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## The Meaning and Fulfillment of the “Preaching Texts” of the Apocalypse (Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10)

A. Boyd Luter

*Liberty University*, [abluter@liberty.edu](mailto:abluter@liberty.edu)

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**The Meaning and Fulfillment of the “Preaching Texts”  
of the Apocalypse (Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10)**

A. Boyd Luter, Ph.D.

Contract Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

*abluter@liberty.edu*

There are hundreds of allusions to the Old Testament—and other literature—in the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, the first two of consequence—Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10—are found in the same verse: Revelation 1:7.

Given the original oral nature of the book (i.e., “the one who reads... and those who hear”; Rev. 1:3),<sup>2</sup> it is not inappropriate to refer to Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 as the, if you will, stated-up-front “preaching texts” of the Apocalypse. By that wording, I mean that the Apostle John, the human author of the book (1:4), and Jesus, the Divine

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<sup>1</sup> G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 77-79. In note 16 on p. 77, Beale cites research ranging from 195 to 1,000 uses of the OT in Rev., depending on the criteria employed.

<sup>2</sup> The orality of the New Testament books is a consistent emphasis in my book with Richard Wells, *Inspired Preaching: A Survey of Preaching Found in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), with a specific chapter I contributed on “John’s Epistles and Revelation Inspired Preaching” (pp. 146-58).

author (1:2), are signaling in the introductory segment of the book that the remainder of the Apocalypse is, at least to some significant extent, an exposition of how Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 will be fulfilled at the end of the age.

How might this claim be substantiated? This paper, *first*, will seek to establish the central role of the Daniel 7 and Zechariah 12 citations in Revelation 1, looking ahead to the rest of the Apocalypse. *Second*, it will consider what content basis for such a focal role might be found in the original contexts of Daniel 7 and Zechariah 12. *Third*, the usage of these two passages *together* by Jesus in Matthew 24<sup>3</sup> will be explored. *Fourth*, four places in the Apocalypse where the Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 citations appear to be fulfilled eschatologically will be looked at (in two sub-sections). *Finally*, the “building block” implications of the study will be drawn together, as well as the findings that are distinctive and offer contributions in a wider theological framework.

### **The Central Focus of Revelation 1**

The following inverted (i.e., center-facing) parallel structure is clear enough<sup>4</sup> to support the idea that the citations from Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 in Revelation 1:7 are intended as the “spotlighted” portion of the introductory chapter of the Apocalypse:

#### ***A Chiastic Structuring of Revelation 1***

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<sup>3</sup> The versions of Jesus’ Olivet Discourse in Mark 13 and Luke 21 will not be considered here because they only include Dan. 7:13.

<sup>4</sup> Virtually no published purported chiastic structure in the Bible beyond the simplest/shortest (i.e., *aba’* or *abb’a’*) has gone uncontroverted. However, as the study of Ancient Near Eastern literary structure alongside orality (notably, how written literature being read aloud fell on the ear and was heard/understood) has progressed, many scholars have grown more accustomed to thinking in the thought patterns of the biblical era, including its extensive use of inverted parallelism.

- a (1:1) The revelation of Jesus Christ, to show His servants what must quickly take place
- b (1:2-3) John *saw* (Gk *blepo*) and testified about Jesus Christ; you're blessed if you read, hear and keep/apply the prophecy
- c (1:4a) John, writing to the seven churches
- d (1:4b) Grace and peace to you from the One who is, who was and who is coming
- e (1:5) Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and...
- f (1:6) He loves us, set us free from our sins by His blood and has made us a kingdom and priests to the Father, to whom be eternal glory and dominion, *Amen!*
- g/g' (1:7a) "Behold, he is coming on the clouds"/"every eye will see Him, including those who pierced Him"*
- f' (1:7b) All the families of the earth will mourn (in repentance) over Him (an echo of Zechariah 12:10)—with certainty! *Amen!*
- e' (1:8a) I am the Alpha and the Omega (which Jesus calls Himself in 22:13)
- d' (1:8b) The Lord God, the One who is, who was and who is coming
- c' (1:9-11) John on Patmos, commanded to write to the seven churches
- b' (1:12-18) The vision of the Son of Man (see Daniel 7:13 above), which John "saw" (Gk *blepo*); the First and the Last, the Living—Resurrected—One testifies
- a' (1:19-20) The command to write what John had just seen, the current circumstances in the seven churches (i.e., his servants [also in v. 20]) and what will take place after this; the symbolism speaks of the seven churches, God's servants (see 1:1).

In this structure, the parallelism of the ‘c,’ ‘d’ and ‘e’ pairings are clear.<sup>5</sup> Since ‘f’ and ‘f’ both strikingly end in “Amen!”, that parallelism is highly likely. The ‘g’ layer thus emerges as the focal centerpoint: the collage of Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10.

That raises two questions: 1) *Why* are the Daniel 7 and Zechariah 12 citations made the centerpiece of the introduction of the Apocalypse (which assumes the careful study of both of those passages and their other biblical usage together to answer the question)? and 2) If the prophecies of Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 truly are that important in Revelation, *where/how* are they fulfilled within the book?

Before proceeding to answer those questions, though, it is helpful to show that a chiastic structuring of Revelation 1 is really not an unexpected development. The following general outline of the overall Book of Revelation was initially published by my former student, (now Dr.) Michelle Lee, in *Novum Testamentum* in 1998<sup>6</sup>:

### ***A Chiastic Macrostructure of the Book of Revelation***

A (ch. 1) Introduction, including the first beatitude (1:3)

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<sup>5</sup> The ‘b’ pairing also is relevant to this study for two reasons: 1) it is striking that the first playing out of the “coming with the clouds” imagery cited in Rev. 1:7 (Dan. 7:13) is only five verses later (i.e., Rev. 1:12ff. [in ‘b’]); and 2) in my recent study “‘Read, Hear/Heed’ (Rev. 1:3): Obeying an Exegetical Clue to Understand the Overall Practical Messages of the Apocalypse,” I found that, playing off Rev. 1:3 (in ‘b’), one of the most prominent practical messages to be obeyed in Revelation is the endurance of “the saints” in the midst of suffering (see Rev.13:9-10; 14:12-13), a theme canonically introduced in Dan. 7:21-22, 25-27.

<sup>6</sup> M.V. Lee, “A Call to Martyrdom: Function as Method and Message in Revelation,” *NovT* 40 (1998). This article began as a doctoral seminar paper at Notre Dame under Josephine Massengbyrde Ford, the author of the *Revelation* Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), whose published view is that the Apocalypse is not a unified document. Ford, however, was quite positive toward the paper’s publication.

B (chs. 2-3) God's people in the seven churches and prophecy of the future testing of "the earth-dwellers"<sup>7</sup> in "the hour of trial"

C (chs. 4-5) The heavenly throne room, where it is said that those for whom the Lamb died from all the nations will reign on the earth

D (ch. 6) The first six seals (parallel to the "beginning of birth pains" in Matt. 24:4-14) are removed from the scroll, including the rider on the white horse and the kings and commanders hiding from the Lamb's coming wrath

E (7:1-8:1) The Jewish 144,000 are sealed on earth as God's servants and the innumerable multitude from every nation is taken to heaven to serve the Lord there

F (8:2-9:21) The latter trumpet judgments are "woes" upon the "earth-dwellers" (8:13)

G (chs. 10-11) John prophesies the beast will kill the two witnesses in Jerusalem, who have prophesied for three and a half years (11:3), in Jerusalem, "the great city," and the "earth-dwellers" celebrate as a result, though the witnesses' resurrection/ascension triggers a great revival of both Jews and Gentiles (11:13)

H (12:1-6) The birth of Christ from a godly Jewish woman and His protection through the ascension long ago are the model for a corporate righteous Jewish "woman" made up of converted Jewish believers (see 11:13) fleeing to the wilderness, protected by God for three and a half years (12:6)

I (12:7-17) "The heaven-dwellers" are introduced by name (12:12) and Satan's wrath will be focused on the earth from that point forward

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<sup>7</sup> "Earth-dwellers" and "heaven-dwellers" terminology has been used in this outline in keeping with primary findings of my article with Emily Hunter (now McGowin), "The 'Earth-Dwellers' and the 'Heaven-Dwellers' in Revelation: An Overlooked Interpretive Key," *Faith and Mission* 20/1 (Fall 2003) 3-18.

