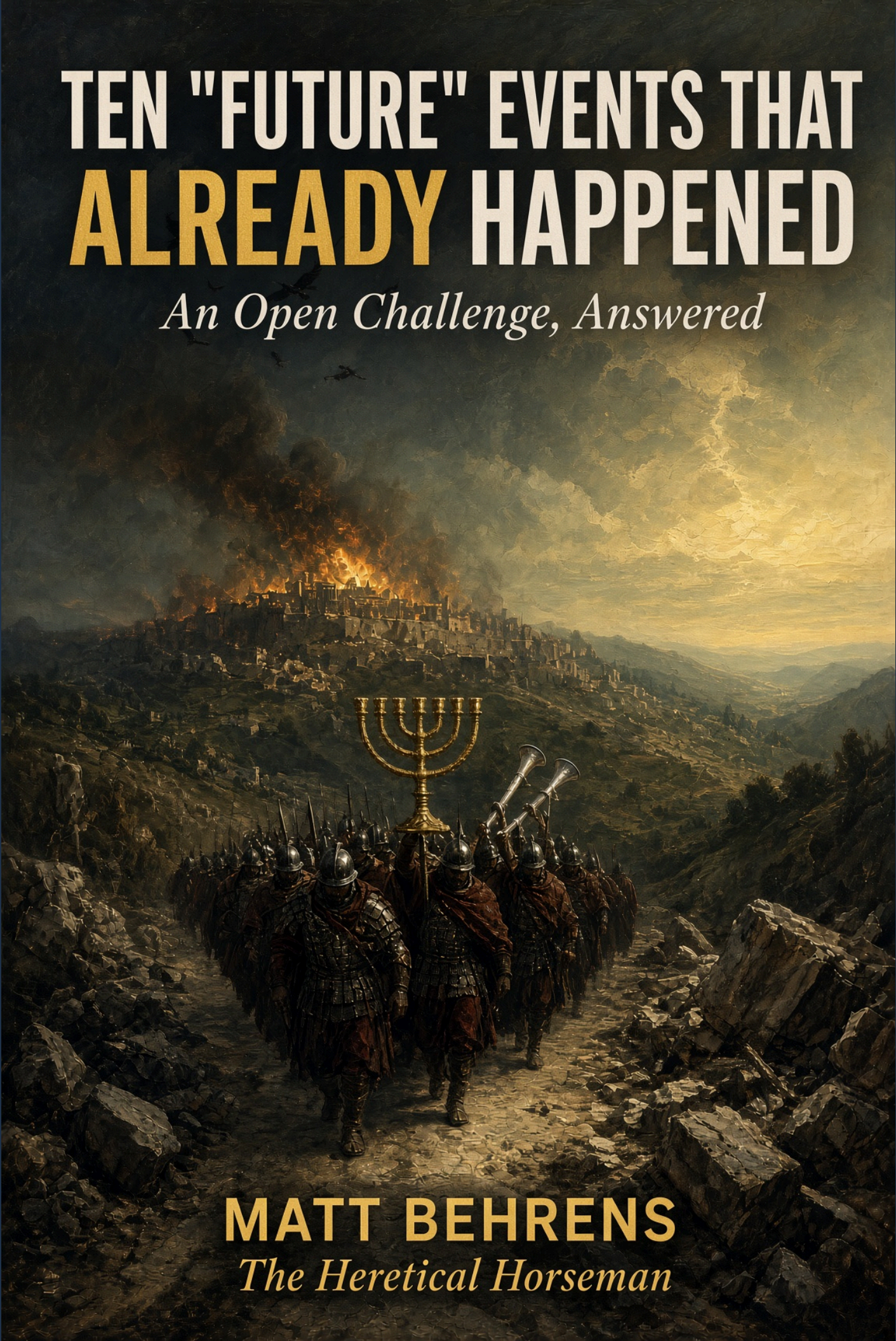


TEN "FUTURE" EVENTS THAT **ALREADY** HAPPENED

An Open Challenge, Answered



MATT BEHRENS
The Heretical Horseman

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By Matt Behrens, The Heretical Horseman

Till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18)

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A Note on Method

A man posted an open challenge on my page. I am not going to use his name, because the point of this book is not to win an argument with one person. The point is that his challenge is the challenge. It is the one every preterist gets, in one form or another, from the first week he opens his mouth: *Show me the history. Prove it happened.* He wrote it out more completely than most, with ten numbered events and well over a hundred verse references, and then he said I should not need a book to answer it. He is wrong about that. A list of ten events and a hundred verses is a book-length question, and a man who seeks truth owes it a book-length answer. One note on the text: he first posted a nine-item version; after I said I would answer it in a book, he deleted that one and posted this expanded version, adding Daniel's seventy weeks, a "Ten Kingdom Confederation," the mark of the beast, and a dozen more references. That is fair. A man is entitled to sharpen his question, and the sharper question is the one I answer here, in his words, exactly as he posted it:

"The Heretical Horseman", I hereby openly challenge you to produce factual evidence from reliable and verifiable source materials, which definitively show that ALL of the cataclysmic/apocalyptic events described in the Book of Revelation have supposedly already occurred. And especially concentrate on PROVING your position that these ten very prominent and extremely important Scripturally prophesied future historical events have supposedly already occurred:

[1] "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him" (2 Thessalonians 2:1) [of all of the "members" of "the church, the body of Christ" ("those who belong to Christ Jesus" or are "in Christ Jesus")]; "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:3); "16 For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the [blast of the] trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain [on the earth] will 'simultaneously' be caught up (raptured) together with them [the resurrected ones] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord!" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) [this prophesied future historical event is also known as, "The Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Rapture or Gathering of the Church, the Body of Christ"] (Matthew 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; John 14:1-4; 21:22; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 4:5; 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; James 5:7-8; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 1 John 2:28; Revelation 22:7, 12, 20);

[2] "the day of the Lord has come", in which "the apostasy [or "the rebellion"] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction" (2 Thessalonians 2:2-3, 6, 8; Daniel 7:8, 11, 25; 8:25; 11:36; Revelation 13:5-6);

[3] The Antichrist "will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'" [or "week"], allowing the 'Third Temple' to be built on the 'Temple Mount' (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 11:1); The establishment of the 'Ten Kingdom Confederation' (Daniel 7:7-8, 20, 23-24; Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12-18), and "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth" (Revelation 17:1-6, 15-18; 19:2)

[4] "He ["the man of lawlessness"] will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4), and "In the middle of the 'seven' [or "week"] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him" (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Revelation 13:14-15; 19:20; 20:10; Daniel 7:11, 25; 8:24; 11:36);

[5] "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, 10 and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10); "2 The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority...3 The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. 4 People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast"....7 It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast...13 And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. 14 Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth...15 The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. 16 It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, 17 so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name" (Revelation 13:1-17);

[6] "For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:11);

[7] ALL of the cataclysmic/apocalyptic events described in Revelation 6-20 having supposedly already occurred [the opening of "the seven seals"; the sounding of "the seven trumpets"; the "pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth"];

[8] "the Lord Jesus will overthrow ["the lawless one"] with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Daniel 7:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 19:19-20);

[9] "The Valley of Decision" [in "the Valley of Jehoshaphat"] and "The Battle of Armageddon" (Joel 3:1-16; Revelation 14:14-16, 17-20; 16:12-16; 19:11-21);

[10] the "thousand years" 'Messianic Kingdom' and "reign on the earth" of Jesus Christ and His saints, "at the renewal of all things [or "in the regeneration"]", when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne", as "king over the whole earth" ["the King, the LORD Almighty"] (2 Samuel 7:10-16; Isaiah 1:26; 2:1-5; 9:6-7; 11:1-12; 65:16-25; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:8-9; 33:7, 11, 14-18; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Daniel 2:35, 44; 7:13-14, 18, 22, 27; Obadiah 21; Micah 4:1-8; Zechariah 14:9, 16; Matthew 19:28; 20:21; 25:31, 34; Luke 1:31-33; 22:28-30; Acts 1:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 11:15; 12:10; 20:4-7).

When I said I would write a book, he answered under the earlier version: "you shouldn't need to 'write a book' for this simple challenge. Is all you actually need to do, is to take those nine prophesied future historical events that I have listed here, and show/prove their supposed historical fulfillment from the actual historical record." Later he put it this way: "Post the Scriptural and historical factual evidence from reliable and verifiable source materials, which actually PROVE that the 'Second Coming' of Jesus Christ to the earth and His subsequent 'waging a righteous war' and 'ruling justly', as well as ALL of the cataclysmic/apocalyptic events described in the Book of Revelation, have already occurred."

Fair enough. Here is the book.

What I am going to do, and how

Every one of his ten items gets a chapter, or shares one with its neighbor where he split a single passage across two numbers. Every one of his verse references gets answered, and Appendix A lists each reference with the chapter where it is dealt with, so that no one can say I skipped the hard ones. (The thread under his first post is quoted where it shows what he believes; he has not posted a thread under the second.) I quote the challenger verbatim, from the thread, every time I characterize his position; I do not put words in his mouth. Scripture is quoted from the King James Version throughout, except where I am showing what he posted, in which case I give it in the version he used. I chose the King James for one reason: this book asks the reader to check every quotation, and the King James is the one standard English Bible anyone can check, reprint, and compare without a license, in the same way the historians in Appendix B are given from public-domain translations. Where the argument rests on the Greek or Hebrew rather than on any English rendering, I say so in the sentence.

When I bring in a commentator, it is to show that other careful readers saw the same thing in the text, not to settle anything by authority, and I am careful about *which* readers I cite for *what*. David Chilton's published commentary on Revelation, Kenneth Gentry's work on the date of that book, and Gary DeMar's work on the Olivet Discourse are the standard studies of the first-century

fulfillment of Revelation and Matthew 24, and I lean on them heavily for exactly that, but those men, in those books, are partial preterists: they hold that the Second Coming, the general resurrection, and the final judgment are still future, and Gentry in particular has published against the view I hold. I will not cite any of them for the full-preterist claim. Where I make that further claim, I cite the men who actually make it, Don Preston, Michael Sullivan, and David Green, and I say so. The challenger should not get the easy win of catching me citing a man for a view he does not hold, and the reader should always know which claim is common ground and which is mine.

When I bring in a historian, I quote him by book and section, from a public-domain translation, and the passage is reproduced in Appendix B so the reader can check it without buying anything. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish general who surrendered to the Romans and then watched the siege from the Roman side, is the primary witness; Tacitus the Roman senator, Suetonius the imperial secretary, Cassius Dio the consul, Eusebius the church historian, and the Babylonian Talmud are the corroborating ones. None of them was a preterist. Josephus was a Pharisee of priestly family who went over to Vespasian; Tacitus despised Jews and Christians about equally; the Talmud's sages were no friends of the church. That is what makes them useful. They had no reason to make the Olivet Discourse come true.

The rules of evidence

The challenge asks for "the actual historical record." I accept that standard, but before I apply it, I have to say plainly what kind of claims are on the list, because they are not all one kind, and a man who demands the same proof for all of them is demanding something no text could ever supply.

Some of the ten are *things a historian can record*. A city surrounded by armies. A famine inside the walls. A mother eating her child. A temple burned to the ground and its stones pulled apart. Deceivers leading crowds into the wilderness promising signs. Three factions tearing the city apart from inside while the Romans built their earthworks outside. Those events are in the historical record, in detail, in the words of men who were there, and I will show them.

Some of the ten are *things only Scripture can date*. "The coming of the Son of man in the clouds" is not an event a Roman historian could write down, because it is covenant language drawn from Daniel and Isaiah, and whether it happened in AD 70 depends on what that language means and when the New Testament says it would occur. For these, the historical record can show the *visible* side of the fulfillment, the ruin of the city, but the *timing* is settled by the text's own words: "this generation," "at hand," "shortly," "the time is near." A man who will not let the Bible date its own prophecies has already decided the question before the evidence is in.

Some of the ten are *things no historian could ever record*. "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:11) is a statement about what God did in the hearts of a people. Josephus could not see it. He could only see what it produced, and he did: a nation that, in his own words, "like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them" (*Wars of the Jews* 6.5.3). If the challenger means to say that an event is unfulfilled until a secular writer records a divine act, then he has set a test that no prophecy, past or future, could pass. Nobody will ever "record" God sending a delusion. They record the madness. Josephus recorded the madness.

The discipline of this book is the same for every item: first the text, and what it says about its own time and audience; then the fulfillment reading; then the historical receipts, where the item admits of them; and then, in every chapter, a plainly labeled paragraph on where the reading is contestable. I do not believe anything in here is "impossible to refute." I believe it is the most faithful reading of the texts, and I will tell you where the other side has a real card to play. A response that concedes nothing is not a response. It is a performance.

The one question under all ten

The challenger and I agree on more than the thread under his first post would suggest. We agree that Christ reigns now, from heaven. His own words: Jesus "is currently sharing the Father's heavenly throne but will eventually occupy His own unique throne." What he disputes is not that the reign exists but that it will stay where it is. We agree that the prophets promised Yahweh would dwell in Zion, gather the nations, restore David's throne, and judge the earth. We agree that Hebrews 1:2 puts the apostles in "the last days"; he conceded that himself: "that is exactly why I did NOT include Hebrews 1:2 in my listing of prophecies waiting to be fulfilled in 'the final period of history.'" We agree that the Day of the Lord language in Joel was at least partly fulfilled at Pentecost; he called Acts 2 "the 'near future' partial fulfillment of that prophecy."

The whole disagreement is one question: *when the New Testament says these things were near, did it mean it?* Every item on his list is a text that the New Testament itself dates. The coming and the gathering (item 1) were promised to "we which are alive and remain." The man of lawlessness (items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8) was being restrained "now," and the mystery "doth already work." Daniel's seventy weeks and ten kings (item 3) are read by the New Testament as ending in the generation that killed the Messiah and watched the sanctuary burn. Revelation 6–20 (item 7) sits inside a book that says on its first page and its last that its contents "must shortly come to pass" and "the time is at hand." Armageddon (item 9) is in that same book, and the kingdom (item 10) was announced as "at hand" by John the Baptist, by Jesus, and by the apostles, and Peter said on Pentecost that Christ had been raised up to sit on David's throne. If those time-words mean what they say, the challenge answers itself. If they do not, then no amount of history

will satisfy, because the challenger will always be able to say that what happened was not *the* fulfillment but only a shadow of one.

That is where we are. Let me take the clock first, because everything else hangs on it.

Part I: The Clock

Chapter 1: "This Generation," and the Brackets That Are Not Scripture

The challenger's first move in the thread, before the ten items (it was posted under his first, nine-item version), was to post three verses from the Amplified Bible:

Luke 21:32 — "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, this generation [those living at that definite period of time preceding the second coming] will not pass away until everything takes place."

Mark 13:30 — "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, this generation [the people living when these signs and events begin] will not pass away until all these things take place."

Matthew 24:34 — "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, this generation [the people living when these signs and events begin] will not pass away until all these things take place."

He posted them as proof that "this generation" means a generation at the end of history. I want to deal with this first, because it is the clock on which everything else runs, and because the way he handled it shows exactly the move the whole challenge depends on.

What the brackets are

The Amplified Bible's own preface explains its method. Brackets, it says, "contain justified words, phrases, or brief commentary not fully expressed in the preceding English text," and "The amplifications within brackets serve many purposes... they may expand a teaching or principle" (Amplified Bible, 2015, "Abbreviations and Special Markings"). The challenger himself quoted the publisher's description back to me: the AMP "does this through the use of explanatory alternate readings and amplifications to assist the reader in understanding what Scripture really says." Exactly. The brackets are the publisher's commentary. They are not Greek. The Greek of all three verses is the same two words, *hē genea hautē*, "this generation," and there is nothing in them, or around them, that reads "those living at that definite period of time preceding the second coming." That sentence was written in La Habra, California, not in Judea. The publisher calls it commentary, so do I.

The question is not what the bracket says. The question is what Jesus meant by "this generation," and the honest way to find out is to see how He used the phrase everywhere else. Matthew records it again and again, and every time it is the people standing in front of Him:

"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows" (Matthew 11:16).

"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matthew 12:41).

"O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" (Matthew 17:17).

One chapter before the Olivet Discourse, to the scribes and Pharisees, after promising to send them prophets whom they would kill and crucify and scourge: "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation" (Matthew 23:36). Then, without a break: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (23:38). The disciples walk out, point at the Temple, and Jesus says not one stone will be left on another (24:1-2). They ask when. He answers, and He closes the answer with the identical formula He had just used in chapter 23: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (24:34).

Same speaker. Same phrase. Same "all these things." One chapter apart. No one I know of reads "this generation" in Matthew 23:36 as people alive two thousand years later, because the next verse names their house and the next chapter names their Temple. The burden is on the man who says the same words, from the same mouth, in the next chapter, mean something they have never meant anywhere else in the Gospel.

The Amplified's own footnote helps me

Here is the part the challenger did not notice. The AMP footnote on Matthew 24:33, which he posted himself, says that "these things" means "false christs, wars, famines, earthquakes." Good. Now go back up the chapter. Jesus told the disciples, "ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars" (24:6), "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you" (24:9), "when ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation" (24:15), "then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains" (24:16). *Ye. You. Them which be in Judaea.* The people who would "hear" and "see" those things were the men He was talking to. The AMP's bracket says "this generation" is the people living when those signs begin; the text says the people who would see them begin were the disciples. The publisher's bracket and the publisher's footnote point in different directions, and only one of them is attached to anything Jesus said.

Where the instinct comes from

The challenger's answer, when I laid this out, was that I "make up scenarios." I would put it the other way. One of us reads "this generation" the way Matthew uses it everywhere else, and one of us reads it the way a bracket in a 2015 edition says to, and the reader can decide which is the scenario.

I want to be fair about where his instinct comes from, because it is not stupid. Verses 29–31 describe the sun darkened, the stars falling, the Son of Man coming on the clouds, and the elect gathered with a trumpet. To a modern reader that sounds like the end of the world, and if it is the end of the world, then "this generation" *must* mean something else, because the world is still here. That is the whole engine of the futurist reading: the form of the fulfillment is decided first, from how the language sounds to us, and then the time-statement is adjusted to fit. The preterist does it the other way around. The time-statement is plain and unambiguous; the imagery is Old Testament judgment language with a long track record; so the imagery is read in light of the clock, not the clock in light of the imagery. I will show in Chapter 7 that Isaiah used "the stars of heaven... shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened" for the fall of Babylon to the Medes (Isaiah 13:10, 17), and that Jesus is quoting Isaiah. For now the point is only this: the plain words set the date, and the date is the generation that heard Him.

C. S. Lewis, no preterist, called Matthew 24:34 "the most embarrassing verse in the Bible," because he took "this generation" to mean exactly what it says and then had to conclude Jesus was wrong. I think Jesus was right, but Lewis and I agree about what the words mean, and the challenger's bracket is a way of not having to.

Where this is contestable

I will say it in every chapter, so I will say it here. There is a serious scholarly reading, held by R. T. France among others, that Matthew 24:4–35 is about AD 70 and that the parousia proper begins at 24:36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man." On that reading "this generation" means exactly what I say it means, but the Second Coming is after verse 35. That is the best version of the futurist case, and it concedes everything I need for the clock. The challenger's version, which moves "this generation" itself to the end of history, is defended in the dispensational study Bibles and nowhere in the critical commentaries. If he wants to fall back to France's position, I will meet him there in Chapter 4.

Chapter 2: The Last Days of What?

The second fight in the thread was over the phrase "the last days." The challenger wrote: "Jesus Christ gave 'warnings' to both the generation of His day, and to ALL generations to follow, and especially to the generation of the future 'last days' or 'end times.'" When I asked him where the "latter days" came from and who they were for, he produced a long list of references and a distinction: the phrase, he said, "is a prophetic phrase referring generally to the future, but in some cases, it is referencing the final period of history," and he listed the cases he had in mind: Isaiah 2:2–3; Ezekiel 38:16; Hosea 3:5; Joel 2:28–32; Micah 4:1; Acts 2:17–21; 2 Peter 3:3. He also said, with some emphasis, that he "did NOT state to you that 'the latter days' are 'about our generation.'"

I take him at his word on that last point, and it is a bigger concession than he may realize. If "the last days" are not about our generation, then the question is simply which generation they are about, and the New Testament answers that question in the first person.

The apostles said they were in them

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1–2). The writer does not say the last days are coming. He says God has spoken in them, to "us."

"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20). Christ's first coming was *in* the last times.

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2:18). John does not say the last hour is near. He says it *is* the last hour, and he gives the evidence: the antichrists are here, now.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). The ends of the ages had arrived on Paul's readers.

"But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). The cross was "in the end of the world," the end of the age.

The one the challenger himself put on his list: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:16–17). Peter is standing in Jerusalem in AD 30, and he says *this is that*. Joel's "afterward" (Joel 2:28) is Peter's "in the last days," and Peter says the last days are the days he is standing in.

The challenger's reply to Hebrews 1:2 was the concession I quoted: "that is exactly why I did NOT include Hebrews 1:2 in my listing of prophecies waiting to be fulfilled in 'the final period of history.'" So he agrees Hebrews 1:2 is first-century, but Hebrews 1:2 uses the same phrase, *in these last days*, that Acts 2:17 uses, and Acts 2:17 is on his "final period of history" list. He has one phrase, in two apostles, in the same decade, and he has sorted it into two different eras without a textual reason for the sort. The reason is the content: Acts 2:19–20 goes on to mention blood and fire and the sun darkened, and that sounds to him like the end of the world. We are back to the engine from Chapter 1: the imagery is deciding the date.

His own Joel argument proves the other way

He argued from the structure of Joel 2: the "afterward" of 2:28 follows the locust plague (2:1–11), the call to repentance (2:12–17), and the restoration of the land (2:18–27), so, he said, it "is quite obviously meant to describe the final period of history." Peter, an inspired apostle, read that same "afterward" and said it had arrived at Pentecost. Either Peter misread Joel's structure or the challenger did, and Peter did not stop at verse 29. He kept quoting through the wonders in heaven, the blood and fire and vapor of smoke, the sun turned to darkness and the moon to blood, "before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2:19–20). He put the whole passage, including the cosmic language and the Day of the Lord, under "this is that." Then he told the crowd what to do about it: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Not from a generation at the end of time. From *this* one.

The challenger called Pentecost a "'near future' partial fulfillment" with "the 'far future' complete and final fulfillment coming at 'the day of the LORD.'" I answered that in the thread and I will answer it here: the Day of the Lord Joel announced was the day of Jerusalem's deliverance *and* judgment, "for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance... and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:32), and the sequence Peter started, outpouring, then signs, then the Day, ran its course inside forty years. Jesus said that generation would see "fearful sights and great signs... from heaven" (Luke 21:11); Josephus, no Christian, records armies in the clouds and a voice in the Temple at Pentecost saying "Let us remove hence" (*Wars* 6.5.3); and the Day fell on the city in 70, while the remnant, warned by Jesus to flee when they saw the armies (Luke 21:20–21), had already withdrawn to Pella (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5). That is Joel's shape exactly: judgment on Jerusalem, deliverance for the remnant in Zion. "Partial" is a word the challenger needs; it is not a word Peter used.

Moses named the last days

The challenger's list of "latter days" texts began, rightly, with Genesis 49:1, Numbers 24:14, and Deuteronomy 4:30 and 31:29. He should have stayed on Deuteronomy 31. That is where the phrase gets its content. Moses, about to die, tells Israel: "I know that after my death ye will utterly

corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands" (Deuteronomy 31:29). Then he teaches them a song to be a witness against them (31:19–21), and the song describes the generation of the latter days: "They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation" (32:5); "I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith" (32:20); "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand" (32:35); "For the LORD shall judge his people... when he seeth that their power is gone" (32:36).

Israel's latter days, in Moses, are the days of her terminal, perverse generation, when God hides His face, the day of calamity comes, and her power is gone. Now listen to the New Testament: Peter at Pentecost, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40), the Septuagint's word for Deuteronomy 32:5's "crooked"; Paul to the Philippians, "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" (Philippians 2:15), the same two words; Hebrews, quoting Deuteronomy 32:35–36 outright, "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people," and then, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:30, 37); Daniel's angel, "when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (Daniel 12:7), Moses' "when he seeth that their power is gone." The last days were the last days of Israel's covenant: the generation Moses foresaw, the one Jesus called "this generation," the one Peter called "untoward," the one whose power was scattered when the Temple fell. Michael Sullivan has set this out at length in "Deuteronomy 32: The Forgotten Foundation of Old and New Testament Eschatology" (FullPreterism.com, 2025), and I think he is right that most futurist readers have never gone down to that basement. The challenger listed Deuteronomy 31:29 and never opened it.

The rest of his list

The challenger cited a long string of "latter days" texts as occurrences of the phrase, without argument, and I will not pretend each one needs a chapter, but several of them date themselves, and he should see it.

Malachi 4:5: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." Jesus said who Elijah was: "if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matthew 11:14), and "Elias is come already, and they knew him not" (17:12). If Elijah came before the great and dreadful day, and Elijah was John the Baptist, then the great and dreadful day was the day of John's generation. Malachi 3:1–2, "the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple... But who may abide the day of his coming?", is the same coming,

to a Temple that stood until 70. Malachi 4:1, "the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven," is what John the Baptist preached to the Pharisees at the Jordan: "now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees... he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:10, 12). Now, not later.

2 Timothy 3:1: "in the last days perilous times shall come." Four verses later Paul tells Timothy what to do about the men of those times: "from such turn away" (3:5). Timothy was to turn away from men who were already there. Paul is describing his own day.

Hosea 3:5: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king... in the latter days." Peter announced David's greater Son enthroned in Acts 2, and three thousand Israelites returned that day. Jeremiah 23:20, 30:24, 48:47, 49:39, Daniel 2:28 and 10:14, Deuteronomy 4:30: each of these says "latter days" of something in the prophet's future, and the challenger listed them as occurrences of the phrase, not as end-of-history texts. Ezekiel 38:16 he did put in his "final period of history" group, and I touch it in Chapter 9. Daniel 8:17, 19, "the time of the end," belongs to the vision of the ram and the goat, Persia and Greece, and "the end" there is the end of that vision's "indignation" (8:19). Daniel 11:35, 40 and 12:4, 9 are a different matter: they are one phrase in one continuous speech, the vision of chapters 10–12, and that vision ends with the shattering of the holy people's power (12:7). The challenger himself placed Daniel's "time of the end" at the end of the Old Covenant, as I show in Chapter 3. Ezekiel 38:16, Gog, I will touch in Chapter 9, because John puts Gog at the end of the thousand years.

