18-24). We have come to Zion (past tense). We have come to the city of the living God which is heavenly Jerusalem! We have come to Jesus. The writer of Hebrews was familiar with Joel 3. Paul was familiar with Joel 3. John was familiar with Joel 3. What then does Joel 3 speak?

When a passage is causing confusion we need to examine it in at least three ways. First we need to allow the Holy Spirit to teach us. That is his job. Second we need to verify what we believe the Holy Spirit has said. The word of the Lord will always confirm the speaking of the Holy Spirit. We confirm by finding how the apostles and writers of the New Testament interpreted the passage. We have already done this. We see that the New Testament writers did not see natural Judah or natural Jerusalem as being the promise of God. Natural Jerusalem and natural Zion are not the eternal. The church is the eternal.

Third we need to find how the interpretation was made prior to the 1800’s. Many cults arose in the 1800’s (Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventist, Spiritism, Christian Science, Jehovah’s Witnesses, etc.). Also it was in this time that the Plymouth Brethren began their teaching. It is from the teachings of the Plymouth Brethren that comes the false teaching that God loves the natural Jew and

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natural Jerusalem more than other people or places. How was Joel 3 interpreted prior to the 1800’s?

Matthew Henry writing in the early 1700’s says, "... now this whole chapter is a comment upon that promise, showing what that deliverance shall be, how it shall be wrought by the destruction of the church’s enemies, and how it shall be perfected in the everlasting rest and joy of the church."  

Matthew Henry interprets Joel 3 concerning the destruction of the enemies of the church. He does not interpret it as the restoring of the natural. Rather he interprets it according to the heavenly or spiritual. This aligns exactly with Paul and the writer of Hebrews.

Henry says that many events happened before and after the captivity in Babylon to fulfill this from a natural position. “This was in part accomplished in the deliverance of Jerusalem from the attempt that Sennacherib made upon it in Hezekiah’s time, and afterwards in the return of the Jews out of their captivity in Babylon, and other deliverances wrought from the Jewish church between that and Christ’s coming.”

Again we see the Dispensationalists saying God has not done what he has already done. He has already rebuilt the temple as he said he would. He has already rebuilt Jerusalem as he said he would. He has already reestablished the land boundaries as he said he would. Now we find the Dispensationalists saying he must again do Joel 3. We will place some dates to show that Joel 3 has happened.

Joel was written prior to the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel. Thus it was written prior to the exile into Babylon of the southern kingdom. The date of Joel’s writing is set around 800 B.C. The northern kingdom of Israel was captured 721 B.C. The southern kingdom of Judah was led into captivity in 587 B.C. Joel prophesied the entire nation would go into captivity, but would return again (Joe 3:1).

As we know Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity. After seventy years it was released to rebuild the temple and the city (Dan 9:25; Ezr 1:3). The temple was rebuilt. The city and the walls were rebuilt. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah teach this. God said he would do it and he did.

Judah and Jerusalem was restored as Joel 3:1 said. This is not something that must happen again. It has happened.

What about the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joe 3:2)? There is not a geographical place called “the valley of Jehoshaphat.” It will be difficult for all nations to war at a place that does not exist. Dispensationalists make the valley of Jehoshaphat mean Armageddon. Interestingly neither is there a geographical place called Armageddon. There is a valley of Megiddo, but there is no Armageddon. What does Joel mean then by the valley of Jehoshaphat?

In 2 Chronicles 20 we are told the story of Jehoshaphat. A multitude came against Jehoshaphat from Moab and Ammon (2 Chr 20:1). The Lord miraculously set confusion in the enemies camp. They killed one another. Jehoshaphat and the people praised God and took the spoils. This took place in the valley of Berachah, not Armageddon or even Megiddo. Berachah is close to Jerusalem. The valley of Megiddo which Dispensationalists call Armageddon is far north. The point is Joel was not saying there will be one specific location that all this will happen. Neither was he saying that all this will happen at one time. This is exactly what history has proven.

From the time of Joel’s writing on there were many nations that entered the land attempting to take Israel. The only successful ones were the ones the Lord Himself brought to judge. The Assyrians came to Judge the northern kingdom of Israel. The Chaldeans came to judge the southern kingdom of Judah. The Romans came to judge the generation that rejected Jesus. All others were destroyed. One example is Sennacherib (see 2Ki 18:13 - 19:36; 2Ch 32:1-32:22). The Lord sent an angel to destroy the Assyrians.

