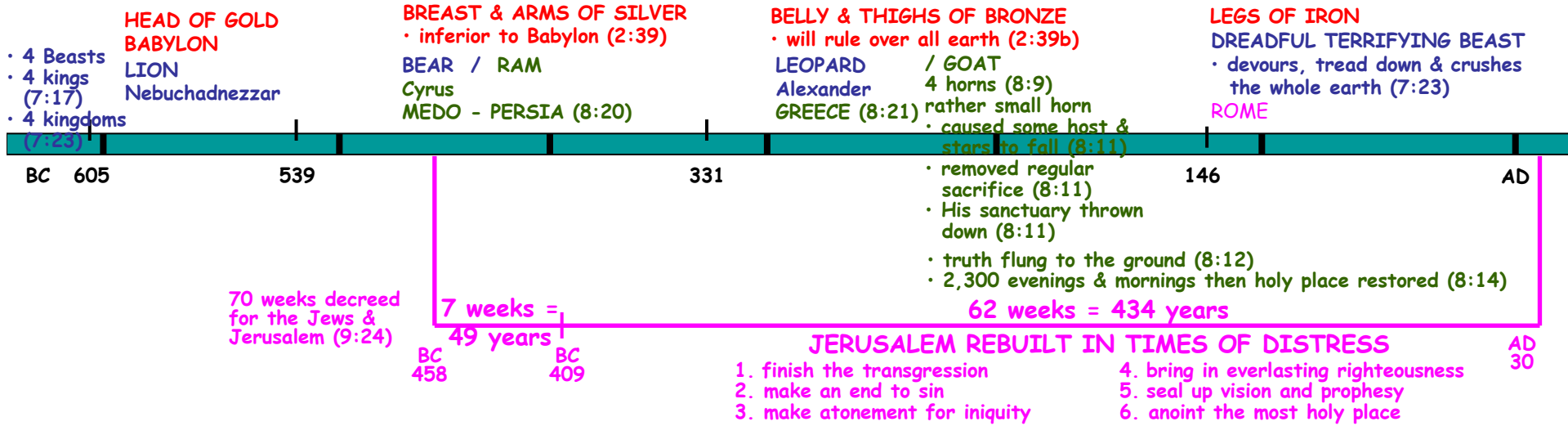
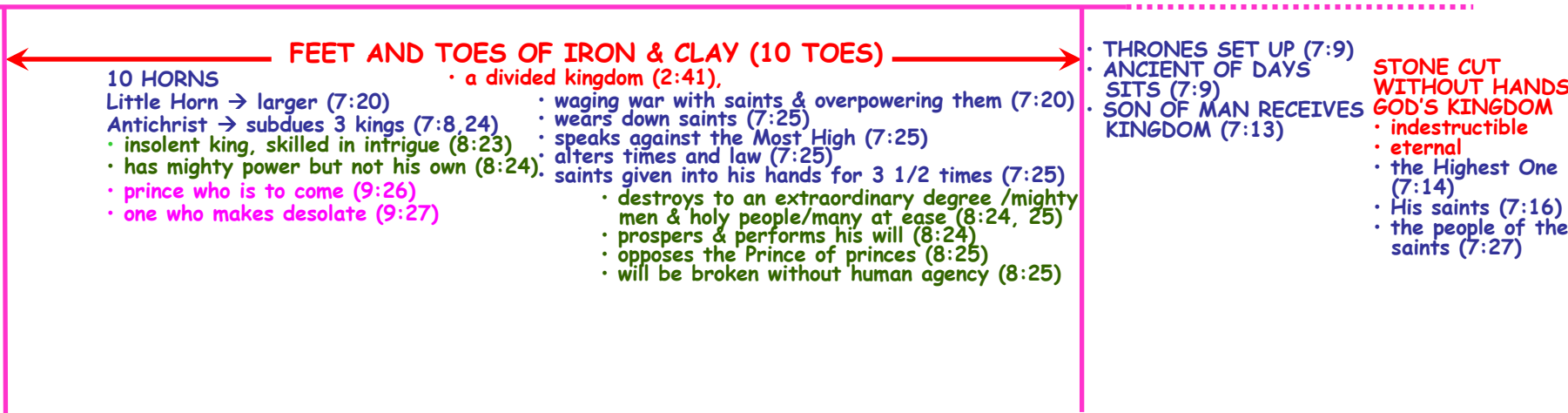
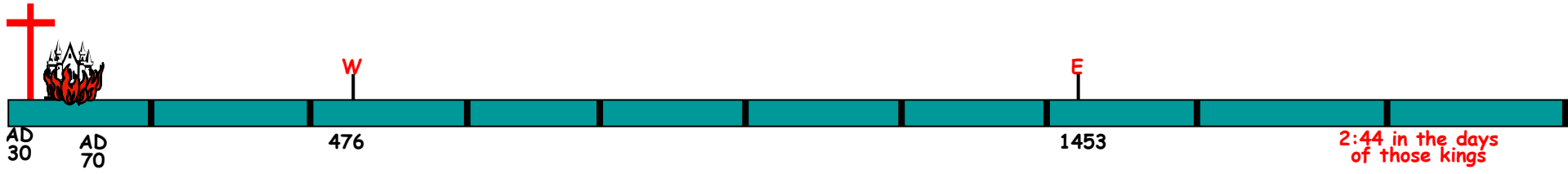