J (ch. 13) Mid-point “Peak” I: Worshiping the beast (because you are an “earth-dweller” [13:8]) and persecuting the “saints” (13:7) because the “heaven-dwellers” (13:6) are out of reach (i.e., in heaven)

J’ (chs. 14-15) Mid-point “Peak” II: Fearing (trusting)/glorifying the Lamb or suffering the eternal consequences of being Babylon the Great or a beast-worshiper

I’ (ch. 16) God’s wrath is focused on beast-worshippers (16:2, 6, 7, 9, 11) and Babylon the Great (see 16:17-21)

H’ (17:1-6) The evil corporate image of the woman, Babylon the Great, responsible for the martyrdom of believers throughout history

G’ (17:7-18) Ultimately, “the great city” is Babylon the Great (17:18), whom the beast—who astonishes “the earth-dwellers”—and the “kings” (see 10:11) will betray, before being defeated by Christ

F’ (ch. 18) The final “woes” come upon Babylon the Great, who receives the punishment predicted to come upon the “earth-dwellers” (3:10; 8:13) for martyring God’s people (18:20, 24; see 6:10), proving the closest relationship between Babylon and the “earth-dwellers”

E’ (19:1-10) The innumerable multitude (see 7:9ff.) is portrayed as a heavenly choir and Christ’s bride

D’ (19:11-21) The wrath of Christ, the rider on the white horse, comes upon the gathered armies of kings and commanders

C’ (20:1-10) God’s people reigning with Christ on the earth for 1,000 years

B’ (20:11-22:5) The “earth-dwellers” are judged eternally, then God’s people dwell in the new heavens and earth

A' (22:6-21) Conclusion, including the last two beatitudes of the book (22:7 [which mirrors the structure of 1:3] and 22:14.

The complexity of structuring the entire Book of Revelation chiastically is truly an astonishing oral/literary achievement. However, as we turn to consider Daniel 7, it is quickly realized that the Apocalypse is following a crucial earlier literary pattern: the Book of Daniel.

Most laypersons reading a translation of the Book of Daniel don't know it is written in two languages: Hebrew and Aramaic. Roughly half of Daniel (i.e., chs. 1, 8-12) is written in Hebrew and half in Aramaic (chs. 2-7). The following is the center-facing structure of the Aramaic portion of Daniel—where, of course, Daniel 7:13 is found:

### *The Chiastic Structure of Daniel 2-7*

A (ch. 2) Nebuchadnezzar's "metallic" vision of four Gentile kingdoms, with an emphasis on what leads to the final kingdom of God

B (ch. 3) A test of faith (I; see Hebrews 11:34): Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace

C (ch. 4) The humbling of Nebuchadnezzar after his arrogant profession of "Babylon the Great" (the biblical background of the wording "Babylon the Great" in Revelation)

C' (ch. 5) The humiliation of Belshazzar and the fall of Babylon (i.e., the first empire of chs. 2 and 7)

B' (ch. 6) A test of faith (II; see Hebrews 11:33): Daniel in the lion's den



A' (ch. 7) Daniel's "beastly" vision of four Gentile kingdom, with an emphasis on the latter aspect of the fourth kingdom, the Ancient of Days, the Son of Man and the suffering and everlasting victory of the saints<sup>8</sup>

Given the presence of the citation of Daniel 7:13 in Revelation 1:7, as well as other significant allusions to Daniel throughout the Apocalypse, it certainly cannot be considered unexpected that Revelation would be structured like the Aramaic portion of Daniel. Add to that David Dorsey's impressive research, indicating that each chapter in Daniel 1-6 is also structured in an inverted parallel manner,<sup>9</sup> and it becomes less and less surprising that Revelation 1 reflects the same kind of center-facing structures found in the Aramaic section of Daniel (see above).

### **The Earliest Scriptural Background of Revelation 1:7: Daniel 7 and Zechariah 12**

Given his conclusions on the structures of Daniel 1-6, it is surprising, though, that Dorsey does not offer a proposed chiastic understanding of Daniel 7. However, my own research over time has indicated that Daniel 7 is structured chiastically, reflecting a fairly clear inverted parallel structure, as set forth below:

#### *A Chiastic Structuring of Daniel 7*

a (7:1) Introductory summary of Daniel's vision

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<sup>8</sup> David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 259.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 260-61.

b (7:2-6) The first three world empires

c (7:7-8) The fourth beast and the little horn

d (7:9-12) The Ancient of Days and the court convening; arrogant words by the little horn and the fourth beast destroyed

e (7:13a) “I continued watching in the night visions...”

*f (7:13b-14a) One like a Son of Man comes on the clouds into the presence of the Ancient of Days, where He is given authority to rule; “every people, nation and language” will serve Him*

*f’ (7:14b) The dominion of the Son of Man is everlasting and His kingdom will not be destroyed*

e’ (7:15) “The visions in my mind terrified me...”

d’ (7:16-22) The little horn wages war against “the saints” until the Ancient of Days arrives and passes judgment

c’ (7:23-26) The meaning of the fourth beast and the little horn, who will oppress “the saints” for “a time, times and half a time” (see the same wording in Revelation 12:14)

b’ (7:27) The greatness of all the kingdoms under all heaven given to “the saints”

a’ (7:28) End of the vision’s interpretation: terrifying thoughts

The pairings in the ‘a’ through ‘e’ layers make sufficiently good sense opposite each other to provide a good supporting case for the ‘f’ layer (7:13b-14) being a viable midpoint for the overall structure of the chapter. If that is valid, then the question becomes, “What is the focal central section emphasizing by its structural parallelism?”

Logically, it appears that ‘f’ and ‘f’ must be sequential steps—7:14b being later, speaking of the eternal kingdom of the Son of Man, with 7:13b-14a describing that which leads up to that everlasting kingdom. An implication for our understanding of the use of Daniel 7:13b in Revelation 1:7 is that, given the pairing at the center of the chiasm in Daniel 7, the reader has reason to expect a sequential fulfillment of the central ‘f’ section (7:13b-14) of this prophecy in the Apocalypse.

Before leaving Daniel 7, though, two other points are worth making: 1) A theme is introduced in d’, c’ and b’ (i.e., 7:16-27) that assumes an important role in Revelation 13-14. It is difficult to avoid the contextual implication that the citation of Daniel 7:13 in Revelation 1:7 carries along with it from the Daniel context the prophecy about the suffering of “the saints” in Dan. 7:21-22, 25, 27, given that it is so clearly echoed/fulfilled in Rev. 13:7 (with a related applicational comment appearing almost immediately in 13:10; see also 14:12); and 2) In f (7:13b), in what immediately follows the very wording cited in Revelation 1:7 (and Matthew 24:30; see below), it is observed that the “coming” of the Son of Man “with the clouds of heaven” is not to earth, but into the presence of the Ancient of Days.<sup>10</sup> Nor does the wording that immediately follows, stating that the Son of Man is “given authority to rule and glory and a kingdom” specify *where* “those of every people, nation, and language” (7:14a) will serve Him: on earth, after being taken to heaven, or both.

Understanding this background for the Apocalypse provided by Daniel 7 is crucial, but Zechariah 12 must not be overlooked. So, what does careful observation of the context in Zechariah 12 contribute to understanding why Revelation 1:7 places it

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<sup>10</sup> In Dan. 7, the only Divine figure who actually is said to come to earth is the Ancient of Days, when He intervenes in judgment on behalf of “the saints” in 7:22.

alongside Daniel 7:13 as “partner preaching text” being focally fulfilled in the Apocalypse?

The following structuring of Zechariah 12-14<sup>11</sup> is helpful in providing an answer:

*A Chiastic Structuring of Zechariah 12-14*

a (12:1-4) All the nations will gather against Jerusalem, but the Lord will defeat them.

b (12:5-9) Judah and her leaders will be strengthened and the attacking nations will be destroyed.

*c (12:10-14) The house of David and the residents of Jerusalem will repent/mourn as they look on the One they have pierced.*

*c (13:1-6) The sin and impurity of the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem will be washed away, idolatry will be removed and false prophets will be ashamed.*

b' (13:7-9) Judah's leader (the Lord's “shepherd”) will be struck and the sheep scattered; a remnant will survive and call on the Lord.

a' (14:1-21) All the nations will gather against Jerusalem, but the Lord will defeat them and become their King.

