

# The Dispensationalist's End-Time Remnant People of God in Revelation: An Exegetical Evaluation

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## Abstract

*Biblical scholars from different schools of thought have already written so much about the “Remnant” theme in the Scripture both from OT and NT. It appears to me that one area that needs to be explored is the appraisal of one of these ideas in the light of sound biblical exegesis and biblical principles of interpretation. This paper attempts to exegetically evaluate the Dispensationalist’s interpretation of the “Remnant” of Revelation. The Dispensationalist, with Futuristic approach to the book, asserts that the “Remnant” of Revelation represents the literal Israel that would believe the Messiah at the Parousia and would reign with Him on earth during the Millennium while the Church would be in heaven. However, after the exegetical evaluation of such view, it was found out that the evidences and arguments presented by the Dispensationalist biblical scholars and theologians are not exegetically founded.*

**Keywords:** *Remnant, Dispensationalism, Revelation*

## INTRODUCTION

The issue about the “Remnant” in the Scripture is a very well-trodden biblical theme. Many scholars<sup>i</sup> have already written articles and books with various perspectives and theological baggage. Consequently, it seems to me that there is only a little room left to fill in. Thus, instead of proposing another study on the “Remnant” in the Scripture, this paper would like to exegetically evaluate the view of Dispensationalist<sup>ii</sup> regarding the “Remnant” of Revelation. It will look into whether or not the Dispensationalist’s view is exegetically sound in the light of principles of Biblical interpretation. Furthermore, this is not an exhaustive treatment of the said view being mentioned.

J. Dwight Pentecost (1960) already mentioned that this view (Dispensationalists’ Pre-tribulation rapture, literal Jewish nation as Remnant) has been under attacked by Amillennialists and Post-tribulation rapturists (p. 123). It seems to me that to objectively evaluate this view, it is wise and proper to evaluate this view in the light of the widely accepted *Sola Scriptura* and *Analogia Scriptura* principles among biblical scholars and theologians. First, this paper describes the Dispensationalist’s view of the “Remnant” in Revelation, then, it evaluates the view in the light of those principles mentioned above. In the process of evaluation, this paper will present evidences and arguments either for or against the said view.

## Dispensationalist’s Remnant View in Revelation

Pentecost (1960) begins his treatment of the “Remnant” in the book of Revelation by anchoring his arguments to the statement in Rom 11:26 “all Israel will be saved”<sup>iii</sup>

which according to him would refer to the believing Jews at the second advent of Christ (p. 128). He continues by stating that the “Remnant” of Rev 12:17 refer to the believing Jews who would witness for Jesus during the seven-year tribulation period prior to the second advent of Jesus (p. 133). He came up with this conclusion because he claims that the woman of Revelation 12 who is the target of Satan’s attack is not Mary the Mother of Jesus, nor the Christian Church<sup>iv</sup> but rather the nation of Israel (p. 129). He presented several arguments for this conclusion: (1) the Son of the woman here is the Messiah (12:5); (2) the woman clothed with the Sun, Moon, and Stars which according to Gen 37:9 (cf. Jer 31:35-36; Josh 10:12:14; Judg 5:20; Ps 89:35-37) refer to the Sons of Jacob; (3) the imagery of a woman was used of Israel (Isa 54:5-6; 47:7-9; Jer 4:31; Isa 66:7-8; Mic

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4:9-10; 5:3) (p. 129),<sup>v</sup> (4) the theological reasoning that God would unconditionally fulfil His covenant promise to the nation of Israel.<sup>vi</sup> The fourth argument is further elaborated by asserting that the nation of Israel will be brought back to their land after the rapture of the Church because God would definitely save all of Israel by all means before the second coming (p. 129).

In addition, Walvoord (1990) asserts that the seventieth week or the last seven years of Daniel 9:25-27 will be the last seven years of earth's history before the *Parousia*.<sup>vii</sup> Consequently, he proposes a Futuristic interpretation of the Book of Revelation suggesting that the visions of Rev 4-18 will take place during the seven-year tribulation prior to the *Parousia* (Rev 19), and Millennium (Rev 20) (Walvoord, pp. 518-614). In this school of thought, the Church is already raptured and is seen in heaven in Rev 4 and 5 (Ibid., p. 543).