The Antichrist (Daniel 2, 7, 9)

Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 9
<p>40 from the <u>fourth kingdom</u> which is as strong as iron; and which will crush and break all these in pieces.</p> <p>41 from a divided kingdom, <u>the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron,</u></p> <p>42 <u>some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.</u></p> <p>43 they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another</p> <p>44 And <u>in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever</u></p> <p>45 the statute was crushed <u>by the stone cut without hands</u></p>	<p>7 <u>a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong with large iron teeth, which devoured, crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.</u></p> <p>8 <u>another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts.</u></p> <p>11 <u>the horn was speaking boastful words</u></p> <p>11 the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire</p> <p>17 'These great beasts, which are four <i>in number</i>, are four kings <i>who</i> will arise from the earth.</p> <p>19 <u>the fourth beast, different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, which devoured, crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet</u></p> <p>20 <u>the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts, and which was larger in appearance than its associates.</u></p> <p>21-22 <u>that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the saints took possession of the kingdom.</u></p> <p>23 <u>The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it</u></p> <p>24 <u>the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.</u></p> <p>25 he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law;</p> <p>25 <u>they will be given</u> into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.</p> <p>26 <u>But the court will sit for judgment,</u> and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.</p>	<p>26 the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end <i>will come</i> with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.</p> <p>27 he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering</p> <p>27 <u>on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate</u></p>



← EVEN TO THE END, WAR & DESOLATIONS ARE DETERMINED FOR JEWS & JERUSALEM →



9:27 Covenant made with the many for one week

REGULAR SACRIFICE REMOVED: HOLY PLACE & HOST TRAMPLED (8:11-13)

STOP TO SACRIFICE & GRAIN OFFERING (9:27)

2,300 evenings & mornings until holy place properly restored (8:14)

9:27 Complete destruction on one who makes desolate

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Some rabbis claim that one of the things necessary for a Third Temple is the ashes of the Red Heifer. Of all the sacrifices for sin mentioned in the Old Testament, only the slaying of the Red Heifer was “outside the camp,” i.e., not in the temple. Numbers Chapter 19 describes this offering, and instructions for preparing water for ritual purification from the ashes of the sacrificed animal after it had been burned.

Red heifers without spot or blemish are today being bred and raised by at least one group in the United States, Rev. Clyde Lott who writes in a new 1995 Jewish publication, “The Restoration.” (Ref. 12)

American amateur archaeologist Vendyl Jones of Arlington, Texas, has for many years been searching in caves near Qumran for the ashes of the last red heifer sacrificed before the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

Authorities at The Temple Institute have stated, however, that Third Temple sacrifices and ritual cleansing can be accomplished (restored) without these old ashes if they are not found....

Final Summary

Today the fragile peace that prevails on the Temple Mount grows more and more tenuous to this hour. Certain groups are clearly preparing to build a Third Temple. The Government of Israel is determined to keep things as they are. Christians who take their New Testaments seriously believe the Third Temple will indeed soon be rebuild and the status quo is bound to change.* The power and influence of a billion Muslim are committed not only to maintaining control of the Temple Mount, but moving out to conquer of all of Israel and then the world in the name of Allah. Bible believers know how the story will end, but the unfolding of the story is exciting indeed - almost on a daily basis.

* C's Note: See Isaiah 66:1-4

The Ashes of the Red Heifer

<http://www.templemount.org/tempprep.html>

“he shall make strong” - והגביר *vehigbiyr*. The idea is that of giving strength, or stability; of making firm and sure; he would confirm or establish “a covenant” with the many. According to this, it is not necessary to suppose that it was any existing covenant that it referred to, but that he would ratify what was understood by the word “covenant”...

a difference of opinion as to the proper nominative to the verb “confirm” - whether it is the Messiah, or the foreign prince, or the “one week.” Hengstenberg prefers the latter, and renders it, “And one week shall confirm the covenant; with many.” Bertholdt renders it “he,” that is, “he shall unite himself firmly with many for one week” - or, a period of seven years.

27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one

The word here rendered “in the midst” - חצי *cheṣiy* - means, properly, half, the half part, Exo. 24:6; Num. 12:12; then the middle, or the midst, Jdg. 16:3... It refers to something which was to occur at about the middle portion of this time, or when about half of this period was elapsed, or to something which it would require half of the “one week,” or seven years, to accomplish.