The parallels in all three chiastic layers (i.e., ‘a,’ ‘b’ and ‘c’) make sense. In considering the central layer—where 12:10, cited in Revelation 1:7, is found—it can be concluded that the mourning of Israel (Zech. 12:10ff.)—and whatever is meant by the

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<sup>11</sup> Adapted from Dorsey, 320.

wording “the residents of Jerusalem”<sup>12</sup>—is directly related to the washing away of their sin (13:1), strongly implying this is salvific, especially given the repeated mention of “family/families” in 12:12-14 (see “families” in Rev. 1:7). Playing off the wording “the residents of Jerusalem” in 12:10, such wording as “the land will mourn, every family... (12:12) and “all the remaining families, every family...” (12:14) is noteworthy.

This may have been taken by Jesus as sufficient reason to use the wording “all the families of the earth” in Matthew 24:30, which is echoed in Revelation 1:7 (and quite possibly elsewhere in Rev. [e.g., 5:9; 7:9; 11:9]). However, it is also important to observe that the LXX of Daniel 7:14 also contains the same Greek word (*phule*) in describing one of the groupings of those who will serve the Son of Man in His kingdom. If Zechariah is written after Daniel,<sup>13</sup> Zechariah 12:10 may thus be understood as explaining *how* the groupings of *phule* become the servants of the Son of Man.

Where these points play out in the Book of Revelation will be discussed later in the paper. At this point, though, it is necessary to consider the only other biblical passage in which Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 are used together: the earlier portion of Matthew’s version of the Olivet Discourse.

### **The Further Scriptural Background of Revelation 1:7: Matthew 24**

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<sup>12</sup> As I stated in my recent article, “The Land as Covenant Backdrop: A Modest Response to Burge and Waltke,” *Criswell Theological Review* NS 9/1 (Fall 2011) 68, there is sufficient reason to understand the wording “the residents of Jerusalem” as expanding those present in Zech. 12:10 to more than Jews.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Gleason L. Archer, Jr. (“Daniel,” in *EBC* gen. ed. F.E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985], 7: 6) dates the completed book of Daniel at around 530 B.C., while Hermann Austel (“Daniel,” in *ECB* gen. ed. W.A. Elwell [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989], 687) dates the earliest event in Zechariah in 520 B.C.

The side-by-side usage of Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10—along with a reasonably clear quotation from Joel 2:30-31 (see also Isa. 13:9-10)<sup>14</sup>—does not show up in the Matthean Olivet Discourse until 24:29-31. However, the lead-off wording in verse 29—“Immediately after the tribulation of those days”—causes the reader to reverse course to try to answer “What ‘tribulation?’”—“What is meant by ‘those days?’”

To take care that there are no wrong assumptions in approaching 24:29a, it is necessary to consider here 24:1-28 as the immediate context of that wording. To do so with the immediate reason for Jesus’ sermon in mind, it must be noted that the Olivet Discourse is in answer to the following pointed questions from the apostles: 1) “When will these things happen” (i.e., the destruction of the Temple, which Jesus was referring to in 24:2)? 2) “What is the sign of Your coming (2a) and of the end of the age” (2b)?

With that in mind, the following inverted parallel understanding of the earlier section of Matthew 24 is insightful:

### *A Chiastic Structuring of Matthew 24:1-28*

- a (24:1-3a) The destruction of the Temple and when will it be (question 1)
- b (24:3b) Focus on the question (2a) in the middle: “What is the sign of your *parousia*?”
- c (24:4-12) Notably, false messiahs and false prophets will mislead many. Also, the experience of “tribulation” (Greek *thlipsis*) during the preliminary period called “the beginning of birth pains” (i.e., before the unprecedented tribulation at “the end of the age”).

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<sup>14</sup> It is acknowledged that the cosmic phenomena listed in Matt. 24:29 is also seen in Isa. 13:9-10, but as only being *generally* connected with the Day of the Lord. Joel 2:30-31 provides the important *specific* detail that the phenomena occur *before* the Day of the Lord.

- d (24:13) The one who endures to “the end” (i.e., of the age [question 2b]) will be saved.
- e (24:14) Gospel of the kingdom preached to the whole world/all the nations and then “the end” (i.e., of the age [answering question 2b]) shall come
- e’ (24:15) Abomination of desolation standing in the Holy Place ([answering question 1]; see Dan. 9:27; 12:11), speaking of *both* A.D. 70 and an end-times Temple
- d’ (24:16-22) Taking flight during “great tribulation” (echoing Dan. 12:1)
- c’ (24:23-26) False messiahs and false prophets leading people astray (this wording repeated from ‘c’ strongly suggests that both passages refer to the same time period)
- b’ (24:27) The obvious visibility of the *parousia* (as opposed to the Greek term *erchomai*, which is used more times in the rest of the passage) of the Son of Man (initially addressing Question 2a, leaving the implication that Christ’s *parousia* will take place after the preliminary “tribulation” described in 24:23-26)
- a’ (24:28) Vultures gathering around the carcass (figurative for the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70, with possible eschatological reference [question 1])<sup>15</sup>

There is much that could be considered here. To focus on the question at hand (i.e., what is meant by “the tribulation of those days”), though, it is particularly helpful to notice two things: 1) there is a clear contrast between (earlier) “tribulation” and (later) “great tribulation,” but the parallel wording in the ‘c’ layer (e.g., false messiahs and prophets) indicates the author is returning to speak of the *earlier* period of “tribulation”—as opposed to the “great tribulation”—in mirroring fashion in c’ (24:23-26); and 2) the earlier “tribulation” is closely related to the analogy of “the beginning of birth pains.”

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<sup>15</sup> What Jesus is referring to in using the proverbial saying in Matt. 24:28 has been notoriously difficult for scholars to determine. Observation of the chiasmic structure helps in that regard.

Of great assistance here is a simple word study of the Greek word *thlipsis*, rendered “tribulation” in this passage. It is beyond reasonable dispute that, of the 45 uses of *thlipsis* in the New Testament, only a bare handful refer to the period immediately preceding the return of Christ.<sup>16</sup> The rest, including three clear uses early in the Apocalypse (Rev. 1:9; 2:9, 10), describe affliction in the Christian life in the present age (cf. John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3). “Playing fair” with this wider usage of *thlipsis* requires the following balanced exegetical/theological conclusion: there is consistent “tribulation” (i.e., affliction, suffering) in the Christian life prior to the end of the age (the predominant NT usage), but there will be totally unprecedented (i.e., “great” [Gk. *megale*]) tribulation at the end of the age (the minority, specialized usage).

Therefore, given that: 1) the vast majority usage of *thlipsis* refers to suffering in the Christian life prior to the end of the age; and 2) the phenomenon of “early labor” (a.k.a. “false labor” and, in modern medical terminology, Braxton Hicks contractions) may occur days or weeks before the “hard labor” of the actual birth of the child— analogically pushing the idea of “the *beginning* of birth pains” back away from the period up against the Second Coming of Christ<sup>17</sup>—a very important conclusion can be drawn in arriving at the threshold of Matthew 24:29-31: the “tribulation of those days” in 24:29a is referring to affliction experienced before what is normally thought of as the “tribulation period”—what Jesus means by “great tribulation”—at the end of the age.

Before moving on to 24:29-31, one other “big picture” observation should be registered about what is learned from the above chiastic structuring of 24:1-28: with the

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<sup>16</sup> This same general point is made by Moo, in his primary essay in *Three Views on the Rapture*, by Alan Hultberg, Craig Blaising and Douglas Moo (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 186-87, 191.

<sup>17</sup> Essentially the same observation based on Matthew’s inclusion of “*beginning of...*” in 24:8 is made by D.A. Carson, “Matthew,” *EBC* gen. ed. F.E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 8: 498; and R.T. France, *Matthew* TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 338.



exception of the b/b' layer (i.e., the initial statement of the question about Christ's *parousia* [24:3] and the parallel analogy for the *parousia* [24:27]), Matthew 24:1-28 squarely addresses Questions 1 and 2b, but barely touches 2a. Assuming Jesus did not "dodge the question," that presumably leaves Question 2a (i.e., "What is the sign of your coming?") to be a focus of 24:29-31.

In turning to 24:29-31, by this point in this study, it is anything but surprising to find it is also structured in an inverted parallel way. In regard to this passage, careful observation of its literary structure is particularly helpful, because much of the previous analysis of this key passage has been confused by the failure of scholars to perceive and track its non-linear (i.e., mirroring) flow and the resulting implications.