Where this is contestable

Two things. First, "latter days" in some Old Testament texts (Genesis 49:1; Numbers 24:14) does simply mean "in the future," and I have never claimed otherwise; the challenger and I agree on that. The question is what the New Testament writers meant when they said they were *in* them, and I do not think a plain reader can get past Hebrews 1:2, 1 Peter 1:20, and 1 John 2:18. Second, 2 Peter 3:3, "there shall come in the last days scoffers," is on his list and is the strongest text for a last days that extends past the apostles, because the scoffers' complaint is "Where is the promise of his coming?" I would answer that Peter's readers were already hearing that scoff, that Peter had just said "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4:7), and that the "day of the Lord" of 2 Peter 3:10 is the same day Hebrews says "will not tarry." I grant that 2 Peter 3 is a text on which my side has to work, and that the thousand-years-as-a-day statement in 3:8 is a verse the other side will always have in hand. My answer to 3:8, in brief: the next verse says the Lord "is longsuffering to us-ward" (3:9), Peter's readers; they were to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (3:12), which no one does for a day two thousand years off; and the "elements" that melt are the *stoicheia*, the word Paul uses for the ordinances of the old covenant (Galatians 4:3, 9; Colossians 2:20), never for the periodic table. Chilton makes the last

point himself (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 542), and I take the whole chapter, verse by verse, in Chapter 9.

Chapter 3: Daniel Sealed, Revelation Unsealed, and the Book That Dates Itself

The third fight in the thread was short, and I think it was the most revealing. I had written that Daniel was told his prophecy was "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4, 9), and that Revelation deliberately reverses the instruction: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 22:10). The challenger answered: "that is actually referencing 'the time of the end' of the Old Testament [or 'covenant'] witness, and to be opened during the time of the New Testament [or 'covenant'] witness, which is of course when the Book of Revelation would be written."

Read that again. He has just said that Daniel's "time of the end" is the end of the Old Covenant, and that it arrived when the New Testament was written. I agree with every word, but Daniel's "time of the end" is not an empty label. It is the time Daniel's own book attaches to specific events, and if those events are at "the end of the Old Covenant," then the challenger has placed them in the first century with his own hands.

What Daniel put at "the time of the end"

Daniel 12:1–2: "And at that time shall Michael stand up... and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The tribulation and the resurrection.

Daniel 12:4: "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end."

Daniel 12:6–7: "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?... it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

Daniel 12:9: "the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

Daniel 12:11: "from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up..."

"the time of the end," in Daniel, is when the unequalled time of trouble comes, the dead awake, the daily sacrifice is taken away, the abomination is set up, and the power of the holy people is shattered, and "all these things shall be finished" then. Jesus took that chapter and set it in His generation: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place... then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time" (Matthew 24:15, 21). That is Daniel 12:1 and 12:11, quoted,

in a speech that ends with "this generation shall not pass." The historical record supplies the rest: "on that very day, which was the seventeenth day of Panemus, [Tamuz,] the sacrifice called 'the Daily Sacrifice' had failed, and had not been offered to God, for want of men to offer it" (Josephus, *Wars* 6.2.1), in July of 70, a few weeks before the Temple burned. The power of the holy people was scattered that summer. Daniel says all these things would be finished then. The challenger says Daniel's time of the end is the end of the Old Covenant, so do I.

Why Daniel was sealed and John was not

Chilton saw the contrast plainly: "The angel's statement is in contrast to the command Daniel received at the end of his book: 'Conceal the words and seal up the book until the time of the end' (Dan. 12:4). Daniel was specifically ordered to seal up his prophecy, because it referred to 'the end,' in the distant future" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 43). Daniel wrote around 530 BC. John, by the reading I defend below, wrote in the late 60s. From Daniel to the fall of the Temple is six centuries; from John to the fall of the Temple is a few years. One is sealed because it is far; the other is unsealed because it is at hand. That is what the two commands mean. If Revelation's "time is at hand" means two thousand years and counting, then the angel's instruction to John is the opposite of what it says, and Daniel, with six hundred years to wait, should have been the one left open.

The book that dates itself

This matters for the challenge because item 7, "ALL of the cataclysmic/apocalyptic events described in Revelation 6–20," is the heart of what he wants proved, and the first thing a reader must settle about any prophecy is when the prophet said it would happen. Revelation says so at both ends.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1). "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (1:3). "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done" (22:6). "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand" (22:10). "Behold, I come quickly" (22:7, 12). "Surely I come quickly" (22:20).

Chilton, who held a future Second Coming, still wrote: "The words shortly and near simply cannot be made to mean anything but what they say" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 42), and "A futurist interpretation is refuted in the very first verse of Revelation" (p. 52). Gentry, who has published against my view, wrote thirteen pages on the Greek of those words in *Before Jerusalem Fell* and concluded that events "two or three thousand years in the future" could not be called "at hand," but "if the expected events were to occur within a period of from one to five years—as in the case

with Revelation if the book were written prior to A.D. 70—then all becomes clear" (p. 141). I am not citing either man for full preterism. I am citing them for the date on the book, which they establish, and which leaves the challenger's item 7 no room.

Two more clocks inside the book

Revelation also dates itself twice from the inside, and both dates belong to the 60s.

First, the beast's heads: "there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (17:10). The angel says one king is: reigning as John writes. Chilton: "The first five Caesars were Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. One is: Nero, the sixth Caesar, was on the throne as St. John was writing the Revelation. The other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while: Galba, the seventh Caesar, reigned for less than seven months" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 435–436). Gentry: "If there is any chronologically precise statement in the book, Revelation 17:10 should certainly be it" (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 151), and "It seems indisputably clear that the book of Revelation must be dated in the reign of Nero Caesar, and consequently before his death in June, A.D. 68" (p. 158). Nero died in June of 68; Galba reigned from June 68 to January 69.

Second, the Temple: "Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (11:1–2). Gentry: "The Temple is required to be standing for the symbolical action of the vision to have any meaning. John uses the future tense when he speaks of the nations' treading down the city" (p. 175). Jesus had said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24); John says the holy city "shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Same verb, same city, same event, still future to both. Chilton adds in a footnote that the war "did last a literal three and a half years, from 67 to 70" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 275 n. 5; his wording is "the Roman siege of Jerusalem under Vespasian and Titus," but the siege proper was Titus's and lasted five months; it is the war in Judea, from Vespasian's spring of 67 to the Temple's fall, that ran forty-two months).

The book says "shortly" and "at hand" at both ends; it says the sixth Caesar is on the throne; it says the Temple is standing and about to be trodden down. Everything in chapters 6–20 sits between those markers. The challenger wants history for those chapters. He will get it, but he should notice that before any historian is opened, the book has already told him which decade to look in.

Where this is contestable

I will be honest about the one real difficulty, because the challenger will find it if I do not. The Domitianic date is an early tradition, not a dispensationalist invention. Irenaeus, late in the second century, wrote of the Apocalypse that "it was seen not long ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian" (*Against Heresies* 5.30.3, as quoted by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.18); Victorinus and Jerome follow him, and Eusebius transmits it. Domitian died in 96. If John wrote in 95, the Temple of Revelation 11 had been rubble for twenty-five years and "the sixth king" has to be found some other way. The sentence everyone cites has a Greek verb, *heōrathē*, whose subject can be the vision or John himself, "it was seen" or "he was seen," and that is a defensible reading of the Greek that has been argued both ways since the eighteenth century; Gentry argues the subject is John, most scholars read it as the vision, and I will not pretend the point is settled. I hold the early date as the better reading of the book's own evidence, not as a proof: a temple still standing to be measured (11:1–2), a sixth king who "is" (17:10), and a Jerusalem whose fall is the book's climax. Two things about the external tradition are worth noting without overclaiming either. Eusebius introduces the Domitianic banishment with "It is said" (3.18.1), while he narrates the flight to Pella and the signs before the war as fact (3.5–3.8), and Irenaeus, our source for the late date, is the same writer who insists that Jesus lived to nearly fifty (*Against Heresies* 2.22.5); his chronology is sincere and unreliable. There are early voices on the other side as well: Epiphanius places John's exile under Claudius (*Panarion* 51.12, 33), and the Syriac titles of Revelation name Nero. The external evidence is divided. The internal evidence is not.

Here is the sentence that makes this flank survivable: even on the late date, the argument of this book stands. In 95 the book still says "the time is at hand" (1:3; 22:10) and "Surely I come quickly" (22:20) to seven churches in Asia; a late date does not move those words forward, it only makes "quickly" mean nineteen centuries instead of twenty, and the late date does not help the challenger with 17:10 or 11:1–2; it makes them impossible for him too. Under Domitian the sixth king "who is" would have to be counted past Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and Titus, and the temple John is told to measure would have been ash for a generation. The challenger needs the early date for those verses as badly as I do.

Part II: The Ten Items

Chapter 4: Item 1: The Coming of the Lord and Our Gathering Together unto Him

The challenger's first item is the one he cares about most; in the thread under his first post he called the idea that Christ has already "raptured" or "gathered" the church the mark of a deceived man. He attached more than twenty references to it. I will take the controlling text first, then the one that is the real fault line between me and the partial preterists, then the rest in order.

2 Thessalonians 2:1: the word Paul chose

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him" (2 Thessalonians 2:1).

The Greek noun for "gathering together" is *episynagōgē*. It occurs exactly twice in the New Testament. The other place is Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Same word. In Hebrews it is the church's assembling, and it is tied to a day the readers could see approaching. The verb form is what Jesus used in Matthew 24:31, "they shall gather together his elect from the four winds," and in Matthew 23:37, "how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." The word means to synagogue: to assemble a congregation. Chilton, a partial preterist, saw it: "Christ's use of the word gather is significant in this regard. The word, literally, is a verb meaning to synagogue; the meaning is that with the destruction of the Temple and of the Old Covenant system, the Lord sends out His messengers to gather His elect people into His New Synagogue" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 99), and on 2 Thessalonians 2:1 directly: the first churches "looked forward to the soon-approaching Day when apostate Israel would be thoroughly disinherited, and the Church revealed as the true Synagogue, 'gathered together' in the final, New Covenant form (2 Thess. 2:1)" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 372). DeMar, also a partial preterist, reads it the same way: "The gathering is horizontal and earthly, not vertical and heavenly. Jesus wanted to 'gather' the children of Israel 'together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings' (Matt. 23:37). This is not a description of a rapture" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 210).

On the text the challenger chose to head his first item, the two best-known partial-preterist commentators in America agree with me that the "gathering together" of 2 Thessalonians 2:1 was the first-century gathering of the New Covenant people at the fall of the Old Covenant order, not a physical removal of Christians from the planet. The challenger put the word "Rapture" in brackets beside it. The word is not in the verse, and the men who have studied the verse hardest, from his side of the resurrection question, say it does not belong there.

What does the historical record show for a "gathering"? It shows the thing Jesus said would happen when the gathering came: the messengers going out to the four winds. By the early 60s Paul could already write that the gospel had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Colossians 1:23) and that the faith of the Roman church was "spoken of throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:8). It shows the Jerusalem church obeying "then let them which be in Judaea flee" (Matthew 24:16): "the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3), and it shows what the gathered were gathered *out of*: a city in which, by Josephus's count, eleven hundred thousand died and ninety-seven thousand were carried away (*Wars* 6.9.3). The elect were gathered; the rest were scattered. That is Matthew 24:31 and Luke 21:24 side by side, and both are in the record.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18: where I part from the partial preterists

Now the hard one. I said I would tell the reader where the other side has a real card, and here it is, because on this text the partial preterists I have been quoting are not on my side.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17).

Chilton: "As Paul's words so clearly state, the events of the Last Day include the Second Coming, the Resurrection, and the 'Rapture' (the 'catching up' of the living saints 'to meet the Lord in the air'). The Bible does not teach any separation between the Second Coming and the Rapture; they are simply different aspects of the Last Day" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 139). DeMar: "Most postmillennialists and amillennialists see 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 as relating to the general resurrection of the saints" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 165). Gentry: "His Second Coming at the end of world history (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:13ff.)" (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 123). Gary North: "There is indeed a Rapture, but it comes at the end of time" (Appendix C in *Days of Vengeance*, p. 635). All four read 1 Thessalonians 4:17 as the end of history, and Chilton and DeMar read 2 Thessalonians 2:1 as AD 70 while doing so. DeMar says outright that "Paul is discussing two separate events" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 210).

I do not think two events can be made out of those two letters, and here is the reason, which is not mine but Michael Sullivan's, aimed at the partial preterists' own Keith Mathison. In 1 and 2 Thessalonians Paul says "we," "you," and "our" about the coming of the Lord over and over: "ye

turned to God from idols... to wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thessalonians 1:9–10); "what is our hope... Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (2:19); "your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:23); "to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven" (2 Thessalonians 1:7). The partial preterist reads every one of those "you"s as the first-century Thessalonians and every one of those comings as AD 70, except the one in 1 Thessalonians 4, where "we which are alive and remain" suddenly means Christians at the end of history. Sullivan: "According to Mathison, all of Paul's 'we,' 'you,' and 'our' statements in 1 and 2 Thessalonians refer to Paul's own first-century audience and address Christ's coming in AD 70—except for the statements in 1 Thessalonians 4 ('the rapture'). Mathison decides that 'we' in 1 Thessalonians 4 means something other than what it means everywhere else in 1 and 2 Thessalonians." That is the whole problem in one sentence. The Thessalonians' "coming of the Lord" in 1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 5:23, and 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10 and 2:1 is one coming, and 4:15 says some of them would be alive to see it.

What, then, happened? Not what the challenger means by "rapture." No Christian floated off the earth in AD 70, and the full-preterist view does not need one to have. Sullivan: "Being revealed with Christ in glory (Col. 3:4) and becoming like Him and seeing Him in His Parousia (1 Jn 3:2) had nothing to do with escaping physical death or with being literally caught up into the literal sky or with being biologically changed. It had to do with God's people, living and dead, being 'gathered together' to become His eternal Tabernacle, His spiritual Body, the New Man, the heavenly Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem in the Spirit." The pieces of the verse are Sinai's pieces: the descent, the voice, the trumpet, the cloud, the meeting (Exodus 19:16–20), and Hebrews tells the first-century church, in so many words, that their mountain, voice, and trumpet are not the literal ones: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words... But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:18–19, 22). If the mountain and the trumpet of the New Covenant are not literal, the cloud and the meeting of 1 Thessalonians 4 are not literal either. The dead in Christ "rose first": they were brought out of Hades into the presence of God, which is what John saw at the same moment, "death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them" (Revelation 20:13), and the living were "caught up together with them": gathered, in the same hour, into the same New Covenant presence. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord": not in the sky; in the city where "the tabernacle of God is with men" (Revelation 21:3).

Now the honest part. The partial preterists have an argument against this and I want it on the table. DeMar: "If they had thought that either the rapture or the Second Coming had taken place—as per Paul's supposed message or letter—would they not have asked themselves why Paul had not been raptured? How could Paul have written a letter after the rapture or the Second

Coming if he was no longer on the earth?" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 214). Mathison's version, which Sullivan quotes: "The entire argument of 2 Thess. 2 could have been reduced to the single question, Are you still here?" They use it to prove that 2 Thessalonians 2:2 cannot be about a physical rapture, and they are right, but look at what follows. Paul did *not* say "Are you still here?" He did not say the graves are still full. He argued from sequence: the apostasy and the man of sin had to come first. If the event the Thessalonians feared they had missed were a visible exodus of living Christians into the sky, that reply is bizarre. If the event were the covenantal coming and gathering I have described, one that a church in Macedonia could believe had happened in Judea on the strength of a false report, the reply is exactly right. Sullivan puts the same question the other way around: Paul "does not say, 'How can you believe that the Day of the Lord, our gathering to Him, and the resurrection have already occurred because you are still here, the graveyards are still full, and planet has not been destroyed?'" The partial preterist's own best argument about 2 Thessalonians 2:2 tells us the Thessalonians were not expecting to watch their neighbors levitate.

I do not have to rest on the "we" alone, because Paul kept writing, and the chapter break at 5:1 is not his. Read 4:13 through 5:11 as one paragraph, which is how he wrote it. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds" (4:16–17), and in the next breath, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (5:1–4). The coming that gathers the saints and the day that destroys the unready are one event, in one sentence of Paul's thought. Now look at whose event it is. "We which are alive and remain": Paul's readers. "Ye have no need that I write unto you": they already knew when. "Ye... are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you": they would be awake for it. A man does not tell people they will not be surprised by a day two thousand years after their funerals.

Every image in the paragraph is the Olivet Discourse, which is dated. The trumpet and the gathering: "he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds" (Matthew 24:31), inside "this generation" (24:34). The thief: "if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come" (24:43). The travail of the woman with child: Jesus' *ōdinōn*, "the beginning of sorrows" in the King James, birth pains in the Greek (24:8). "Peace and safety" is Jeremiah's charge against Jerusalem's prophets, "saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11), and it is what the false prophets in the Temple were still saying on the day it burned (Josephus, *Wars* 6.5.2, in the next chapter), and the wrath the Thessalonians were spared, "For God hath not appointed us to

wrath" (5:9), is the wrath Paul had named three chapters earlier, on the Jews "who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us... for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (2:15–16), the "wrath to come" John the Baptist announced to that generation at the Jordan (Matthew 3:7). The partial preterist dates 5:2's thief to AD 70, because the thief is Matthew 24:43 and Matthew 24 is AD 70. He then has to make 4:16–17, the verses that lead directly into it, the end of the world. That is not two events in Paul. It is one event with a chapter number dropped into the middle of it by a medieval editor.

One more word, the one everybody skips. "Caught up... to meet the Lord in the air": the noun for "meet" is *apantēsis*, and it occurs three times in the New Testament. The other two are the virgins going out "to meet" the bridegroom and escort him to the feast (Matthew 25:6), and the Roman Christians who "came to meet us as far as Appii forum" (Acts 28:15) and walked Paul into the city. The word is what citizens did when a king arrived: they went out to meet him and brought him in. It is not what people do when they are leaving. The saints went out to meet the King at His coming. Nobody left the planet; the King arrived, in the generation Paul said would be alive for it.

Here is the flank stated at its full strength, and the answer to it. "Caught up... in the clouds... in the air" reads like a physical lift, and "the dead in Christ shall rise" reads like graves. The dead did rise, out of Hades, "death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them" (Revelation 20:13), the rising Paul told Felix was "about to be" (Acts 24:15). The living were gathered to the King's presence at the coming of Matthew 24:31, and the historical record settles what the gathering was *not*: the church was still on the ground after 70. Eusebius records the Jerusalem church at Pella (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3); Clement of Rome wrote to Corinth in the 90s; Ignatius wrote his letters on the way to his death under Trajan. A physical disappearance of the church in AD 70 is unsupported by any record and contradicted by the record we have. That is why the main full-preterist reading, the one I hold, has never required one; Ed Stevens holds a minority view that some believers were removed unobserved, and I do not. What exactly the living experienced in that hour is the seam I hold loosely. The timing and the identity of the event are the parts Paul fixed, and he fixed them in the same paragraph as the thief and the travail that every partial preterist already puts in 70.

What can history record of this? Only what it did record: a church that survived, gathered, and spread, and a Judaism that did not. The nature of the gathering is settled by the text, not by Tacitus, and I have told the reader plainly that it is a reading.

One more thing about this text, because the challenger quoted it in the Amplified: "we who are alive and remain [on the earth] will 'simultaneously' be caught up (raptured) together with them [the resurrected ones]." The words "on the earth," "raptured," and "the resurrected ones" are in brackets and parentheses because they are not in the Greek. The verse does not say "on the

earth"; it does not say "raptured"; it does not even contain the word "resurrected." I showed in Chapter 1 that the Amplified's own preface calls its brackets "brief commentary." The challenger has now quoted, as the text of his first item, a verse with the conclusion he wants inserted by the publisher. That is not a small thing in a challenge that demands "reliable and verifiable source materials." The verifiable source is the Greek, and the Greek says "caught up together with them in the clouds."

Acts 1:9–11: "in like manner"

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight... Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9, 11).

Read what they actually saw. He did not drift into the blue until He was a speck. "A cloud received him out of their sight." A cloud took Him and hid Him, and the first readers of Luke knew which cloud, because Daniel had described it: "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days... And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (Daniel 7:13–14). The disciples had just asked about the kingdom (Acts 1:6). The ascension was the answer. He went up in the glory-cloud to take the throne; DeMar and Chilton, partial preterists both, read Acts 1:9 that way: "At His ascension, Jesus had come up to the Ancient of Days 'with the clouds of heaven' to receive the kingdom from His Father (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9)" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 123); "The Bible tells us exactly when Jesus came with the clouds of heaven: And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9)" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 98).

Now the angels: He "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go." Luke wrote that sentence, and Luke had already told us what the Son of Man's coming in a cloud looks like and when it falls: "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory... Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled" (Luke 21:27, 32). Same author. Same cloud. With a date on it. Jesus told the high priest the same thing, and gave it a start time: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). The Greek behind "hereafter" is *ap' arti*, "from now on." From that night forward Caiaphas would see the Son of Man enthroned and coming on the clouds. Caiaphas never saw a body in the sky. He saw his authority broken, his Temple threatened, and his city marked for ruin, and Jesus called that seeing Him come. John tells us who the "every eye" is that sees it: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him" (Revelation 1:7). The ones who pierced Him were the ones promised the sight.

That is the whole idiom of a cloud-coming in the prophets. "Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence" (Isaiah 19:1), and the instrument of that coming was Assyria's army. He went up in the cloud of glory to receive the kingdom; He came in the clouds of judgment to destroy His enemies and bring down the old covenant heaven and earth, the way God had always come on a cloud against a nation. As they saw Him go, Jerusalem saw Him come. In like manner.

The phrase "in like manner," *hon tropon*, will not bear the weight the challenger puts on it in any case. Preston: "while *hon tropon* can sometimes mean identicalness, it more often means general likeness, without specificity. For instance, in Matthew 23:37, Jesus said he had desired to gather Jerusalem 'as (*hon tropon*) a mother hen gathers her chicks.' Surely no one would argue that Jesus wanted to gather Jerusalem under his literal arm!" And the men who press "identical manner" do not hold it themselves: He went up silently, and they expect Him to come with a trumpet.

Here is the flank at full strength. *Hon tropon* stresses manner, and the manner included "while they beheld" (1:9); the opponent's best line is, "They watched a body rise; they must watch a body descend." The answer is Matthew 26:64 and Revelation 1:7. The watching was promised to the generation that watched Him go, "from now on," and Jesus defined the seeing as seeing the Son of Man come on the clouds while Caiaphas lived, and the angels' question, "why stand ye gazing up into heaven?", is a strange rebuke to give men whose whole duty, on the challenger's reading, was to keep watching the sky. That is the way I read Acts 1:11, and I read it inside the timing Jesus gave rather than apart from it. Zechariah 14:4, "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," is the text the challenger will reach for next; I take it in Chapter 9.

Matthew 16:27: the verse with a date attached

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:27–28).

The challenger cited verse 27 and stopped. Verse 28 is Jesus telling the men in front of Him that some of them would live to see it. That is the same coming (Mark 9:1 and Luke 9:27 make "the kingdom" and "the Son of man coming" one event), and it is dated to the lifetimes of the hearers. DeMar, a partial preterist, calls 16:27 "a certain reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 149). The "reward" of verse 27 is Revelation 22:12, "behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be," which is also on the challenger's list. He has cited the same promise twice, once in Matthew with "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death" attached and once in Revelation with "quickly" attached, as proof of a coming two thousand years later.

He has now added the parallels, Mark 8:38 and Luke 9:26, and they make it worse for him, not better. Mark: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38), and the very next verse, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (9:1). The coming in glory is the coming the Son of Man would be ashamed of "this adulterous and sinful generation" at, and some standing there would live to see it. DeMar: "A distant generation is not in view; it's Jesus' contemporaries who will experience His wrath" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 34). Luke 9:26–27 says the same with "some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." Three Gospels, one coming, one generation.

John 14:1–4: the Father's house

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2–3).

"My Father's house" is what Jesus called the Temple (John 2:16). The "mansions" are *monai*, dwelling places; the word occurs once more in the New Testament, in the same chapter: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode [*monē*] with him" (14:23). The abode Jesus prepares is the Father and the Son dwelling in the believer, and in the same breath He says, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (14:18). The "coming again" of 14:3 is a coming *to them*, and it ends with "where I am, there ye may be also," which is what John sees at the end of Revelation: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3), and "the temple of God was opened in heaven" (11:19). The place prepared was the New Covenant Temple, the Father's house with many rooms, and the coming to receive them was the coming of the book that says it comes "quickly." Contestable: a reader who takes "mansions" as heavenly real estate will not be moved by this, and I grant that John 14 by itself does not date anything. It is the rest of the New Testament that dates it.

John 21:22: "till I come"

"Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die" (John 21:22–23). The challenger added this verse to his list. Read it. Peter has just been told how he will die; he asks about John; Jesus answers that John might "tarry till I come." The brethren took it to mean John would not die before the coming. John, writing the Gospel, corrects the inference but not the premise: Jesus "said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come"

(21:23). The premise everyone in the conversation shared is that "till I come" could fall inside John's lifetime. Peter died under Nero; John outlived the fall of Jerusalem. DeMar: "History tells us that Peter died before Jerusalem was destroyed, and John lived beyond Jerusalem's destruction, a perfect and expected fulfillment of Matthew 16:27-28. If we are still waiting for the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction of His coming 'in the glory of His Father with His angels,' then some of those who were with Jesus are still alive! An impossibility, to be sure" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 33). Henry Hammond saw it in 1653: the saying "was fulfilled in John's seeing the... famous destruction of the Jews, which was to fall in that generation" (quoted in *Last Days Madness*, pp. 33–34). The challenger cited John 21:22 for a future coming. It is a verse in which Jesus allows that one of the men in front of Him might live to see it, and one of them did.