Another additional piece of the picture about the "Remnant" in Revelation deals with the relationship of the "Remnant" of Revelation with the 144,000 of Rev 7 and 14. According to this view, the 144,000 "constitute a special part of the Remnant nation, set apart by a sovereign act of God to be a special witness during the tribulation period" (Ibid., p. 132). The 144,000, are considered as a part of the "Remnant" but not the entire "Remnant" itself (Ibid.). However, Nathaniel West (1993) argues that the woman of Rev 12 and the 144,000 are the same. They represent the nation of Israel, the people of God who would survive the great tribulation and living to the advent of Jesus (pp. 233-254). Furthermore, after the second coming, this "Remnant" will reign with Jesus on earthly Mount Zion during the Millennium (Rev 14:3) (Walvoord, 1990, p. 132).

### **Evaluation of Dispensationalist's View of the Remnant People of God in Revelation**

One of the evidences to be evaluated, in support to the idea that the Remnant people of God in Revelation are Israelites in the flesh, is the Dispensationalist's proposed structure of the book of Revelation. It asserts, in line with the Futurist school of thought, that Rev 4-18 corresponds to the seven-year tribulation prior to the *Parousia* of Jesus Christ. One of the prominent arguments for this view is the contention that the word "church" (*ἐκκλησία*) has not been mentioned in Rev 4-18. Their argument implies that the church has already been raptured prior to the seven-year tribulation. Hence, the people of God on earth during the seven-year tribulation prior to the second coming (Rev 19) are only the believing Israelites (Rev 7:1-8; Rev 14:1-5) who will pass through the great tribulation but will be delivered from that tribulation and will reign with Christ during the 1000 years (Rev 20) (cf. Walvoord, 1990, 543-44; Walvoord, 1966, 101-103).

Contrary to the Dispensationalists' view, Rev 4-18 seem to evidently show that the visions featured what would happen from the time of John until the end of time just prior to the *Parousia* (this supports the Historicist's view of revelation). To support this statement, this paper presents several evidences. First, Rev 4 and 5 do not talk about the Church but rather, this second major vision of John, pictures Christ's enthronement in the heavenly throne room. Chapter 4, describes the majesty and power of God as the creator on His throne. In the Biblical historical setting, this imagery most likely would allude to the enthronement of a king. Ranko Stefanovic (2002) suggests that "the description of the scene in Revelation 5 is patterned after the OT coronation and enthronement ceremony (cf. 2 Kgs 11:12-19; 2 Chron 23:11-20)" (p. 161). Evidences such as: (1) "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (5:5) which is a messianic title refers to the Lamb being mentioned here (Revelation 5); (2) "the root of David," another messianic title of the Lamb (5:5; cf. Isa 11:1,10); (3) The Lamb took the seven-sealed scroll out of the right hand of God the Father who sat on the throne (5:7) was an OT imagery for an enthronement of an Israelite king; (4) "have made us kings and priests to our God" (5:10); (5) and the adoration and worship of the Lamb together with the God the Father (5:12-14); would imply kingly or royal setting and would probably point out that the Lamb has already been enthroned and has regained His authority and power after His death, resurrection and ascension (5:9; cf. 1:18). This enthronement would most likely take place right after His ascension rather than after more than two thousand years in the future (in John's standpoint). This is evident in the immediate and wider canonical context. In Rev 3:21, it is evidently clear that Jesus already sat (*καθίσαι*, an Aorist which, in the context, denote a one point in time action in the past) at the throne of His Father even prior to the time when the messages to the seven churches were given. In the wider canonical context, it is even very persuasive. For example, Apostle Paul, when writing to the Ephesians (c.a. A.D. 62-64), also acknowledged the historical fact that after Jesus' resurrection God exalted Him by reinstating Him to

position and authority in heavenly places (1:20) immediately after He ascended to heaven (cf. Acts 2:30; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22).<sup>viii</sup>

Second, the expression “καὶ δείξω σοι ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα” (and I will show you what must take place after these *things*, NIV) is another verification that warrants a fulfillment of Rev 4-18 in the course of history from the time of John up to the *eschaton*. Walvoord postulates that this expression “should be regarded as a prediction of events which shall occur at the end of the age” (Walvoord, 1966, 102). However, in view of the literary context, it is apparent that the antecedent of the first and second phrase “μετὰ ταῦτα” (after these *things*, the first one is at the beginning of 4:1 and the second is at the last) in Rev 4:1 could be the first vision (Rev 1:9-3:22). The expression “μετὰ ταῦτα” is a literary device here in the book that occurred several times (1:19; 4:1; 7:1; 7:9; 9:12; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1; 20:3).