He would perform a work which would pertain to many... The simple idea is, that this would pertain to “many”

“cease” (ישבית *yashebiyt*) means, properly, to rest (from the word Sabbath), and then in Hiphil, to cause to rest, or to cause to cease. It conveys the idea of “putting an end to”

week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice

“offerings” of any kind - whether of flour, fruits, grain, etc

the word “wing” presupposes that what is said would pertain to something in connection with the temple having a resemblance to the wings of a bird, and the word “upon” (על 'al) would lead us to suppose that what was to occur would be somehow upon that.

denotes “bloody offerings”

and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come

“Upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator.” The Latin Vulgate is, “And there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation.” The Greek, “And upon the temple shall be an abomination of desolations.” The Syriac. “And upon the extremities of the abomination shall rest desolation.” The Arabic, “And over the sanctuary shall there be the abomination of ruin.” Luther renders it, “And upon the wings shall stand the abomination of desolation.” Lengerke and Hengstenberg render it, “And upon the summit of abomination comes the destroyer.” Prof. Stuart, “And the water shall be over a winged fowl of abominations.” Barnes, “And upon the wing of the abominations one causing desolation” - ועל כנף ועל משמם שקיציים כנף ועל *ve'al kenap shiqqytsiym meshomem*.

“abominations” (שקוציים *shiqquṣiym*) means “abominable” things, things to be held in detestation, as things unclean, filthy garments, etc., and then idols, as things that are to be held in abhorrence. The word is one that might be used of an idol god, or of anything that would pollute or defile, or that was from any cause offensive. ...

one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one

“he shall make it desolate” - משמם *meshomem* - is “he making desolate;” that is, “a desolator.” It is a Poel participle from שָׁמַם *sha'mem* - to be astonished, to be laid waste; and then, in an active sense, to lay waste, to make desolate. Great abruptness: “He shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease. And - upon the wing - the porch of the temple - abominations! And a desolator!”

- Until the completion - ועד-כלה *ye'ad-kalah*. That is, the series of events in the prophecy shall in fact reach to the completion of everything pertaining to the city and temple.

ונחרצה *venecheṛṣah*, as denoting that this is the fulfillment of the determination in regard to the city and temple. The idea is, that what was determined, or decided on

תתך *tittak*, to pour, to pour out, to overflow - as rain, water, curses, anger, etc; represented as “poured down” upon a people, in the manner of a storm

שׁוֹמֵם *shomem*, (ל כל *kal* instead of פל *peṣ*), an intransitive verb, and means, in “Kal,” to be astonished or amazed; then “to be laid waste, to be made desolate”; here is that which is desolate or laid waste - the wasted, the perishing, the solitary.

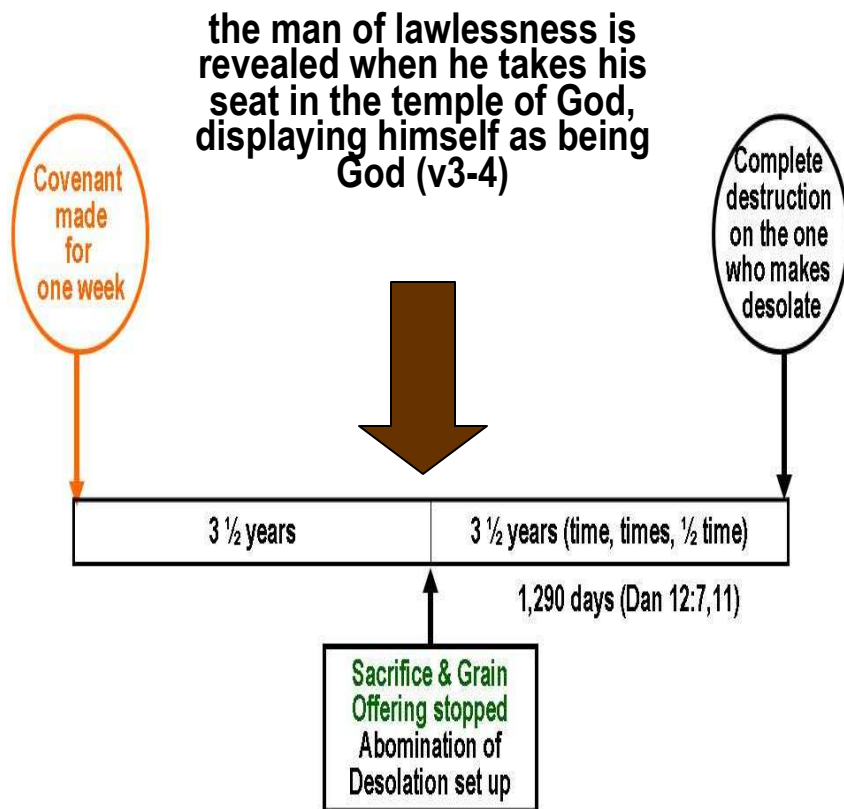
that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

When is the lawless one revealed and how? (2Thess 2:1-10)

The Mystery of Lawlessness is already at work (v6)

The Apostasy Comes First (v3)

The Restrainer is Removed (v6-7)



The events that mark the rising of the Antichrist

1. Beginning: A 7-year Covenant ratified, confirmed & established with the many (the Jews)
2. Temple offerings start in Israel
3. Middle: A stop put to sacrifice and grain offering
4. On the wings of temple (porch), abominations! And a desolater!
5. **The Tribulation / Great Tribulation Begins - Time of Great Distress for the Jews / The Time of Satan's Great Wrath**
6. End: desolater is completely destroyed