#### *A Chiastic Structuring of Matthew 24:29-31*

a (24:29a) Immediately after "the tribulation of those days" (i.e., the preliminary period of "the beginning of birth pains" spoken of in 24:4-12, 23-26)

b (24:29b) Phenomena mentioned in Joel 2:31 as *before* the "Day of the Lord"

c (24:30a) The "*sign*" seen... in heaven (i.e., answering Question 2a)

d (24:30b) The Son of Man

e (24:30c) "Will mourn" (Greek *kopsontai*) (Zech. 12:10)

f (24:30d) "*All the families (Greek phulai) of the earth*" (wording similar to both Dan. 7:14, LXX and Zechariah 12:12, 14, LXX)

e' (24:30e) “Will see” (Greek *opsontai*) (the idea is present in Zech. 12:10 [LXX], though a different Greek word (*epiblepo*) is used there, so Jesus’ word choice is specifically intended to parallel *kopsontai* [“will mourn”])

d' (24:30f) The Son of Man

c' (24:30g) “Coming on the clouds of heaven” (Dan. 7:13)

b' (24:31a) [Jesus] will send out His angels with a loud trumpet (also in Joel 2:1, where the trumpet declares the coming of the “Day of the Lord”)

a' (24:31b) [Jesus] will gather His elect from the four winds

First, the detailed precision of the inverted parallels in these three verses is noteworthy. For example, the repetitions of “Son of Man” in the ‘d’ layer and the Greek wording *kopsontai/opsontai* in the ‘e’ layer demonstrate that these pairings are highly intentional.

Further, the Greek wording at the midpoint of this literary structure (*pasai hai phulai tes ges*) seems to draw upon the immediate contexts of both Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 and is quoted verbatim in Revelation 1:7—where, of course, this study began. A plausible reason for that would be, as the presence of the preaching of the gospel to “all the nations” in Matthew 24:14 proves to be the end times completion of the Great Commission to make disciples of “all the nations” in 28:19, so the Son of Man (i.e., Christ) “coming on the clouds of heaven” for “all the families of the earth” brings together exegetical implications in the prophecies of Daniel 7 and Zechariah 12 that point to a wider audience that will respond to the worldwide mandate of the Great Commission during the end times.

In regard to Daniel 7, “all the families of the earth” in Matthew 24:30 explains *how* “those from every family, nation and language”—wording functionally equivalent to “all the nations” in 24:14 and 28:19—become the Son of Man’s servants (Dan. 7:14). From Zechariah 12, this chiasmic understanding of Matthew 24:29-31 makes it clear that the “mourning,” which is located in Jerusalem (Zech. 12:10) and closely linked to the washing away of sin (13:1), is indeed true repentance unto salvation, as required in Luke’s version of the Great Commission: “repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to *all the nations*, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47, emphasis mine).

Still to be addressed here is how Matthew 24:29-31 addresses Question 2a (“What is the sign of your coming?”). Jesus’ answer to that key query of the apostles is given in the ‘a,’ ‘b’ and ‘c’ layers of the chiasm.

Layer ‘a’ chronologically places the gathering of His elect from “the four winds”<sup>18</sup> (‘a’ [24:31]) “immediately after” (‘a’ [24:29]) what has been argued above as being the completion of the preliminary “tribulation”/affliction (i.e., ‘the beginning of birth pains’ [24:8]), which would logically be just before the beginning of the period of “the great tribulation” (24:21). Layer ‘b’ tells of other things that will be taking place at the same time, with both descriptions echoing prophecies found in Joel 2: The cosmic phenomena depicted in Matthew 24:29 (‘b’) are from Joel 2:31 and are there prophesied to occur “*before* the... Day of the Lord comes”; and the blowing of the trumpet in Matthew 24:31 (‘b’) predicted in Joel 2:1 is to sound the alarm that “the Day of the Lord

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<sup>18</sup> Another highly significant use of the phrase “the four winds” in a key OT prophecy is Ezek. 37:9. That passage is also surely in the background of Jesus’ wording in Matt. 24:31. It will be discussed in regard to Rev. 7 below.

is coming” (i.e., is near). Layer ‘c’ specifies that “the sign” which will “appear in the sky” (‘c’) will be the Son of Man “coming on the clouds of heaven” (‘c’ [24:30]).

The *tote* at the beginning of 24:30 is commonly translated “then” in the sense of “at that time,” but not infrequently means “then” in the sense of “thereupon” (i.e., “next” or “after that”).<sup>19</sup> As a result, it is not possible to know for sure from Matthew 24:29-31 whether the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds occurs at the same time as the gathering of the elect from the four winds (24:31), or sometime “after that.”

To pull together the more significant points/implications gleaned from carefully observing the chiasmic structures in Matthew 24, where the “preaching texts” in Revelation 1:7 are previously placed together in the words of Jesus: 1) the gathering of the elect from the four winds (24:31) is “immediately after” the completing of “the beginning of birth pains,” the preliminary tribulation/affliction of the course of the age, before the beginning of “the great tribulation”; 2) the inclusion of the phenomena from Joel 2 in Matthew 24:29 implies the equating of “the great tribulation” (24:21) with—at least the beginning of—the Day of the Lord, since both seem to begin immediately after the gathering of the elect; 3) The answer to Question 2a at the beginning of Matthew 24 is that the sign of the Son of Man’s “coming” is His “coming on the clouds of heaven,” but it is not clear from this passage whether His “coming” is at the same time as the gathering of the elect, or later, and nothing is said about whether His “coming” is to earth; but 4) what clearly does happen on earth is that whoever is meant by “all the families of the earth” will repent when the sign of the Son of Man is seen in the sky.

### **The Fulfillment of Revelation 1:7 (I): Chapters 4-5 and 7:1-8:1**

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<sup>19</sup> BAGD, 823-24.

Finally, it is time to look at the Book of Revelation and see where what has been learned so far in this study will be fulfilled. As has been seen, the prophetic content of Daniel 7 and Zechariah 12—and various implications there—are pulled together and teased out by Jesus in Matthew 24, the apparent immediate background for why Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 are cited in Revelation 1:7. However, for Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 to be truly seen as the “preaching texts” for the Apocalypse, it must be demonstrable where those texts—and their original contexts and further Scriptural side-by-exposition which have been probed—come to fruition later in the Book of Revelation.

The first such fulfillment section is Revelation 4-5, which occurs in the heavenly throne room. That point in itself immediately calls to mind the middle of Daniel 7,<sup>20</sup> also set in the heavenly throne room. The following is the structural layout of chapters 4-5, which is fairly obviously dependent on Daniel 7, while also moving beyond it in the detail of its fulfillment:

#### *A Chiastic Structuring of Revelation 4-5*

a (4:1-8) The heavenly throne room and its praise

b (4:9-11) The four living creatures and the 24 elders: The worthiness of the One seated on the throne because He created and sustains

*c (5:1-4) None found worthy to open the seven-sealed scroll*

*d (5:5) The victorious Lion of Judah may open the scroll*

*d' (5:6-7) One like a slaughtered Lamb takes the scroll from the One on the throne*

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<sup>20</sup> See the discussion of Dan. 7 as the predominant OT influence in Rev. 4-5 in Beale, 314-16.

*c'* (5:8-10) *Those with the prayers of the saints sing a new song: The Lamb is worthy to open the scroll because of His redemption of those from “every tribe and language and people and nation”*

*b'* (5:11-12) A massive choir of angels: The worthiness of the Lamb because He was slaughtered

*a'* (5:13-14) The praise of all creatures for the One seated on the throne and the Lamb

For the purposes of this paper, the most relevant parts of this inverted parallel structure are the ‘c’ and ‘d’ layers. At the midpoint (d, d’), the Son of Man of Daniel 7 is here visualized as the Lion/Lamb. It is seen that His reason for coming before the throne of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:13—the One seated on the throne in Rev. 4-5—is to take the seven-sealed scroll, so that it can be opened—which opening process is not complete until all seven seals have been removed, in chapter 8.<sup>21</sup> The ‘c’ layer adds that the Lamb’s worthiness to open the scroll is based upon His redemptive work in behalf of those from “every family and language and people and nation,” wording equivalent to “those of every people, family, and language” in Daniel 7:14 (LXX).