It seems that when this phrase is used, the antecedent is always the preceding vision or events. For example, in Rev 7:9, the antecedent of “μετὰ ταῦτα” is the previous vision about the 144,000. The same is true with the antecedent of Rev 9:12 which describes the two others “woes” that will happen after the first “woe.” In these occurrences, it appears that the visions/events (subsequent) after the visions/events in the antecedent seem to happen chronologically one after the other in a continuous manner in the course of history or in the *eschaton* (except in some occurrences like in 7:1; 15:5). This is further evident in Rev 19:1, wherein “μετὰ ταῦτα” refers to the destruction of the harlot woman Babylon in the *eschaton* and the subsequent vision/events portrays the rejoicing of the great multitude in heaven because our God Almighty has judged Babylon (v. 2).

Thus, going back to Rev 4:1, my contention is that the antecedent of “μετὰ ταῦτα” is the first vision, that is, the messages to the seven churches in 1:9-3:22, which primarily are events that transpire during the late first century A.D., and the subsequent second vision/events in Rev 4-22:5 may point to the events that would happen from the time of the seven churches up to the *eschaton* in a continuous manner. This was also already implied in Rev 1:19 “γράψον οὖν ἃ εἶδες καὶ ἃ εἰσὶν καὶ ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα” (“Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things, NAS). Here, the things “which are” would probably refer to the messages to the seven churches (2:1-3:22), and **the things** “which shall take place after these (μετὰ ταῦτα, after the events in the seven churches)” may indicate the events that would transpire immediately after or consecutively with the seven churches up to the time of the *eschaton* in an unbroken succession. I saw no obvious reason for believing that there is a gap of more than 2000 years from the time of the “things which are” and the time of “the things which will take place after these.”

There are compelling evidences in chapters 6:1-8:1 that would render the Dispensationalists’ “gap theory” exegetically unfounded. First, verse 1 puts on view the fact that chapter 6 is still connected to chapter 4-5 (And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, ‘Come,’ v. 1). It describes the unbroken chain of events from the coronation or enthronement of Jesus in heaven immediately after His ascension (first century A.D.) to the opening of the seven-sealed scroll given to Him by God the Father in 5:7. Thus, if chapters 4-5 describe the enthronement of Jesus, then, reasonably, the subsequent events after the opening of the first seal (in heaven) should describe the events that happen right away on earth (And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer, Rev 6:2 NAS). The white horse may symbolize the victory of Christ or the Gospel. Andrews Bible (2010) concurs that It portrays here the gradual conquest of Christ, pictured riding on a white horse (p. 1668). Barclay (1960) observes that “a Roman general would ride a white horse to celebrate a triumphal victory” (p. 178). Stefanovic (2002) adds, “in this dramatic presentation, John is shown, in symbolic language, the victorious spreading of the Gospel to the world” (p. 178). Furthermore, Ladd (1972) also suggests that the events in the first seal would refer to “the first generation of believers . . . (who) victoriously established the gospel in all the Roman world until the Empire ceased its violent opposition” (p. 97). Paulien (1992) suggests that it refers to “His kingdom through the preaching of the Gospel by His church during the first century A.D (p. 229). Luke in the book of Acts noted that even the enemies testified that they turned the world upside down.<sup>ix</sup>

The remaining seals (second seal to seventh seal), when opened by the Lamb one after the another, of course like in the first seal, logically portray the events that would happen in succeeding centuries, after the events of the first seal, up to the *Parousia*. The symbolic descriptions of the events from second seal to the seventh would really suit with the events happened in history from the early centuries of the Christian Church up to the *eschaton*.<sup>x</sup> Since Rev 4 and 5 evidently portray the enthronement of Jesus after His resurrection and ascension. Since it chronologically

happened in first century A.D., it is then reasonable to conclude that the succeeding scenes in Rev 6-8:1 describe the events from the first century up to the *Parousia*. Contrary to the Dispensationalists' view, the church is still on earth. Furthermore, Rev 4-18 does not portray the events on the so-called seven-year tribulation prior to the *Parousia*.