Israel's Agricultural Calendar

Israel's Agricultural Calendar												
Nisan	Ziv /lyyar	Sivan	Tammuz	Ab	Elul	Tishri /Ethanim	Bul /Marchesh -van	Kislev	Tebeth	Shebat	Adar	Adar Shenii
Mar-Apr	Apr-May	May-June	June-July	July-Aug	Aug-Sep	Sep-Oct	Oct-Nov	Nov-Dec	Dec-Jan	Jan-Feb	Feb-Mar	
30 days	29 days	30 days	29 days	30 days	29 days	30 days	29 days	30 days	29 days	30 days	29 days	29 days
SPRING			SUMMER			AUTUMN			WINTER			
barley & flax harvest begins	barley harvest dry season begins	wheat harvest	tending vines	ripening of grapes, figs & olives	process-ing of grapes, figs & olives	plowing	sowing of wheat & barley	winter rains begin	rainy winter months	new year for trees	almond tree blossoms citrus fruits harvest	

- Passover
- Unleavened Bread
- First-fruits

- Pentecost



- 9 Av
Destruction of Jerusalem + Temple
BC 586
AD 70

- Trumpets
- Atonement
- Tabernacles



- Dedication (Hanukkah)
John 10:22
8 days
25 Kislev - Tebeth

- Purim
14,15 Adar

- Israel's calendar was an agricultural one, based on the moon. A lunar cycle requires 29 days, 12 hours 44 minutes 2.8 seconds between two successive new moons. ∴ Marcheshvan, as often as necessary, is lengthened to 30 days.
- Yom Kippur (Atonement) can't be on a Friday or a Sunday because of the great inconvenience of preparing food. Rosh Hashanah (Trumpets) can't occur on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday. Therefore adjustments were made to Marcheshvan & Kislev in the preceding year.
- The calendar on the Internet is the calendar for Israel in the EXILE, now that Israel is back in the land, the Lord has raised up a group of rabbis who formed the Society of the New Moon who are proclaiming the holy convocations of the Lord by looking for the new moon *and* by making sure the barley is "aviv" (in the ear, Ex 9:31).

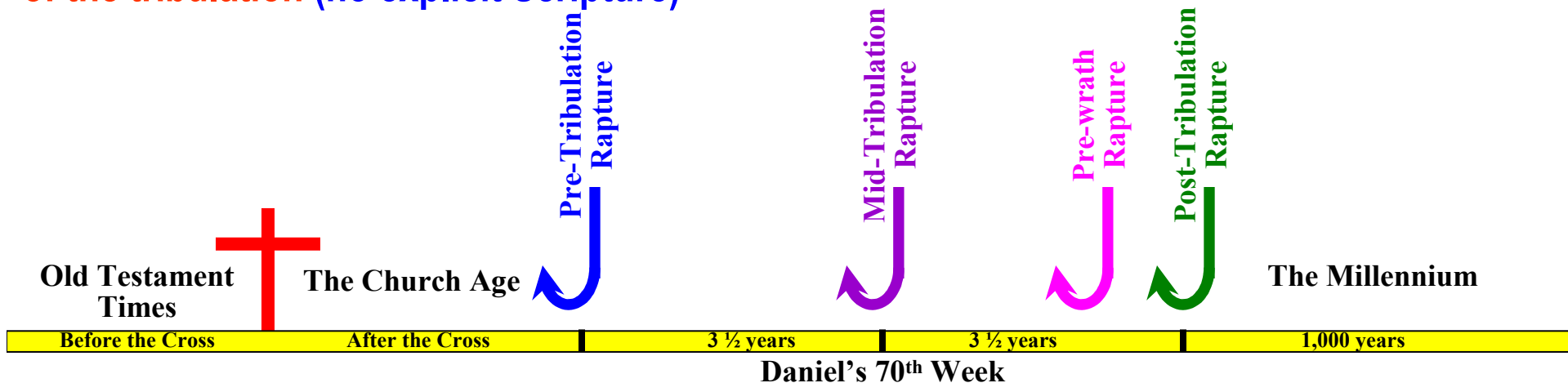
The Hebrew Calendar

Feast	OT	NT	Significance
Sabbath	Exo 20:8	Heb 4:9	Millennium
Passover	Lev 23:5	1 Cor 5:7	Jesus the Passover slain for our sins
Unleavened Bread	Lev 23:6	1 Cor 5:7-8	Holy Walk of Believers
First-fruits	Lev 23:10	1 Cor 15:27	Christ the First-fruits raised from the Dead
Weeks or Pentecost	Lev 23:16	Acts 2:1	Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