In Revelation 4-5, however, there is no mention of the “coming on the clouds” imagery from Daniel 7 or anything obviously related to Zechariah 12. Nor is there obviously discernible content related to Matthew 24. Thus, those background elements must be logically understood to be fulfilled at later points in the Apocalypse. The next likely location for a further partial fulfillment is Revelation 7:1-8:1.

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<sup>21</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 250, concludes from his discussion of the nature of the seven-sealed scroll: “Therefore the seals are on the outside of the scroll, and chapter 6 provides preliminary events that lead up to the eschaton, when the divine plan is completed.” A very important theological implication of this conclusion is that the end-times “tribulation period” cannot begin until after the scroll is opened (i.e., until the trumpet judgments).

Again, the chiasmic structuring of this passage emphasizes points that are beneficial to consider in regard to this study:

***A Chiasmic Structuring of Revelation 7:1-8:1***

a (7:1-3) Calm (I): The restraining of “the four winds” and the angels who would harm the earth, sea and trees

b (7:4-8) The sealing of the *servants* of God on their foreheads

c (7:9-12) The innumerable multitude from “every nation, tribe, people and language” before the One on the throne and the Lamb, thankful for salvation and worshipping

c’ (7:13-14) The innumerable multitude that came out just before (see the grammatically parallel use in Rev. 3:10<sup>22</sup>) the “great tribulation,” through the agency of the blood of the Lamb

b’ (7:15-17) The innumerable multitude *servicing* the One seated on the throne and the Lamb

a’ (8:1) Calm (II): Silence in heaven for half an hour after the opening of the seventh seal

In ‘a’, the single use of the phrase “the four winds” in Revelation (in 7:1) must be recalling Jesus’ words about the gathering of the Son of Man’s elect from “the four winds” in Matthew 24:31, which is the lone use of that phrase in Matthew. That

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<sup>22</sup> I have previously argued this point in “The ‘Earth-Dwellers’ and the ‘Heaven-Dwellers,’” 9. There, I observed that, since “the hour of testing” (Rev. 3:10) was planned by God to test “the earth-dwellers” (see 13:8; 17:8), not believers, it makes better sense to take “keep you from the hour of testing” as removal before the time period of testing. Since 3:10 and 7:14 are grammatically parallel—*ek tes horas tou peirasmou* (3:10) and *ek tes thlipseos tes megales* (7:14), and both are talking about the same time period (i.e., “hour of testing” = “great tribulation”), it follows that 3:10 and 7:14 they are making the same point.

gathering was seen to take place “immediately after” the *preliminary* “tribulation” (24:29) of what Jesus described by analogy as the “beginning of birth pains” (24:8).

Verification for that assertion comes from the immediately preceding section of Revelation, as well as 8:1. *First*, it has been widely observed that Revelation 6 contains extensive parallelism to the “beginning of birth pains” section of Matthew 24:4-14,<sup>23</sup> which, as argued earlier in this paper, has to do with *thlipsis* (“tribulation, affliction”) prior to the “great tribulation” at the end of the age. *Second*, the cosmic phenomena in Revelation 6:12-13 looks back to Joel 2:30-31, which occurs *before* the beginning of the Day of the Lord, as well as Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:29, where it said to be “immediately after” the preliminary *thlipsis*. *Third*, Revelation 6:17 closes that section with a reference to “the great day of Their (i.e., the One seated on the throne and the Lamb) wrath,” another way of speaking of the Day of the Lord (see, e.g., the equating of those ideas in Zephaniah 1:14-15). However, the Day of the Lord cannot begin in 6:17, given the pregnant silence in 8:1, very likely an allusion to Zephaniah 1:7 (“Be silent in the presence of the Lord God, for the Day of the Lord is near” [i.e., is about to begin *after* 8:1]). Thus, the aorist *elthen* in Revelation 6:17 should be understood as proleptic<sup>24</sup> (i.e., futuristic: “the great Day of Their wrath *is coming*”), just as the usage of the exact verbal form (*elthen*) must be rendered in a comparable prophetic context in Jude 14.

In the ‘b’ pairing, another step from the Daniel 7 midpoint is played out: “those of every people, family and language” are to “serve” (*douleuo*, LXX) the Son of Man” (7:14). In Revelation 7:3, the 144,000 are called “the slaves (*doulous*) of God.” In 7:15,

<sup>23</sup> Ian Boxhall (*The Revelation of Saint John* Black’s NTC [Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006]105) summarizes, “... [C]ommentators from earliest times have also recognized the strong parallels with the so-called Synoptic Apocalypse (Mark 13; Matthew 24; Luke 21)....”

<sup>24</sup> See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 563-64.



the “vast multitude from every nation, family, people, and language” (7:9) “serve” (*latreuo*, “to serve, worship”) the One seated on the throne and the Lamb “night and day in His sanctuary.” The bottom line to grasp here is that, fulfilling Daniel 7:14, both groups “serve” the Lord—the 144,000 on earth, the innumerable multitude in heaven.

The central ‘c’ layer reflects yet another aspect of Daniel 7:14: how the Son of Man and “those of every people, family, and language”—apparently the same as “a vast multitude from every nation, family, people and language” in Revelation 7:9—get together so they can “serve” Him. As noted in the above discussion of Daniel 7, nothing in 7:13-14 indicates that the Son of Man “coming with the clouds of heaven” comes to earth at that point. Instead, He goes into the presence of the Ancient of Days in the heavenly throne room (7:9, 13). It is thus quite possible that at least some of the servants spoken of in Daniel 7:14 could be in heaven, since no location is stated for that group. That possibility becomes important to consider when looking at Revelation 7, where one group of God’s servants is on earth (7:4-8), while another is in heaven (7:9-17).

All in all, the literary structure of Revelation 7:1-8:1 and the clear allusions in that passage together primarily focus on the fulfillment of part of the prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14, but as it is further detailed by Jesus in Matthew 24. Particularly significant is the distinctive phrase “the four winds” (Rev. 7:1; cf. Matt. 24:31). Its purpose seems to be to signal that the first interlude of Revelation 7 is the place in the Apocalypse where the gathering of “His (i.e., the Son of Man’s/Christ’s) elect” takes place. That would appear to mean that one portion of Christ’s “elect”—the Jewish 144,000—is “sealed” (i.e., protected [7:3; see 8:4]) on earth, while the other portion—the innumerable multitude from “every nation, family, people, and language” (7:9)—is taken to heaven

Before leaving Revelation 7, however, another strand of prophecy should be brought into play in regard to the 144,000. The wording “the four winds” (7:1) also looks back at the “valley of dry bones” vision in Ezekiel 37.<sup>25</sup> There, hard on the heels of Ezekiel’s New Covenant prophecy of Israel being gathered from all the nations (36:24) and coming under the ministry of the Holy Spirit (36:27), the Spirit<sup>26</sup> comes “from the four winds” (37:9) and breathes life into the dry bones of Israel in chapter 37, causing “a vast army” to come to life spiritually. Since Revelation 7:4-8 reads much like the numbering of Israel’s military forces in Numbers 2:2-34, it appears that Revelation 7:4-8 is the fulfillment of the “firstfruits” (see that wording describing the 144,000 in 14:4)<sup>27</sup> of Israel coming under the New Covenant *en masse* at the end of the age (Rom. 11:25-26).

If this understanding is correct, it offers an explanation of how the two primary scenes in Revelation 7 both play off the initial wording “the four winds” (7:1): the 144,000 (7:4-8) and the innumerable multitude (7:9-17) are both part of “His elect” gathered from “the four winds” (Matt. 24:31). The conversion of the 144,000 “servants of God” (7:3) on earth begins the fulfillment of the miraculous New Covenant salvation of “all Israel” (Romans 11:25-26) prophesied in Ezekiel 37. That passage and the translation of the innumerable multitude from “every nation, family, people and

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<sup>25</sup> This parallel seems so clear that it was quite surprising that, in a perusal of recent commentators, I was unable to find any that tracked it. The closest was J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation IVPNTC* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 111, who states that, in Rev. 7, “John’s language echoes the prophecies of Ezekiel.” Most commentators are preoccupied with the parallels with the four horsemen of Zech. 6, usually because that passage clearly is a primary background text for the four horsemen of Rev. 6:1-8.