The next evidences presented by the Dispensationalists, as noted above, are in Revelation 12. Pentecost asserts that the woman here represents literally the nation of Israel during the seven-year tribulation based on several arguments already noted above. It is overwhelmingly evident, that the Child of the woman whom the Dragon (Satan) wanted to destroy was Jesus (v. 5; Cf. Matt 2:13-18) (pp. 123-133). However, this paper does not concur with their interpretation of the identity of the woman. Looking at Revelation 12 in the light of its immediate and wider contexts, it is fairly evident that this woman may represent the people of God in its entirety both faithful Israel in the flesh and spiritual Israel. Revelation 12 supports this assertion. The people of God when Jesus was born were the faithful Israelites (only the faithful Israelites were considered as people of God, cf. Rom 9:6,7,8,27), and some Gentiles who became God-fearers, but the majority of the Gentiles were not yet evangelized at that point in time. However, when the Child of the woman was "caught up to God and His throne" (v. 5), then Dragon turn his focus to the woman. What is now the identity of the woman after Jesus' ascension? Definitely, the woman here includes the believing Israelites (in Palestine and in Diaspora) and the vast number of Gentiles (cf. Acts 2, 8:26-40; 10; 11; 13; 14; 16; 17; 18; 19; Gal 3:26-29; Rev 2-3; Rev 7:9-17; etc.). Furthermore, the imagery of the woman in the Scripture is not only exclusive to the nation of Israel (Isa 54:5-6; 47:7-9; Jer 4:31; Isa 66:7-8; Mic 4:9-10; 5:3) but also, especially in the NT, was used for the Church (2 Cor 11:2-3; Eph 5:22-33) which includes both believing Israelites and believing Gentiles.

The chronological setting of Revelation 12 and the OT allusions do not also

support the interpretation that the woman is the literal nation of Israel as the remnant

during the so-called seven-year tribulation. Chronologically, Rev 12 does not describe the scene during the seven years prior to the *Parousia* but rather portrays the tribulation or persecution of the woman (after the ascension, the people of God in the NT, the Church) which was inflicted by the Dragon during the "1260 days" or "a time, and times, and half a time" (12:6,13; A.D. 538-1798). The chronological setting of Rev 12 would not warrant a period of seven years prior to the *Parousia*, but would rather point to the time immediately after the ascension of Jesus (Rev 12:5). The sentence flow of Rev 12:5 and 6 does not support the "the gap theory" of about 2000 years. The conjunction "και"<sup>xi</sup> at the beginning of v. 6 connects its idea to previous verses (vv. 3-5). This means that after the Male-Child has been caught up to heaven (v.5) away from the Dragon (v. 4), the Dragon shifts his focus to the woman and persecutes her (v. 13). However, the woman found refuge in the wilderness with two wings of an eagle given to her (v. 14). It is reasonable to assert that the time period (1260 days, or three years and a half which is symbolic) of the persecution of the woman by the Dragon immediately follows or not long from the ascension of the Male-Child. This fits with the statement of the first voice heard by John showing him what will happen after the messages to the seven churches (4:1).

The Dispensationalists literally interpret "1260 days," that it pertains to the persecution of the remnant of Israel during the seven-year tribulation period. However, considering the immediate context (the book Revelation) of Rev 12, and its broader context both NT and OT, it is evident that "1260 days" should be symbolically regarded as 1260 years. This was the period (A.D. 538-1798) in the history of the Church that Satan used powerful human institutions both religious and political authorities. In Rev 12, the persecutor of the woman is the Dragon having seven heads and ten horns (v. 3). The period mentioned (1260 days, or 3 and a half years) is very significant in identifying the religio-political systems that Satan used to persecute the woman. In the immediate context, the Dragon who has seven heads and ten horns seems to be related with the sea-beast of

Rev 13 which also has seven heads and ten horns.<sup>xiii</sup> It is obvious that the Dragon used the sea-beast<sup>xiii</sup> to persecute the woman who, in Rev 13, is called “saints” (see v. 7) during the same period mentioned in Rev 12. Here, in Rev 13, instead of 1260 days, the one being mentioned is forty-two months (If you multiply 42 months with 30 days per month, it would come up to 1260 days). In broader context, this sea-beast of Rev 13 seems thematically parallel with other NT and OT prophetic description of the same religio-political power.