1 Corinthians 15:23: "they that are Christ's at his coming"

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23). This is the resurrection chapter, and the challenger is right to put it under the coming: Paul ties the rising of "they that are Christ's" to the parousia, so the question is only when the parousia was, and this letter answers inside itself: "the time is short" (7:29), "the ends of the world are come" upon the readers (10:11), "we shall not all sleep" (15:51), "at the last trump" (15:52). The last trumpet of Revelation 11 is the one Gentry and Mathison place in AD 70, and at it "the time of the dead, that they should be judged" arrived (Revelation 11:18). Sullivan has put the partial preterists' own premises into a syllogism: the parousia of Matthew 24 is the parousia of 1 Corinthians 15:23 and 1 Thessalonians 4 (Gentry says so); the parousia of Matthew 24 was fulfilled in AD 70 (Mathison and Wilson say so); therefore the parousia that raises "they that are Christ's" was fulfilled in AD 70. I hold the conclusion. The partial preterists hold both premises and reject the conclusion, and I have given their reason and its cost in the 1 Thessalonians 4 section above.

2 Timothy 4:1, 8: "who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing"

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:1). The challenger added this verse; I am glad he did, because the Greek carries a time-word the King James drops. The verb is *mellontos*, "about to": Young's Literal Translation reads, "who is about to judge living and dead at his manifestation and his reign." Paul, writing from prison shortly before his death, charged Timothy before the Christ who was *about to* judge the living and the dead. That is the same "about to" he used before Felix about the resurrection (Acts 24:15), and the same "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come" of Hebrews 10:37. Verse 8 is addressed to the same generation: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (4:8). Paul expected his crown "at that day," and he put himself and "all them also that love his

appearing," Timothy's generation, in the same sentence. Where contestable: the partial preterists read 2 Timothy 4:1 as the Last Judgment; Chilton cites it, through Berkhof, for "the future Judge" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 530). The word *mellontos* is the reason I do not.

1 Corinthians 1:7; 4:5: the Corinthians were waiting

"So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end" (1 Corinthians 1:7–8). "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come" (4:5). Paul told the Corinthians to wait for it and to hold their judgments until it. In the same letter he told them "the time is short" (7:29), "the fashion of this world passeth away" (7:31), "the ends of the world are come" upon them (10:11), and "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (15:51). Every one of those is addressed to people who would be dead within fifty years if the coming were not in their lifetime. The challenger reads 1:7 as proof of a future coming. It is proof that the Corinthians were told to expect it.

1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13: the wrath to come

"To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Paul tells us which wrath in the next chapter: the Jews "who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us... for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (2:15–16). The "wrath to come" of 1:10 is the wrath that had already begun to fall on the persecutors of the Thessalonian church, and Chilton, partial preterist, says so: "Paul emphasized that the imminent judgment would be poured out upon 'the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets'" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 115). Then 2:19: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" The Thessalonians themselves are Paul's crown *at the coming*. Then 3:13: "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." Paul prays that *their* hearts be found blameless at it. These are not texts about a coming to someone else's generation.

1 Timothy 6:14; Titus 2:13: "until the appearing"

"That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew" (1 Timothy 6:14–15). Paul tells Timothy to keep the charge *until the appearing*, and says God will show it "in his times," in its own season. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13), addressed to people living "in this present world" (2:12), the present age. Neither verse says the appearing is far off; both say the readers should be looking for it. Where contestable: "until" in a charge can mean "for as long as you live, and He may come after." I grant that 1 Timothy 6:14 alone does not fix a date. James does.

James 5:7–8: the judge at the door

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord... Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:7–9). The challenger cited verses 7–8 and left out verse 9, which is the one that tells you how near "draweth nigh" is: the judge is at the door. James is writing to "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (1:1) and has just told the rich men who oppressed them, "Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days" (5:3) and "ye have condemned and killed the just" (5:6). A man standing at a door is not two thousand years away.

1 Peter 1:7, 13: "at the revelation of Jesus Christ"

"That the trial of your faith... might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7). "Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13). Peter's readers were to receive grace *at* the revelation. Peter also wrote, in the same letter, "the end of all things is at hand" (4:7), "the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (4:17), and that he was "a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (5:1), where the Greek is *mellousēs*, "about to be revealed." The man who wrote 1:13 wrote 4:7. Same pen, same letter, same readers.

1 John 2:28: "we may have confidence"

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28). Ten verses earlier: "it is the last time" (2:18). John expected to be among the "we" who would "have confidence" before Him at His coming, and he said the hour was the last one.

Revelation 22:7, 12, 20: "I come quickly"

"Behold, I come quickly" (22:7). "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me" (22:12). "Surely I come quickly" (22:20). I dealt with the book's clock in Chapter 3. I will only add that the challenger has placed, on the same list, as proofs of a far-future coming, three verses that say "quickly," one that says "some standing here shall not taste of death," one that says "the judge standeth before the door," and one that says "it is the last time." He did not cite them for the time-words. He cited them for the word "coming." But the time-words are in the verses, and they cannot be taken out.

Where this item is contestable, in summary

The partial preterists agree with me on the gathering of 2 Thessalonians 2:1, on Matthew 16:27, on 1 Thessalonians 1:10, and on the whole first-century frame. They disagree with me on 1

Thessalonians 4 and Acts 1:11, and that disagreement is the real one. I have given their argument and my answer. Their reading requires Paul's "we" to change meaning in one chapter of one letter; it requires a chapter break between 4:17 and 5:1 that Paul did not write, so that the thief and the travail of 5:2–3 can be AD 70 while the trumpet and the gathering three verses earlier are the end of the world; it requires *apantēsis* to mean leaving when it everywhere means escorting in; and their own best point about 2 Thessalonians 2:2 implies the Thessalonians were not expecting a visible rapture. On Acts 1:11 it requires Luke to mean by "in like manner" something other than what Luke himself wrote in 21:27 and 32. I do not call that a knockdown. I call it the reading that keeps Paul's paragraph and Luke's book in one piece. The reader can weigh that, and I have not yet answered the question that always follows: if the dead were raised in 70, what about the believer who dies today? That is Chapter 10.

Chapter 5: Items 2 and 3: Daniel's Clock: The Seventy Weeks, the Little Horn, and the Ten Kings

The challenger's second version of the challenge added a layer the first did not have: Daniel. Under item 2 he attached Daniel 7:8, 11, 25; 8:25; 11:36 and Revelation 13:5–6 to the man of lawlessness, and under item 3 he wrote out the dispensational scaffolding in full: "The Antichrist 'will confirm a covenant with many for one "seven"' [or 'week'], allowing the 'Third Temple' to be built on the 'Temple Mount' (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 11:1); The establishment of the 'Ten Kingdom Confederation' (Daniel 7:7-8, 20, 23-24; Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12-18), and 'Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth' (Revelation 17:1-6, 15-18; 19:2)."

I want to be exact about what is being claimed, because three different things have been welded together here, and only one of them is in Daniel. Daniel 9:27 speaks of someone confirming a covenant with many for one week. Daniel does not mention an Antichrist, a Third Temple, a Temple Mount, or a confederation; those words are the challenger's, and they come from a system built in the nineteenth century. I will take the texts in the order Daniel gives them, and the reader can decide whether the system is in them.

Daniel 9:24–27: seventy weeks, and the "he" of verse 27

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy... And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:24, 26–27).

Seventy weeks of years, four hundred and ninety, "determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city." Every reading the challenger and I share runs the sixty-nine weeks to the Messiah. The challenger's system then does something no other reading of any prophecy does: it stops the clock after the sixty-ninth week, inserts a gap of two thousand years and counting, and restarts the seventieth week at the end of history with a different "he." DeMar, a partial preterist, puts the problem in a sentence: "It is impossible to insert time between the end of one year and the beginning of another. January 1st follows December 31st at the stroke of midnight. There is no 'period between' the conclusion of one year and the beginning of the next year" (*Last Days*

Madness, p. 253). And: "Nothing in the text of Daniel 9:24—27 implies a 'gap'" (p. 247). He is also candid about why the gap exists: "Without a futurized seventieth week, the dispensationalist system falls apart. There can be no pretribulational rapture, great tribulation, or rebuilt temple without the gap" (p. 246). That is the challenger's item 3 in one sentence: it is the gap, dressed up.

Now the "he." The challenger says "The Antichrist 'will confirm a covenant with many.'" Read verse 26 again. The subject of its first clause is "Messiah," who is "cut off, but not for himself." The "prince that shall come" is mentioned only as the one whose "people" destroy the city; in the Hebrew he hangs off "the people" in a construct chain and is never the subject of a verb. The natural antecedent of "he shall confirm the covenant with many" is the Messiah who was just cut off, and the New Testament says so in Jesus' own words at the Last Supper: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). "The covenant"; "for many"; shed in the seventieth week. DeMar: "it is Jesus who 'will make a firm covenant with the many,' not the antichrist. This language is used by Jesus, not the antichrist, in Matthew 26:28 in addressing His Jewish disciples in the first century as a fulfillment of the seventieth week... Nothing in the Book of Revelation, a book that supposedly describes a future seven-year great tribulation (Daniel's 'postponed' seventieth week), mentions the antichrist making a covenant with the Jews and then breaking it. The New Testament fulfillment of the seventieth week of Daniel 9:27 is found in the redemptive work of the cross" (*Last Days Madness*, pp. 249–250). Isaiah had said the same of the Servant: "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities... and he bare the sin of many" (Isaiah 53:11–12). The "many" of Daniel 9:27 are the "many" of Isaiah 53 and Matthew 26.

"In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." The cross, in the middle of the seventieth week, ended the sacrifices before God: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Hebrews 10:9); "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (10:26). DeMar: "From God's covenantal and judicial perspective they did stop. Jesus put an end to them through His shed blood. This is why He could cry out, 'It is finished' (John 19:30). This is the message of the Book of Hebrews" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 256 n. 9), and then God made the covenantal fact a historical one, in the generation that kept offering what He had ended: "on that very day, which was the seventeenth day of Panemus, [Tamuz,] the sacrifice called 'the Daily Sacrifice' had failed, and had not been offered to God, for want of men to offer it" (Josephus, *Wars* 6.2.1). The sacrifice ceased before God at the cross and ceased on the altar in July of 70, and nothing between those two points required a gap.

"And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation." That is the clause Jesus quoted: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place... then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains" (Matthew 24:15–16). Luke tells us what it looked like: "when

ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20). Chilton: "The meaning of both Daniel and Matthew is made clear by the parallel reference in Luke" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 89). I take the abomination up in the next chapter under item 4, where the challenger lists it again; here the point is only that Jesus placed Daniel 9:27's abomination inside "this generation," and the challenger has placed it after a gap Jesus never mentioned.

Where the seventy weeks *end* is a point on which the men I cite disagree with each other, and I will not hide it. DeMar ends the four hundred and ninety years about AD 33 or 34, three and a half years after the cross, with the destruction of the city "determined" inside the seventieth week but carried out in 70 (*Last Days Madness*, pp. 249, 254–255). Chilton says flatly that "the 'seventy weeks' were to end with the destruction of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24–27)" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 5). Sullivan agrees with Chilton: "This last seven was from the anointing of Jesus in His first coming to His anointing the Church (His Most Holy Place New Jerusalem) in His Second in AD 70." I hold with DeMar, and I want to say why, because the reason is the same one I just used against the challenger. A week is seven years. Four hundred and ninety years that run without a gap from the decree to the Messiah cannot be stretched in their last seven to cover forty; if I let the seventieth week run from the cross to the fall of the Temple, I have done to the week what the dispensationalist does to the space after the sixty-ninth, and a critic would be right to say so, so the clock runs continuously: the Messiah cut off in the midst of the week, the covenant confirmed with many in His blood, and the week closing about AD 34, when the gospel went to the Gentiles. The six things the weeks were to accomplish (9:24) were accomplished in that span: transgression finished and reconciliation made at the cross; everlasting righteousness brought in; vision and prophecy sealed in the One they pointed to; and "the most Holy" anointed, which is not a building but the people on whom the Spirit fell at Pentecost, "he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God" (2 Corinthians 1:21). What follows the weeks is what 9:26 says follows them: "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary... and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." The destruction is the decreed consequence of the week, carried out in 70, not a part of the week's count. Chilton and Sullivan put the Temple's fall inside the week; I think that costs the argument its spine, and I leave it with them, but notice what none of us does: none of us needs a gap, a Third Temple, or an Antichrist. The disagreement among preterists is over which first-century year the clock ran out. The challenger's disagreement with all of us is over whether the clock has run out at all.

Nor is the first-century reading a modern invention. Clement of Alexandria, writing about AD 200, read the seventieth week as ending in the fall of Jerusalem (his own stretching of the half-week to Nero is not my reading, but his century is): "The half of the week Nero held sway, and in the holy city Jerusalem placed the abomination; and in the half of the week he was taken away, and Otho, and Galba, and Vitellius. And Vespasian rose to the supreme power, and destroyed

Jerusalem, and desolated the holy place" (*Stromata* 1.21). Gentry, who assembled the patristic evidence, adds: "several of the early fathers held a distinctly preteristic interpretation of Daniel 9!" (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 352, citing Barnabas, Tertullian, Origen, Julius Africanus, Eusebius, and Augustine). The challenger's version has an ancient advocate too; Hippolytus, early in the third century, placed the seventieth week at the end of the age with Antichrist, so I will not claim the fathers were unanimous, but the reading that puts the week in the first century, ending in the ruin of the holy place, was in the church a century before Hippolytus, and a gap filled by a "church age" of two thousand years and counting is in no father at all; Hippolytus expected his seventieth week within a few centuries, not after a parenthesis that has outlasted every empire since.

"The people of the prince that shall come" (9:26)

The city and the sanctuary were to be destroyed by "the people of the prince that shall come," and their end would be "with a flood," and "unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Every preterist I cite reads this of Titus and his legions in 70; DeMar: "Daniel is seeing this in the sixth century B.C., but it did not happen until A.D. 70, when Titus and his Roman legions fulfilled this prophecy exactly" (*Last Days Madness*, pp. 254–255). The record is Josephus, book seven: "Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple... it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited" (*Wars* 7.1.1). The flood came; the war went to its end; the desolation was complete. The challenger reads verse 26 as history (he has to; the Temple is gone) and verse 27 as future. They are one sentence apart, about the same city, the same sanctuary, and the same "end."

The "Third Temple"

Here is the plainest thing I can say about item 3: there is no verse. The challenger lists Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; and Revelation 11:1 as texts about the Antichrist "allowing the 'Third Temple' to be built on the 'Temple Mount.'" Not one of them mentions a temple being built. Every one of them concerns a temple that was *standing* when the text was written. Daniel 9:26 says the sanctuary will be destroyed; Matthew 24:15 says the abomination will stand "in the holy place," two verses after Jesus said of the Temple in front of Him that not one stone would be left on another; 2 Thessalonians 2:4 was read by people in the 50s who knew exactly one temple of God; Revelation 11:1 tells John to measure a temple that was there to measure (Chapter 3). DeMar: "The New Testament mentions nothing about a rebuilt temple. There is nothing in Matthew 24 that even hints at the rebuilding of the temple... There is nothing in Daniel 9:24-27 that even hints that there will be a rebuilt temple" (*Last Days Madness*, pp. 72–73), and he quotes two dispensational scholars admitting it: Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy, "'There are no Bible verses that say, 'There is going to be a third temple'" (p. 73). When the system's own defenders concede that the Third Temple is nowhere in

Scripture, the challenger should not be asking me for the historical record of its construction. He should be asking himself where he got it.

Daniel 7: the fourth beast, the ten horns, and the little horn

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Daniel 7:7–8). "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (7:11). "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (7:25).

First, the beast. The four beasts are the four kingdoms of Daniel 2, and the fourth is Rome, the kingdom "in the days of" whose kings God sets up His own (Daniel 2:44). The challenger agrees; he affirms the present kingdom. Chilton: "The fourth empire, Rome, partakes of the evil, beast-like characteristics of the other empires, but it is much worse... This, as we noted at 12:3, is the origin of the Dragon's (and thus the Beast's) ten horns and seven heads" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 328), so the fourth beast is not a "revived Roman Empire" at the end of history. It is Rome, in the days of Rome, which is where Daniel 2:44 put the arrival of the kingdom and where Daniel 7:13–14 puts the Son of Man receiving it.

Second, the horns. "The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise" (7:24). John saw the same ten horns on the beast of Revelation 13:1 and explained them: "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Revelation 17:12). The challenger calls this a "Ten Kingdom Confederation." John calls them kings who hold power *with the beast*, for an hour, and who then "shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (17:16). Rome in the first century ruled through exactly such kings: the client kings and provincial governors who marched with the legions. DeMar: "'ten kings' were allied 'with the Beast' in the first century (Rev. 17:12). Rome actually had ten first-century imperial provinces... These provincial kings did what the Beast (Rome) commanded. Caesar ruled the Empire, but lesser rulers governed in the conquered territories and assisted Rome in the persecution of Jews and Christians. They, too, were called 'kings.' For example, Caesar was called 'king' (John 19:15) while Agrippa, who was most assuredly under the rule and dominion of Caesar, was also called 'king' (Acts 26:2)" (*Last Days Madness*, pp. 280–281). The count of "ten

imperial provinces" is Farrar's and is contested; Rome's provinces were more than ten, and I do not rest on the number. Chilton is careful not to over-specify: "It is not necessary, however, to attempt a precise definition of these ten subject kings; the symbol simply represents 'the totality of those allied or subject kings who aided Rome in her wars both on Judaism and Christianity.' The burden of the text is to point to these kings, with whom the Harlot has plied her trade (v. 2), as the instruments of her eventual destruction (v. 16-17)" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 437).

That is the receipt. The kings who burned the harlot are in the record by name. Josephus lists the allied kings whose troops joined Vespasian: "auxiliaries got together, that came from the kings Antiochus, and Agrippa, and Sohemus, each of them contributing one thousand footmen that were archers, and a thousand horsemen. Malchus also, the king of Arabia, sent a thousand horsemen, besides five thousand footmen" (*Wars* 3.4.2); Cassius Dio says the Romans "had many slingers and bowmen that had been sent by some of the barbarian kings" (*Roman History* 66.4.2-3); Tacitus records the hatred of the neighboring peoples for the Jews, and Chilton quotes J. S. Russell on it: "'Tacitus speaks of the bitter animosity with which the Arab auxiliaries of Titus were filled against the Jews... This is a terrible commentary on the words of the angel-interpreter: 'The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore'" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 440). The harlot's former lovers burned her. Chilton, in a footnote: "The destruction of the Harlot by her former 'lovers' is inexplicable apart from the hypothesis that she is Jerusalem" (p. 439 n. 19). No confederation of ten European nations has ever burned a city called Babylon. The kings of the Roman east burned the Temple in the summer of 70, on the tenth of Ab.

Third, the little horn, and here I will be more careful than the challenger was. Daniel 7:8 and 7:24-25 describe a horn that rises among the ten, subdues three, speaks great words against the Most High, wears out the saints, and holds them "until a time and times and the dividing of time," which is three and a half years, the forty-two months of Revelation 13:5. The challenger attaches these verses to the man of lawlessness. The partial preterists in my library do not identify the little horn by name; Chilton connects Revelation 13's beast, with its "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies," to Nero and to Paul's man of sin (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 328), but he does not say "the little horn is Nero." The one early reading that places the horns in the first century is in the Epistle of Barnabas, which Gentry quotes: "'Ten kings shall reign upon the earth, and a little king shall rise up after them, who shall subdue under one three of the kings.' The three subdued kings represent Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. The tenth must be Vespasian, which indicates a start from Julius" (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 157). On that reading, the three horns plucked up are the three emperors of the year 69 and the little horn is the Flavian who destroyed the sanctuary. Sullivan, from the full-preterist side, in the table of his "Exegetical Essays on the First Century Man of Lawlessness," reads the little horn as Jewish, the Herods and the Zealot priesthood who "persecuted and waged war against the saints and performed 'abominations' in the land and

temple." I will not pretend those readings agree. What they agree on is the frame: the horn rises in the days of the fourth beast, Rome; it wears out the saints for three and a half years; and it is destroyed when the beast is slain and "given to the burning flame" (7:11). Nero's forty-two months of war on the saints ran from November 64 to June 68, and Chilton notes that it "did in fact last a full 42 months, from the middle of November 64 to the beginning of June 68" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 333). Nero died by his own hand in June 68; the Temple burned in August 70; Revelation 19:20 has the beast and the false prophet "cast alive into a lake of fire," which is Daniel 7:11's "burning flame." The challenger wants the little horn to be a man not yet born. Daniel puts him among the horns of Rome, and the saints who possessed the kingdom at his fall (7:22) were the saints Paul wrote to.

Then the hinge of the chapter, which the challenger cites for item 10 and which belongs here as well: the judgment sits, the beast is slain, and "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days... And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (7:13–14). The Son of Man goes *up* to receive the kingdom; the beast's dominion is taken away "to consume and to destroy it unto the end" (7:26); "the kingdom and dominion... shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High" (7:27). Jesus told the high priest that he would see that very scene: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). Daniel 7 is a first-century chapter by the testimony of the Man it is about.

Daniel 8:25 and 11:36: the wrong beast

The challenger listed Daniel 8:25 and 11:36 beside the man of lawlessness. Daniel 8 names its own empire: "the ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia" (8:20–21), and the "king of fierce countenance" who shall "stand up against the Prince of princes" and "be broken without hand" (8:23, 25) rises "in the latter time of their kingdom," the Greek kingdom. That is Antiochus Epiphanes, who defiled the sanctuary in 167 BC and died without a human hand on him. Chilton reads Daniel 8 and 11 of "the tribulation suffered under Antiochus Epiphanes" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 88), and on Daniel 8 nearly every commentator of every school agrees, because the chapter names the goat. Daniel 11:36, "the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god," sits inside the long history of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic wars that chapter 11 narrates, and whether it continues of Antiochus or moves on to Herod (Philip Mauro's reading, which David Green follows in his *House Divided* chapter on 1 Corinthians 15) it is a king of the second temple period, not a man at the end of the world. The challenger has borrowed Antiochus's description and given it to a future Antichrist. The pattern is real: the "abomination" Antiochus set up (11:31) is the first-run type of the "abomination of desolation" Jesus quoted from Daniel 9:27 and 12:11, and 12:11 is not an Antiochus text, because it sits in the vision of

chapters 10–12 whose end is "when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people" (12:7), but a borrowed description is not a second fulfillment of the chapter it was borrowed from, and Daniel 8 tells us, by name, whose king it is describing.

Revelation 13:5–6: the mouth speaking great things

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (Revelation 13:5–6). The challenger attached this to item 2. It is the little horn's mouth (Daniel 7:8, 25) on the sea-beast of Revelation 13, whose number is Nero's name (Chapter 7). Chilton puts Paul and John side by side: "The Roman Caesars received honor belonging only to the one true God; Nero commanded absolute obedience, and even erected a 120-foot-high image of himself. For this reason St. Paul called Caesar 'the man of sin'... St. John emphasizes this aspect of the Beast: And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 328). That is Chilton's identification of the man of sin, not mine; I give mine in Chapter 6, and I should say plainly how I relate the two figures the challenger has joined: the little horn of Daniel 7 rises among the horns of Rome and is a Roman figure; the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians 2 sits in the Temple of God and is a Jewish one. They are allies in the same war and they fall in the same fire, but they are not the same man, and the chapter the challenger built by welding them together is his, not Daniel's or Paul's. Forty-two months of blasphemy and war on the saints, November 64 to June 68, and the record of it is Tacitus: "Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace" (*Annals* 15.44).

Babylon the Great (Revelation 17:1–6, 15–18; 19:2)

The challenger put the harlot under item 3, with the ten kings, which is where John put her: she rides the beast, and the beast's horns burn her. I give the identification in Chapter 7 (18:24; 11:8; 17:6) and will not repeat it. I will add the two verses he cited that I did not. "The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (17:18): how can Jerusalem be said to reign? Chilton: "Revelation is not a book about politics; it is a book about the Covenant. Jerusalem did reign over the nations. She did possess a Kingdom which was above all the kingdoms of the world. She had a covenantal priority over the kingdoms of the earth. Israel was a Kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6), exercising a priestly ministry of guardianship, instruction, and intercession on behalf of the nations of the world" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 442–443). Then 19:2: "he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." That is Jehu's commission against Jezebel, "that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets" (2 Kings 9:7), and it is what Jesus said would fall on Jerusalem: "that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth"

(Matthew 23:35). Rome never shed the blood of the Old Testament prophets. One city did, and Jesus named her.

Where this chapter is contestable

Four things. The identity of the little horn is not settled among preterists, and I have shown the reader the readings rather than picking one and calling it proven; what I do hold firmly is that the chapter places him in the days of Rome and ends him at the Son of Man's enthronement. Daniel 9:27's "he" is read by some scholars, including some who are no dispensationalists, as the Roman prince rather than the Messiah; the covenantal reading I have given is the stronger one, and the New Testament's "covenant... for many" supports it, but a critic can cite names on the other side. The year the seventy weeks end is an intra-preterist disagreement, and I have shown it, and the ten kings are a symbol whose exact referents cannot be listed with certainty; Chilton's caution is the right one. What is not contestable is the thing the challenger's item 3 needs: a verse about a Third Temple, a gap after the sixty-ninth week, or a confederation at the end of history. Those are not in Daniel, and the men who built the system have said so themselves.

Chapter 6: Items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8: The Day of the Lord, the Falling Away, and the Man of Sin

Five of the challenger's ten items quote 2 Thessalonians 2 (he spreads the chapter across items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8), so I will take the chapter as a whole and mark each item as I come to it. Here is the passage in full, because the reader needs its time-words in front of him:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:1–12).

Before I say anything about who the man of sin was, I want the reader to see what Paul says about *when*. "Now ye know what withholdeth." "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." "He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." Three present tenses, addressed to people in Thessalonica in the early 50s. The Thessalonians knew the restrainer. The lawlessness was already working. The restrainer was restraining *now*. DeMar, a partial preterist, draws the only conclusion those words allow: "from these time-text passages we know that he was restraining in Paul's day. Without ever being able to identify the man of lawlessness we can conclude that he appeared and disappeared in the first century" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 212). That is the frame. Whatever the historical identification turns out to be, the chapter puts its own events inside the lifetime of the restrainer the Thessalonians could name.