<sup>26</sup> The word play on the semantic range of the Hebrew *ruach* (“breath, wind, [S]pirit”) in Ezek. 37 is enough similar to the one Jesus employed in John 3:8 (where, in translation, the Greek *pneuma* can mean “wind” or “[S]pirit”) to make it very possible that Ezek. 37 was what Jesus had in mind when He chided Nicodemus in John 3:10.

<sup>27</sup> See the discussion of this passage by this writer in A. Boyd Luter, “Firstfruits,” *Lexham Bible Dictionary* ed. John D. Barry (Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, forthcoming).

language” to serve in heaven (Revelation 7:9) both partially fulfill Daniel 7:14: the service of “those of every people, family, and language” to the Lord.

### **The Fulfillment of Revelation 1:7 (II): Revelation 11 and 14**

To this point, two prominent parts of the citations of the “preaching texts” of the Apocalypse in Revelation 1:7 still have not been fulfilled: 1) the actual inclusion of the “coming on the clouds” wording from Daniel 7:13; and 2) the “mourning” (i.e., repentance) of “all the families of the earth” from Zechariah 12:10. As will be seen, in general, the “on the clouds” wording is fulfilled in Revelation 14 and the Zechariah passage in Revelation 11. The latter will be discussed first.

Revelation 11 is part of a sectional chiasmic structure that encompasses what is often referred to as the second interlude of the book (chs. 10 and 11):

#### *A Chiasmic Structuring of Revelation 10-11*

a (10:1-4) Focus on the seven thunders

b (10:5-7) The days of the seventh trumpet’s sounding will complete God’s hidden plan

c (10:8-11) Eating the bittersweet (i.e., judgment and salvation) scroll and prophesying about many “*peoples, nations, languages and kings*”

d (11:1-2) The Gentiles trample “the holy city” for 42 months (see 13:5)

e (11:3-6) Two witnesses prophesy indestructibly for 1,260 days

e’ (11:7) The two witnesses killed by the Beast out of the abyss (ending the 1,260 days)

d' (11:8) The dead bodies of the two witnesses desecrated in “the great city” (beginning the 42 months of the reign of the Beast [13:5])

c' (11:9-13) The two witnesses raised and ascended “*in a cloud*”; those from among the “*peoples, families (see 1:7), languages and nations*” watch (i.e., see with their eyes)—as well as those who live in “the holy city”—and fear and glorify God<sup>28</sup> (see 14:6-7)

b' (11:14-18) The blowing of the seventh trumpet

a' (11:19) God’s sanctuary in heaven opened; effects include rumblings of thunder

The ‘a’ and ‘b’ layers here move things forward toward the seventh trumpet and the conclusion of the Trumpets sequence (8:7-11:19). The ‘d’ and ‘e’ layers provide the most help available within the entire body of the Apocalypse on the chronological breakdown of the “great tribulation” (see 7:14), which chronology is easier to grasp when the inverted parallel structuring of the section is understood. The reason is that, at first glance, it seems to be presented in reverse sequential order. The latter three and a half year period (“42 months”) is presented first textually, in 11:2 (‘d’), while the previous three and a half years<sup>29</sup> (“1,260 days”) is spoken of in 11:3 (‘e’). Then, however, the end of the first three and a half years and the beginning of the latter three and a half years is played out in sequential order in the mirroring pairings (11:7 [‘e’], 8 [‘d’]).

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<sup>28</sup> A recent discussion of this passage as the primary point of fulfillment of Rom. 11:25-26 in Revelation by this writer is found in A. Boyd Luter, “The Land as Covenant Backdrop: A Modest Response to Burge and Waltke,” *Criswell Theological Review* NS 9.1 (2011): 63-65.

<sup>29</sup> Generally, one of the two witnesses in Rev. 11 is interpreted as being the “Elijah figure” prophesied to come “before the great and awesome Day of the Lord” (Mal. 4:5). Fulfilling Mal. 4:5, the two witnesses will be in the world *prior to* the beginning of the “1,260 days” (Rev. 11:3) of their untouchable public ministry, which are the first three and a half years of the tribulation period (with the reign of the Beast [13:5; see 11:2] being the latter three and a half years). If this is correct, the seven-year tribulation period and the Day of the Lord begin at the same point.

The ‘c’ layer is “where the action is” in this passage in tracking the fulfillment of the “preaching texts” in Revelation 1:7. The extensive conceptual parallelism between the ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses in 11:3-12 and that of Jesus in the Gospels accounts and Acts 1:9<sup>30</sup> leaves the reader with a strong sense that Jesus, who met with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-6), is close at hand. There are also important parallels to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the first occasion of a mass salvation of Jews.<sup>31</sup> Certainly, those from “the peoples, families, languages, and nations” who view the dead bodies of the two witnesses must be considered parallel terminology to “all the families of the earth” in 1:7. The focus on “those who pierced Him” (echoed from Zech. 12:10) *seeing* in 1:7 is likely at least partly fulfilled in the “enemies” of the two witnesses watching intently as they ascend (11:12).<sup>32</sup> The salvific sense of “mourning” (Rev. 1:7, echoed from Zech. 12:10) is present in the fact that, in the immediate wake of the deadly earthquake in Revelation 11:13a, the survivors (lit. “the rest”) “feared God and gave Him glory” (11:13b)—the exact response required in the announcing of the “eternal gospel” in 14:6-7. (All in all, Revelation 11:13

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<sup>30</sup> The immediately noticeable parallels between the two witnesses and Jesus are: 1) common proximity to the temple in their ministry (Rev. 11:1-2); 2) obvious similarity in length of public ministry (11:3); 3) both are involved in the doing of great miracles (11:6); 4) neither could be captured/killed until God’s perfect timing (11:7); 5) they are killed in Jerusalem (11:8); 6) obvious similarity in length of time dead (11:9, 11); 7) both resurrected (11:11); 8) they are seen after being resurrected by many witnesses (11:11-12); 9) both ascend to heaven in a cloud (11:12); and 10) as noted above, Elijah and Moses—the models for the miracles the two witnesses do in 11:6—met with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

<sup>31</sup> I have discussed these parallels in “The Land as Covenant Backdrop,” 63: 1) at Pentecost, there were Jews from “every nation under heaven” in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5), while, in Rev. 11:8, there were those representing “the peoples, families, languages and nations” in Jerusalem (11:8); the theological turning points in both passages are resurrection and ascension: see Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:24, 32-33 and Revelation 11:11-12; and 3) repentance/faith by a very large group of onlookers takes place in both passages (Acts 2:38-41; Rev. 11:13).

<sup>32</sup> Another possible angle here in regard to the “enemies” seeing is worth mentioning. Since the command to the two witnesses (“Come up here!” [11:12]) is the same wording John initially heard in 4:1, and since, in 1:2 “the testimony of Jesus Christ” can be understood as a subjective genitive (i.e., Jesus as the revealer of divine truth), the voice the witnesses heard in 11:12—unidentified and described only as “a loud voice from heaven”—may be that of Jesus, the Son of Man. If so, and the cloud is symbolic of the Son of Man, perhaps seeing that particular cloud and hearing His voice essentially equates to “seeing” Him.

also seems like the best candidate for the *ultimate* fulfillment of Romans 11:25-26.

However, that is not a focus of this paper.)

As strongly as the wording in Revelation 11:9-13 appears to point to the fulfilling of Zechariah 12:10, though, that is not everything that should be gleaned concerning the outworking of Revelation 1:7 in c'. The description of the ascension of the two witnesses "in a cloud" (Gk. *en te nephele*) is also probably worth pursuing.

There are only seven uses of "cloud" (Gk. *nephele*) in Revelation. After (1) the citation of Daniel 7:13 in Revelation 1:7 ("He is coming with the clouds"), the other uses are: (2) a reference to an angel coming down from heaven, "surrounded" by a cloud, in 10:1; and, (4-7) in 14:14-16, four uses in the context of one "like a son of man" seated on a cloud (see the discussion below), which definitely brings to mind the wording from Daniel 7:13 and Matthew 24:30. Usage (3) is Revelation 11:12 (c').

The wording in 11:12 immediately calls to mind the "cloud" into which Jesus disappeared from view as he ascended in Acts 1:9. However, there is likely more in view here. As soon as Revelation 1:7 spotlights the "cloud" wording from Daniel 7:13 and Matthew 24:30 as a key aspect of what would be played out in the Apocalypse, the alert reader begins to wonder where "cloud" would show up later as part of the end-times fulfillment of Daniel 7:13. The primary textual point of that fulfillment is certainly Revelation 14:14-16 (i.e., uses 4-7 of "cloud" above [see the discussion below]). However, 11:12 may well be an important "stepping-stone" toward that final aspect of fulfillment in 14:14-16.