In 2 Thess 2:1-11, Paul, prophetically, mentions a religious entity (the Man of Lawlessness) which is exactly the same with sea-beast of Rev 13. Both opposed God (2 Thess 2:4a; Rev 13:5-6); both are worshipped (2 Thess 2:4a; Rev 13:4,8); both are related to the temple of God (2 Thess 2:4b; Rev 13:6); both usurped the prerogative of God as God (2 Thess 2:4b; Rev 13:4,8); the one in 2 Thess 2 definitely is future in Paul's time reference, the one in Rev 13, as already pointed out previously, existed not long after the time of John the author of Revelation; both are destroyed at the *Parousia* (2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:20).

In the OT, the sea-beast of Rev 13, is identified as the “little horn” (Dan 7:7-8; 19-26; 8:9-26). The little horn came out of the ten horns of the fourth beast which symbolizes the fourth world empire (Roman Empire; see Dan 7:17), and he is greater than them (Dan 7:20), the sea-beast also has ten horns (Rev 13:1). Both spoke great words of blasphemies against God (Dan 7:25a; Rev 13:5,6). Both desecrated the temple of God (Dan 8:11; Rev 13:6). Both have persecuted the saints or the people of God (Dan 7:21,25a; 8:10; Rev 13:7). The time-period of their reign, and persecution of the saints under their dominions was the same (Dan 7:25c; Rev 13:5).<sup>xiv</sup> Both usurped the authority of God (Dan 8:11; Rev 13:6,8). Both seemed to be a religio-political powers (Dan 7:20; 8:9; Rev 13:2,4,6,7,8). Both are destroyed by the Messiah at his coming (Dan 7:11,26; 8:25; Rev 19:20). If this little horn arose after the demise of the Roman Empire ruled by the Caesars, as Dan 7 and Dan 8 would indicate, and if this religio-political power would continue until the *Parousia*, it is very reasonable to conclude that the 1260 days (time, times, and half a time) time period is not literal days but years. In view of these similarities, it is fitting to assert that they refer to the same religio-political power which was used by Satan to persecute the people of God, the woman or people of God during the 1260 days or years. It is then logical to suggest that the woman of Rev 12 does not refer to the nation of Israel during the seven-year period prior to the *Parousia*, but rather symbolizes the Church or the people of God who were persecuted not long after the ascension of the Male-Child—Jesus the Messiah.

Lastly, the Dispensationalists contend that the remnant of Rev 12:17 and the 144,000 of Rev 7:1-8; 14:1-5 are remnants within the remnant nation of Israel that would witness for God during the seven-year tribulation prior to the *Parousia* (see Pentecost, pp. 131-132). They argue that the word “ἐκκλησία” (church) does not occur in Rev 4-22:15.<sup>xv</sup> However, upon examining their arguments, it seems to lack biblical moorings. Looking at Rev 12:17, it is pretty obvious that the flow of the prophetic narrative of Rev 12 is chronologically unbroken from the beginning to the end of the chapter. As already discussed above that Rev 12:5 and 6 have an unbroken chronological and syntactical connections, so, the same argument is applied between Rev 12:16 and 17 which means that the presence of the conjunction “καί” connects v. 17 to v. 16 in an unbroken syntactical and chronological fashion. It naturally implies that the time-period of the remnant (who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jess) seed of the woman of v. 17 would be after the 1260 days or years previously discussed. Thus, it is not during the so called seven-year tribulation period prior to the *Parousia*. Hence, the remnant seed of the woman are not literal Jews or Israelites but rather spiritual Israel.

These remnants are the target of the Dragon's persecuting agencies in Rev 13:11-18. However, in Rev 14:1-5, they are called the 144,000 or saints (14:12) who refused to receive the “mark” of the beast (13:15-18), but would rather receive the seal of God on their foreheads (14:1; cf. Rev 7:1-8). They were viewed as standing on Mount Zion together with the Lamb (14:1). These 144,000 were not literal Israelites, who, according to the Dispensationalists will reign with Christ on an earthly mount Zion or Jerusalem, but rather spiritual Israel<sup>xvi</sup> who will reign with Christ during the 1000 years in heavenly mount Zion after they have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image (Rev 15:2; cf. Rev 20:4-6). The location of the reign of those who gained the victory over the beast and over his image in 15:2 is in heaven (the sea of glass is in heaven, see 4:6). It is therefore, reasonable to conclude that the remnant of Rev 12:17 and the 144,000 of Rev 7:1-8 and Rev 14:1-5,

and the victorious saints over the beast and over his image are not literal Israel but spiritual, the church of God who will reign in heaven not on earth during the 1000 years.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