Item 2, first half: "the day of the Lord has come"

The challenger quoted the NIV, "the day of the Lord has already come." The KJV has "is at hand." The Greek verb is *enestēken*, and DeMar is right that the modern versions have it: "The Greek word translated 'is present' is found in six places in the New Testament in addition to 2 Thessalonians 2:2. In each case, 'present' and not 'near' is the best translation (Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor.

3:22; 7:26; Gal. 1:4; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 9:9)" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 213), so the Thessalonians' error was not that they thought the Day was near. The whole New Testament said it was near, and Paul had said so to them in his first letter. Their error was thinking it had *arrived*. Chilton: "False teachers had been frightening the believers by saying that the day of judgment was already upon them" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 108).

Stop there and ask the challenger's own question. What kind of "Day of the Lord" could a church in Macedonia believe had already come, in the early 50s, without walking outside to check? Not the end of the world. Not a visible descent of Christ with every eye seeing Him. Not a rapture, or they would have noticed they were still there, which is the partial preterists' own point and a good one. The only Day they could have believed in on the strength of "a letter as from us" is a Day that happens somewhere else, to someone else: the judgment on Jerusalem that Paul had told them was coming on the Jews "to the uttermost" (1 Thessalonians 2:16). DeMar reconstructs it exactly: "The only word they had was a false report that the day of the Lord, that is, the destruction of Jerusalem, had come... Paul assures them that the day of the Lord had not come, Jerusalem was still standing, and certain events had to transpire before the city and temple would be destroyed" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 216). A church that could be fooled into thinking the Day of the Lord had come is a church that expected the Day of the Lord to be a historical judgment in Judea. That is item 2's first half, and it was fulfilled in 70.

Item 2, second half: the falling away

"Except there come a falling away first." The Greek is *hē apostasia*, with the article: *the* apostasy, one the readers already knew about ("I told you these things," 2:5). Two readings are live, and both are first-century.

The first is religious. Jesus had said of that generation, "then shall many be offended... And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:10–12). Hebrews is one long warning against it: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (3:12); "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (10:26). John wrote, "even now are there many antichrists... They went out from us" (1 John 2:18–19). Paul warned Timothy "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith" (1 Timothy 4:1), the verb of *apostasia*. The great first-century apostasy was Israel's rejection of her Messiah and the drift of Jewish Christians back toward the Temple under persecution; DeMar: "those Jews who rejected Jesus made up the great apostasy... If the 'apostasy' arose from the midst of Judaism, is it not possible that the man of lawlessness is also a Jewish figure of the first century?" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 226).

The second is political. *Apostasia* is the ordinary Greek word for a revolt, and Josephus uses the cognate for the Jewish revolt against Rome. DeMar: "Josephus uses apostasia to characterize the Jewish revolt against the Roman government. If Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is using apostasia to describe a political revolt, then this also neatly fits the historical context of the Jewish rebellion against Roman authority that is known in history as the 'Jewish War'" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 222). Sullivan leans this way: "In this case, it would imply that the Jews were staging their political 'revolt' (cf. Jerusalem Bible Translation) against the Romans in the coming years of AD 66-70."

I do not have to choose, because in the first century the two were one thing. The nation that rejected its King revolted against Caesar in the name of a kingdom its King had refused, and the revolt is the best-documented event in first-century Judea. It began in May of 66, when the procurator Florus "ventured then to do what no one had done before, that is, to have men of the equestrian order whipped and nailed to the cross before his tribunal" (Josephus, *Wars* 2.14.9), and the city rose. Suetonius, from the Roman side: the Jews "revolted and after killing their governor, they routed the consular ruler of Syria as well, when he came to the rescue, and took one of his eagles" (*Vespasian* 4.5). That is the apostasy, in the record, with a date.

Item 4: the man of sin in the temple of God

"That man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

Here is my position, and then the history that gives it color, because Josephus gives this item more of it than any other in the book.

The man of sin is the lawless priesthood of the last generation, seized and enthroned in the Temple by the Zealots, with Phannias, the sham high priest chosen by lot in the winter of 67-68, as its most literal face. The restrainer is the lawful order that held that priesthood down: Rome's civil authority over the province and the legitimate high priesthood under it, with Ananus the son of Ananus as the last man to hold the line. Paul's "now," "already," and "ye know" (2:6-7) fix the century; Josephus supplies the sequence. I name the office firmly and the men loosely, because that is how Paul wrote. "That man of sin... the son of perdition" is a type, not a biography; "the son of perdition" is the title Jesus gave Judas (John 17:12), the insider who betrayed Him from the Temple's side, and the restrainer is named in two genders, "what withholdeth" (neuter, 2:6) and "he who now letteth" (masculine, 2:7), which is a power and its representative, an order and the men who held it. The man of sin has the same shape.

Let me put the other readings on the table before the history, so the reader sees who holds what. Chilton reads the man of sin as Caesar: "Nero commanded absolute obedience, and even erected

a 120-foot-high image of himself. For this reason St. Paul called Caesar 'the man of sin'" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 328); Gentry holds Nero too, with Claudius as the restrainer, as DeMar reports (*Last Days Madness*, p. 220); and there is an ancient tradition behind them, which Gentry quotes from Henderson: "Lactantius, St Chrysostom, St Jerome, and other Christian writers accept and repeat the theory that Nero is the Antichrist to come" (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 80). DeMar's objection is four words long: "Nero never sat in the temple" (p. 220). DeMar himself reads the man of sin as "the principal religious leader of Israel—the high priest who officiated over Jewish law and did not concern himself with using the law in a God-honoring way" (p. 229), with Phannias as the last of them; Sullivan: "Some scholars, present company included, suggest that Phannias Ben Samuel, the final High Priest before AD 70, best fits the man of lawlessness." John Bray proposed the Zealot commander John of Gischala, who "sat" in the Temple (quoted in *Last Days Madness*, p. 230), and Ed Stevens proposes Eleazar, the Temple captain who in 66 stopped the daily sacrifice for Caesar and began the revolt; the objection Sullivan presses against both is that neither was "killed" at the coming, as Paul says the man of sin would be (2:8), John of Gischala certainly surviving the war. I do not fight the Nero reading; I note that every candidate on anyone's list died or disappeared with the first century. The only reading with no candidate at all is the one that puts the man in ours.

Now the history, in order, from the priest who watched it.

The lawlessness. Paul's word for the man in 2:7 is *anomia*, lawlessness (the King James's "man of sin" in 2:3 follows manuscripts that read *hamartia*, sin; the older manuscripts read *anomia* there too), and lawlessness is Josephus's charge against the men who took the Temple. When the Zealots began appointing high priests in defiance of the hereditary succession: "these last took upon them to appoint high priests. So when they had disannulled the succession, according to those families out of which the high priests used to be made, they ordained certain unknown and ignoble persons for that office, that they might have their assistance in their wicked undertakings" (*Wars* 4.3.6). The same section: they "came into the sanctuary with polluted feet."

The enthronement. The Zealots "made the temple of God a strong hold for them... the sanctuary was now become a refuge, and a shop of tyranny" (4.3.7), and then cast lots for the high priesthood: "it fell upon one whose name was Phannias, the son of Samuel, of the village Aphtha. He was a man not only unworthy of the high priesthood, but that did not well know what the high priesthood was, such a mere rustic was he! yet did they hail this man, without his own consent, out of the country, as if they were acting a play upon the stage, and adorned him with a counterfeit face; they also put upon him the sacred garments, and upon every occasion instructed him what he was to do" (4.3.8). Josephus adds that the lawful priests, watching from a distance, wept at the mockery. The office was exalted by a lot cast as if by God, and a man hauled in "without his own consent" was dressed in its glory; Phannias is the face of the thing, not its will.

An office seated in the temple of God by a process that claimed divine sanction is as close to "shewing himself that he is God" as a historian is ever going to hand you.

The restrainer, and his removal. Ananus, deposed from the high priesthood in 62 but "the ancientest of the high priests" in Josephus's words (4.3.7) and the lawful order's spokesman, rallied the city against the Zealots and drove them into the inner court: "the robbers could no longer oppose them, but were forced gradually to retire into the temple; when Ananus and his party fell into it at the same time together with them... so they fled into the inner court immediately, and shut the gates. Now Ananus did not think fit to make any attack against the holy gates" (4.3.12). While Ananus lived, the lawlessness was contained. Then the Idumeans were let into the city by night, and the Zealots and Idumeans together slaughtered the guard: "the outer temple was all of it overflowed with blood; and that day, as it came on, they saw eight thousand five hundred dead bodies there" (4.5.1). Ananus was murdered, and Josephus writes the sentence for me: "I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her wall, and the ruin of her affairs, whereon they saw their high priest, and the procurer of their preservation, slain in the midst of their city" (4.5.2). The restraint was taken out of the way; the lawlessness ran free. Paul wrote in the early 50s, so the restrainer he meant was whatever lawful order the Thessalonians could name, Rome's governors and the legitimate priesthood together; DeMar's "the first-century Roman government was the likely restrainer of Jewish persecution against Christians" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 231) is the Roman half of it. Ananus is the shape of that order's last stand, not necessarily the man Paul had in mind. I say it that way.

The sanctuary as the seat of murder. After Ananus, the Zealots held mock trials in the Temple. They tried Zacharias the son of Baruch and, when their own judges acquitted him, "two of the boldest of them fell upon Zacharias in the middle of the temple, and slew him... They also threw him down from the temple immediately into the valley beneath it" (4.5.4), which reads like Matthew 23:35 played out again. Later John of Gischala "emptied the vessels of that sacred wine and oil, which the priests kept to be poured on the burnt-offerings, and which lay in the inner court of the temple, and distributed it among the multitude" (5.13.6); the blood of worshippers "stood in lakes in the holy courts themselves" (5.1.3); and Titus, outside the walls, told the men inside that he, a Roman, would preserve what they were profaning: "I will endeavor to preserve you your holy house, whether you will or not" (6.2.4). That is the "abomination that maketh desolate" seen from inside the city before the Romans ever reached the sanctuary, and it is Daniel's "for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate" (9:27).

The end. "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2:8). Phannias vanishes from the record with the Temple. Of the two tyrants who had ruled from its courts, Josephus writes that Simon "was reserved for the triumph,

and to be then slain; as was John condemned to perpetual imprisonment" (6.9.4). The office died in the fire. The men who had held it were finished with it.

Which temple? The one standing in Jerusalem when Paul wrote. The Reformers read "the temple of God" as the church, in order to make the Pope the man of sin; DeMar rejects that reading and so do I. The Thessalonians, reading Paul's letter in the early 50s, had exactly one "temple of God" in their minds, and Warfield, no preterist, saw that Paul's description "can have nothing else in view than what our Lord described as 'the abomination of desolation which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place' (Mt. xxiv. 15)" (quoted in *Last Days Madness*, pp. 212–213). The abomination of Daniel 9:27 and 12:11 stood in the holy place before the sanctuary burned. Josephus, who was a priest, says it in his own voice: the Zealots "transferred their contumelious behavior to God himself, and came into the sanctuary with polluted feet" (*Wars* 4.3.6); and later, "the blood of all sorts of dead carcasses stood in lakes in the holy courts themselves" (5.1.3). Whether or not one can name the man, the thing Paul described, lawless men sitting as gods in God's Temple, is in the record.

The abomination of desolation. The challenger's item 4 now joins Paul's verse to Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11, and to Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14: "In the middle of the 'seven' [or "week"] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." I dealt with the "middle of the week" in Chapter 5. On the abomination itself, the first thing to say is that Jesus dated it. He put it in the discourse that ends "this generation shall not pass" and told the men listening that when *they* saw it they should run (Matthew 24:15–16). The second is that Luke decodes it: "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20). DeMar: "By comparing Luke 21:20-21 and Matthew 24:15—18, we can pinpoint the time when the abomination of desolation was to appear... Was Jerusalem ever surrounded by armies prior to A.D. 70? Yes! Did Jesus' disciples flee the city? Yes!" (*Last Days Madness*, pp. 77–78). What exactly "stood in the holy place" is argued among preterists, and the candidates are all in Josephus. The Zealots, who "came into the sanctuary with polluted feet" (*Wars* 4.3.6) and whose investiture of the sham priest moved the old high priest Ananus to say, as DeMar quotes him, "It would have been far better for me to have died before I had seen the house of God laden with such abominations and its unapproachable and hallowed places crowded with the feet of murderers" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 79, citing *Wars* 4.3.10). The Idumeans, twenty thousand of them, who broke into the city in 68 and slaughtered in the Temple courts; Chilton takes that night as the sign (*Paradise Restored*, pp. 89–90), and the Romans, at the end: with the sanctuary still burning, the soldiers "brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus imperator, with the greatest acclamations of joy" (*Wars* 6.6.1). DeMar: "What Caligula could not do in A.D. 40, the Roman armies accomplished in A.D. 70" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 81). Pagan standards, sacrificed

to, in the court of the Temple, on the day it fell. Whichever of those the reader takes as *the* abomination, every one of them stood in the holy place inside the generation Jesus named, and the desolation that followed is the best-documented event in first-century Judea. The challenger needs an abomination in a temple that does not exist. Daniel, Jesus, and Josephus give him three in the one that did.

Item 5: signs and lying wonders

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."

This is one of the best-attested features of the last generation of Judea. Jesus had said, "there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). Here is Josephus, in the 50s, under the procurator Felix:

"These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretense of Divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty" (*Wars* 2.13.4).

"But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him; these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place" (*Wars* 2.13.5).

That Egyptian is in the New Testament. When Paul was arrested in the Temple, the Roman tribune asked him, "Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?" (Acts 21:38). Luke and Josephus are describing the same man; Luke's four thousand and Josephus's thirty thousand are a tribune's count of the armed core and a historian's count of the crowd, the kind of discrepancy two independent witnesses produce.

On the last day of the Temple, August of 70, with the sanctuary burning, Josephus records the lying wonders at their climax: "A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now, there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes" (*Wars* 6.5.2). Six thousand people, women and children among them, died in the

burning cloister on that prophet's word. "Signs and lying wonders... in them that perish." That is not my gloss. It is a Jewish historian describing his own people.

DeMar ties the thread together: "There is certainly enough evidence to support the view that false Christs had made their appearance with numerous 'signs and wonders' during the period before Jerusalem's fall (Matt. 24:24)" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 234). Chilton reads the "spirits of devils, working miracles" that gather the kings to battle in Revelation 16:13–14 as the same thing, and quotes 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12 under it (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 408–409).

Revelation 13:1–17, which the challenger now quotes at length under this item. He wants the historical record for the beast's authority "over every tribe, people, language and nation," for the worship of the beast by "all inhabitants of the earth," for the second beast's fire from heaven and speaking image, and for the mark without which none could buy or sell. I gave the beast's name in Chapter 7: Nero, 666, the sixth king who "is." Here are the rest, verse by verse.

"Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (13:7). That is the Roman Empire, which held the known world; Chilton: "During the time of the Beast's triumph he wields authority over the fourfold earth: every tribe and people and tongue and nation. This was true of the Roman Empire" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 333). It was also given "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them," for "forty and two months" (13:5, 7); Gentry: "the 'war' of the Beast against 'the saints' undoubtedly refers to the Neronic persecution of Christianity, the first imperial persecution of the faith... The express delimitation of the Beast's persecution of the saints is a period of 42 months. Interestingly, the Neronic persecution lasted just about that very length of time" (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 254), and he quotes Moses Stuart's reckoning from November 64 to June 68.

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him" (13:8). The Greek is *gē*, and in this book "those who dwell on the Land" is John's fixed phrase for Israel. Chilton: "St. John is not speaking of the world (the 'earth') following the Beast; the word he uses here should be translated Land, meaning Israel. We know this because the context identifies his worshipers as those who dwell on the Land (Rev. 13:8, 12, 14)—a technical phrase used twelve times in Revelation to denote apostate Israel... Faced with a choice between Christ and Caesar, they had proclaimed: We have no king but Caesar! (John 19:15)" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 331). The worship the verse describes is not a planet bowing to a statue. It is a covenant people choosing Caesar over their Messiah in front of Pilate, and then, when the choice came again under Nero, delivering Christians to him.

The second beast, "out of the earth," out of the Land, with "two horns like a lamb" and the voice of a dragon (13:11), is the apostate leadership of Israel, which is what John calls "the false prophet" in 16:13 and 19:20 (Chapter 7). "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (13:13). Chilton: "Unlike the powerless false prophets of Baal, he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth; thus this false Elijah

deceives those who dwell on the Land... In imitation of the Biblical prophets, who called down God's fiery wrath against apostates and lawbreakers... the Jewish leaders appeared to exercise God's judgment against the Church, excommunicating Christians from the synagogues and persecuting them to the point of death" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 338–339). The record of Jewish wonder-workers in that generation is in Acts itself: Simon in Samaria (8:9–11), Elymas at the proconsul's side in Paphos (13:6–8), the sons of Sceva in Ephesus (19:13–16), and the "image of the beast" which the Land is made to worship (13:14–15): Chilton reads it as the Synagogue itself, remade into an instrument of Caesar's lordship: "The leaders of Israel worked to enforce worship, not of the true God, as in the Christian churches, but of the Synagogue itself—the Image of the Beast" (p. 344), and, "It is not necessary to suppose that the Jews literally bowed down to a graven image; the point is that they were worshiping and serving an alien god" (p. 339).

Then the mark. "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (13:16–17). Two things about this verse that the challenger's reading never notices. First, the mark on hand and forehead is Moses' language for allegiance to God's law: "thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes" (Deuteronomy 6:8), the mark of God's own servants in Ezekiel 9:4 and Revelation 7:3 and 14:1. Chilton: "the 'mark of the Beast,' of course, is the Satanic parody of the 'seal of God' on the foreheads and hands of the righteous (3:12; 7:2–4; 14:1), the mark of wholehearted obedience to the Law in thought and deed (Deut. 6:6–8)... Israel has rejected Christ, and is 'marked' with the seal of Rome's total lordship; she has given her allegiance to Caesar, and is obedient to his rule and law" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 342). DeMar: "Every Jew would have understood that a mark on the hand or the forehead was an identification of loyalty, ownership, and heart-felt allegiance to Jehovah... These signs were not literal marks on the skin" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 184). Second, "buy or sell" in a book about the Temple is Temple language. Jesus drove out "all them that sold and bought in the temple" (Matthew 21:12). DeMar: "Revelation 13:16–17 is not describing the control of financial transactions but rather access to the temple controlled by the Jewish anti-Christian religious establishment... To take the 'mark of the beast' meant a person denied that Jesus was the Messiah, the true temple of God, the only sufficient sacrifice" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 188). Jesus had told the disciples exactly this: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2), and Chilton cites Farrer for the economic side of it: the synagogues "organized economic boycotts against those who refused to submit to Caesar as Lord, the leaders of the synagogues 'forbidding all dealings with the excommunicate,' and going so far as to put them to death" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 341). The "Caesar is Lord" test was the charge in Thessalonica itself: "these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7).

Where this is contestable, I will say plainly: there is no single receipt for the mark the way there is for the three factions or the talent-weight stones. The mark is a symbol, the parody of God's seal, and the historical reality behind it is the exclusion of Christians from synagogue and market under a Jewish leadership allied with Rome, which Acts and John describe and which the Temple's own market made literal. A reader who insists on a tattoo or an implant will not find one in the first century; he will also not find one in the text, which says "the name of the beast, or the number of his name," and gives the number as a man's.

Item 6: the strong delusion

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

I said in the Note on Method that this is the item no historian can record, because it is a statement about an act of God, but a historian can record what the delusion produced, and Josephus did, and he said in his own words that it was the kind of blindness only God sends.

Here is his summary of the generation: "Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them" (*Wars* 6.5.3). Here is the lie they believed: "what did most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, 'about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.' The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination" (*Wars* 6.5.4). Tacitus, from Rome, confirms the same delusion: "in most there was a firm persuasion, that in the ancient records of their priests was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers, coming from Judaea, were to acquire universal empire... the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these mighty destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth" (*Histories* 5.13). Suetonius: "There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief, that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judaea to rule the world... the people of Judaea took to themselves; accordingly they revolted" (*Vespasian* 4.5).

Read those three together. A nation that had just rejected its own Messiah went to war against the world's only superpower because it believed a messiah was about to come out of Judea and rule the earth, and it could not be talked out of it "even by disasters." Jesus had warned them: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). "They received not the love of the truth," and so they believed the lie. DeMar puts the pattern beside its Old Testament model: "This passage parallels 1 Kings

22:19-22 where Ahab is enticed to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead. In like manner, first-century Israel was enticed to go up and fight against the Romans and fall at Jerusalem" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 235). God sent a lying spirit into the mouths of Ahab's prophets so that he would go up and die; He sent a strong delusion into the mouths of Jerusalem's prophets so that she would rise and fall. No pagan historian will ever write "God sent a delusion." Two pagan historians and a Pharisee wrote that the Jews believed an oracle that destroyed them and could not be brought to believe the truth. I do not know what a "historical record" of 2 Thessalonians 2:11 would look like if it does not look like that.

Item 8: destroyed with the brightness of His coming

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

The challenger reads this as a visible, physical return of Christ to the earth to kill an individual. Paul is quoting Isaiah: "he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4). DeMar: "Notice that in its Old Testament context that Jehovah does not appear in bodily form. The language is obviously meant to be interpreted figuratively since God does not have a mouth or lips" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 233). The "spirit of his mouth," Isaiah's "breath of his lips," is the word of judgment that brings an army; the "brightness of his coming" is the appearing of His glory in the destruction He sends. Paul had already told the Thessalonians what that coming would look like and whom it would hit, in the chapter just before: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:6–8). The people troubling the Thessalonians were the Jews who "killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us" (1 Thessalonians 2:15). Chilton, partial preterist: "Clearly, Paul is not talking about Christ's final coming at the end of the world, for the coming 'tribulation' and 'vengeance' were specifically aimed at those who were persecuting the Thessalonian Christians of the first generation. The coming day of judgment was not something thousands of years away. It was near—so near that they could see it coming" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 116). Even Keith Mathison, editor of the standard Reformed book against my view, writes that "the coming of Christ for judgment in 2 Thess. 1 is the same as the coming of Christ for judgment revealed in the Olivet discourse and elsewhere" (quoted by Sullivan from *When Shall These Things Be?*).

The coming of 2 Thessalonians 1:7–8 is AD 70 by the partial preterists' own reading. The coming of 2:8 is the same coming, in the same letter, and it is the coming of 2:1, "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and... our gathering together unto him." One coming, dated by Paul's "now" and "already."

What did it look like in the record? "It is God, therefore, it is God himself who is bringing on this fire, to purge that city and temple by means of the Romans" (Josephus, *Wars* 6.2.1, in his own speech to the rebels). "We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men or any machines do towards overthrowing these towers!" (Titus, in *Wars* 6.9.1). "But as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous, [Ab,] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon" (*Wars* 6.4.5). The man of sin, whoever he was, and the system that enthroned him, were consumed in that fire. DeMar's last word on the chapter is Warfield's: God has "blown him away" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 235).

The challenger has now attached Daniel 7:11 and Revelation 19:19–20 to this item, and they belong with it. "I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Daniel 7:11) is the end of the fourth beast at the Son of Man's enthronement (Chapter 5), and "the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20) is John's picture of the same end (Chapter 8). The lawless one of 2 Thessalonians 2:8, the beast of Daniel 7:11, and the beast and false prophet of Revelation 19:20 go into the same fire at the same coming, and the coming is dated by the restrainer Paul's readers knew.

Where this chapter is contestable

Three places, and I will not hide any of them. First, the man of sin: I have named the office and left the man loose, and a critic can say that a prophecy whose subject cannot be named to a single biography has not been shown fulfilled. My answer is that Paul wrote a type and a power in two genders, that his own time-markers ("now," "already," "ye know") settle the century whether or not any name settles the man, and that the *thing* described, a lawless usurpation of God's Temple ending in its destruction, is in Josephus's fourth book in detail. Second, Augustine confessed he did not know what Paul meant by parts of this chapter, and DeMar quotes him for it (*Last Days Madness*, p. 206); humility here is not a weakness of my position but a condition of reading the text at all. Third, the challenger can still say that AD 70 was a *type* of a greater fulfillment. He said as much about Joel, but Paul does not say "first," "partial," or "pattern." He says "now," and he says the day would not come until *that* man was revealed and *that* restrainer removed. A fulfillment that has to be relocated past the lifetime of the restrainer Paul's readers knew is not a fuller fulfillment of Paul's words. It is a different prophecy.

Chapter 7: Item 7: The Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls

The challenger wants "ALL of the cataclysmic/apocalyptic events described in Revelation 6-20" shown from the historical record. I will give him the record, but I have to say first what Revelation is, because a man who reads it as a newspaper of the future will not recognize the history when it is in front of him.

Revelation is a prophecy, in the idiom of the prophets, about the thing Jesus had already prophesied in plain speech: the end of the Old Covenant order and the destruction of the city and Temple that had killed Him, within that generation. It says so on its first page, "things which must shortly come to pass... for the time is at hand" (1:1, 3). It names its target: "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (11:8). It tells us who the harlot is by the one crime Jesus had assigned to Jerusalem alone: "in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (18:24; compare Matthew 23:35-37, "that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth... O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets"), and it describes that city's fall in the language the prophets had used for every judged city before her: Babylon, Edom, Egypt, Tyre, and Jerusalem herself in 586 BC. R. H. Charles noticed a century ago that the six seals of chapter 6 and the Olivet Discourse "present practically the same material," and Chilton draws the conclusion: "to prophesy the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 182).

"the historical record" for Revelation 6-20 is the record of the Jewish War, AD 66-70, and the question for each vision is not "did the sun literally go black?" but "did the thing the prophets meant by that language happen?" Isaiah said of Babylon's fall to the Medes, "the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine" (Isaiah 13:10). The Medes came; the sun did not. Nobody says Isaiah 13 is unfulfilled. I ask only that Revelation be read by the same rule. Here is the record, vision by vision.