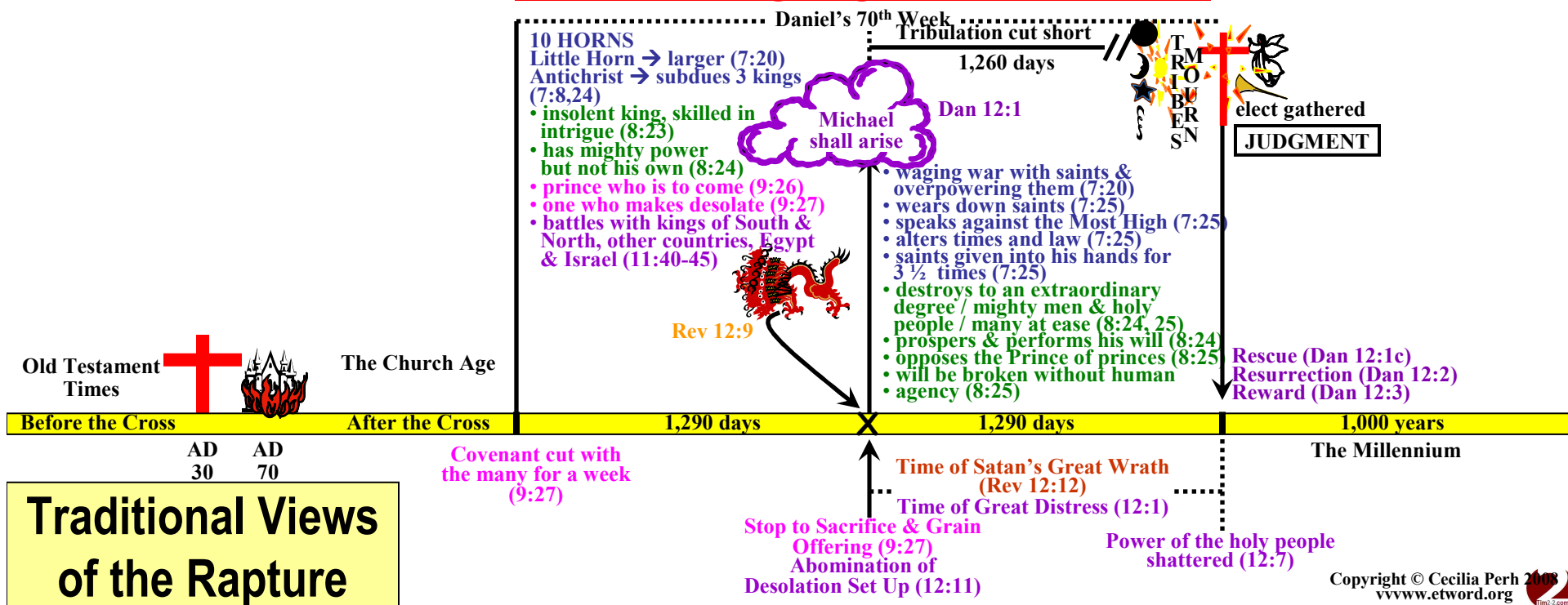
Summer – Age of the Predominantly Gentile Church

Trumpets	Lev 23:24	Daniel 7:9-14	Coronation of Christ in Heaven
Atonement	Lev 23:27; 25:9	Matt 24:30-31 Heb 9:1-14	Nation of Israel Mourns
Booths or Tabernacles	Lev 23:42 Zech 14:16-18	Rev 20:4	Millennium

Rapture = the catching up of living saints from the earth to the air (1 Thess 4:17) into heaven where they stay for varying lengths of time before returning with Christ at the end of the tribulation (no explicit Scripture)



The Gathering Together of the Saints



Traditional Views of the Rapture

Characteristics of the End Times (Matthew 24:37-42)

37 **For**
the coming of the Son of Man will be **just like** the days of Noah.

38 **For**
as in those days before the flood
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,
UNTIL THE DAY that Noah entered the ark,

39 **and** aor act ind, ginosko, to know (of partial experiential knowledge)
they did not understand aor act ind, erchomai, to come
UNTIL THE FLOOD CAME aor act ind, airo, to take up
parousia, coming **and TOOK THEM ALL AWAY,**
so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.

40 **Then**
there will be two men in the field;
one **will be taken** pres pass ind, paralambano, take along, receive
and pres pass ind, aphiemi, send away, leave behind
one **will be left.**

41 Two women **will be** grinding at the mill;
one **will be taken**
and pres pass ind, paralambano, take along, receive
one **will be left.** pres pass ind, aphiemi, send away, leave behind

42 **Therefore** pres act imp, gregoreo, be or keep awake, be alert
be on the alert,

for oidate, perf act ind, oida (perfect with present meaning), to know, understand, perceive,
you do not know which day your Lord **is coming.**

pres mid ind, erchomai, to come

Genesis
6:1-13

Implications

- * the Lord's coming spells judgment or salvation for all
- * the Lord's coming is sudden, unexpected, catastrophic, universal

In Matt. 24:40, 41; Luke 17:34, 35, *paralambáno* in the pass. form is used as the opposite of *aphiemi* (863), to let be. In these verses, those who are taken are not to be misconstrued as those whom the Lord favors, as if they were the same saints spoken of in 1Thess. 4:17 who will be raptured (*harpázo* [726], to seize, catch away, as if by force) to meet the Lord in the clouds.

