

WHEN TWO ARE TRANSLATED AS ONE

Preamble

Hope in the Second Coming of Christ has experienced “progressive postponements”¹ for nearly 2000 years. This apparent “delay” led many in the early Christian church into skepticism with a doubting spirit of “Why hold on to such beliefs as an eschatological judgment or a glorious *parousia* of Jesus?”²

In an urgent attempt to stay this troubling trend, Peter called those who negatively cry, “Where is the promise of His coming?” – **Scoffers** (II Peter 3:3-4). Then he warned that the “day of the Lord” would be to them as a thief coming in the middle of the night (3:10).

Urging vigorous attention to that hope, Peter directed his readers to “remember” the promises and to hope in Christ (1:12-13, 15; 3:1-2). Then he concluded: “*Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless*” (II Peter 3:12, 14). The word for “hastening” is *spaudontas*, which implies earnestly desiring.

Though Daniel’s prophecy of the *mareh* vision clearly revealed a millennial wait that lay ahead, the early Christian church wasn’t permitted to understand those narratives.

“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.” (Acts 1:7-8a).

We **are** to recognize that there **has been a tarrying time and** the mandate to continue the vitality of our eschatological hope. They must coexist.³ God does not, however, leave those who will finish the work to build their eternal aspirations on uncertainty. That is why a correct view of prophecy reveals **when** it is “present truth.” That is when hope catapults into reality.

Scripture **clearly** presents **events** which are to **sequentially** occur that will “mark out” the imminence of Christ’s coming, and numerous **timing periods** which collectively tell **when** it will be at the door. Careless attention to these missives could compromise eternity. That could even be an indictment against anyone who fails to reflect that urgency.

“The end is near. This is that which Jesus would have us keep **ever before us** – the shortness of time.”⁴ “**Every discourse** should be given under a sense of the awful judgments soon to fall on the world. The message of truth is to be proclaimed by lips touched with a live coal from the divine altar.”⁵

¹ Keener, Craig S.; *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 564.

² Carroll, John T; *The Return of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, MA, 2000), p. 137.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ White, Ellen G.; *Letter 97*, 1886; *Last Day Events*, p. 42.

⁵ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 36-37.

“My heart is filled with anguish when I think of the tame messages borne by some of our ministers, when they have a message of life and death to bear. The ministers are asleep; the lay members are asleep; and a world is perishing in sin.”⁶

Christian lifestyles reflect: “I have more time,” “There will be another chance to get serious,” “God’s love is too great to forget me” or “I’m waiting for a given event, then ...”

To bring an urgency into our lives and witness to others means we unequivocally understand prophecy and its “now” meaning! The Bible gives helpful clues that orient us to the apocalyptic “end.” The text suggesting that it comes when the gospel penetrates all the world is not helpful. When that occurs, it will be too late (even if we could know). Thus, it is not an anticipatory “sign.” To wait for legal restrictions on religious liberty only runs the risk of becoming a backslider under duress.

The end cannot come unless there is a people who are “in the know” and have no “fuzzy thinking” about the Bible. We must confront the question, “Who are those people who will know and finish the work?” They must be unique. What do they know to be on earth’s last witnessing mission? That brings us to the purpose of this narrative. They **are** special. They are called “saints” (*hagion* – G) (Revelation 14:12). They are holy. They will be made up of two living groups! One, however, is the pace setter.

The Distinguishing Template of “Two”

Christians, hoping to be saved, anticipate being among the “saints” (14:12) and hopefully part of that group called the “remnant” (12:17). Visions of standing before God’s throne garbed in white, among, likely, millions translated loyalists, stimulate the deepest longing (Revelation 7:14).

That reality must be preceded, however, by every person journeying on a special path of faith, experiencing cleansing and rebirth. Those who traveled on that “path” are identified in many ways:

1. Those resurrected when Jesus arose (Matthew 27:52-53)
 2. Those resurrected when Jesus returns (I Thessalonians 4:16)
 3. The unique group called the 144,000 (Revelation 7:4)
 4. The unnumbered multitude who are translated (7:9)
- } Clearly making an “upward journey” before death

There is one “set” of believers, whom God often refers to, that is prophetically unique. It is described by **size** – one part is small, the other large. This is what we want to address.

In times of need, God raises up leaders to provide special messages for His people, individuals who can guide and direct His chosen ones, who can be safely followed in times of crises. While serving his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses, spent forty years in the quietude of the wilderness. While there, God called him by voice from a flaming, burning bush. This was an invitation that was unmistakably heaven-originated.⁷

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁷ White, Ellen G.; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 252-254; Exodus 3:4.