The seals (Revelation 6)

The four horsemen (6:1-8): conquest, war, famine, death. The second rider takes "peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another." Josephus on Judea after 66, as Chilton quotes him: "every city was divided into two armies encamped against one another, and the preservation of the one party was in the destruction of the other; so the day-time was spent in the shedding of blood, and the night in fear" (*Wars* 2.18.2, cited at *Days of Vengeance*, p. 189). The third rider holds "a pair of balances," the famine-scales of Ezekiel 4:10, and a day's wage buys a quart of wheat. Josephus on the siege: "there was no corn which any where appeared publicly, but the robbers came running into, and searched men's private houses; and then, if they found any, they

tormented them, because they had denied they had any; and if they found none, they tormented them worse, because they supposed they had more carefully concealed it... they snatched the bread out of the fire, half-baked, and ate it very hastily" (*Wars* 5.10.2). The fourth rider is Death with Hades behind him, "to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth," which is, as Chilton notes, God's own list of "my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem" in Ezekiel 14:21 (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 191). Josephus's tally of the city: "the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand" (*Wars* 6.9.3), and his verdict: "neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world" (5.10.5), which is Matthew 24:21 in the mouth of a Pharisee.

The fifth seal (6:9–11): the souls under the altar, "slain for the word of God," asking how long until their blood is avenged "on them that dwell on the earth," and told to wait "a little season." Jesus had named the murderer: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee" (Matthew 23:37), and had promised "that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth" (23:35). Chilton: "If the martyrs' blood is flowing around the base of the altar, it must be the priests of Jerusalem who have spilled it" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 194). The little season ended in 70.

The sixth seal (6:12–17): earthquake, sun black as sackcloth, moon as blood, stars falling like figs, heaven departing as a scroll, and kings and captains hiding in the rocks, saying "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us." Every line is quotation. Sun and moon: Isaiah 13:10 (Babylon), Ezekiel 32:7 (Egypt), Joel 2:31 (Jerusalem). Stars like figs and heaven as a scroll: Isaiah 34:4 (Edom). "Fall on us" is Hosea 10:8, spoken of Israel's judgment, and Jesus quoted it on the road to Golgotha, to the women of Jerusalem, about *their* children: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren... Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us" (Luke 23:28–30). Chilton: "This passage is not speaking of the End of the World, but of the End of Israel in A.D. 70... The generation that had rejected the Landlord's Son (cf. Matt. 21:33–45) would soon be screaming these very words" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 198–199). The challenger reads the sixth seal and sees the cosmos coming apart. John's first readers, who knew Isaiah and had heard what Jesus said to the daughters of Jerusalem, saw a nation.

The sealing and the escape (Revelation 7)

Before the trumpets, an angel seals "an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (7:4), and then John sees "a great multitude... which came out of great tribulation" (7:9, 14). The remnant of Israel is marked before the judgment falls, exactly as Ezekiel's man with the inkhorn marked the faithful before Jerusalem's first destruction (Ezekiel

9:4–6). The historical shape is Pella. Eusebius: the Jerusalem church "had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come there from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men" (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3). "That generation." Eusebius, in 325, used Jesus' word.

The trumpets (Revelation 8–9)

The first trumpet burns "the third part of trees... and all green grass" (8:7). Josephus on the Roman approach to Jerusalem, as Chilton quotes him: "The countryside, like the city, was a pitiful sight, for where once there had been a multitude of trees and parks, there was now an utter wilderness stripped bare of timber" (*Wars* 6.1.1, at *Days of Vengeance*, p. 237). *The second trumpet* is "a great mountain burning with fire... cast into the sea" (8:8). Jesus had told the disciples, on the road in from Bethany, with the Temple Mount in view, "if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done" (Matthew 21:21), and Jeremiah had called Babylon "O destroying mountain... and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain" (Jeremiah 51:25). Chilton: "God is now speaking of Jerusalem in the same language He once used to speak of Babylon" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 238).

The fourth trumpet darkens a third of sun, moon, and stars (8:12); Chilton quotes Farrar's survey of the period: "Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, all died by murder or suicide; Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, Herod Agrippa, and most of the Herodian Princes, together with not a few of the leading High Priests of Jerusalem, perished in disgrace, or in exile, or by violent hands. All these were quenched suns and darkened" (pp. 240–241). Four emperors in one year, 68–69, is the record; "lights of government going out" is the idiom.

The fifth trumpet releases locusts from the pit to torment "those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" for "five months" (9:4–5). Chilton offers two layers: the natural locust season, May to September, and "the actions of Gessius Florus, the procurator of Judea, who for a five-month period (beginning in May of 66 with the slaughter of 3,600 peaceful citizens) terrorized the Jews, deliberately seeking to incite them to rebellion. He was successful: Josephus dates the beginning of the Jewish War from this occasion" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 244–245). Josephus on that May: "the whole number of those that were destroyed that day, with their wives and children (for they did not spare even the infants themselves), was about three thousand and six hundred. And what made this calamity the heavier was this new method of Roman barbarity; for Florus ventured then to do what no one had done before, that is, to have men of the equestrian order whipped and nailed to the cross before his tribunal" (*Wars* 2.14.9).

The sixth trumpet looses "the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates" with an army of "two hundred thousand thousand" (9:14–16). The Euphrates was the border across which Assyria and Babylon had come against Israel; it is the direction of judgment. The number is "myriads of myriads," and Chilton is right that "attempts to reduce this expression to arithmetic miss the point" (p. 251). What came from that direction in the fall of 66 was Cestius Gallus with the Twelfth Legion and auxiliaries drawn from the Syrian frontier; Chilton: "the Jewish rebellion in reaction to the 'locust plague' of Gessius Florus during the summer of 66 provoked Cestius' invasion of Palestine in the fall, with large numbers of mounted troops from the regions near the Euphrates... his forces arrived at the gates of Jerusalem in the month of Tishri—the month that begins with the Day of Trumpets" (p. 252). Cestius reached the Temple wall and then, for no reason Josephus could explain, withdrew. That withdrawal was the window in which Jesus' people, who had been told to flee "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies" (Luke 21:20), left.

The Temple, the seventh trumpet, and "the time of the dead" (Revelation 11)

I showed in Chapter 3 that Revelation 11:1–2 has the Temple standing and the city about to be trodden down "forty and two months." That is Luke 21:24 and it is the war, Vespasian's spring of 67 to the Temple's fall; the siege of the city itself was five months. The two witnesses prophesy, are killed "in the street of the great city... where also our Lord was crucified" (11:8), and are vindicated, and the forty-two months ended as Daniel said the time of the end would, with the daily sacrifice taken away (Daniel 12:11): "on that very day, which was the seventeenth day of Panemus, [Tamuz,] the sacrifice called 'the Daily Sacrifice' had failed, and had not been offered to God, for want of men to offer it" (Josephus, *Wars* 6.2.1). Then the seventh trumpet: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (11:15). The challenger put this verse on his list for item 10, as a future event. It is the seventh trumpet of a book dated to the 60s, and the elders explain what it means in the next verses: "the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints... and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (11:18).

Here is a point the challenger will not like, but neither will the partial preterists, and I owe it to both. The seventh trumpet is the last trumpet. Paul's resurrection is "at the last trump" (1 Corinthians 15:52). Gentry holds that the trumpet of Revelation 11 sounded in AD 70, and Sullivan reports Mathison holding the same. Sullivan: "they admit that the last trumpet of Revelation 11 was fulfilled in AD 70, but they do not discuss the fact that the time of the last trumpet was the time for 'the dead' to be judged (Rev. 11:18)... How were the dead judged in AD 70 without the resurrection of the dead taking place?" That is a fair question, and it is the hinge

between the partial and the full view. The kingdom came in its fullness, the dead were judged, the prophets were rewarded, and the destroyers of the land were destroyed, all at one trumpet, in one verse, inside a book that says "shortly." If the reader wants to split that verse so that the destruction is past and the judgment of the dead is future, he will have to show me where the verse permits it.

The open book and the song of Moses (Revelation 10 and 15)

Two chapters the challenger's "6–20" includes and the survey above skipped. In chapter 10 the angel with the open little book swears "that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets" (10:6–7). No more delay; the mystery finished at the seventh trumpet; the book open, not sealed, which is Daniel's sealed book reversed (Chapter 3). In chapter 15 the victors over the beast "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (15:3), and the song of Moses is Deuteronomy 32, the song Moses wrote to be a witness against Israel's last, perverse generation, with "the day of their calamity is at hand" in it (Deuteronomy 32:35; Chapter 2). The men who overcame the beast sang the covenant lawsuit over the city it was written against.

The beast, and the number of a man (Revelation 13)

The beast from the sea is Rome, and in its head of the hour, Nero. The number is his name: "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six" (13:18). In Hebrew letters, *Neron Kesar*: nun 50, resh 200, waw 6, nun 50, qoph 100, samekh 60, resh 200, which is 666. Gentry: "An ancient Hebrew or Aramaic spelling of 'Nero Caesar' (although not the most common one), was 'Nrwn Qsr'... today hard archaeological documentary evidence for just such a spelling of Nero's name has been found in a Murabba'at document of the Qumran community" (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 199). The variant reading 616 in a few manuscripts is what you get if you spell the name the Latin way, without the final *n* (Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*, p. 351 n. 37; Gentry, p. 201), and the beast is given "to make war with the saints" for "forty and two months" (13:5–7). Tacitus: "Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace... Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired" (*Annals* 15.44). Suetonius: "Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition" (*Nero* 16.2). The first imperial persecution ran from November of 64, in the aftermath of the fire of Rome, to Nero's death in June 68: forty-two months by Moses Stuart's reckoning (quoted in Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 254). Chilton: "all the earliest Christian writers on the Apocalypse, from Irenaeus down to Victorinus of Pettau and Commodian in the

fourth, and Andreas in the fifth, and St. Beatus in the eighth century, connect Nero, or some Roman emperor, with the Apocalyptic Beast" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 351).

The second beast, "out of the earth," out of the Land, with two horns like a lamb, who makes the Land worship the first beast, is the apostate religious leadership of Israel in league with Rome; John calls him "the false prophet" (16:13; 19:20). Chilton: "the false prophets were Jewish religious leaders who sought to seduce Christians from the outside... Apostate Judaism became completely subservient to the Roman State" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 336–337). "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15) is that beast speaking.

The bowls (Revelation 16)

The sixth bowl dries the Euphrates "that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" (16:12), and the frogs, "spirits of devils, working miracles," gather the kings "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14). I take Armageddon in the next chapter. On the Euphrates, Chilton quotes Carrington that the armies from the east "surely represents nothing but the return of Titus to besiege Jerusalem with further reinforcements," and adds, "it is certainly more than coincidental that thousands of these very troops actually did come from the Euphrates" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 407–408). On the frogs, I refer the reader to the false prophets of Chapter 6, "suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people," who kept the city fighting to the end.

The seventh bowl: "the great city was divided into three parts" (16:19). Josephus: "the sedition at Jerusalem was revived, and parted into three factions, and that one faction fought against the other... to be like a wild beast grown mad, which, for want of food from abroad, fell now upon eating its own flesh" (*Wars* 5.1.1). Tacitus, independently: "There were three generals, and as many armies. Simon held the outer and larger circuit of walls. John, also called Bargioras [sic; Bar Giora was Simon's name], occupied the middle city. Eleazar had fortified the temple... There were continual skirmishes, surprises, and incendiary fires, and a vast quantity of corn was burnt" (*Histories* 5.12). Three parts, two witnesses, and the corn that could have fed the city for years went up in the factions' fires.

Then "there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent" (16:21). Josephus, describing the Roman artillery: "Now the stones that were cast were of the weight of a talent, and were carried two furlongs and further... As for the Jews, they at first watched the coming of the stone, for it was of a white color, and could therefore not only be perceived by the great noise it made, but could be seen also before it came by its brightness; accordingly the watchmen that sat upon the towers gave them notice when the engine was let go, and the stone came from it, and cried out aloud, in their own country language, The Stone Cometh" (*Wars* 5.6.3, Whiston's translation). Some modern translations of that cry read "The Son is coming," on the strength of a variant in the Greek, and Chilton prints it that way (*Days of*

Vengeance, p. 417); I give the reader Whiston's "The Stone Cometh" because that is what the public-domain text says, and I will not build on a reading the reader cannot check. Either way: hailstones the weight of a talent, from the sky, on the men of the great city, in the summer of 70.

Babylon the harlot (Revelation 17–18)

The harlot sits on the beast; she is "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17:6); she is "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (17:18); and she falls "in one hour" (18:10, 17, 19). Chilton: "Jerusalem was the preeminent transgressor in this regard. The Roman persecution came about through the Jews' instigation and connivance, as the Book of Acts constantly informs us. Jerusalem's whole history, in fact, was one of relentless persecution of the godly, and especially of the prophets" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 431–432). Why "Babylon"? Because she had become what Babylon was to her, and God gave her Babylon's end on Babylon's day. Josephus, who was there: "now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous, [Ab,] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon" (*Wars* 6.4.5); and again, "one cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed, as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians" (6.4.8). The Temple burned on the anniversary of its first burning. The prophet who named the harlot "Babylon" knew what he was doing.

The signs the historians could not explain

The challenger asked for "reliable and verifiable source materials." Here are three that agree with each other and had no reason to.

Josephus: "Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year... the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men... was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night... before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, 'Let us remove hence'" (*Wars* 6.5.3).

Tacitus, who may have read Josephus and who believed none of the religion: "There had been seen hosts joining battle in the skies, the fiery gleam of arms, the temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds. The doors of the inner shrine were suddenly thrown open, and a voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry that the Gods were departing. At the same instant there was a mighty stir as of departure" (*Histories* 5.13).

The rabbis, in the Babylonian Talmud, dating the signs to the year the Temple's own worship went wrong: "The Sages taught: forty years prior to the destruction of the Temple the lot did not arise in the right [hand], and the strip of crimson did not turn white, and the westernmost lamp did not burn. And the doors of the Sanctuary opened by themselves, until Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai scolded them. He said to [the Sanctuary]: Sanctuary, Sanctuary, why do you frighten yourself?... I know about you that you will ultimately be destroyed, and Zechariah, son of Ido, has already prophesied concerning you: 'Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars'" (*Yoma* 39b). Forty years before 70 is 30. On the usual chronology that is the year of the cross; on any chronology it is the generation. The Talmud says the Day of Atonement lot stopped falling right, the scapegoat's crimson thread stopped turning white, and the Temple doors began opening on their own, from the time the Lamb of God was offered. The forty years are the sages' words; the link to the cross is mine. The sages did not write it to help me.

Jesus had said, "fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven" (Luke 21:11). A Pharisee, a Roman senator, and the Talmud say there were. I do not build doctrine on portents; the doctrine stands on the text, but when a man demands the historical record and three hostile witnesses hand it to him, he should at least read it.

What Eusebius said about all of it

The church historian, writing about AD 325, set Josephus beside the Gospels and drew the conclusion the challenger says no one ever drew: "These things took place in this manner in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, in accordance with the prophecies of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who by divine power saw them beforehand as if they were already present... If any one compares the words of our Saviour with the other accounts of the historian concerning the whole war, how can one fail to wonder, and to admit that the foreknowledge and the prophecy of our Saviour were truly divine and marvellously strange" (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.7). He even counted the years: God "held back their destruction full forty years after their crime against Christ" (3.7). The Olivet Discourse was read as fulfilled in AD 70 by the first historian of the church.

Where this chapter is contestable

I will give the challenger five things. First, the date: the Irenaeus tradition, discussed in Chapter 3, is a real external argument for 95, and if he wins it, the beast and the Temple have to be reread. Second, the correspondences are not all of one weight. The three factions, the talent-weight stones, the Temple burning on Babylon's day, the daily sacrifice ceasing, the signs at Pentecost: those are receipts. The five months of Florus or the troops from the Euphrates are plausible referents for symbols that may have been meant more generally, and Chilton himself gives no historical event for the third trumpet's "Wormwood." A symbol can be fulfilled without a one-to-

one event, and I should not claim more precision than the prophet did. Third, the partial preterists who gave me most of this chapter read Revelation 19–20 as the gospel age and the end of history, and I read them as the consummation of the same first-century event; I will show the seam in the next two chapters. Fourth, the land beast as Israel's religious leadership is Chilton's reading and mine; most academic commentators read the second beast as the priesthood of the imperial cult in the cities of Asia, and the reader should know that the Jewish identification is the minority one, held because the beast rises "out of the earth," the Land, and is called "the false prophet." Fifth, the challenger can say, as he said of Joel, that every one of these was a "near partial fulfillment" of a far complete one. To that I have only one answer, and it is the book's own: the time is at hand, the sixth king is reigning, the Temple is standing, and nothing in the twenty-two chapters says "and then again, later."

Chapter 8: Item 9: The Valley of Decision and the Battle of Armageddon

The challenger lists Joel 3:1–16 and Revelation 14:14–20, 16:12–16, and 19:11–21 together under one heading, and he is right to, because they are one picture. Joel supplies the harvest and the winepress; Revelation 14 reuses them; Revelation 16 names the gathering-place; Revelation 19 shows the Rider and the supper. The question is what the picture is a picture of. The challenger thinks it is a literal battle at the end of history with Jesus physically leading an army. I think it is the judgment of Jerusalem and the vindication of her victims, painted in the colors every prophet before John had used, and that the historians recorded the blood.

Joel 3: a valley named for a verdict

"For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel" (Joel 3:1–2).

Start with the time-stamp, because the challenger's own method demands it. "In those days, and in that time" points back to what Joel has just said, and what he has just said is the outpouring of the Spirit "afterward" (2:28–32), which Peter said arrived at Pentecost. The gathering of the nations to the valley belongs to the same "days" as the gift of tongues. The challenger separated Acts 2 from "the far future complete and final fulfillment"; Joel's own connective ties the valley to the Pentecost era.

Joel dates it a second way in the same verse: "when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem." The restoration of Judah's captivity is what the apostles said was underway in their day: Peter's "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets," which "all the prophets... have likewise foretold of these days" (Acts 3:21, 24), and Paul's "all Israel shall be saved" through the one olive tree (Romans 11:26). The Judah being restored in those days was the remnant under Messiah, with the nations grafted in. Joel's valley is dated to that restoration by Joel.

Now the dock, because the challenger's best point on this item is that Joel 3:2 is a judgment on the nations *for* Israel's sake, "whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land," and he will say AD 70 was the reverse. Read the charge. The crime is scattering. Jesus brought the same crime home to Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets... how often would I have gathered thy children together... and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37), and the people she scattered were the "prophets, and wise men, and scribes" He sent her (23:34), "scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria" by her persecution (Acts 8:1; 11:19), where Luke's verb is the scattering Joel charged. The nations are gathered "for my people

and for my heritage Israel" (Joel 3:2), and "my people" in those days is the people Peter names: "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Peter 2:10). The city that would not be gathered, and scattered God's people instead, stands in Joel's dock beside the nations, and both were judged. "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem" (3:16) is the roar Amos aimed at Israel in his first sentence, "The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem" (Amos 1:2). Josephus gives the gathering its literal face, the legions with the auxiliaries of the allied kings, Agrippa, Antiochus, Sohemus, and Malchus of Arabia (*Wars* 3.4.2, in Chapter 5), the nations of the region brought to the valley by a king's command. Then the harlot fell to the beast she rode, and the beast's turn came after (Revelation 17:16; 19:20). Joel's verdict fell on everyone in the valley.

Joel names the nations, which is the verse that takes "all nations" off the globe. "Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine?... The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians... And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah" (3:4, 6, 8). The nations of Joel 3 are Judah's neighbors, the Phoenician and Philistine coast, judged for selling Judah's children, and promised their own sold in return: a regional, historical verdict, carried out in the Greek and Maccabean and Roman wars long before 70. That does two jobs. It shows that Joel's "all nations" is the nations around Judah, not the planet, which is the same scope "all nations" has in Matthew 24:14 and 25:32, and it shows that the chapter already has fulfilled layers inside it, so the challenger cannot treat the whole of Joel 3 as one future event without ignoring the verses Joel addressed to Tyre. (The name is the verdict in both languages: "Jehoshaphat" means "the LORD judges," and the Greek Old Testament renders "the valley of decision" in 3:14 as *hē koilas tēs dikēs*, the valley of judgment, LXX Joel 4:14.)

Now the valley. There was no "valley of Jehoshaphat" on any map in Joel's day. *Jehoshaphat* means "Yahweh judges," and the valley is named for what happens in it, as the valley where King Jehoshaphat's enemies destroyed one another was renamed "the valley of Berachah," blessing, for what happened there (2 Chronicles 20:26). Joel says so himself twelve verses later: "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision" (3:14). The "valley of decision" is the valley of the verdict, the threshing-floor. It is not a grid reference. It is a sentence.

Look at the verbs Joel uses for the judgment: "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great" (3:13). Sickle, harvest, winepress. Hold that; John will pick it up. Then: "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people" (3:16). The challenger quoted that verse from the NIV as proof of a future event. Hebrews quotes the same shaking and tells its readers it is about to happen to them: "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more,

signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Hebrews 12:26–28). The heavens and earth that were shaken were the Old Covenant order, "things that are made," and the kingdom that remained was being received by the people Hebrews was written to. Joel's shaking is Haggai's shaking is Hebrews' shaking, and Hebrews says "we."

Then Joel ends: "So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more... and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD" (3:17–18). That is the city John saw come down: "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth" (Revelation 21:27), and "a pure river of water of life... proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (22:1). The challenger reads Joel 3:17–18 as a future earthly Jerusalem with a literal spring. John read it as the New Jerusalem, the bride, and the spring as the water Jesus had already promised: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).

Revelation 14:14–20: the harvest and the winepress

John takes Joel's two verbs and makes two visions. First the harvest: "Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (14:15). Then the vintage: "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 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. 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" (14:18–20).

"The vine of the earth" is "the vine of the Land," and the vine of the Land is Israel; Isaiah 5 is the vineyard song, and the second of Jesus' three parables in the Temple was about a vineyard whose tenants killed the heir (Matthew 21:33–41). Chilton: "The repeated references to the Land (six times in verses 15–19), combined with the imagery of the vine of the Land, emphasize that this is a judgment on the Land of Israel" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 375). "Without the city" is where the winepress is trodden, which is to say the blood runs outside Jerusalem's walls, and "a thousand and six hundred furlongs" is roughly the length of the Land from Dan to Beersheba. Chilton: "Sixteen hundred stadia is slightly more than the length of Palestine: The whole Land of Israel is thus represented as overflowing with blood in the coming nationwide judgment" (p. 376).

What is in the record? Vespasian's campaign through Galilee in 67, before the siege: "nor did the Romans, out of the anger they bore at this attempt, leave off, either by night or by day, burning the places in the plain, and stealing away the cattle that were in the country, and killing

whatsoever appeared capable of fighting perpetually, and leading the weaker people as slaves into captivity; so that Galilee was all over filled with fire and blood; nor was it exempted from any kind of misery or calamity" (Josephus, *Wars* 3.4.1). The whole Land, then the city. Inside the walls: "the blood of all sorts of dead carcasses stood in lakes in the holy courts themselves" (5.1.3). In the last days of the siege the Romans "made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood" (6.8.5). Blood in lakes; blood putting out fires. A prophet who wanted to say that in a vision would say "unto the horse bridles."

The harvest that comes *before* the vintage in John's vision, the reaping of the grain by the Son of Man Himself (14:14–16), is the gathering of the elect out of the Land before the winepress is trodden: item 1 again, the firstfruits of 14:4 brought in, the remnant at Pella, the church of the four winds. Chilton reads the grain harvest as the ingathering of the church and the vintage as the excommunication of Israel (pp. 373–374), and I agree with him.

Revelation 16:16: "a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon"

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (16:16). The challenger calls it "The Battle of Armageddon." John does not. John calls it a *place*, and he does not describe a battle in chapter 16 at all; the gathering is for "the battle of that great day" (16:14), and the next verse is the seventh bowl on "the great city." The battle, if the reader wants one, is in chapter 19.

The place is *Har-Magedon*, "Mount Megiddo," and there is no Mount Megiddo. Megiddo is a town on a plain. Chilton: "A problem for 'literalists' arises here, for Megiddo is a city on a plain, not a mountain. There never was or will be a literal 'Battle of Armageddon,' for there is no such place" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 411), so why the name? Because of what happened at Megiddo. It is where Deborah broke the kings of Canaan (Judges 5:19), and above all where good King Josiah, disobeying the word of God, went out against Pharaoh and was killed (2 Chronicles 35:20–24), a death Judah mourned so bitterly that Zechariah used it as the measure of Jerusalem's final mourning: "In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon" (Zechariah 12:11), and what is the mourning of Zechariah 12? The verse just before: "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him" (12:10), the verse John quotes on his first page: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Revelation 1:7). "Armageddon" is the name of Jerusalem's mourning. It is the place where a king who would not hear God's word died, and where the city that pierced her King would weep like it wept for Josiah. Chilton quotes Farrer: "Mt. Megiddo stands in his mind for a place where lying prophecy and its dupes go to meet their doom; where

kings and their armies are misled to their destruction; and where all the tribes of the earth mourn, to see Him in power, whom in weakness they had pierced" (p. 412).

Who was gathered? "The kings of the earth and of the whole world" (16:14), by the frogs of lying prophecy. In the record, the armies that came to Jerusalem were the nations. Josephus lists the auxiliaries of the allied kings who marched with the legions; Cassius Dio, a Roman, says the Romans "had many slingers and bowmen that had been sent by some of the barbarian kings," and that the Jews in turn "were assisted by many of their countrymen from the region round about and by many who professed the same religion, not only from the Roman empire but also from beyond the Euphrates" (*Roman History* 66.4.2–3). Tacitus: "Their numbers were increased by a vast rabble collected from the overthrow of the other cities. All the most obstinate rebels had escaped into the place" (*Histories* 5.12). The world's kings came down to the valley of the verdict, some to besiege and some to be besieged, and the verdict was given on the city. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." Tacitus heard the number: "I have heard that the total number of the besieged, of every age and both sexes, amounted to six hundred thousand" (*Histories* 5.13).

Revelation 19:11–21: the Rider, the sword, and the supper

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war... and his name is called The Word of God... and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations" (19:11, 13, 15).

The challenger paraphrased this as Jesus returning "to the earth in order to 'wage a righteous war' against all of the forces of evil." Read the weapon. The Rider's sword comes out of His mouth, and He is called the Word of God. That is Isaiah 11:4, "with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," which is the same weapon as 2 Thessalonians 2:8, "the spirit of his mouth," which the challenger listed separately as item 8; and it is Hebrews 4:12, "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." A sword from the mouth is a word. The war is waged by the Word.