To summarize, this study evaluates whether or not the view of the Dispensationalists that the end-time remnant people of God in Revelation are the Israelites in the flesh is biblically and exegetically founded. They proposed several arguments which are anchored on Rom 11:26, Dan 9:24-27, and Rev 12 (also includes Rev 7, and 14) and on the presupposition that God will unconditionally fulfil His covenant with them. Thus, they argue that the Children of Israel will be restored during the seven-year tribulation prior to the *Parousia*. They came up to this belief by asserting that the seventieth week of Dan 9:24-27 prophecy will be fulfilled during the seven-year tribulation prior to the *Parousia*. This is also called the “Gap Theory.” Based on these presuppositions, they argue that Rev 4-18 describe the events during the so-called seven-year tribulation prior to the *Parousia*. This is called “Futurist School of Thought.” Consequently, they contend that the woman of Rev 12 and the remnant of her seed (12:17) are the restored and converted Jews during this seven-year tribulation. Furthermore, the 144,000 of Rev 7 and 14 are also literal Israelites that would reign with the Messiah on the earthly mount Zion during the 1000 years in Rev 20.

However, this study found out that Rev 4-18 do not describe the events during the so-called seven-year tribulation but rather evidently describe the scenario from the time of John (first Century A.D.) up to the *eschaton*. This study also found out that the woman of Rev 12, the remnant of her seed (12:17), and the 144,000 of Rev 7 and 12 are not the literal Israelites but the people of God, which in the context of Rev 12 would comprise the faithful Israel before the ascension, and the after the ascension of Jesus would include the Gentile believers. This study concludes that based on these findings, the view of the Dispensationalists that the literal nation of Israel as end-time remnant people of God in Revelation is not biblically or exegetically well-founded. These findings are based on the following reasons.

First, Rev 4 and 5 does not describe the raptured church in heaven at the beginning of the seven-tribulation, but rather describes the enthronement of Jesus right after His ascension. It was clear that the antecedent of “μετα ταυτα” was the messages to the seven churches, hence the events “after these things” would be from Rev 6-22. It was also evident that the taking of the seven-scroll of the Lamb (Rev 5), and several kingly terminologies imply the enthronement of Jesus. He sat at His Father’s right hand as argued from the OT background, the immediate, and broader contexts. Since there is, syntactically, an unbroken connection between Rev 4 and 5 to Rev 6, consequently, the events that follow (Rev 6-22) describe the events from the first century up to the *Parousia* or beyond.

Second, this is also strengthened by the analysis of Rev 12 in its immediate and broader contexts. It is obvious that Rev 12:3-5 has a first century A.D. chronological setting. It is further asserted that Rev 12:6 is chronologically linked with vv. 3-5 in an unbroken manner due to the syntactical function of “καί” in the prophetic narrative.

Third, it is also argued that the 1260 days or time, times, and half a time (Rev 12:6,13) is not literal but symbolic, due to its link to sea-beast of Rev 13, the man of lawlessness of 2 Thess 2:4, and the little horn of Dan 7 and 8. It is noted that the little horn arose after the fourth world empire (Roman Empire, fell in A.D. 476), and would continue until the *Parousia*. Hence, the persecution of the saints of the Most High was not for 1260 literal days but for 1260 years. If this is the case, the woman of Rev 12 and the saints of Dan 7 and 8 during the 1260 years persecution, represent the people of God in its entirety, not the literal Israel during the seven-year tribulation.

Fourth, the remnant of Rev 12:17, the 144,000 of Rev 7 and 14 are not literal Israel but Spiritual Israel both believing Jews and Gentiles. The syntactical connection of Rev 12:17 to the preceding section would negate such assertion. The immediate and broader contexts would indicate that the NT people of God are also called Israel of God, children of Abraham by faith, and the twelve tribes that are in the *diaphora*. The mount Zion also is not the earthly mount Zion but heavenly mount Zion. The reign of saints is not on earth but in heaven during the 1000 years.