In that regard, it is highly probable that the definite article before "cloud" (Gk. *te nephele*) is anaphoric (i.e., looking back to a previous usage). As Osborne rightly

concludes, “While chapter 10 is the nearer antecedent, the cloud of 1:7 (also an articular prepositional phrase) provides the better conceptual parallel.”<sup>33</sup> That being the case, the ascension of the two witnesses *en te nephelē* serves as a jolting reminder to the reader that, even though the Beast is able to kill the two witnesses, the power of the Son of Man, who 1:7 foretells is “coming with the clouds,” defeats death (11:1-12) and, at that point in chapter 11, is simply waiting for the Divine timing to display that power on a much broader scale.

A preview of the Son of Man’s power displayed in both final salvation and final judgment is depicted below in the inverted parallel structure of Revelation 14-15:

#### *A Chiastic Structuring of Revelation 14-15*

a (14:1-5) The 144,000 (see Revelation 7:4-8) now with the Lamb and protected on Mount Zion in heaven

b (14:6-7) The eternal “gospel”: fear, glorify and worship God!

c (14:8-11) God’s wrath on Babylon the Great and Beast-worshippers

*d (14:12-13) Perseverance of “the saints” (Daniel 7:22, 25, 27); blessing on those who die in the Lord in those days*

*d’ (14:14-16) The “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13) on “the clouds” and the final (grain) harvest (see Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43)*

c’ (14:17-20) The “grapes of wrath” harvested, focused on “the city”

b’ (15:1-4) The martyrs in heaven, singing about fearing, glorifying and worshiping God

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<sup>33</sup> Osborne, 431.

a' (15:5-8) The sanctuary—"the tabernacle (Gk. *skene*, which is equated to the "heaven-dwellers" in 13:6, who the reader is clued is at least partly equivalent to the "innumerable multitude" raptured to heaven in 7:9ff. by the use of the cognate *skenoo* in 7:15, which is also present in 13:6) of testimony"—in heaven before the seven plagues poured out.

The vantage point of layer 'a' is in heaven, where the 144,000 are now safely with the Lamb (14:1-5)—who is also the Son of Man! The other side of the coin of what was taking place in heaven is the preparation to pour out the climactic bowls of wrath (15:5-8). The 'b' layer articulates the "eternal gospel" (14:6-7) and pictures the martyrs who respond to that message, now in heaven (15:1-4). The 'c' layer speaks of the eternal consequences of unbelievers who worship the Beast (14:8-11), instead of receiving the eternal gospel, and the corresponding judgment that is depicted as "the grapes of wrath" (14:17-20). Conceptual links<sup>34</sup> reveal that 14:17-20 refers to the same event that is also pictured as the pouring out of the final bowl of wrath in 16:17-21 and the second coming of Christ in 19:11ff., where He is called "the Word of God" (19:13) and "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (19:16).

The central ('d') layer contains a pairing in which both parts look back to aspects of the great prophecy in Daniel 7. Getting to the point of this overall study, this is the location of the final fulfillment of Daniel 7:13 in the Apocalypse.

In 'd', the phrase "perseverance of the saints" (Rev. 14:12) recalls the suffering of "the saints" prophesied in Daniel 7:22ff. Significantly, Revelation 14:12-13 is at the very structural center of the book (J' [chs. 14-15]; see the macrostructural diagram of

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<sup>34</sup> The most obvious link is the wine and the trampling of the winepress of God's wrath (Rev. 14:19-20; 16:19; 19:15).



Revelation earlier in the study). Further, as I concluded in a recent unpublished paper,<sup>35</sup> 14:12-13 is at the *practical* “heart” of the book, echoing the initial use of *tereo* (“keep, obey”) in 1:3 in the wording “the saints, who keep (Gk *tereo*) God’s commands and their faith in Jesus” (14:12). The bottom line applicationally here is that such obedience and faith in Christ, the Son of Man, is how “the saints” at the end of the age will persevere.

In ‘d’, the highly concentrated “Son of Man on a cloud” wording in all three verses (14:14, 15, 16) fairly shouts the ultimate fulfillment of the wording from Daniel 7:13 cited in Revelation 1:7! In contrast to 14:17-20 (see the discussion above), though, the depiction of the harvest here is of grain,<sup>36</sup> not grapes. Relatedly, 14:14-20 is also the fulfillment of Jesus’ parable of the separation of “the wheat and the tares” (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43) at “the end of the age” (13:39, 40).

Pulling this together, Revelation 14 is the point in the Apocalypse at which the fulfillment of the Son of Man wording of Daniel 7 is completed. Those related to the Beast are judged (Rev. 14:8-11 and 14:17-20) and the martyred “saints” (14:12-13) who responded to the proclamation of the “eternal gospel (14:6-7) are “harvested” (14:14-16) in the sense of being taken to heaven (15:1-4).

Before closing, a possible difficulty is worth addressing: in the Second Coming passage in 19:11ff., the description of the Word of God/King of Kings figure sounds more like the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9—and notice must be taken that the Ancient of Days is the One who intervenes for the saints in 7:22. Perhaps the answer is found in

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<sup>35</sup> A. Boyd Luter, “‘Read, Hear/Heed’ (Rev. 1:3): Obeying an Exegetical Clue to Understand the Overall Practical Messages of the Apocalypse,” Unpublished paper presented at the Southwest Region Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Dallas, TX, March, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Osborne, 550-52, titles this section of his commentary “Grain Harvest” (14:14-16). Stephen S. Smalley (*The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005], 372-73) agrees, following the reasoning of Richard Bauckham (*The Theology of the Book of Revelation* NTT [Cambridge: CUP, 1993], 94-98).

the description of “One like the Son of Man” in Revelation 1:13ff. being notably like the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9. If so, the Son of Man, given co-authority by the One seated on the throne in Revelation 4-5, acts in the stead of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7 to carry out all the events included in the scroll—which appear to telescope all the way to the Second Coming.<sup>37</sup>

### **Conclusion: How Are the “Preaching Texts” Fulfilled in the Apocalypse?**

The following are the major findings of this paper:

1. The quotations from Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 are spotlighted as the literary centerpiece of Revelation 1, inferring that those passages will play a very important role in the unfolding of the Apocalypse from that point forward.
2. The Son of Man material in Daniel 7:13-14 is at the literary centerpoint of that chapter, giving the sense that the future fulfillment of that portion will be of particular importance. That is likely a key reason why Jesus picks up the passage in Matthew 24:30 and why John focuses on it in Revelation 1:7. Also, nothing is said in Daniel 7:13 about the Son of Man coming to earth at that point, but into the heavenly throne room. That observation allows for the taking of at least some of the Son of Man’s “servants” from “every people, family, and language” (7:14) to heaven to serve Him there.

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<sup>37</sup> Osborne, 339, is correct in saying “The content of the scroll is now unveiled in the trumpets and bowls.” Since Revelation 17:1-19:10 is a sort of extended “postlude” (i.e., as compared to the interludes in chapter 7 and 10:1-11:15) to the bowl judgments, at 19:11ff., the reader is—with a feel of finality—brought back to a different description of what happened in 16:17-21 and 14:17-20.