The verb *paralambáno* in most cases indicates a demonstration in favor of the one taken, but not always. In Matt. 4:5, 8, it is used of Satan taking Jesus up to tempt Him. In John 19:16 it is used of taking Jesus to lead Him to the cross.

The verb *paralambáno* is to be contrasted in Matt. 24:40, 41 to *airo* (142), to take up and away. It is used to refer to those in the days of Noah who were taken away, not being favored but being punished, while Noah and his family were left intact. Therefore, in this passage in Matt. and the parallel passage in Luke, *paralambáno* must not be equated to the believers who are to be raptured at the coming of the Lord for His saints.

It refers rather to those who, as in the days of Noah, are taken to destruction. The others are left alone (*aphiemi*) for the purpose of entering into the blessings of Christ's kingdom (identified by some as the Millennium) and the righteous rule of Christ upon earth.

The Rules of PARDES (<http://www.yashanet.com/studies/revstudy/pardes.htm>)

INTRODUCTION

The modern manner of interpreting Biblical text is commonly called exegesis. This method concerns itself mostly with the literary and grammatical context of Scripture verses. Practitioners of exegesis sometimes view anything beyond the literal text as "isogesis" and often pay it little heed to it, or regard it with suspicion. This is an **unfortunate** error, a result of a backlash against improper allegorizing of the Scriptures, resulting in a case where "the baby is thrown out with the bathwater."

With regard to the proper understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures in their proper context, including the "New Testament" books, there are in fact "levels" of interpretation that must be taken into consideration. This was the method used to write and interpret Scripture by the authors themselves as well as the audience of their time and culture.

THE RULES OF PARDES INTERPRETATION^[1]

The four level of interpretation are called: Parshat, Remez, D'rash and Sud. The first letter of each word P-R-D-S is taken, and vowels are added for pronunciation, giving the word PARDES (meaning "garden" or "orchard"). **Each layer is deeper and more intense than the last, like the layers of an onion.**

P'shat (pronounced peh-shaht' - meaning "simple")

The p'shat is the plain, simple meaning of the text. The understanding of scripture in its natural, normal sense using the customary meanings of the word's being used, literary style, historical and cultural setting, and context. **The p'shat is the keystone of Scripture understanding. If we discard the p'shat we lose any real chance of an accurate understanding and we are no longer objectively deriving meaning from the Scriptures (exegesis), but subjectively reading meaning into the scriptures (eisegesis). The Talmud states that no passage loses its p'shat:**

Talmud Shabbat 63a - Rabbi Kahana objected to Mar son of Rabbi Huna: But this refers to the words of the Torah? **A verse cannot depart from its plain meaning,** he replied.

Note that **within the p'shat you can find several types of language, including figurative, symbolic and allegorical.** The following generic guidelines can be used to determine if a passage is figurative and therefore figurative even in its p'shat:

When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement is **figurative.** Example: Isaiah 5:7 - For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

When life and action are attributed to an inanimate object the statement is **figurative.** Example: Zechariah 5:1-3 - Then I turned, and lifted up my eyes, and looked, and behold a flying scroll. And he said to me, What do you see? And I answered, I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits, and its width ten cubits. And he said to me, This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth; for everyone who steals shall be cut off henceforth, according to it; and everyone who swears falsely shall be cut off henceforth, according to it.

When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement is **figurative.** Example: Psalm 17:8 - Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of your wings ...

Remez (pronounced reh-mez' - meaning "hint")

This is where another (implied) meaning is alluded to in the text, usually revealing a deeper meaning. **There may still be a p'shat meaning as well as another meaning as any verse can have multiple levels of meaning.** An example of implied "REMEZ" Proverbs 20:10 - **Different weights, and different measures, both of them are alike an abomination to the Lord.** The p'shat would be concerned with a merchant using the same scale to weigh goods for all of his customers. The remez implies that this goes beyond this into aspects of fairness and honesty in **anyone's life.**

D'rash (pronounced deh-rahsh' also called "Midrash," - meaning "concept")

This is a teaching or exposition or application of the P'shat and/or Remez. (In some cases this could be considered comparable to a "sermon.") **For instance, Biblical writers may take two or more unrelated verses and combine them to create a verse(s) with a third meaning.**

There are three rules to consider when utilizing the d'rash interpretation of a text:

A drash understanding can not be used to strip a passage of its p'shat meaning, nor may any such understanding contradict the p'shat meaning of any other scripture passage. As the Talmud states, "No passage loses its p'shat."

Let scripture interpret scripture. Look for the scriptures themselves to define the components of an allegory.

The primary components of an allegory represent specific realities. We should limit ourselves to these primary components when understanding the text.