Now here is something the challenger should weigh carefully, because it comes from the man who wrote the standard commentary on Revelation from the side that still expects a bodily return. Chilton on 19:11: "St. John is not describing the Second Coming at the end of the world. He is describing the progress of the Gospel throughout the world, the universal proclamation of the message of salvation, which follows the First Advent of Christ" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 481–482), and on the "slaying" of the kings' armies in 19:21: "The message of the Gospel, the Word-sword of the Spirit, goes out from Christ's mouth and destroys His enemies by converting them, piercing them to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, judging the

thoughts and intentions of their hearts" (pp. 491–492). DeMar, same side: "Jesus did not go into heaven on a horse, and He will not return on a horse" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 165). The partial preterists do not find the Second Coming in Revelation 19. They find the conquest of the nations by the gospel after the harlot's fall. I find the same, with this difference: I think the chapter's first act, the judgment of the harlot and the vindication of her victims (19:1–3), the marriage of the Lamb to the bride who replaces her (19:7–9), and the destruction of the beast and the false prophet who had ruled the Land in league (19:20), is the AD 70 consummation itself, and that the Word's war on the nations that follows is what the kingdom has been doing ever since, and will do, because "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:7).

The supper. "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men" (19:17–18). Jesus had said it first, in the Olivet Discourse, of this very judgment: "For whosoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matthew 24:28). It is the oldest curse of the covenant: "thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away" (Deuteronomy 28:26), and John's wording is Ezekiel's feast after Gog's defeat: "Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field... that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth" (Ezekiel 39:17–18). The record: the Idumeans and Zealots killed the former high priest Ananus and his colleagues and "cast away their dead bodies without burial," so that men who had "worn the sacred garments, and had presided over the public worship... were cast out naked, and seen to be the food of dogs and wild beasts" (Josephus, *Wars* 4.5.2). Titus's soldiers crucified five hundred a day before the walls "when their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies" (5.11.1). Six hundred thousand bodies of the poor were thrown out the gates (5.13.7). The supper of the great God was served in Judea in 70.

The beast and the false prophet are "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (19:20). Nero died by his own hand in June of 68, "weeping at every thing that was done, and frequently saying, 'What an artist is now about to perish!'" (Suetonius, *Nero* 49), and the Roman world that had deified him went through four emperors in a year. The false prophet, the apostate leadership of Israel, burned with its Temple in August of 70, and its lying prophets with it. Chilton reads the lake of fire here as "his symbolic description of the utter defeat and complete destruction of these enemies in their attempt to seize the Kingdom: The evil personifications of pagan Rome and apostate Israel are ruined and overthrown" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 491). I do not need the lake to be a literal pool in Judea. I need the beast and the false prophet to have been destroyed in that generation, and they were.

Where this chapter is contestable

Three things. First, Joel 3:2 on its face is a judgment on the Gentiles for Israel's sake, and the challenger will say AD 70 was the reverse. I have answered that above from Joel's own dating (3:1 with Acts 2:16 and 3:21), from the charge of scattering that Jesus laid on Jerusalem (Matthew 23:34–37), and from the named nations of 3:4–8. It is a reading, and I say so; but it is a reading dated by Joel and Peter rather than imported, and the Tyre verses mean the challenger's "all nations" is a reading too, and a worse one. I hold it with the confidence I hold Acts 2's "this is that," because that is what it rests on. Second, I have followed Chilton's two layers in Revelation 19, a first-century judgment and an ongoing gospel conquest, and a critic may say I have taken what I like from each. I would answer that John himself puts the harlot's fall, the marriage, the Rider, and the supper in one sequence, and that Isaiah 9:7 requires the reign to keep increasing after any consummation, so the two layers are the text's. Third, "Armageddon" has been explained a dozen ways, and I have given the one I find most faithful to Zechariah 12. I would only insist on the negative: there is no mountain at Megiddo, and no literal battle is narrated anywhere in the chapter that names the place.

Part III: The Kingdom

Chapter 9: Item 10: The Throne, the Thousand Years, and the Reign on the Earth

This is the item under all the others. The challenger's eight other items are events; this one is a system, and it is the system that makes him need the events to be future. He believes that Christ, now sharing the Father's throne in heaven, will one day leave it, descend to the Mount of Olives, take a throne in geographical Jerusalem, and reign over the nations from there with His saints for a thousand years, with the nations going up to Jerusalem each year for the Feast of Tabernacles. If that is what the prophets promised, then of course it has not happened, and of course the Second Coming is future, so the question I asked in the thread under his first post, and ask again here, is the question of this chapter: *where does the New Testament say that the enthroned Jesus will leave the Father's throne, relocate to earthly Jerusalem, and sit on a physical throne there?*

He gave me nearly forty references for item 10 and about twenty more in the thread. I will take them in groups, because they fall into groups: the Davidic throne; the "until" texts; Zion and the mountain; the thrones of the apostles; the kingdom texts in Daniel and Revelation; and the thousand years. Appendix A has every reference individually.

What we agree on

Let me say it once more so nobody mistakes the dispute. The prophets promised that Yahweh would dwell in Zion, that David's throne would be established forever, that the nations would be gathered to it, that the saints would reign, and that the kingdom would never end. I affirm every one of those promises. Christ reigns now; the saints reign with Him now; Zion is established now; the nations are being gathered now. The challenger affirms the present heavenly reign too; he wrote that Jesus "is currently sharing the Father's heavenly throne." The whole question is whether the reign *moves*, from heaven to a chair in Jerusalem, and whether the apostles ever said so.

The throne of David: Luke 1:32–33 and Acts 2:29–36

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32–33).

The challenger wrote: "David's throne historically existed exclusively in geographical Jerusalem." That is true, and it is the premise of his whole position, so let us ask the apostles what happened to Gabriel's promise. Peter, on Pentecost, in Jerusalem, speaking of David:

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ... This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:30–36).

Read the logic. God swore to David that his seed would sit on his throne. Peter says David foresaw *the resurrection of Christ* in that oath. Then Peter explains the throne: resurrection, exaltation "by the right hand of God," the outpoured Spirit as proof, and Psalm 110, "Sit thou on my right hand." The conclusion is not "and one day He will come to Jerusalem to sit on David's chair." The conclusion is "God hath made that same Jesus... both Lord and Christ." Peter does not postpone the Davidic throne. He locates it, and he locates it at the right hand of God. Chilton, a partial preterist and a postmillennialist, says exactly this: "According to the inspired Apostle Peter, David's prophecy of Christ being seated on a throne was not a prophecy of some earthly throne in Jerusalem (as some today mistakenly insist). David was prophesying about Christ's throne in heaven. It is the heavenly enthronement that King David foretold, Peter told his audience on the Day of Pentecost. From His throne in heaven, Christ is already ruling the world" (*Paradise Restored*, pp. 68–69). DeMar: "He now occupies David's throne in the heavenly Jerusalem" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 125).

Gabriel promised David's throne; Peter said the promise was kept at the ascension. The challenger's whole case requires that Peter left something out. I asked him for the verse where an apostle supplies it. He answered with Acts 3:19–21, so let us go there.

The rest of the challenger's Davidic texts say the same thing in the apostles' hands. 2 Samuel 7:14, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son," is applied by Hebrews to the Son who has already "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3, 5). Isaiah 9:7, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David," is the text Gabriel is quoting in Luke 1:32–33, and Peter says where that throne is. Jeremiah 30:8–9, "I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds... But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them," uses the verb Peter uses: God "would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:30); Paul preached the same in Antioch, "he raised up unto them David... Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" (Acts 13:22–23). Jeremiah 23:5–6 and 33:14–18, the Branch who "shall reign and prosper," with 33:7 and 11, "I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return" and "I will cause to return the captivity of the land," the restoration Peter called "the

times of restitution" (Acts 3:21) and Joel dated his valley by (Joel 3:1), with the promise that David "shall never want a man to sit upon the throne" and the priests the Levites shall not "want a man before me," are fulfilled in one Man who is both: "a priest upon his throne" (Zechariah 6:13), who "because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Hebrews 7:24). Ezekiel 34:23 and 37:24, "one shepherd... my servant David," Jesus claimed in person: "there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). Not one of these promises is postponed by the apostle who quotes it.

"Whom the heaven must receive until": Acts 3:19–21 and Psalm 110:1

The challenger quoted Acts 3:21 in the New Living Translation: "For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things," and said it was "the actual witness of 'the Holy Scriptures'" I had demanded, the verse that says Jesus must leave heaven. Here it is in the King James, with the verses on either side, because the NLT's "final" is not in the Greek and the surrounding verses tell you what "all things" means:

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (Acts 3:19–24).

Three things. First, Peter tells his hearers what the "restitution of all things" is: it is what "all his holy prophets" spoke of, and then he says, of all the prophets from Samuel on, "have likewise foretold of *these days*." These days. The days Peter is standing in. The restoration the prophets foretold was underway in the first generation; Peter is preaching inside it. Second, the "sending" of Jesus is attached to a judgment on Peter's own hearers: "every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." That is the coming in judgment that fell on the unrepentant of that generation. Sullivan: "Per Peter, God was in the process of restoring Israel by forming a spiritual new covenant 'new people' or 'nation'... and if they didn't repent... they would be 'cut off' from that new covenant people and blessings and be judged in AD 70." Third, and this is the one that matters most: nothing in the verse says Jesus will *leave* heaven for Jerusalem. "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution" says heaven holds Him until the restoration; it does not say what happens to His throne after. The challenger read "until" as a terminus for the heavenly session and "restitution" as a relocation. The verse says neither. Chilton, who expects a bodily return, uses it only to say that Christ "will remain in heaven until

the Last Judgment" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 189), not that He will reign from Jerusalem afterward. The phrase "restitution of all things" is one Jesus had already used of a man: "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already" (Matthew 17:11–12), of John the Baptist. The restoring Peter preached had begun with John and was running when Peter spoke.

The same goes for Psalm 110:1, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," which the challenger says "marks a definitive end to His current celestial session." It marks the end of the *subjugation*, not of the session; "until" tells you when the enemies will be under His feet, not where He will sit afterward. Paul applies it: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Corinthians 15:25), and the one New Testament writer who dates the footstool does it for the first century: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Hebrews 10:12–13), and twenty-four verses later, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (10:37). The enemies in Hebrews are the ones trampling the Son of God and about to be devoured by "fiery indignation" (10:27–29), the apostate covenant people of Hebrews' day. Sullivan: "the first century Jewish 'enemies' to be 'made his footstool' were 'about to' experience a judgment of fire at Christ's 'in a very little while' AD 70 coming that could not be delayed (Heb. 10:13-37)." The partial preterists read "until" as the Last Day; they do not read it as a move to Jerusalem. Gary North, as far from me on the resurrection as a man can be, writes: "Any suggestion that Jesus will rule physically on earth in history (meaning before the final judgment), away from His place at God's right hand, is also a suggestion that the right hand of glory is not all that glorious" (*Rapture Fever*, p. 80).

Revelation 3:21: the two thrones

The challenger's first throne text was Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." He reads it as "Jesus explicitly differentiates between His current position and His future throne." Read the tense. "I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne": past and present. Then "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne": the overcomer in Laodicea, in the 60s, is promised a seat on Christ's throne. If Christ's throne is a future chair in Jerusalem, then Laodicean Christians were promised a chair in Jerusalem. If, as Paul says, God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6), then Christ's throne is where the Father's is, and the overcomers sit with Him there. The verse distinguishes two thrones in the way a son's seat beside his father is distinguished from the father's; it does not put one in heaven and the other on earth. Chilton on the parallel in Revelation 20:4: "The saints' thrones are in heaven, with Christ (Eph. 2:6); yet,

with their Lord, they exercise rule and dominion on earth (cf. 2:26-27; 5:10; 11:15)" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 514).

Jeremiah 3:17: the city called a throne

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 3:17). The challenger: "The prophet explicitly designates the physical city as the location of this authority." But look at the verse before it, which tells you *when* "that time" is: "in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more" (3:16). The days when Jerusalem is called Yahweh's throne are the days when nobody remembers the ark: the days after the Old Covenant furniture is gone. That is not a restored Temple with a restored ark and a chair in it. That is a Jerusalem with no ark at all, which is the Jerusalem John saw: "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Revelation 21:22), and Jeremiah does not say a man will sit on a throne *in* Jerusalem. He says Jerusalem *is* the throne. The city is the seat of God's rule; and the New Testament's Jerusalem, the one the nations are gathered to, is "the heavenly Jerusalem" to which the Hebrews had already come (Hebrews 12:22), "Jerusalem which is above... the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26).

Zion and the mountain: Isaiah 2, Micah 4, Zechariah 8 and 2, Isaiah 62

The challenger posted Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-8 twice each, with Zechariah 2:10-13, 8:3, 8:20-23, Micah 4:6-8, Isaiah 62:11-12, and Obadiah 21. I affirmed every one of them in the thread and I affirm them here. The question is how the apostles read them.

Isaiah 2:2 says that "in the last days" the mountain of the Lord's house will be established above the hills and all nations will flow to it. I showed in Chapter 2 that the apostles said they were in the last days. Hebrews then tells the readers *which mountain they had come to*: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (Hebrews 12:22). Not "ye will come." "Ye are come." Isaiah's mountain "exalted above the hills" with nations "flowing" uphill into it is a picture, as I said in the thread: if that is literal geography, we are going to need a different planet. Chilton reads the "last days" of Isaiah 2:2 as the generation in which "the 'Holy Mountain' began its dynamic growth and all nations began to flow into the Christian faith, as the prophets foretold (see Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-4)" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 116). DeMar: "In the Old Testament, a mountain was often a symbolic reference to a kingdom or national power" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 332). Daniel's stone "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:35); that mountain is the kingdom; nobody thinks it is granite. Micah 4 says the same as Isaiah 2 nearly word for word and adds the throne: "the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever..."

unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem" (Micah 4:7–8), and "from henceforth" is the hinge: the reign in Zion began at a point and has not stopped. "The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2) is what the risen Lord commanded: "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Then "they shall beat their swords into plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4) is a trajectory, the direction the Word sends the nations, not a date on which the last sword was melted; Isaiah 9:7 says the increase of that government has no end.

Zechariah 2:10–11: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people." Paul tells us when the nations were joined: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19), "that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body" (3:6). "I will dwell in the midst of thee" is "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) and "ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them" (2 Corinthians 6:16), where Paul quotes Ezekiel 37:27, from the very chapter the challenger cited for a future "David my servant" reigning over a restored Israel (Ezekiel 37:24–27). Paul took Ezekiel 37's "my tabernacle also shall be with them" and said it was the Corinthian church. Zechariah 8:3, "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth," is the same dwelling, and the city of truth is the one John calls "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven" (Revelation 21:2).

Zechariah 8:20–23, "many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem," and the ten men taking hold of the skirt of a Jew, saying "We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you," is the Gentile mission in a sentence: "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22), the gospel "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16), and Peter at Cornelius's house. Isaiah 62:11, "Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him," is Revelation 22:12, "behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me," which is on the challenger's list for item 1, and Isaiah 11:10, from the challenger's citation of Isaiah 11:1–12, "there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek," is quoted by Paul as the charter of his own ministry: "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust" (Romans 15:12). Paul says Christ *has* risen to reign over the Gentiles. He does not say He will come down to do it.

This is the pattern across the whole list. The challenger reads the prophets and tells me what their imagery must mean physically. I read the prophets through the apostles, who quoted those exact verses and said they were being fulfilled in the church. Luke 1 promises David's throne; Acts 2 locates it. Isaiah 2 promises the mountain; Hebrews 12 says we have come to it. Ezekiel

37 promises the tabernacle with them; 2 Corinthians 6 says the church is it. Isaiah 11 promises the root of Jesse reigning over the Gentiles; Romans 15 says he has risen to do it. Jeremiah 3 says Jerusalem will be the throne when the ark is forgotten; Revelation 21 shows the city with no temple. Those are not my readings imposed on the prophets. They are the apostles' readings, and they are in the verses the challenger himself cited.

Zechariah 14: the feet on the mountain

Now the text that is the real basis of the challenger's "physical touchdown," and I will not dodge it: "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west... And the LORD shall be king over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:3–4, 9).

Four observations. First, the chapter opens with Jerusalem *taken*, not rescued: "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity" (14:2). That happened in 70, in the record, in detail; Josephus's whole fifth and sixth books are that verse. Second, the people are told to *flee* through the valley the split mountain opens: "ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains... like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah" (14:5). That is Luke 21:21, "then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains," and it is Pella. The mountain cleaving is the way of escape for the remnant, which is what a mountain splitting east and west from Jerusalem would be. Third, as DeMar points out, "one of the problems in making Zechariah 14:4 refer to Christ's second coming is the absence of any reference to Him coming down... Numerous times in the Bible we read of Jehovah 'coming down' to meet with His people. In most instances His coming is one of judgment. In no case was He physically present" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 332). Yahweh's "feet" stood on Sinai, on the Temple's threshold, and on "the high places of the earth" in Micah 1:3, where "the mountains shall be molten under him" (1:4) and the event was the fall of Samaria to Assyria, and nobody saw a foot. The idiom is Yahweh's presence in judgment. Fourth, an early Christian reader applied the verse to Jesus' *first* coming: Tertullian, as DeMar quotes him, "'But at night He went out to the Mount of Olives.' For thus had Zechariah pointed out: 'And His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives'" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 334). DeMar's conclusion, on the whole chapter, from the partial-preterist side: "Forcing these series of descriptive judgments to leap over the historical realities of Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 so as to fit a future judgment scenario is contrived and unnecessary" (p. 331).

Then the challenger's clincher, Zechariah 14:16–17: the survivors of the nations "shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain." I asked him in the thread:

do you expect the Messianic kingdom to reinstate mandatory Mosaic feast observance, with a covenant curse on the nations that do not make the trip? The question stands, and Paul answered it: the feast days "are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17). Jesus did, at the Feast of Tabernacles itself: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37), on the day the priests poured out the water, in the feast Zechariah 14:16 names, with Zechariah 14:8's "living waters" in His mouth. Chilton: "Zechariah too prophesied of the meaning of this feast in terms of the conversion of the nations and the sanctification of every area of life (Zech. 14:16-21). In the Last Days, during the celebration of the same feast, Jesus Christ again set forth its meaning: the outpouring of the Spirit upon the restored believer" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 222). The chapter ends with "in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts" (14:21), the trader driven from the house, which Jesus did with a whip of cords (John 2:15-16), and with "every pot in Jerusalem" holy, so that "all they that sacrifice" may use them (14:21), which is what the New Covenant did to sacrifice: "there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18), and every believer a priest. "The LORD of hosts" dwelling with them is John's "the tabernacle [*skēnē*] of God is with men" (Revelation 21:3), the Feast of Tabernacles kept forever. Zechariah 14, read whole, is the city taken, the remnant fleeing, the living water flowing, the nations keeping the true Tabernacles, and the Lord king over all the earth. Every piece of it is in the New Testament, and none of it is a chair. I will say exactly what in that chapter is a reading and what is not: verses 1-2, the city taken and half carried captive, are not a reading, they are Josephus; verse 4, the feet and the cleft mountain, is a reading, and I have given it with DeMar and Tertullian beside me.

The thrones of the apostles: Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:28-30, Matthew 25:31, Acts 1:6

"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28).

The challenger's AMP bracket reads "the renewal [that is, the Messianic restoration and regeneration of all things]." The Greek word is *palingenesia*, and it occurs exactly once more in the New Testament: "he saved us, by the washing of regeneration [*palingenesia*], and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). The regeneration is the age of the new birth. Chilton: "By His death, resurrection, and ascension to His glorious Throne (Eph. 1:20-22), Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom Age (Col. 1:13)—the Regeneration—in which all nations are being brought to feast at His Table with the patriarchs and apostles (Isa. 52:15; Luke 13:28-29; 22:29-30). In this age, the apostles reign over the New Israel" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 510). The apostles' thrones are their authority over the new Israel: the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and

prophets" (Ephesians 2:20), and the New Jerusalem's "twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Revelation 21:14). Twelve thrones, twelve foundations, twelve tribes of the new Israel. Luke 22:29–30 says the same thing with "kingdom" where Matthew has "regeneration," and adds the table: "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom," which is what the church has done at the Lord's table since the night He said it.

Matthew 25:31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," is not a new scene. It is the coming of 24:30–31 with the throne shown: "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels," which is 16:27–28, "the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works... There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see." Three statements of one coming, the third dated by the men who would live to see it. DeMar: "Compare 25:31 with 16:27, a certain reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70... These verses are almost identical" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 149). Chapter 25's three parables, the virgins, the talents, the sheep and the goats, are all readiness for that coming, and nobody in the challenger's camp separates chapter 24 from chapter 25 but the chapter number (R. T. France, who divides the discourse at 24:36, is the honest exception, and I met him in Chapter 1). "The throne of his glory" is the phrase of 19:28, where the Twelve sit with Him "in the regeneration," the word Paul uses for what the Spirit did (Titus 3:5). Daniel supplies the frame: the Son of Man receives the kingdom (7:13–14), and the awakening to "everlasting life" and "everlasting contempt" happens "at that time," the time of the unequaled trouble (12:1–2). Jesus' "everlasting punishment" and "life eternal" in 25:46 are Daniel's pair, and Daniel dated them.

The joint the challenger will press is "all nations" (25:32), *panta ta ethnē*, which sounds like the globe. It is the same phrase Jesus used earlier in the same discourse: "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (24:14), and Paul says that was done by the 60s: the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Colossians 1:23), "made known to all nations" (Romans 16:26). Jesus used the phrase twice in one speech; it means the same thing both times. Joel gives the Old Testament picture, the nations gathered to "the valley of Jehoshaphat" to be judged for how they treated God's people (Joel 3:2), which Joel himself dates to the days when Judah's captivity is restored (3:1), the days Peter said had come (Acts 2:16; 3:21), and which I take in Chapter 8.

The criterion is where the reading gets its spine, because it is Jesus' own earlier words. He sent the Twelve out and told them how the nations' reception of them would be judged: "He that receiveth you receiveth me... And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (10:40–42), and "whosoever shall not receive you... It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city" (10:14–15). Matthew 25

is that promise paid out: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (25:40). The hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned "brethren" are the apostles' own résumé, "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace" (1 Corinthians 4:11), and the Hebrews who "had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods" (Hebrews 10:34) are the sheep in the act. The goats are the towns and peoples that shut the door on the messengers, "ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (24:9). Jesus told the Twelve the nations would be judged by how they received them; 25:31–46 is that judgment with the throne attached.

DeMar is candid that "all nations" is hard to confine to a single event in 70, and he reads the passage as "a judgment over time" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 150). I keep his observation and put it inside the generation rather than after it. The nations were not judged in one afternoon; they were judged as the gospel reached them and as they received or refused its carriers, city by city (10:14–15), between Pentecost and the fall of the city, with the verdict pronounced at the coming. "Over time" describes the forty years. It is not a loophole out of them. What I hold with less confidence is not the date of the coming or the identity of the judge; it is whether the gathering before the throne is a single scene or the summary of a period, and the text allows either, and one thing stays true now, so that no reader hears "the judgment already happened, so nobody is judged": the event was dated; the standard was not. Every person still faces the same throne at death, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27), and the outcomes are the two Daniel named. The judgment of the nations happened. The judgment of the person is at the door he walks through.

Acts 1:6: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The challenger cites the question as if it were the answer. Jesus did not say "yes, later." He said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons," and then, "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (1:7–8). The restoration they asked about was redirected into the mission they were given; and one of the men who asked the question stood up ten days later and announced that Christ had been raised up to sit on David's throne (Acts 2:30). Peter answered Acts 1:6 himself.

Three smaller texts from the same list. Isaiah 1:26, "I will restore thy judges as at the first," is the Old Testament behind the twelve thrones "judging the twelve tribes of Israel"; the judges restored to Zion are the apostles, and the verse after it says how Zion is restored: "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness" (1:27). Matthew 20:21, the mother of James and John asking that her sons "may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom," got the answer "Ye know not what ye ask... to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give" (20:22–23), followed by "whosoever will be great among you,

let him be your minister" (20:26); it is a text about the nature of the kingdom's rule, and it cuts against a political throne. 1 Corinthians 6:2, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?", is Paul's argument that Corinthian Christians should settle their own lawsuits *now*, because they are the judges; it is a present fact he reasons from, not a future he postpones, and Luke 14:15, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," was answered by Jesus with the parable of the great supper: the invited guests refused, and "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" and the people from "the highways and hedges" were brought in (14:21–23). The supper was served to those who came.

Daniel 2 and 7, Obadiah 21, Revelation 2:26–27, 5:10, 11:15, 12:10

Daniel 2:44: "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." The kings are the kings of the fourth kingdom, Rome. The kingdom was set up in the days of Rome; the challenger agrees, because he affirms the present reign, but then Daniel 2 has one fulfillment, in the first century, and the stone that "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (2:35) is the mountain Hebrews says we have come to and Isaiah says the nations flow into. DeMar: "There are no exegetical reasons to postpone the kingdom of Daniel 2. No gap is mentioned" (*Last Days Madness*, p. 248).

Daniel 7:13–14: the Son of Man comes "with the clouds of heaven... to the Ancient of days," and receives "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him." I said it in the thread: He comes *to* the Ancient of Days, not from heaven to Jerusalem. Chilton: "Christ is seen going up, not down! The Son of man is going to the Ancient of Days, not coming from Him! He is not descending in clouds to the earth, but ascending in clouds to His Father!" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 67). Then 7:18, 22, 27: "the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever." The saints possess it with Him, from where He has it. Obadiah 21, "saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's," is the same: Zion's deliverers come *up* to Zion, and the kingdom is Yahweh's. Nothing in any of these texts has the Son of Man leaving the Ancient of Days for Judea.

Revelation 2:26–27, to Thyatira: "he that overcometh... to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron... even as I received of my Father." *Received*, past tense; Psalm 2 already fulfilled in Christ, who shares it with overcomers in a first-century church. Revelation 12:10: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ," spoken when the dragon is cast down, in a book whose events "must shortly come to pass." Revelation 11:15 I dealt with in Chapter 7: the seventh trumpet, "he shall reign for ever and ever," at the time of the dead being judged, and Revelation 5:10, which the challenger quoted in the NASB, "they will reign upon the earth": in the King James it is "we shall reign on the earth," and in either reading the question is the *sphere* of the saints' rule, not the *location* of Christ's throne. Chilton: "Does this reign of the saints take place in heaven or on earth?"