Moses, with Aaron's assistance, became a small "group," chosen to lead hundreds of thousands of people out of Egypt.

Messenger (small group) (two men) – Moses and Aaron

The called (great multitude) (2–3 million) – Hebrew people with followers

Once the Israelites entered Canaan, **they** were to be a "small group" to reach the world – the "large group."

"Through the Jewish nation it was God's purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples.

Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the **whole world**. The **nations of the world**, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through **His church**. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man."⁸

Israel (God's "spouse" – Jeremiah 3:14) apostatized so severely that He permitted the northern ten tribes to be "carried away" to Assyria (II Kings 18:11). Then Judah (including Benjamin and Levi), called the "House of Judah," were taken captive to Babylon "because ye have not heard my words" (Jeremiah 25:8-11, II Chronicles 36:21).

Though the latter was a time-limited curse, God's strategy had to begin again.

This strategy is a template of how planet earth will be prepared for Christ's return. There must be multiple precedences to illustrate His plan. It is continuing with those "small" and "large" groups.

That Repeated Design

Aging Daniel reaffirmed that the end of the 70-year captivity was in sight (Daniel 9:1). Cyrus issued the Canaan-bound decree, with two leaders once again in charge (Zerubbabel as governor and Joshua as the high priest).

This time, instead of two men leading two to three million people, there were two men leading only approximately 50,000.

Two Men – 50,000

God put this "begin again" group on probation. A new temple was rebuilt in troublous times. But those people never received the favor of God's physical presence, the Shekina, (except when Jesus personally came). God's glory had previously left Solomon's temple, so loath to leave, stopping on the Mount of Olives before departing (Ezekiel 11:22-23). This was before Nebuchadnezzar's final attack (586 B.C.) and during that 70-year captivity. The covenant conditions outlined in Daniel 9 were never fulfilled.

Tragically, Jesus Himself provided the final curse: "*They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall ren-*

⁸ White, Ellen G.; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 286.

der him the fruits in their seasons” (Matthew 21:41). “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:38).

God’s redemptive strategy demanded, again, another beginning!

Jesus chose twelve disciples. This time the divine plan would see success. But – it would take 2000 more years. This would, however, be the model of how everything would end at the terminus of 6000 years from Adam’s fall.

Twelve Apostles (kingdom number) – World

The commission: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Result: “As these messengers of the cross went forth to proclaim the gospel, there was such a revelation of the glory of God as had never before been witnessed by mortal man. By the co-operation of the divine Spirit, the apostles did a work that shook the world.”⁹

Jesus had told the disciples that when this objective was completed, “then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). There were two ends described in Matthew 24, just as there are two ends in Daniel 9! This first “end” occurred when the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. This fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy, “and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (Daniel 9:26c).

Not only was there a second prophetic purpose in this prophecy, the 2300-Atonement-Years prophecy was still to be completed, as well as many three-and-a-half-year, final “appointed time”

prophecies. This was alluded to when Gabriel noted: “he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation” (Daniel 9:27c).

God’s Template of “Two” at the Apocalyptic End

Prophecy makes pristine clear that this gospel outreach will be replicated at the end. It will be spiritually and legally successful! Daniel 8:14, when looked at carefully in the oldest manuscripts, reveals that “holiness will be vindicated” (*qodesh nisdaq* – no article before *qodesh*). The case that has been pending against God’s character will be adjudicated. The fate of each will be sealed.

Though we have the “sheep” and the “goats” (Matthew 25:32-33), the “unjust” and the “righteous” (Revelation 22:11) and the “wheat” and the “tares” (Matthew 13:30), there will also be two distinct groups of ***righteous people*** – a replication of God’s template.

What follows opens to the student how these have been symbolically depicted in distinct end-time prophecy, starting as early as Daniel. This is only a brief résumé. This is God’s final “saint” plan.

⁹ White, Ellen G.; *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 593.

Those Translated

144,000 (a remnant) (arrive first onto earth's final scenes)	–	Great Multitude (byproduct of the witnessing of the 144,000)
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How does prophecy illustrate these groups and these sequences?

1. Two Horns

*“Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had **two horns**: and the two horns were high; but **one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last**” (Daniel 8:3).*

Horns give power to the ram. Daniel's initial impression: Those horns were “high.” They would be of supreme power (vs. 4) and value to the ram. He then informs us that he had observed those horns sprouting and growing. The second came up last, and it was “higher” (*gaboah* – longer), than the first.