Again, due to these evidences and arguments, this paper concludes that the view of the Dispensationalists that the end-time remnant in Revelation are the restored nation of Israel is very obviously, not biblically or exegetically well-founded. This study recommends a thorough study of the “gap theory” of Dan 9:24-27.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup>For example, J. Dwight Pentecost (1960), "The Godly Remnant of the Tribulation Period," *Bibliotheca Sacra*: 123-133; Ganoune Diop, (1996), "The Remnant Concept as Defined by Amos," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society*: 67-81; Dan G. Johnson (1984), "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 11," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46: 91-103; Gerhard Pfandl (1997), "The Remnant Church," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 8: 19-27; Gerhard F. Hasel (1972), *The Remnant The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah*, Andrews University Monographs, Volume V, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1-460; John Paul Heil (2002), "From Remnant to Seed of Hope for Israel: Romans 9:27-29," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64: 703-720; Greg King (1994), "The Remnant in Zephaniah," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151: 414-27; James W. Watts (1988), "The Remnant Theme: A Survey of New Testament Research," *Perspective in Religious Studies*: 109-129; Pat Graham (1976), "Remnant Motif in Isaiah," *Restoration Quarterly*: 219-228; W. Burnet Easton, Jr. (1948), "The Strategy of the Remnant" *Theology Today*: 199-220; Benjamin L. Merkle (2010), "Who will be left Behind? Rethinking the Meaning of Matthew 24:40-41 and Luke 17:34-35," "Who will be Left behind?" *Western Theological Journal* 72: 169-79; Donald Sneen (1986), "The Root, the Remnant, and the Branches," *Word and World* 4:4: 398-409; Ben F. Meyer (1965), "Jesus and the Remnant of Israel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*: 123-130; Kevin C. Peacock (2003), "Who is a God Like You?: Theological Themes in Micah," *Southwestern Journal of Theology*: 27-47; Markus Barth (1988), "One God, One Christ, One People," *Ex Auditu*: 8-22; Craig Evans (1988), "Isa 6:9-13: In the Context of Isaiah's Theology," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 29/2: 139-148; J. G. McConville (1986), "Ezra-Nehemiah and the Fulfilment of Prophecy," *Vetus Testamentum* XXXVI/2: 205-224; Ed Christian (2000), "Straight-Legged People: Elijah's Message to Revelation's Remnant," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 11:1/2: 315-323.

<sup>ii</sup>Dispensationalism is a theological system which asserts that all OT prophecies concerning national Israel will unconditionally be fulfilled. Hence, in this system, the seventy weeks prophecy in Daniel 9 is divided into two parts. The 69 weeks or 483 years has already been fulfilled in the past, whereas the last week or the seventieth week or seven years is carried to the future which is called "seven-year tribulation prior to the Parousia. The Period between the end of the sixty-ninth week and the beginning of the seventieth week is called a parenthesis or the age of the Church. The people of God are divided into two groups. The Church will be raptured before the seven-year tribulation begins. The literal Israel will reign with Jesus during the millennium while the Church will be raptured to heaven. See John Walvoord (1990), *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, Wheaton, IL: Victor, 248-258; Ibid. (1959), *The Millennial Kingdom*, Findlay, OH: Dunham, 139-322; Ibid. *Daniel* (1971), *The Key to Prophetic Interpretation*, Chicago: Moody, 216-237; Ibid. (1974), *The Rapture Questions*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 23-27.

<sup>iii</sup> This paper will not deal with the issue of Rom 11:26.

<sup>iv</sup> According to him, during this period, the Church has already been raptured before the start of start of the seven-year tribulation prior to the visible coming of Jesus (p. 129).

<sup>v</sup> Craig Keener (2000) also supports the view that the woman here symbolizes Israel or a faithful remnant of Israel due to the argument that OT which was the theological source to early Christians portrayed righteous Israel as the mother of the restored future remnant of Israel (Isa 54:1; 66:7-10; Mic 4:9-10; 5:3; cf. Isa 7:14; 9:6; 26:18-19) (p. 314). However, He does not exclude the idea that the Gentile converts are also included. Ibid. On the other hand Grant R. Osborne (2002) postulates that the woman here represents the whole people of God both the faithful Israel and the church (p. 456). On the other hand, Alan Johnson (1981) observes that the woman under attack in Rev 12 represents the new Israel which is composed of both Jews and Gentiles (p. 515).

<sup>vi</sup> Gerhard Hasel, however, argues by presenting evidences that God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants was conditional. Since Abraham's descendants failed to fulfil the conditions of the covenant, thus, they also forfeited the promises of the covenant. Gerhard Hasel, "God's Plan for Israel," Biblical Research Institute, accessed July 2022.

<sup>vii</sup> This study will not deal with the gap theory.