3. The pouring out of the “[S]pirit of grace and power” in Zechariah 12:10, plus its close proximity to the washing away of sin (13:1) for those in view in 12:10 seem to indicate that the “mourning” of 12:10 is true saving repentance. The repeated wording “the residents of Jerusalem” (12:10 and 13:1) and “every family” (12:12, 14) is likely the textual basis for the extending of the wording to “all the families of the earth” by Jesus (Matt. 24:30) and John (Rev. 1:7).
4. Jesus locates the gathering of the elect from the four winds (Matt. 24:31) “immediately after” (24:29) the *preliminary* tribulation of “the beginning of birth pains” (24:8), just prior to the unparalleled “great tribulation” (24:21)/Day of the Lord (i.e., the phenomena in 24:29b depicts is *before* the Day of the Lord). The gathering of the elect from “the four winds,” which certainly sounds like the Rapture, is thus seen to be pre-“great tribulation.” What is not answered here is how long the “great tribulation” lasts. The inverted structure of 24:29-31 leaves the impression that, in its end-times fulfillment, there will be more involved in the actual sequential playing out of both Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10.
5. Revelation 4-5 is the point of fulfillment of the Son of Man going into the presence of the Ancient of Days in the heavenly throne room (see Dan. 7:13). In Revelation 5:1ff., it is realized that the reason why the Son of Man—depicted in Revelation 4-5 as the Lion/ Lamb—goes there is to take the scroll, which contains the end times events to be played out after the removal of the seals.
6. Revelation 7:1-8:1 is the point at which the gathering of the elect from the four winds (i.e., the Rapture; see Matt. 24:31) takes place. It is immediately after the unsealing of the scroll sequence in Revelation 6, which strongly parallels the

- “beginning of birth pains” section in Matthew 24. The “servant” wording in Revelation 7:3, 15 echoes and fulfills the servant wording in Daniel 7:14.
7. Revelation 11 is the point in the Apocalypse at which Zechariah 12:10 is fulfilled (as well as Rom. 11:25-26). Extensive parallels to the ministry/death/resurrection/ascension of Jesus and the Day of Pentecost, as well as the description of a mass group’s response in 11:13 being in the same terms used for the “eternal gospel” in 14:6-7, are too much to be coincidence. Revelation 11 also provides a chronological framework of seven years, starting with the beginning of the Day of the Lord/“great tribulation”: the “Elijah figure” of Malachi 4:5 ministers unhindered for three and a half years (Rev. 11:3), until the Lord allows the killing of the two witnesses by the Beast in 11:7. Then, the reign of the Beast will last another three and half years (13:5; see 11:2).
  8. Revelation 14:14-16 is the only point in the Apocalypse where the Son of Man “on a cloud” wording from Daniel 7:13 occurs. The two-sided harvest of Revelation 14:14-20 appears to be the judgment at the end of the age visualized in Jesus’ parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43. Since Revelation 14:17-20 is a preview of the Second Coming in 19:11ff., the fulfillment of Daniel 7:13 is connected all the way to the Second Coming.
  9. If the above reasoning, the freshness of which is based partly—but hardly exclusively (see below)—on the implications of the literary structures of the various passages studied, is valid, it becomes clear why John, “moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21), positioned Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 as what I have called the “preaching texts” of the Apocalypse: they are predominant OT

prophecies whose fulfillment truly does form much of the fulfillment “backbone” of the Book of Revelation.

10. Though not the focus of this study, angles seen in Daniel 7, Matthew 24, and Revelation 7 dovetail into the theological conclusion that the Rapture of the church takes place in Revelation 7, just before the beginning of the seven-year long (11:3; 13:5) period of end-times unparalleled tribulation (see Dan. 12:1).<sup>38</sup> In its most basic form (i.e., the church “raptured” before a seven-year end-times “tribulation period”), this is a pretribulation Rapture, though supported and configured differently than the standard view. Because of its carefully-argued focus on Revelation, it is a needed alternative pretribulation position, since there is a typical assertion of silence<sup>39</sup> in regard to the actual textual location of the Rapture in the Apocalypse by pretribulationists.<sup>40</sup>

To pick up the loose thread above, while some may choose to view the preceding study as an exercise in “parallelomania,” it should be noted that many of the most important observations that emerged are not dependent on the *extended* chiastic structures. I presented the inverted parallel structures here because: 1) finding and studying them sensitized me to exegetical and theological angles I would not have noticed otherwise; and 2) they may be helpful for others, especially those who are sensitive to literary structural factors. I will now highlight points that stand on their own:

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<sup>38</sup> Exegetically and theologically, this conclusion fits hand in glove with the findings in “The ‘Earth-Dwellers’ and the ‘Heaven-Dwellers,’” which came at the subject from a very different exegetical angle.

<sup>39</sup> I.e., it is prophesied in Rev. 3:10, but “fulfilled” (in the silence) between chapters 3 and 4. This placement of the fulfillment of the Rapture in Rev. in standard pretribulation thinking thus reasons not from what is actually present in the text, but what is *not present or assumed to be present in the silence*.

<sup>40</sup> A recent example is the words of Craig Blaising (*Three Views of the Rapture*, 62): “[T]here is no explicit reference to the rapture in the book of Revelation....”

- In Revelation 1, the mirroring references to Christ in 1:5 and 8, plus the twin uses of “Amen!”, form a very clear *abb’a*’ mini-chiasm, pointing to the emphasis in the middle: the quotations from Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10.
- In Daniel 7 and Zechariah 12, the same key observations can be made by careful study of the text, independent of the chiastic structures. Where the inverted parallel structures are helpful is showing how Daniel and Zechariah “spotlighted” those two sections, which may be part of why they are focused on in Matthew 24 and Revelation 1.
- In Matthew 24, establishing the longer chiasms in 24:1-28 and 24:29-31 is very helpful in determining which of the apostles’ questions (24:3) Jesus is addressing at what point in the flow of the Discourse. However, careful observation of the text (e.g., the crucial qualifier “the *beginning* of birth pains”) and word usage (e.g., *thlipsis*), as well as the temporal indicator attached to the immediate context of the Joel 2:31a allusion (i.e., “*before* the great and awe-inspiring Day of the Lord comes” [2:31b]) essentially makes the same case I offered above.
- In Revelation 4-5, its echo of Revelation 7:13 is focused more clearly by the fact that the midpoint of the Revelation 4-5 chiasm plays off the midpoint of Daniel 7 chiasm. However, everything else noted above was gleaned from basic exegesis.
- In Revelation 7:1-8:1, the chiasm spotlights what I have concluded is the point of the Rapture in the Apocalypse, also focusing on the “servants” angle from Daniel 7:14, seen in heaven in Revelation 7. However, the nature of the scroll (i.e., as not being open for viewing until all seven seals are removed), the *inclusio* (i.e., framing effect) of the same Joel 2:31a allusion used in Matthew 24:29 in

- Revelation 6:17 and the Zephaniah 1:7 allusion in Revelation 8:1, the significance of the phrase “the four winds” (7:1; see Matt. 24:31 and Ezek. 37:9) and the parallel Greek structure of “the hour of testing” and “the great tribulation” (see note 22 above) combined make that case.
- In Revelation 10-11, the wider chiastic structure is most helpful in determining the equating of (the beginning of) the Day of the Lord and a seven-year period (normally called the “Tribulation period”) in Revelation and the chronological breakdown of that period. Otherwise, the extensive similarities to both the ministry/death/ resurrection/ascension of Jesus and the Day of Pentecost, the mention of “in the cloud,” the preview wording of “the eternal gospel” in Revelation 14:6-7 in 11:13, and the echoes of the context of Zechariah 12:10 and Romans 11:25-26 point to their conclusions relying on the chiasm.
  - In Revelation 14-15, the inverted parallel structure serves to clarify the relationships in what, at first glance, appears to be a disjointed sectional structure. However, because of the observations of the clustered use of “cloud” for the only time in the Apocalypse, alongside the wording “one like a Son of Man,” plus the “wrath/wine/winepress” linkage to 16:17-21 and 19:11ff., again, the chiastic structure is not necessary to secure the conclusions drawn above.

In conclusion, a wide-ranging, detailed case has been offered that the placement of Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 in Revelation 1:7 is strategically intentional, because of their role as so-called “preaching texts” previewing the major trajectories of prophetic fulfillment moving through the Apocalypse. In the process, other exegetically or

theologically relevant observations emerged or clarified: 1) Daniel 7 sets the stage for the Rapture more than previously thought; 2) Zechariah 12:10 is seen as picturing salvation for those in view, a wider group than previously understood; 3) There is more dealing with the Rapture in Matthew 24:29-31 than some scholars have allowed; 4) A multi-faceted exegetical case exists for a pretribulational Rapture in Revelation 7:9ff.; and 5) Each point of fulfillment of Daniel 7 or Zechariah 12 in Revelation is in an “explanatory” section: the heavenly throne room scene in chs. 4-5, the “prelude” to the opening of the seals on the scroll; the “interlude” before the end of the unsealing sequence (7:1-8:1); the “interlude” before the end of the trumpet judgments (ch. 11); and the “prelude” to the pouring out of the bowl judgments (14:14-20). It appears John/Jesus are thus providing the rough equivalent of prominent “road signs” at literary “slow down” junctures related to the progressive fulfillment of the “preaching texts” as the Apocalypse unfolds.