Sud (pronounced either sawd, or sood [like "wood"] - meaning "hidden")

This understanding is the hidden, secret or mystic meaning of a text. An example most people are familiar with is **Revelation 13:18, regarding the "beast" and the number "666."**

EXAMPLES OF PARDES FROM MATTHEW

Examples of the Remez, D'rash and Sud, can be found in Matthew as follows. (Of course the p'shat is throughout the text.) Without knowledge and application of the rules of PARDES, these verses would either not make sense or indicate an error on the part of the author:

Remez

Matthew 2:15 - "Out of Egypt I called my son." This is a quote from Hosea 11:1 that Matthew is applying to Yeshua. If we stuck to a literal exegesis only and researched the quote, we would have to accuse Matthew of improperly using Scripture, as Hosea is clearly speaking of the nation of Israel, and not the Messiah. **Matthew however, is hinting (a remez) at the relationship between Israel and the Messiah, in this and other verses he uses.**

D'rash

Matthew 18:18 - "... Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" This is a verse that has been interpreted in numerous (incorrect) ways due to a lack of understanding that this a d'rash concerning decisions one makes in their personal "walk with God" (called your "halakha" in Hebrew/Judaism).

Sud

Matthew 26:28 - "Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them saying, Drink from it all of you, This is my blood ..." **Taken literally this verse would not only be a violation of the Torah commandment against consuming blood, but along with other verses about eating Yeshua's flesh (John 6:51-56), could be grounds for accusations of cannibalism. There is a far deeper, more mystical meaning here however (the sud), even one that those who heard Him did not understand (John 6:52).**

[1] Thanks to James Trimm at www.nazarene.net from whom much of this material is derived from.

The Day and Hour No One Knows

The first thing we realize is that **Jesus is a Jew speaking to other Jews and that everything He says does have a Jewish context.** What then would this statement mean to *the Jews* of Jesus' day? I know what it means to me (modern 21st century believer in Christ Jesus), but that is *not* the point; the point is, what does it mean to a Jew in... Jesus'... day?

To answer this question, I must give you some background as to how the Jews set their calendar. The type of calendars we use has only been in existence only for a few hundred years. It is also based on the sun, while the Jewish calendar is based on the moon, but adjusted to coincide with the cycle of the sun for agricultural purposes.

The Gregorian calendar was "the revision of the Julian calendar introduced in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII and still in force, whereby the ordinary year is made to consist of 365 days and a leap year occurs in every year whose number is divisible by four, except those centenary years, such as 1900, whose numbers are not divisible by 400."

The Julian calendar was "the calendar introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BC, identical to the present calendar in all but two aspects: the beginning of the year was not fixed on Jan. 1 and leap years occurred every fourth year and in every centenary year" **while the Jewish calendar is based on the moon (God's faithful witness in the sky, Psalm 89:37) and is 354 ¼ days long. It is "the luni-solar calendar used by the Jews, in which time is reckoned from 3761 BC, regarded as the year of the Creation. It is based on a Metonic cycle of 19 years, the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th being designated as leap years. Each year begins in September or October and contains the following 12 or, in intercalary years, 13 months of 29 or 30 days each: Tishri, Heshvan, Kislev, Tebet, Shebat, Adar, Adar Sheni (occurring only in intercalary years), Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Ab, and Elul"** (*Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, Collins 1979).

In Jesus' day, the moon was so important that a Jewish festival was proclaimed at the beginning of every month (**the New Moon Festival, Colossians 2:16**). The new moon is the opposite of a full moon. Every month the moon goes through a complete cycle of renewal called "*Rosh Chodesh*," the head or beginning of the renewed month.

Twelve times a year on *Rosh Chodesh*, the moon always starts off with its disk being very dark to the naked eye. Over the course of 15 days, it gets brighter and brighter until it becomes a white-faced disk or full moon. Over the next 15 days, it becomes darker and darker and finally becomes invisible to the naked eye again.

Because the moon was so important for Jewish date-setting, the Sanhedrin took great care to ensure the first day of the month was announced on time. As soon as the new moon was announced, the first day of the month began, and the festivals and weekly Sabbaths were sanctified for observance.

God's "appointed times" (sacred and set times) are also called "holy convocations and rehearsals" (mikraw kodesh), i.e., God's appointed times are actually "holy rehearsals" set apart to reflect events in the Messianic era.

These appointed times belong to God and no one has the authority to change the celebration of an appointed time. Appointed times had to be kept because of their Messianic implications (Colossians 2:17 – "things which are a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.")

The next thing we note is that **Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 refers to our Lord as "the Son", i.e., Jesus in His humanity – He voluntarily limited Himself (see Philippians 2:6-8).** Jesus is a Jew communicating to Jews in the language of His day, and Jews use many figures of speech. Note the many figures of speech He used in Matthew 24.

Figures of speech were and are still widely used in all cultures. We may understand every word of a figure of speech, but if we do not understand how it is used to represent something else in the culture in which it is spoken, we are likely to not understand what the intended meaning of the message is supposed to be:

For example, if I say, I will see you on "Turkey day", Americans have no problem understanding that it refers to "the fourth Thursday of November," while Canadians celebrate it on the second Monday of October. But it has no meaning to many people in Asia who are not exposed to American customs. But if you say, "I'll see you on *Thanksgiving Day*," that has meaning to more people. But until I looked up the Collins' Dictionary, I had no idea *when* it was to be celebrated!