Daniel 8 is God's apocalyptic **introduction** to the final conflict between good and evil. The ram represents Jesus Christ; the two horns, the 144,000 and the great multitude, which comes up last. They are both rooted in Christ!

<u>Horn One</u>	–	<u>Horn Two (longest)</u>
First		Last
144,000		Great multitude

The ram now moves throughout planet earth – coming from the “east.” Which is the direction of deliverance?

2. Two Rivers

*“And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by **the river of Ulai**” (Daniel 8:2).*

*“as I was by the side of the **great river, which is Hiddekel**” (Daniel 10:4b).*

These “waters” represent people, nations, tongues, etc. (17:15). The Euphrates River flowed through Babylon. It symbolized the people who supported that city. In Revelation, Babylon is the “wicked city,” the “harlot,” whose inhabitants God's people will cry to with a “loud voice,” “Come out of her” (Revelation 14:8, 18:2, 4; cf. 17:5). The Euphrates dries up under the sixth vial plague (Revelation 16:12).

This change of support for Babylon – the collective apostate Christian church – is dramatically reflected in Revelation 17:16. Those people then “hate” the “whore” or Babylon. They turn against her. Her support dries up. The end has come.

The “river” imagery in Daniel has “people importance.” Those two rivers (8:2, 10:4) are people east of Babylon and the Euphrates. The Hiddekel or Tigris River is a large body. The Ulai River is small and was the waterway of Shushan. Shushan (which was not in existence in Daniel’s day) would be rebuilt by Darius I. It became a city of sacredness and deliverance to the Hebrew people at the time of Esther. King Xerxes was the ruler, known in Esther’s time as Ahasuerus. That was so important that the eastern gate of Jerusalem , facing Shushan, was called the Gate of Susa (Shushan).

The little Ulai River represents the 144,000, associated with that great city of deliverance to the east. This is where the ram Jesus was initially standing and waiting for its horns to grow – His people to be ready for redemption’s end in the Daniel 8 prophecy!

The Hiddekel River is between the Ulai and the Euphrates – but also *east* of the Euphrates. It represents the great multitude at the time of the latter rain (Daniel 10:4).

Ulai River		Tigris/Hiddekel River
144,000		Great Multitude
First Vision	–	Second Vision
(Jesus present)		(Jesus present)
(Daniel 8)		(Daniel 10)

3. Two Horses

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.... And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand” (Revelation 6:1-2, 5).

Horses in prophecy represent people – especially in battle (Joel 2:1-4, Song of Solomon 1:9, Isaiah 63:13, Zechariah 10:3). Since the seals are numbered, they are opened in **sequence** by Lamb Jesus. This ushers in the end of time.

The white horse represents the 144,000 with rider Jesus (the first seal). We know this by its dramatic association with the first living creature (the Lion Tribe of Judah to the east). This horse is going out to battle and will conquer! The black horse comes on the scene later (the third seal). It is inactive. It is in darkness, waiting to be called out of its apostate environment. This represents those waiting for the call to come out of Babylon. We know this by its association with the third living creature (Tribe of Reuben – infidelity, then repentance). The black horse “coming out” represents the great multitude.

White Horse	–	Black Horse
144,000		Great Multitude

The angel warns everyone not to hurt the oil and wine related to the black horse. God’s Spirit and His cleansing blood are working in these people! Be gentle, tender and tactful with them!

4. Two Peoples

“And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel” (Revelation 7:4).

Once again, in a sequence by design, God notes two groups of individuals. One, the “144,000,” specifically noted within an apocalyptic end, that is awarded the sealing or God’s eternal citizenship to heaven.

The other group is described as being so large that no man is capable of numbering it – the “great multitude” (Revelation 7:9). They are described as “in heaven,” “around the throne” and translated. They had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and had come out of great tribulation.

Awaiting, then Sealed	–	Around the Throne
144,000		Great Multitude

In **all** these illustrations, the message reveals that the 144,000 will be the first group identified by heaven as loyal citizens. They are God’s “special forces” who will help bring the gospel work to an end. The great multitude will symbolize the fruit or harvest of that work! The drama of this distinction is replicated in numerous places.

Of deepest concern: The time for the first angel’s message to encircle the globe is shortly anticipated. That unequivocally means that the **preparation** of the 144,000 is ongoing now (please study the three articles on our website regarding the Judgment of the Living). Of greater concern – the shaking or sifting is between this “preparation” and the “harvest.”

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand”¹⁰ – “the few.” That is a “get ready now” call. We pray for each of our readers. We are in a great transition of time!

“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) ... And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2, Revelation 12:10a.

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¹⁰ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, March 9, 1905.