The answer should be obvious: both!... the Church's sphere of rule includes the earth, but it is exercised from the Throne in heaven. Jesus said to Pilate, 'My Kingdom is not from this world'" (*Days of Vengeance*, pp. 514–515). The saints reign on the earth the way their King does: from Zion above, over the nations below, by the Word. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2:12), Paul told Timothy, and he did not mean Timothy would get a province.

The thousand years: Revelation 20:1–10

Now the piece a first-time reader will find hardest, and I will not pretend otherwise. The challenger's item 10 is "the 'thousand years' 'Messianic Kingdom'... 'reign on the earth.'" Here is what I hold, what others on both sides hold, and why the chapter, read on its own terms, supports it.

First, what the text does not say. It does not say Christ reigns on earth. It says, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (20:4). Souls. Thrones. Reigning with Christ, who is where Revelation 3:21 put Him, on the Father's throne. The challenger quoted 20:4–6 as "reign on the earth," and the words are not there. Chilton reads 20:4 as a reign of souls with Christ in heaven, and amillennialists generally do; they are right.

Second, what "a thousand" means in a Hebrew mouth. Not "endless"; the text itself says the thousand years end (20:3, 7). It means the full amount of a thing. God owns "the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psalm 50:10): all of them. He keeps covenant "to a thousand generations" (Deuteronomy 7:9): to every one. "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday" (Psalm 90:4): the whole span, as nothing. The thousand years of Revelation 20 is the full term of something. The question is the full term of what, and the chapter answers: the full term of Satan's binding, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (20:3). Chilton calls the number "a vast, undefined period of time" that "has already lasted almost 2,000 years" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 507); the challenger calls it a literal millennium after the Second Coming; I call it the full term of the binding, however long the binding lasted, and the book that says "shortly" at both ends tells us how long. Whatever the thousand years is, it is not "the kingdom," because Luke 1:33 says of His kingdom "there shall be no end," Daniel 7:14 says "an everlasting dominion," and Revelation 11:15 says "for ever and ever." A thousand years has an end. The kingdom does not.

Third, the structure, because this is where the chapter stops looking out of place. Revelation 20 is not the chapter after 19 in time. It is the same span told again from Satan's side, and the chapter's own bookends say so. It opens with "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan" (20:2), which is all but word for word the dragon of 12:9, "that old serpent, called the

Devil, and Satan." It closes with the devil cast into the lake "where the beast and the false prophet are" (20:10), already there, where 19:20 put them. Revelation tells its story this way throughout: the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls each run over the same ground. Chapter 20 runs from Christ's binding of Satan to the fall of the city, in parallel with chapters 12 through 19, which is why "the time is at hand" of 22:10 can govern all of it. The amillennialists, who put the Second Coming in the future, nevertheless read chapter 20 as recapitulating rather than following chapter 19; Sullivan notes that "Amillennialists such as G.K. Beale, Robert Strimple and Simon Kistemaker correctly teach that Revelation 20:5-15 simply recapitulates these verses and themes... Revelation 20 is not an isolated island standing away from the time texts or from the structure the book was written in." The partial preterists put 1–19 and 21–22 in the first century. Put the two together and chapter 20 cannot be the one island in the book that is two thousand years long.

Fourth, the binding, which Jesus names. "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?" (Matthew 12:28–29). Binding the strong man is what the kingdom's arrival looked like. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18), said when the seventy came back from the first mission. The demons knew the schedule: "art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29), and what the binding restrained is spelled out in 20:3: "that he should deceive the nations no more." For the first time since Babel the nations could hear; Acts is the record of it, and Paul's "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Colossians 1:23) is the receipt that they did. Chilton, from the other side of the resurrection question, concedes the key point: "The final act in the drama of the definitive... binding of Satan was played out in the destruction of the Old Covenant system. This is why St. Paul, writing a few years before the event, could assure the Church that 'the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet' (Rom. 16:20)" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 502).

Fifth, the reign. The souls on thrones in 20:4, "beheaded for the witness of Jesus," are the souls under the altar of 6:9–11, "slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," who were told to wait "yet for a little season." Chapter 20 shows them reigning with Christ while the binding holds. "The first resurrection" is their life with Him; "the rest of the dead" wait for the term to end, which is the general resurrection of 20:12–13, Hades giving up its dead at the end of the age. Chilton reads the first resurrection as regeneration ("The First Resurrection is Spiritual and ethical, our regeneration in Christ," *Paradise Restored*, p. 187), and Sullivan and Green follow him in "Is Jesus Still in a Physical Body Post AD 30?" (FullPreterism.com, 2015); I think the martyrs are specifically in view, but the difference does not touch the timing.

Sixth, the loosing, named, because a reader has a right to ask what Satan was loosed to do and when. Jesus supplies it in the same chapter as the binding: "When the unclean spirit is gone out

of a man... Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matthew 12:43–45). Cast out, then returned sevenfold, on that generation. That is 20:3 and 20:7 in Jesus' own mouth, with the generation named. Paul describes the mechanism: "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:11), on the people who "received not the love of the truth." Josephus records the result, in Chapter 6 of this book: the deceivers under Felix who "deceived and deluded the people under pretense of Divine inspiration" (*Wars* 2.13.4), and the false prophets inside the burning Temple promising deliverance to the last hour (6.5.2). Satan was loosed to deceive; the nations he could deceive were gathered against "the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (20:9), Gog and Magog being Ezekiel's name for the last assault, reused; and "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (20:9), which is Matthew 22:7 and 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and the summer of 70. Then the throne, the books, Hades emptied, the lake. Then the bride. Preston: "In chapter 20 judgment is set, Satan is cast into the lake of fire; and Jesus takes his glorious bride unto himself! This all happened in 70 AD."

Stated plainly: the thousand years is the full term of Satan's binding, from the kingdom's arrival in Christ's ministry to the loosing that ended in 70. It is a symbol of completeness, not a count, and I do not claim it is a code for forty; Sullivan is candid that no rabbi used a thousand for forty, though some did expect a forty-year messianic interval, and I keep his candor because it is true and it costs nothing. What I do claim is that the book puts the chapter inside "the time is at hand"; that the binding and the loosing are both described by Jesus in Matthew 12, with "this generation" attached to the loosing; and that the loosing has a historical face in Josephus. The structure is the claim. The dates are the reading. A sharp reader will say Matthew 12:43–45 is about demon possession, not Satan's binding; the answer is that Jesus Himself applied the parable to "this wicked generation," which makes it a statement about the generation's trajectory, and that trajectory is exactly what Revelation 20 narrates. It is the piece a first-time reader will find hardest. It is also the one where Jesus did the most of the work for me.

Isaiah 65:16–25 and Gog

Two texts from his item 10 remain. Isaiah 65:17–25, "I create new heavens and a new earth," is the chapter premillennialists use for the millennium because it has death in it: "the child shall die an hundred years old" (65:20), and people build houses and plant vineyards (65:21). Right: it is not heaven, and it is not the eternal state. Chilton: "This cannot be speaking of heaven, or of a time after the end of the world; for in this 'new heaven and earth' there is still death... Isaiah is clearly making a statement about this age" (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 539), and he quotes the Puritan John Owen that Isaiah 65 "is a prophecy of Gospel times only; and that the planting of these new heavens is nothing but the creation of Gospel ordinances, to endure forever" (p. 543). The new

heavens and earth of Isaiah 65 are the New Covenant creation, with people living and dying in it, which is exactly the world John describes after the city comes down: nations walking in its light, kings bringing glory into it, the leaves of the tree "for the healing of the nations," and sinners still outside the gates (Revelation 21:24–27; 22:2, 15). Peter says the new heavens and earth are "according to his promise" (2 Peter 3:13), and the only promise on record is Isaiah 65 and 66 ("the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make," 66:22). That is not a millennium after a Second Coming. It is the age the church has lived in since the old heavens and earth, the covenant order of Temple and Law, passed away.

Since I deferred 2 Peter 3 here from Chapter 2, let me treat it rather than wave at it, because it is the chapter the challenger's side reaches for whenever "shortly" is pressed. Read it to its first readers. The scoffers of 3:3–4 are "in the last days," and their complaint is "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"; Peter's readers were already hearing it, which is why he is answering it. The "heavens and the earth, which are now" are "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (3:7); the ungodly men in view are the ones Peter had just spent chapter 2 on, the false teachers "among you" (2:1). The thousand years of 3:8 is an answer to the scoffer's "where is the promise," not a license to multiply "shortly" by a thousand; and the next verse says who the delay was for: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise... but is longsuffering to us-ward" (3:9), Peter's own readers. They were to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (3:12), which no one does for a day two thousand years off. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (3:10) is 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and Matthew 24:43, the same thief, dated in Chapter 4. The "elements" that "melt with fervent heat" (3:10, 12) are the *stoicheia*, the word Paul uses for the ordinances of the old covenant, "the rudiments of the world" (Colossians 2:20; Galatians 4:3, 9), and never for the periodic table; Chilton makes that point himself (*Days of Vengeance*, p. 542), and John Owen read the whole chapter of "the Judaical church and state" three centuries before him. "New heavens and a new earth" are "according to his promise" (3:13), and the promise is Isaiah 65 and 66, which have people building and planting and dying in them. And Peter closes by sending his readers to Paul, who "hath written unto you... in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things" (3:15–16), which is where I began: Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about this day, and told them they would be awake for it. Second Peter 3 is not the futurist's escape hatch. It is the same day, in the same generation, with the same Isaiah behind it.

Ezekiel 38:16, Gog, John places at the loosing, the end of the thousand years: "Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle... and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (Revelation 20:8–9). The nations compassed the beloved city in 66–70, exactly as Jesus said, "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies" (Luke 21:20), and fire came down on them, which is 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and Matthew 22:7. John borrowed Ezekiel's name for the last assault on God's people and gave it to the last one.

Where this chapter is contestable

The challenger has one card that is better than the rest, and it is not Zechariah 14. It is the sheer number of prophetic promises about a *land*, a *city*, and a *throne* that sound, to a modern ear, like real estate. I have answered that the apostles took those very promises and said they were fulfilled in a heavenly Zion, a spiritual temple, and a throne at God's right hand, and I have quoted the apostles doing it. He may answer that the apostles' fulfillment is the "already" and his is the "not yet." That is the honest form of his position, and it is the partial preterists' position too. My reply is the same in every chapter: the "not yet" has to be in a text, and the texts he cited put the fulfillment in "these days" (Acts 3:24), "this generation" (Matthew 24:34), and "shortly" (Revelation 1:1). He has not shown me the verse where Jesus leaves the Father's throne. I do not think it exists.

Chapter 10: Show Me the Record: What It Can Show, What It Cannot, and What I Owe the Challenger

I said at the start that the ten items are not one kind of claim, and that a demand for the same proof for all of them is a demand no prophecy could meet. Now that the ten are on the table, let me sort them the way the evidence sorts them.

The ledger

Things the historical record shows directly. The apostasy, as a revolt: May 66, Florus, the eagle taken from Cestius (Josephus; Suetonius). Lawless men enthroned in the Temple: the Zealots' lot, Phannias, "polluted feet," blood in lakes in the holy courts (Josephus 4.3.6–8; 5.1.3). Signs and lying wonders: the deceivers under Felix, the Egyptian of Acts 21:38, the false prophet of the burning cloister (Josephus 2.13.4–5; 6.5.2). The delusion's fruit: a nation that believed an oracle of world-rule and "could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth" (Josephus 6.5.4; Tacitus 5.13; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 4.5). The seals: war, famine, death, martyrs' blood (Josephus, books 2–6 entire). The trumpets and bowls in their receipts: the land stripped bare, three factions, talent-weight stones, the daily sacrifice ceasing on 17 Panemus, the Temple burning on the tenth of Ab, the city leveled (Josephus 6.1.1; 5.1.1; 5.6.3; 6.2.1; 6.4.5; 7.1.1). The supper of the great God: priests as food for dogs, five hundred crucified a day, six hundred thousand bodies out the gates (4.5.2; 5.11.1; 5.13.7). The beast's forty-two months of war on the saints (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44; Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2). The portents (Josephus 6.5.3; Tacitus 5.13; *Yoma* 39b). The remnant's escape (Eusebius 3.5). The daily sacrifice ceasing in the midst of the siege, the standards in the Temple court, the allied kings' troops under Titus, the sanctuary and city destroyed to the foundation (Josephus 6.2.1; 6.6.1; 3.4.2; 7.1.1). Daniel's seventieth week read as ending in Nero and Vespasian by Clement of Alexandria about AD 200 (*Stromata* 1.21). The church's own historian reading the Olivet Discourse as fulfilled (Eusebius 3.7). Items 2 through 6 in their historical halves, the seventy weeks and the ten kings of item 3, item 7 in its receipts, and the supper of item 9 are *in the record*, from men who had no stake in the Gospels.

Things the record shows in their visible effect, while Scripture supplies the meaning and the date. The coming of the Lord in judgment (items 1 and 7): the record shows the fire, the siege, and the ruin; Scripture says it was His coming, with "this generation" and "shortly" attached. The gathering (item 1): the record shows the church gathered and spread and Jerusalem scattered; Scripture says the gathering was the fall of the Old Covenant house and the revealing of the New. Armageddon and the winepress (item 9): the record shows the nations at Jerusalem and the blood in the Land; Scripture names the place for Josiah's death and Zechariah's mourning. The kingdom (item 10): the record shows an empire that killed Christians in 64 kneeling to Christ

within three centuries; Scripture says the King was enthroned at the ascension and the Old Covenant rival removed in 70.

Things no record could ever show. The strong delusion as God's act (item 6). The resurrection of the dead out of Hades (item 1, and the end of item 7). The binding and the loosing of Satan (item 10). For these the challenger's demand, "show me the history," is not a hard test; it is a category mistake. No one will ever produce a Roman receipt for a soul leaving Hades. What the New Testament gives us for these is the time-statement, and the time-statement is the only evidence a thing of that kind could ever have.

The question that always follows

I have given the full-preterist answer on item 1 and the resurrection, and I know what comes next, because it is the strongest objection my position faces, stronger than Acts 1:11 and stronger than Zechariah 14, and it is the one every reader actually has. *If the dead were raised in 70, what about the believer who dies today?* This is the flank that decides whether a reader trusts the rest of the book, so I will give the positive account first, let the question fall out of it, and then put the best objection on the table in full.

What the resurrection was. The resurrection the apostles preached was the hope of Israel, not a doctrine about cemeteries. Paul said so on trial, twice: "of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 23:6), and "for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (28:20). The hope of Israel was the one Hosea and Isaiah had given her: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction" (Hosea 13:14), and "He will swallow up death in victory... and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth" (Isaiah 25:8). Those are the two texts Paul quotes when he says "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:54–55), and both are about Israel's restoration from covenant death. Ezekiel used the same picture for the same thing: "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves" (37:12), spoken to exiles who had no graves. Daniel's "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (12:2) is the same picture, and Daniel dated it himself: "when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (12:7).

Paul then defines the death that is defeated: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law" (15:56). The death in view is the one that "reigned from Adam to Moses" (Romans 5:14), separation from God's presence, which the Temple itself symbolized by a veil, and which Hebrews names as the thing the old order kept in place: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing" (9:8). The cross dealt with the sting; the removal of the first tabernacle, in 70, finished

the arrangement that gave sin its strength. Physical death keeps happening, and Paul's own verb allows for it: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (15:26) is a present tense in the Greek, *katargeitai*, "is being rendered ineffective," as Young's Literal has it; what ended is death's sting, condemnation and Sheol. That is the mechanism, and it is in the text, not patched onto it.

The resurrection has three dimensions, and I name all three so none of them looks like the only one. *Corporately*, the body of God's people was raised out of Adam's death into unveiled life with God: "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3). *Historically*, the martyrs under the altar, told to "rest yet for a little season" (6:11), were vindicated, and the Old Testament faithful who had waited in Hades, who "without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:40), were raised out of it at the coming: "death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them" (20:13). *Individually*, every believer since receives what that opened: "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1), a body that is "spiritual," which in Paul's usage means governed by the Spirit rather than by mortality, not immaterial, and which is explicitly not the one that went into the ground: "thou sowest not that body that shall be" (15:37); "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (15:50). Jesus' own body came out of the tomb glorified and tangible, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39), and ours is "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21): Spirit-governed, not immaterial, given by God at death, and continuous with us as persons rather than with the corpse, "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him" (15:38).

The believer who dies today. Revelation answers this in a verse, and the Greek makes it sharper than the English. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth" (14:13). "From henceforth" is *ap' arti*, "from now on," the same two words Jesus used to Caiaphas: "Hereafter [*ap' arti*] shall ye see the Son of man... coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). John puts the dividing line at the harvest and the vintage (14:14–20), which is the end of the age. Before that line, the dead waited; after it, "they may rest from their labours," at once. That is the text's own answer to "what about those who die after," and it uses the same two words Jesus used to date the judgment.

Everything else the New Testament says about the believer's death agrees. "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). "Absent from the body, and... present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Philippians 1:23). "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26), said at a tomb, and the judgment the believer faces is personal and at death, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27), "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10), with two destinies, not one. To the reader's question: your grandmother did not miss the resurrection. She walked through the door it opened, into a body God built, into His presence, with no waiting room, on the day she died. "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him" (Luke 20:38).

The best objection, in full. R. C. Sproul endorsed the preterist method and then drew the line here: "Radical preterism, which incorporates all eschatological references into the 'already' mode of fulfillment, faces serious difficulties with crucial issues, such as the believer's experience of the resurrection of the body (1 Corinthians 15). Serious study and dialogue are needed if we are to reach agreement as to how far preterism is to go and what remains for the hope of the church's and the cosmos' future in the full plan of redemptive history" (Foreword to *And It Came to Pass*, p. vii). Chilton, in his published work, made the resurrection "the interpretive key" that distinguishes AD 70 from the Last Day: "The Resurrection of all men is, in the nature of the case, unrepeatable... Therefore, wherever the Bible mentions the Resurrection, it is speaking of the Last Day—the final Judgment, the ultimate Day of the Lord" (*Paradise Restored*, p. 133). I grant Sproul three things before I answer, because they are true. First, the historic creeds affirm a future bodily resurrection, and this reading departs from them; I say that in one sentence and do not soften it. Second, Sproul was a partial preterist who granted the time-texts and said the resurrection was his obstacle, which means the dispute between us is about the *nature* of the resurrection, not its timing; that is the right ground, and it is ground where Paul's fifteenth chapter does the defining, not Nicaea. Third, he is right that without a positive account the view looks like a patch; that is why the account came first and his objection comes after it.

Then one question for Sproul's side. If the resurrection Paul preached meant bodies leaving graves, how could Hymenaeus and Philetus persuade a church that it had "past already" (2 Timothy 2:18)? An error is believable only in the category people were expecting. Nobody in Ephesus looked at the cemetery and was fooled. The error was credible because the thing Paul preached was not an exhumation. Sproul's objection assumes the category that the first-century error already shows was not in play, and Paul's own reasons for the timing stand: the resurrection is "at the last trump" (1 Corinthians 15:52), and the last trumpet sounds in a book dated to the 60s at "the time of the dead, that they should be judged" (Revelation 11:15–18); Daniel put the awakening at the shattering of the holy people's power (12:2, 7); and Paul told Felix the resurrection was "about to be" (Acts 24:15, where the Greek *mellein* is literally "about to," as Young's Literal Translation renders it, "there is about to be a rising again of the dead").

What I hold loosely, in print. What the living believers experienced at the coming in 70, and the exact relation between the corporate event and the individual's passage at death, are the seams of this reading. John 5:28–29, "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice," is the verse that presses them hardest. My answer there is Ezekiel 37:12's graves, which were exile, and Jesus' own "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God" three verses earlier (John 5:25), which puts the hour in His ministry. It is a reading, not a proof. A chapter that says so will be trusted on everything else it says.

What I concede

I promised to mark the places where the challenger, or the partial preterists, hold a real card. Here they are, gathered.

The Domitianic date tradition (Irenaeus via Eusebius 3.18) is a genuine and early external argument against the early date of Revelation; I hold the early date on the internal evidence, the external evidence is divided, and the argument of the book survives either date, because the time-texts do not move and the challenger cannot use 95 for 17:10 or 11:1–2 any more than I can (Chapter 3).

Hegesippus's report (Eusebius 3.20) is third-hand: Hegesippus, about 170, relays what two Galilean farmers, grandsons of Jude, said under interrogation about 90, and Eusebius copies him about 325, in the vocabulary of a second-century creed ("come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works" is formula, which tells you the chronicler is paraphrasing, not transcribing), so I do not hang much on the exact wording in either direction. What every version of the report agrees on is the headline: when an emperor asked Jesus' own relatives about His kingdom, they said it was "not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one." That is a denial of the premillennial thesis, from the Lord's family, to Caesar. The challenger's position loses more from this passage than mine does. The honest part, said plainly: "which would appear at the end of the world" is a weight on my side of the scale, and I record it as one. If the phrase is theirs and not the chronicler's, then two of Jesus' relatives in the 90s still spoke of the kingdom's appearing as future, which means the covenantal frame was already fading in the generation after the Temple fell; that is consistent with what I have argued about how quickly the church lost the frame once it became Gentile and the Jerusalem congregation scattered, but consistency is not vindication. One detail: Eusebius's Greek is *epi synteleia tou aiōnos*, "at the consummation of the age," the disciples' own phrase in Matthew 24:3, "the end of the age" (*synteleias tou aiōnos*). McGiffert renders it "the end of the world." If the grandnephews used the Olivet Discourse's phrase, then what they meant by it is the same question this whole book is about.

1 Thessalonians 4 and Acts 1:11 are read as future by every partial preterist I have cited, and the plain reader's first instinct is with them. My answer rests on Paul's own paragraph, 4:13–5:11 read without the chapter break, on the word *apantēsis*, and on Luke 21:27 and 32 as Luke's own gloss on the angels' sentence. What the living experienced in the hour of the gathering I hold loosely; the timing and the identity of the event Paul fixed, and the record rules out a physical disappearance of the church.

The thousand years is the piece a first-time reader will find hardest. I hold it as the full term of Satan's binding, bounded by Matthew 12:28–29 and 12:43–45 and by the book's "shortly," and I have said what the reading does and does not claim.

Matthew 25:31–46, the sheep and the goats: the coming and its date are fixed by 24:30–31 and 16:27–28, and "all nations" has the scope of 24:14; what I hold loosely is whether the scene is one moment or the summary of the forty years in which the nations received or refused the messengers (Chapter 9). DeMar's "judgment over time" is kept, inside the generation.

Daniel's little horn is identified differently by the men I cite, and Daniel 9:27's "he" has defenders on the other side even among non-dispensationalists; I have given the readings and the reasons (Chapter 5).

The man of sin: I name the office firmly, the lawless priesthood the Zealots enthroned in the Temple, with Phannias as its face, and the men loosely, because Paul wrote a type, not a biography. The Nero reading of Chilton and Gentry stands beside it as the ancient alternative. Paul's time-markers settle the century whether or not any name settles the man, and every candidate on anyone's list died with the first century.

The nineteen centuries of reception. The church read the destruction of Jerusalem as fulfilled prophecy from Eusebius on, but it did not read the Second Coming as fulfilled, and the creeds say "He shall come again." A view that says the whole church misread the time-texts until modern times carries a burden, and I carry it with my eyes open. I will only say that the challenger's system carries a mixed pedigree of its own. The earthly millennial reign, with Zechariah 14's Tabernacles kept in a restored Jerusalem, is old; Papias held a form of it in the second century and Irenaeus wrote it into *Against Heresies* (5.33), and I grant that. The rapture of the church before a tribulation, the gap after the sixty-ninth week, and the Third Temple are Darby's, from the 1830s, and no father has them. The creeds affirm neither the one nor the other. "He shall come again" is a sentence both of us have to read, and the question is still when.

Eight questions for the challenger

He asked me for proof. I have given him the texts and the receipts. Now I will do what I did in the thread, and hand the burden back in the form of questions he can actually answer. He may answer them on my page, and I will post the answers.

1. **Where does the New Testament say that the enthroned Jesus will leave the Father's throne, relocate to geographical Jerusalem, and sit on a physical throne there?** You offered Acts 3:21, which says heaven holds Him until the restoration and says nothing about where He sits after; Psalm 110:1, which dates the footstool and not the seat; and Revelation 3:21, which has Him already seated with the Father and the overcomers promised a seat with Him. Which verse supplies the relocation?
2. **What did the Thessalonians think had happened, in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, when they believed "the day of the Lord" had come?** If it was the Second Coming you

describe, how did they believe it without noticing they were still in Thessalonica, and why did Paul answer them with a sequence of events rather than with "look around"?

3. **If "this generation" in Matthew 24:34 means "the people living when these signs and events begin," as your Amplified bracket says, who were the people Jesus said would "hear of wars" and "see the abomination of desolation" in verses 6 and 15?** And by what rule does the phrase in 24:34 mean something different from the identical phrase in 23:36?
4. **Did the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15 sound in AD 70?** If it did, then "the time of the dead, that they should be judged" (11:18) came in AD 70, and you must explain what that judgment of the dead was. If it did not, then the book that says it "must shortly come to pass" has waited nineteen centuries for its seventh trumpet, and you must explain "shortly."
5. **In Zechariah 14:16–19, do you expect the restored Messianic kingdom to require the nations to travel to Jerusalem annually for the Feast of Tabernacles, with drought as the penalty for non-attendance?** If yes, reconcile that with Colossians 2:16–17 and Hebrews 8:13. If no, you have already read Zechariah 14 the way I do, and the "feet on the mountain" of verse 4 is in the same chapter.
6. **Where does any New Testament writer say that AD 70 was a "partial," "near," or "shadow" fulfillment of any of the ten items?** You used those words for Joel and Acts 2. Peter used "this is that." Show me the apostle who used yours.
7. **Where is the verse that mentions a Third Temple, a gap after the sixty-ninth week, or a confederation of ten end-time nations?** You listed Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; and Revelation 11:1 for a temple being *built*. Every one of them is about a temple that was *standing*. Your own system's scholars, Ice and Demy, write that "There are no Bible verses that say, 'There is going to be a third temple.'" Which verse did they miss?
8. **Who was the restrainer the Thessalonians knew in AD 52 (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7)?** Paul says they knew him. If the man of sin is still future, then the restrainer has been restraining for nineteen centuries and the Thessalonians knew a man who is still alive. If the restrainer was a first-century man or power, then the man of sin he restrained was a first-century man, and the day of the Lord that could not come until that man was revealed came in the first century.