In Singapore we use an expression "catch no ball" which when used in a conversation means, "I haven't the faintest idea what you are saying!" or a more common expression "cool as a cucumber". Although every word is understandable on its own, it has a different meaning in association with other words, a meaning attributed to it by the culture in which it exists.

Although **Hebrews 10:19-22** assigns to it a different meaning, some Jews say that the "tearing of the veil" in **Matthew 27:52** (used in connection with **2 Samuel 13:30-31**) was a sign of mourning by God Himself! It symbolizes God grieving because His people have finally rejected Him and crucified their own Messiah. Whether you agree with this or not is not the issue. The issue is that there are meanings attached to words and actions that must be considered if we want to understand what Jesus meant by what He said.

That having been said, note also **the context of Matthew 24 and Mark 13 – Jesus speaks as One who possesses full knowledge of the future.**

In fact He tells His beloved disciples exactly what they wanted to know! – when the destruction of the temple will be, and the signs which precede His coming and the end of the age. Read again His words in:

Matthew 24:25 - "Behold, I have told you in advance",

Mark 13:23 - "But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance."

Jesus speaks as what He really is – the all-knowing, omniscient God whose every word is truth (see also John 14:6).

This phrase, "Of that day and hour no one knows" refers to a specific day on the Jewish calendar. There are several names given to it by the Jews, one of which is "the unknown day". To what day then does it refer to? Any Jew in Jesus' day will be able to tell you and most Jews today (if they know their history) will be able to tell you that "**the unknown day" on the Jewish calendar refers to a feast day, Rosh Hashanah, which is the only feast day that occurs on the same day the new moon is sanctified or set apart. Without this sanctification, the Jews had no way of determining God's "appointed times" or moedim (Leviticus 23:4).**

Sanctifying the New Moon

Read the following in order to understand how the Jews set apart or sanctify the new moon (taken and adapted from Avi ben Mordechai, "Signs in the Heavens", Millennium 7000 Communications International, 1995, pages 292-313).

The Sanhedrin and the Witnesses

Once a month the anhedrin discussed *when* to proclaim the new moon. They did this through the agency of two witnesses, the element of all legal transactions in Judaism (Deut. 19:15). These witnesses must be men of good character and were always treated with great honor. They had special privileges such as authorization to ride into Jerusalem on horseback on the Sabbath to bring the good news of the new moon festivities!

In qualifying the witnesses, the Sanhedrin used the following criteria:

- a) They never came at the same time.
- b) They were never questioned at the same time.
- c) They were always two new ones each month.

The two qualified witnesses usually stood before the *Nassi* or President of the Sanhedrin to give account of the moon's appearance prior to its becoming totally dark – "horns" of the moon.

Once the President (who had knowledge of astronomy) was convinced that their observation was accurate, he publicly sanctified the start of the new month with the words: "Sanctified" and all the people repeat after him, "Sanctified, sanctified."

After the proclamation, the Sanhedrin ordered watchmen on the nearby hillsides to light fires and thus inform the Jews in all of Judea, Samaria, Egypt, Babylon and the Diaspora that the new month has begun. Once the Sanhedrin set Rosh Chodesh, the rest of the festivals were calculated.

However Tishri presents a unique problem because it was the *only* month that had a holy convocation on the first day – the Feast of Trumpets or Rosh Hashanah. No one could begin to observe the festival *until* they heard those famous words from the Sanhedrin President, "Sanctified." No one in Israel could plan for Rosh Hashanah. When they knew how many days to count to a festival, that would be easy. *But how could they plan for a festival that they did not know at what day or hour it would publicly be announced and thus begin?* Recall, only the Sanhedrin President had the authority to proclaim the first of Tishri. Before that public announcement, everyone had to wait before they could begin the observance of the festival. No one could begin the festival *beforehand*.

Like all the other people of His day, Jesus too could not know the day or the hour to begin the Feast of Trumpets. Of course, *in His deity* He knew the future (see Matthew 24:25; Mark 13:23), but *in His humanity* He was not a member of the Sanhedrin nor was He the President. Therefore He had no authority then to interview the two witnesses or proclaim the start of Rosh Hashanah.

Jesus was using a Jewish idiom for Rosh Hashanah. In Matthew 24, He used many other idioms or figures of speech (see Matthew 24:27, 28, 32, 45, 51). In Jesus' day, memorization was the rule, not the exception and using figures of speech like "lightning," "vultures," "fig trees," "servants," "hypocrites," and images of "the new moon," was a way of making a point stick.

Today, the Rosh Hashanah new moon is not confirmed by two witnesses nor is it proclaimed by the Jerusalem Sanhedrin. The custom was abandoned when the Roman government in the 4th century AD prohibited the Jewish couriers from dispatching the announcement of Rosh Chodesh. Rabbi Hillel II mathematically calculated the Jewish calendar in the mid-4th century AD and this is the calendar that is still in use today.

APPOINTED TIMES OF THE YEAR

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