

C. A Framework Developed from these Passages

Thus far it has been suggested that God's word to Jeremiah in 587 B.C. that Jerusalem would be reinhabited and rebuilt and the temple would be restored began to be fulfilled to 538 B.C. when Cyrus released his Jewish captives and they returned to Palestine to lay the foundations of the Second Temple and to rebuild the walls, the streets, and the houses of Jerusalem. Daniel's vision continued to be fulfilled when Christ began His public ministry in AD. 27 and died an atoning death in AD. 29 or 30, and when the temple and the city were again destroyed in A.D. 70. Daniel predicted that a yet-future seven year period will be characterized by the making of a firm treaty by a coming prince with Israel, that the Third Temple will be built and that temple sacrifice will resume, but that after 3 1/2 years the prince will break the treaty, stop the Jewish sacrifice, and set up an abominable idol that will make the temple desolate.

Jesus says that the setting up of this abominable, desolating idol in the temple by the coming prince will unmistakably identify and mark the beginning of the Great Tribulation period, which means that since the placement of the abomination occurs in the middle of Daniel's seventieth seven, the Great Tribulation will occupy the second half of this seven year period. Christ says that His coming in power and glory will occur immediately after the Great Tribulation, which places His Return at the end of Daniel's seventieth seven and before the Millennium (in a Premillennial scheme).

Paul in II Thessalonians 2 says that this prince, the "man of lawlessness," will occupy the temple, claim to be a god, and demand universal worship, but that he will be destroyed by Christ at His Return in power and glory at the end of the Great Tribulation and Daniel's seventieth seven.

John in Revelation 13 tells us that this prince, this "man of lawlessness", this first "beast" will reveal his true character in the second 3 1/2 years of Daniel's seventieth seven, and will demand universal worship by means of an image, which is the abominable, detestable idol of Daniel 9 and the Olivet Discourse. However, he will be destroyed (and his false prophet with him) by Christ at His Return in power and glory at the end of Daniel's seventieth seven and the Great Tribulation. Thus we see that Christ's coming in power and great glory occurs after the Great Tribulation.

However, this still leaves open-ended the question: How can Christ in the fourth section of the Olivet Discourse emphasize the imminency of His coming when He has clearly stated in the same Discourse that His coming in power and glory will immediately follow the Great Tribulation? That is, how can a posttribulation Return in power and glory be reconciled with Christ's emphasis on the need of alertness and readiness in view of His imminent coming?

This question highlights the need of getting clear on what is meant by "imminency", not only in the context of current discussions of eschatological concerns, but also in Scripture.