The last word to Scripture

I have not written this to win an argument. I have written it because the challenger asked a fair question, and a fair question deserves a fair answer. Here is where I rest it, and none of it is mine.

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:28).

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34).

"For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22).

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1).

"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 22:10).

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

He said He would come in that generation. The Temple fell in that generation. A Pharisee, a Roman, and the rabbis wrote down what it looked like. I believe Him.

Till all be fulfilled.

Appendix A: Every Reference the Challenger Cited, and Where It Is Answered

The references are listed in the order he gave them in the ten-item challenge, then those he added in the thread under his earlier post. "Ch." numbers refer to the chapters of this book.

Item 1: the coming and the gathering

Reference	Where answered
2 Thessalonians 2:1	Ch. 4 (<i>episyntagōgē</i> ; Chilton and DeMar on the gathering); Ch. 6
John 14:3; 14:1–4	Ch. 4 (<i>monai</i> / <i>monē</i> ; 14:18, 23; Revelation 21:3)
1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (AMP) and 4:13–18	Ch. 4 (the partial-preterist reading in full; the "we" argument; Hebrews 12:18–22; the Amplified's brackets); Ch. 10
Matthew 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26	Ch. 4 (with Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27); Ch. 9
John 21:22	Ch. 4 (with 21:23; DeMar; Hammond)
Acts 1:9–11	Ch. 4 (the cloud; <i>hon tropon</i>); Ch. 9 (Zechariah 14:4)
1 Corinthians 1:7; 4:5	Ch. 4 (with 7:29, 31; 10:11; 15:51)
1 Corinthians 15:23	Ch. 4 (with 15:52; Revelation 11:15–18); Ch. 10
1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13	Ch. 4 (with 2:15–16)
1 Timothy 6:14	Ch. 4
2 Timothy 4:1, 8	Ch. 4 (<i>mellontos</i> , "about to"; YLT)
Titus 2:13	Ch. 4
James 5:7–8	Ch. 4 (with 5:9 and 5:3)
1 Peter 1:7, 13	Ch. 4 (with 4:7; 4:17; 5:1)
1 John 2:28	Ch. 4 (with 2:18)
Revelation 22:7, 12, 20	Ch. 3; Ch. 4; Ch. 10

Item 2: the day of the Lord, the apostasy, the man of lawlessness

Reference	Where answered
2 Thessalonians 2:2–3, 6, 8	Ch. 6 (<i>enestēken</i> ; the apostasy; the restrainer; 2:8)
Daniel 7:8, 11, 25	Ch. 5 (the little horn; the beast slain; "time and

Reference	Where answered
	times and the dividing of time")
Daniel 8:25; 11:36	Ch. 5 (Antiochus; "the wrong beast")
Revelation 13:5–6	Ch. 5; Ch. 7

Item 3: the covenant, the "Third Temple," the ten kings, Babylon

Reference	Where answered
Daniel 9:27	Ch. 5 (the "he"; Matthew 26:28; the midst of the week; the gap); Ch. 6
Daniel 11:31; 12:11	Ch. 5; Ch. 6 (the abomination)
Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14	Ch. 5; Ch. 6 (with Luke 21:20)
2 Thessalonians 2:4	Ch. 6 (which temple)
Revelation 11:1	Ch. 3; Ch. 5 ("there is no verse"); Ch. 7
Daniel 7:7–8, 20, 23–24	Ch. 5 (the fourth beast and the ten horns)
Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12–18	Ch. 5 (the ten kings "one hour with the beast"; 17:16 the horns burn the harlot)
Revelation 17:1–6, 15–18; 19:2	Ch. 5 (17:18 "reigneth"; 19:2 "avenged the blood"); Ch. 7 (17:6; 18:24; 11:8)

Item 4: the man of sin in the temple; the abomination

Reference	Where answered
2 Thessalonians 2:4	Ch. 6 (the candidates; which temple; Josephus 4.3.6–8; 5.1.2–3)
Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14	Ch. 5; Ch. 6 (Zealots, Idumeans, Roman standards: Josephus 4.3.6, 4.3.10, 6.6.1)
Revelation 13:14–15	Ch. 6 (the image)
Revelation 19:20; 20:10	Ch. 6; Ch. 8; Ch. 9
Daniel 7:11, 25; 8:24; 11:36	Ch. 5

Item 5: signs and lying wonders; Revelation 13

Reference	Where answered
2 Thessalonians 2:9–10	Ch. 6 (Josephus 2.13.4–5; 6.5.2; Acts 21:38)
Revelation 13:1–17	Ch. 6 (13:5, 7 the forty-two months; 13:8 "the Land"; 13:11–15 the false prophet, fire, image; 13:16–17 the mark, buying and selling); Ch. 7 (13:18, 666)

Item 6: the strong delusion

Reference	Where answered
2 Thessalonians 2:11	Ch. 6 (Josephus 6.5.3–4; Tacitus 5.13; Suetonius, <i>Vespasian</i> 4.5; 1 Kings 22); Ch. 10

Item 7: Revelation 6–20

Reference	Where answered
Revelation 6; 7; 8–9; 10; 11; 12–13; 14; 15; 16; 17–18	Ch. 7 (also Ch. 3; Ch. 5; Ch. 8)
Revelation 19	Ch. 8
Revelation 20	Ch. 9

Item 8: destroyed by the brightness of His coming

Reference	Where answered
2 Thessalonians 2:8	Ch. 6 (Isaiah 11:4; Josephus 6.2.1; 6.4.5; 6.9.1); Ch. 8
Daniel 7:11	Ch. 5; Ch. 6
2 Thessalonians 1:6–10	Ch. 6 (with 1 Thessalonians 2:15–16)
Revelation 19:19–20	Ch. 6; Ch. 8

Item 9: the valley and the battle

Reference	Where answered
Joel 3:1–16	Ch. 8; Ch. 2 (3:16 with Hebrews 12:26–28)
Revelation 14:14–16, 17–20	Ch. 8
Revelation 16:12–16	Ch. 7; Ch. 8

Reference	Where answered
Revelation 19:11–21	Ch. 8

Item 10: the kingdom

Reference	Where answered
2 Samuel 7:10–16	Ch. 9 (with Hebrews 1:5)
Isaiah 1:26	Ch. 9 (with Matthew 19:28)
Isaiah 2:1–5	Ch. 9 (with Hebrews 12:22)
Isaiah 9:6–7	Ch. 8; Ch. 9 (with Luke 1:32–33)
Isaiah 11:1–12	Ch. 9 (with Romans 15:12)
Isaiah 65:16–25	Ch. 9 (Chilton and Owen; Revelation 21–22; 2 Peter 3:13)
Jeremiah 23:5–6; 30:8–9; 33:7, 11, 14–18	Ch. 9
Ezekiel 34:23–24; 37:24–25	Ch. 9 (with 2 Corinthians 6:16; John 10:16)
Daniel 2:35, 44	Ch. 9
Daniel 7:13–14, 18, 22, 27	Ch. 5; Ch. 9
Obadiah 21	Ch. 9
Micah 4:1–8	Ch. 9
Zechariah 14:9, 16	Ch. 9
Matthew 19:28; 20:21; 25:31, 34	Ch. 9 (25:31–46 with Matthew 10:14–15, 40–42); Ch. 10
Luke 1:31–33; 22:28–30	Ch. 9 (with Acts 2:30–36)
Acts 1:6	Ch. 9
1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:12	Ch. 9
Revelation 2:26–27; 3:21; 5:10; 11:15; 12:10; 20:4–7	Ch. 7; Ch. 9; Ch. 10

Cited in the thread under his earlier post: the throne

Reference	Where answered
Revelation 3:21; Acts 3:19–21; Psalm 110:1 / Acts 2:34–35; Luke 1:32–33; Jeremiah 3:17; Matthew 25:31; Zechariah 14:3–10, 16–17; Zechariah 2:10–	Ch. 9 (Joel 3:16–18 in Ch. 8)

Reference	Where answered
13; 8:3; 8:20-23; Micah 4:1-8; Isaiah 62:11-12; Isaiah 1:26; 2:1-5; Joel 3:16-18; Luke 14:15; Daniel 2:35, 44; 7:27; Revelation 20:4-6; 5:10; 11:15; 12:10; 2:26-27; Matthew 19:28; 20:21; 25:31, 34; Luke 22:28-30; 2 Timothy 2:12; Luke 1:33; Acts 1:6; Obadiah 21	

Cited in the thread under his earlier post: "this generation" and "the last days"

Reference	Where answered
Luke 21:32; Mark 13:30; Matthew 24:33-34 (AMP)	Ch. 1
Genesis 49:1; Numbers 24:14; Deuteronomy 4:30; 31:29	Ch. 2
Isaiah 2:2-3; Micah 4:1	Ch. 2; Ch. 9
Jeremiah 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezekiel 38:16; Daniel 2:28; 10:14; Hosea 3:5	Ch. 2 ("The rest of his list"); Ezekiel 38 also Ch. 9
Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21; 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 1:2; James 5:3; 2 Peter 3:3	Ch. 2
Daniel 8:17, 19; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9	Ch. 2; Ch. 3; Ch. 5
Joel 1:15; 3:1-16; Obadiah 15; Zechariah 14:3-5; Malachi 3:2; 4:1, 5	Ch. 2; Ch. 8; Ch. 9
2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 2:1	Cited by him as rebukes, not as prophecy; I take both as instructions and have tried to obey them in this book

Appendix B: The Historical Record, in the Witnesses' Own Words

Every historical quotation in this book is reproduced here, by source, from a public-domain translation, so the reader can check it without buying anything; the two exceptions, marked below, are passages of Josephus given as Chilton quotes them from a modern translation, with Whiston's section number supplied so the reader can find the public-domain text. Section numbers follow the standard divisions of each work. Where a passage is quoted in the chapters, the chapter is noted.

Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* (William Whiston translation)

Josephus (c. AD 37–100), a priest and Pharisee, commanded Jewish forces in Galilee in 66–67, surrendered to Vespasian, and witnessed the siege of Jerusalem from the Roman camp. His *Wars* was written within a decade of the events, in Rome, under Vespasian's patronage.

Preface, §4. "that it was a seditious temper of our own that destroyed it, and that they were the tyrants among the Jews who brought the Roman power upon us, who unwillingly attacked us, and occasioned the burning of our holy temple, Titus Caesar, who destroyed it, is himself a witness... Accordingly, it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were."

2.13.4 (Ch. 6). "These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretense of Divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty."

2.13.5 (Ch. 6). "But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him; these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place."

2.14.9 (Ch. 6, 7). "the whole number of those that were destroyed that day, with their wives and children (for they did not spare even the infants themselves), was about three thousand and six hundred. And what made this calamity the heavier was this new method of Roman barbarity; for Florus ventured then to do what no one had done before, that is, to have men of the equestrian order whipped and nailed to the cross before his tribunal."

2.18.2 (Ch. 7, as quoted by Chilton from a modern translation). "every city was divided into two armies encamped against one another, and the preservation of the one party was in the

destruction of the other; so the day-time was spent in the shedding of blood, and the night in fear."

3.4.1 (Ch. 8). "so that Galilee was all over filled with fire and blood; nor was it exempted from any kind of misery or calamity."

3.4.2 (Ch. 5). "auxiliaries got together, that came from the kings Antiochus, and Agrippa, and Sohemus, each of them contributing one thousand footmen that were archers, and a thousand horsemen. Malchus also, the king of Arabia, sent a thousand horsemen, besides five thousand footmen, the greatest part of which were archers."

4.3.6 (Ch. 6). "they transferred their contumelious behavior to God himself, and came into the sanctuary with polluted feet."

4.3.7 (Ch. 6). "These men made the temple of God a strong hold for them, and a place whither they might resort, in order to avoid the troubles they feared from the people; the sanctuary was now become a refuge, and a shop of tyranny."

4.3.8 (Ch. 6). "it fell upon one whose name was Phannias, the son of Samuel, of the village Aphtha. He was a man not only unworthy of the high priesthood, but that did not well know what the high priesthood was, such a mere rustic was he! yet did they hail this man, without his own consent, out of the country, as if they were acting a play upon the stage, and adorned him with a counterfeit tree; they also put upon him the sacred garments, and upon every occasion instructed him what he was to do."

4.5.2 (Ch. 8). "I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city... while those that a little before had worn the sacred garments, and had presided over the public worship... were cast out naked, and seen to be the food of dogs and wild beasts."

5.1.1 (Ch. 7). "the sedition at Jerusalem was revived, and parted into three factions, and that one faction fought against the other... to be like a wild beast grown mad, which, for want of food from abroad, fell now upon eating its own flesh."

5.1.2 (Ch. 6). "these seized upon the inner court of the temple and laid their arms upon the holy gates, and over the holy fronts of that court."

5.1.3 (Ch. 6, 8). "many persons who came thither with great zeal from the ends of the earth, to offer sacrifices at this celebrated place, which was esteemed holy by all mankind, fell down before their own sacrifices themselves, and sprinkled that altar which was venerable among all men, both Greeks and Barbarians, with their own blood; till the dead bodies of strangers were mingled together with those of their own country, and those of profane persons with those of the priests, and the blood of all sorts of dead carcasses stood in lakes in the holy courts themselves."

5.6.3 (Ch. 7). "Now the stones that were cast were of the weight of a talent, and were carried two furlongs and further... As for the Jews, they at first watched the coming of the stone, for it was of a white color, and could therefore not only be perceived by the great noise it made, but could be seen also before it came by its brightness; accordingly the watchmen that sat upon the towers gave them notice when the engine was let go, and the stone came from it, and cried out aloud, in their own country language, The Stone Cometh."

5.10.2 (Ch. 7). "there was no corn which any where appeared publicly, but the robbers came running into, and searched men's private houses; and then, if they found any, they tormented them, because they had denied they had any; and if they found none, they tormented them worse, because they supposed they had more carefully concealed it... they snatched the bread out of the fire, half-baked, and ate it very hastily."

5.10.3. "children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants; and when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives."

5.10.5 (Ch. 7). "neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world."

5.11.1 (Ch. 8). "they were first whipped, and then tormented with all sorts of tortures, before they died, and were then crucified before the wall of the city. This miserable procedure made Titus greatly to pity them, while they caught every day five hundred Jews; nay, some days they caught more... when their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies."

5.13.6. "I suppose, that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by, for it had brought forth a generation of men much more atheistical than were those that suffered such punishments."

5.13.7 (Ch. 8). "no fewer than a hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dead bodies, in the interval between the fourteenth day of the month Xanthicus, [Nisan,] when the Romans pitched their camp by the city, and the first day of the month Panemus [Tamuz]... told him the entire number of the poor that were dead, and that no fewer than six hundred thousand were thrown out at the gates."

6.1.1 (Ch. 7, as quoted by Chilton from a modern translation). "The countryside, like the city, was a pitiful sight, for where once there had been a multitude of trees and parks, there was now an utter wilderness stripped bare of timber."

6.2.1 (Ch. 3, 6). "on that very day, which was the seventeenth day of Panemus, [Tamuz,] the sacrifice called 'the Daily Sacrifice' had failed, and had not been offered to God, for want of men to offer it, and that the people were grievously troubled at it." And, from Josephus's own speech to the rebels in the same section: "It is God, therefore, it is God himself who is bringing on this fire, to purge that city and temple by means of the Romans, and is going to pluck up this city, which is full of your pollutions."

6.3.4. "There was a certain woman that dwelt beyond Jordan, her name was Mary; her father was Eleazar, of the village Bethzub, which signifies the house of Hyssop... and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said, 'O thou miserable infant! for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition?... Come on; be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a by-word to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.' As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed." (Compare Deuteronomy 28:53–57; Lamentations 4:10; Luke 23:29.)

6.4.5 (Ch. 6, 7). "But as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous, [Ab,] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon."

6.4.8 (Ch. 7). "one cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed, as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians."

6.5.2 (Ch. 6). "A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now, there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes."

6.5.3 (Ch. 2, 6, 7). "Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year... the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men... was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night... before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] temple,

as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, 'Let us remove hence.' But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the temple, began on a sudden to cry aloud, 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!'... at every stroke of the whip his answer was, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!'... 'Woe, woe to myself also!' there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately."

6.5.4 (Ch. 6). "what did most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, 'about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.' The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination."

6.6.1 (Ch. 6). the Romans, with the sanctuary burning, "brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus imperator, with the greatest acclamations of joy."

6.8.5 (Ch. 8). "made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood."

6.9.1 (Ch. 6). Titus: "We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men or any machines do towards overthrowing these towers!"

6.9.3 (Ch. 4, 7). "Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand."

7.1.1. "Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple... it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited." (Compare Matthew 24:2; Luke 19:44.)

Tacitus, *Histories* and *Annals* (Church and Brodribb translation)

Cornelius Tacitus (c. AD 56–120), Roman senator and consul; the *Histories* were written about AD 100–110.

Histories 5.12 (Ch. 7, 8). "Their numbers were increased by a vast rabble collected from the overthrow of the other cities. All the most obstinate rebels had escaped into the place, and perpetual seditions were the consequence. There were three generals, and as many armies. Simon held the outer and larger circuit of walls. John, also called Bargioras [sic; Bar Giora was Simon's name], occupied the middle city. Eleazar had fortified the temple... There were continual skirmishes, surprises, and incendiary fires, and a vast quantity of corn was burnt." (Tacitus attaches the name "Bargioras" to John; Josephus gives "bar Giora" to Simon. The slip is Tacitus's, and I have left his text as it stands.)

Histories 5.13 (Ch. 6, 7, 8). "Prodigies had occurred, which this nation, prone to superstition, but hating all religious rites, did not deem it lawful to expiate by offering and sacrifice. There had been seen hosts joining battle in the skies, the fiery gleam of arms, the temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds. The doors of the inner shrine were suddenly thrown open, and a voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry that the Gods were departing. At the same instant there was a mighty stir as of departure. Some few put a fearful meaning on these events, but in most there was a firm persuasion, that in the ancient records of their priests was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers, coming from Judaea, were to acquire universal empire. These mysterious prophecies had pointed to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these mighty destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth. I have heard that the total number of the besieged, of every age and both sexes, amounted to six hundred thousand."

Annals 15.44 (Ch. 7). "Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus... Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired."

Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (c. AD 69–after 122), secretary to the emperor Hadrian, with access to the imperial archives.

Nero 16.2 (Ch. 7; J. C. Rolfe translation, 1914). "Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition."

Nero 49 (Ch. 8; Alexander Thomson translation). "weeping at every thing that was done, and frequently saying, 'What an artist is now about to perish!'... he drove a dagger into his throat, being assisted in the act by Epaphroditus, his secretary."

Vespasian 4.5 (Ch. 6; Rolfe). "There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief, that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judaea to rule the world. This prediction, referring to the emperor of Rome, as afterwards appeared from the event, the people of Judaea took to themselves; accordingly they revolted and after killing their governor, they routed the consular ruler of Syria as well, when he came to the rescue, and took one of his eagles."

Cassius Dio, Roman History, Epitome of Book 66 (Earnest Cary translation, 1925)

Lucius Cassius Dio (c. AD 155–235), Roman senator and twice consul.

66.4.2–3 (Ch. 8). "for they had many slingers and bowmen that had been sent by some of the barbarian kings. The Jews also were assisted by many of their countrymen from the region round about and by many who professed the same religion, not only from the Roman empire but also from beyond the Euphrates."

66.6.2–3. "The populace was stationed below in the court, the senators on the steps, and the priests in the sanctuary itself. And though they were but a handful fighting against a far superior force, they were not conquered until a part of the temple was set on fire. Then they met death willingly, some throwing themselves on the swords of the Romans, some slaying one another, others taking their own lives, and still others leaping into the flames."

66.7.2. "Thus was Jerusalem destroyed on the very day of Saturn, the day which even now the Jews reverence most. From that time forth it was ordered that the Jews who continued to observe their ancestral customs should pay an annual tribute of two denarii to Jupiter Capitolinus."

Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3 (A. C. McGiffert translation, 1890)

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. AD 260–340), bishop and the first historian of the church.

3.5.3 (Ch. 2, 4, 7). "But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come there from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men."

3.7 (Ch. 7; paragraph numbers in Appendix B follow McGiffert's NPNF edition, which differ from the Schwartz/Loeb numbering by one or two in places). "These things took place in this manner in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, in accordance with the prophecies of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who by divine power saw them beforehand as if they were already present... If any one compares the words of our Saviour with the other accounts of the historian concerning

the whole war, how can one fail to wonder, and to admit that the foreknowledge and the prophecy of our Saviour were truly divine and marvellously strange... that all-good Providence which held back their destruction full forty years after their crime against Christ."

3.18 (Ch. 3, 10; recorded against my own position). "It is said that in this persecution the apostle and evangelist John, who was still alive, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos in consequence of his testimony to the divine word. Irenæus, in the fifth book of his work *Against Heresies*... speaks as follows concerning him: 'If it were necessary for his name to be proclaimed openly at the present time, it would have been declared by him who saw the revelation. For it was seen not long ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian.'"

3.20 (McGiffert §6; Schwartz 3.20.4) (Ch. 10; recorded against my own position). The grandsons of Jude, before Domitian, "when they were asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what sort it was and where and when it was to appear, they answered that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when he should come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works." (The Greek behind "at the end of the world" is *epi synteleia tou aiōnos*, "at the consummation of the age," the phrase of Matthew 24:3; the report is Hegesippus's, c. 170, as copied by Eusebius.)

Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 39b (William Davidson Talmud, Steinsaltz edition; literal text only)

Yoma 39b (Ch. 7). "The Sages taught: forty years prior to the destruction of the Temple the lot did not arise in the right [hand], and the strip of crimson did not turn white, and the westernmost lamp did not burn. And the doors of the Sanctuary opened by themselves, until Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai scolded them. He said to [the Sanctuary]: Sanctuary, Sanctuary, why do you frighten yourself?... I know about you that you will ultimately be destroyed, and Zechariah, son of Ido, has already prophesied concerning you: 'Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars' (Zechariah 11:1)."

Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 1.21 (William Wilson translation)

A witness from about AD 200 that Daniel's seventieth week was read as fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem (not quoted in the chapters; offered for the reader who asks whether anyone before the seventeenth century read Daniel 9 this way). "The half of the week Nero held sway, and in the holy city Jerusalem placed the abomination; and in the half of the week he was taken away, and Otho, and Galba, and Vitellius. And Vespasian rose to the supreme power, and destroyed Jerusalem, and desolated the holy place."

Appendix C: Sources Cited

Scripture is quoted from the King James Version except where the challenger's own translation is reproduced (Amplified, NIV, NLT, NASB), in which case it is identified as his.

The challenge

- Open challenge and comment thread posted to The Heretical Horseman's Facebook page, September–October 2026. The challenger is not named in this book; the thread is archived in full in the author's files, and every quotation attributed to him is verbatim from it.

Full-preterist sources (cited for full-preterist claims)

- Don K. Preston, "The Binding of Satan," FullPreterism.com (August 28th, 2009).
- Don K. Preston, "Can God Tell Time?," FullPreterism.com (August 27th, 2009).
- Don K. Preston, "What About Acts 1?," FullPreterism.com.
- Michael J. Sullivan, "Partial Preterist Keith A. Mathison in *WSTTB* vs. Full Preterist Michael J. Sullivan in *HD*, Part 7: In Like Manner, Acts 1:9–11," FullPreterism.com (April 23rd, 2013).
- Michael J. Sullivan, "...Part 8: The Rapture, 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17," FullPreterism.com.
- Michael J. Sullivan, "...Part 12: The Millennium, Revelation 20," FullPreterism.com (April 25th, 2013).
- Michael J. Sullivan, "Exegetical Essays on the First Century Man of Lawlessness, Spiritual Coming of Christ and the Catching Away of the Thessalonians in AD 70," FullPreterism.com.
- Michael J. Sullivan, "How 2 Thessalonians 2:1–2 and 2 Timothy 2:17–18 Expose Futurist Errors," FullPreterism.com.
- Michael J. Sullivan, "The Resurrection of the Dead Fulfilled by AD 70," FullPreterism.com (February 11th, 2024).
- Michael J. Sullivan, "Deuteronomy 32: The Forgotten Foundation of Old and New Testament Eschatology," FullPreterism.com (May 26th, 2025).
- Michael J. Sullivan, "Daniel 9:24–27: From Babylonian Bondage to Messianic Jubilee," FullPreterism.com.
- Michael J. Sullivan, "The DeMar v. Wilson Discussion," FullPreterism.com (November 11th, 2025), for the 1 Corinthians 15:23 syllogism.
- Michael J. Sullivan and David A. Green, "Is Jesus Still in a Physical Body Post AD 30?," FullPreterism.com (January 21st, 2015).

Partial-preterist sources (cited for the first-century fulfillment of Revelation and the Olivet Discourse, the date of Revelation, and the present reign of Christ, not for full preterism; each of these authors, in the works cited, holds a future bodily return and resurrection)

- David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Dominion Press, 1987), pp. 5, 42–43, 51–52, 88, 146, 149, 181–199, 222, 236–252, 272–275, 281, 312, 328–351, 372–377, 407–418, 423–443, 465, 471, 481–492, 494, 502, 507, 510, 514–515, 517–519, 530, 539–543, 575–580, 589. Appendix C of the same volume is by Gary North (p. 635).
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- Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, 4th ed. (American Vision, 1999), pp. 33–34, 72–73, 77–83, 119, 121, 123, 125, 129–131, 149–150, 165–167, 184, 188, 193–194, 206–235, 246–256, 280–281, 330–334. DeMar's quotations of Henry Hammond (pp. 33–34), the high priest Ananus via Josephus (p. 79), Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (p. 73), B. B. Warfield (pp. 212–213), E. H. Plumptre (p. 229), John Bray (p. 230), F. W. Farrar (p. 232), Tertullian and Matthew Henry (p. 334), and Milton Terry (p. 150) are cited as quoted by him.
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The Heretical Horseman. Till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18)