Our studies on Jewish history and the times prior to the War of A.D. 70 showed many wars. One of these wars was with Antiochus III.

“About 198 BC the Seleucid king Antiochus III conquered Judea (of which Jerusalem was a part), making it tributary to Syria. The Jews later revolted under the leadership of the Maccabees family and defeated the Syrians. The Temple was reconsecrated in 165 BC, and the Maccabean, or Hasmonean, dynasty ruled until Rome took the city in 63 BC.”

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16 Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry’s commentary On The Whole Bible, Volume 4, page 957
17 Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry’s commentary On The Whole Bible, Volume 4, page 957
18 1997 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, Jerusalem
We can be absolutely confident that Joel was not prophesying about the end of the world (earth). How can we be so confident? In Joel 3:4-8 there are specific prophecies to Tyre and Zidon (Joe 3:4-8). Tyre and Sidon were destroyed in the fourth century B.C. Allen says, “The people of Sidon were sold into slavery by Antiochus III in 345 B.C., while the citizens of Tyre and Gaza were enslaved by Alexander in 332 B.C.”

It is interesting how the Dispensationalists avoid Joel 3 as being a fulfilled prophecy. Even here (Joel 3:4-8) where there is no doubt that it is past, they throw in a parenthesis. Preiffer says in Wycliffe Bible Commentary, “The prophet turns aside momentarily to address the nations who have been especially hostile toward the covenant people. He singles out the special mistreatments, and promises the nations swift and righteous retribution for their crimes.”

They want us to think that Joel is prophesying several millennia away. Suddenly he says, “Wait a minute. I need to stick a parenthesis in here and speak to my day.” So Joel does this, and then in verse 9 he says, “Now let’s go back to the future again.” That is not what Joel is doing.

Matthew Henry says there are far greater truths than natural Israel being delivered. “But it has a further reference, to the great redemption wrought out for us by Jesus Christ, and the destruction of our spiritual enemies and all their agents, and will have its full accomplishment in the judgment of the great day.”

Once the fulfillment of Zion and Jerusalem are understood Joel chapter 3 has no interpretation problems. Yes the Lord did deliver the natural. However the natural is not the final summation. The church is the fulfillment of Jerusalem and Zion (Heb 12:22-23).

Joel chapter three is historically important when studying the accuracy of prophecy. However, the only Futuristic importance of Joel 3 is concerning the Church. The kingdom of God has come. It is a time of war (1Co 15:24-28; Mat 11:12; Luk 16:16). Beat your plowshares into swords.

There are multitudes, multitudes in Joel’s valley (Joe 3:9-14). As John speaks of thrusting in the sickle over one million Jews died by A.D. 70. The land of Philistia was saturated with blood. Every city and community was laid desolate. Jesus said nothing had ever happened like it before. It was the day of the Lord (Joe 3:15-16). The darkening of the heavens speaks of lights out for a society. As we have discussed, this is “Collapsing Universe” terminology (see discussion 6:12-17). It was used by Jesus to describe the termination of the age of Moses (Mat 24:29). It was also used by Peter to warn that generation of the desolation at hand (Act 2:16-20). Peter actually quotes Joel 2:30.

The dispensationalists have a problem with the blood coming to the horses bridles. They attempt to interpret everything literally. We have stated that the area spoken of is some two hundred miles. Neither of these valleys are that large.

We will close this chapter with a few of their quotes. Swaggart says, “The Bible says this winepress will be trodden without the city, meaning Jerusalem. The blood will flow about six feet deep (even unto the horse bridles), and this by the space of about 184 miles. This is so horrible that it is almost inconceivable.”

Van Impe changes the thought from “unto the horses bridles” (KJV) to the ground being soaked. The NIV says, “rising as high as the horses’ bridles...” We agree with soaked, but Dispensationalists are sticklers for a literal interpretation. “The results is a 200-mile-long area soaked with blood.”

Cohen changes it from “rising” to “splashes” on the horses bridles.

“Here Rev. 14:20 depicts such a furious crushing from within the winepress which is below ground level that the red juice splashes upwards as high as a horse bridle -- about six feet above ground. Thus this verse does not attempt to give us a reading on the exact depth of blood flowing; rather, I think, it indicates to us the terrible fury in which the Son of God will destroy those armies gathered behind the Beast and against Jerusalem at the end-time.”