<sup>viii</sup> The Greek word *καθίσας* (seated) is an Aorist participle denoting a punctiliar action in relation to another Aorist participle *ἐγείρας* (raised) which denotes physical resurrection of Jesus when linked with the phrase "ἐκ νεκρῶν" (from the dead). The unbroken link of the phrase "seated Him in His right hand in heavenly places" (Eph 1:20 NKJ) with the phrase "raised Him from the dead" with a conjunction "and", indicates that the enthronement of Jesus in heavenly places happened immediately after His resurrection and ascension. This is also supported by the immediate context, when Paul declares that the believers in Christ also would have the same experience, which means that, in their case, the moment they were spiritually resurrected, by God's power, they will also spiritually be raised up to heavenly places and would be seated with Christ (Eph 2:5,6).



<sup>ix</sup>Stefanovic further notes that “in the OT, God sometimes portrayed as riding a horse with a bow in His hand, going forth, conquering His and His people’s enemies, and bringing salvation to His people (Hab 3:8-13; cf. Ps 45:4-5; Isa 41:2; Zech 9:13-16). In Revelation 19, Christ is returning to the earth on a horse and bringing judgment and justice (19:11-16). While in Revelation 19 He wears the diadem crown, which is the royal crown, in chapter 6 he has a crown of victory. This is the crown that in Revelation is almost always used with reference to the overcomer Christ and His overcoming people. With His victorious death on the cross, Christ has overcome and conquered the prince of this world (John 12:31-32; 16:11. By virtue of His death (Rev 5:5) through which he was enabled to redeem humanity, Christ was pronounced worthy to take the sealed scroll (Rev 5:9). Now in Chapter 6, He wears the crown of victory that He earned at the cross” (pp. 227-28).

<sup>x</sup>The red horse in second seal may represent war and bloodshed. The rejection of the gospel may produce strife, persecution, and confusion. This (red horse) would likely fit with the experiences of the early Christian church when Pagan Roman emperors, like for example Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Decius, Diocletian, etc., persecuted them which was only stop when Constantine became emperor. The black horse in the third seal whose rider holds a scale with the expression that conveys acute famine. The black horse portrays the spiritual famine in the Christian church when it became a state religion of the empire during and after the reign of Constantine. The pale horse and its rider in the fourth seal represent spiritual death. The pale horse describes the spiritual death of those who experienced spiritual famine during the third seal. Andrews Study Bible suggests that the four horses well represent the initial surge of the gospel followed by the decline and apostasy of the church into the middle ages. The scene in the fifth seal describes the saints who were martyred because of the gospel. The scene in the sixth seal portrays the events at the just prior and during the *Parousia*. The “silence in heaven” in heaven in the seventh seal has several divergent interpretations. However, they seem to agree that this will be at the *eschaton*. See Ladd (1972, pp. 100-101); Stefanovic (229-32; Andrews Study Bible, 1668-69; 1670).

<sup>xi</sup>Syntactically and lexically, “καί” connects clauses and sentences. It annexes what follows from something said before (καί consecutive). See Thayer, *Lexicon*, Bibleworks 8, s.v. “καί.”

<sup>xii</sup>Their differences are: the Dragon’s seven heads have the crowns, while in the sea-beast, the crowns are on the horns.

<sup>xiii</sup> The Dragon gave the sea-beast his power, his throne, and great authority (Rev 13:2). This indicates that the sea-beast is an earthly power which has a kingdom or dominion. It is also a religious entity because it is worshipped by the people of the world (13:3,4). Further evidence that this is also a religious institution is the fact that it blasphemed God, His Name, and His tabernacle (v. 6), and it also persecuted the saints of God (v. 7). It is also a worldwide power that exercises authority over the nations of the world (v. 7).

<sup>xiv</sup> NAB translates “time, times, and half a time” as “a year, two years, and a half-year.” The time-period of the little horn’s world-wide dominion in Daniel 7, 8, and Rev 13:5 obviously is not literal but rather symbolic. If the little horn is a religio-political power that reign and exercised authority both in religion and politics, and it if it arose after the fourth world empire which is the Roman Empire, and since the Roman empire fell in A.D. 476, it is then reasonably to conclude that the reign of this religio-political power began after A.D. 476. The most likely period would be A.D. 538-1798. It was during this period time when the Papacy, the one that possessed all the characteristics described here about the little horn of Dan 7 and 8, and the sea-beast of Rev 13, as evident in history, persecuted the saints or the people of God. His reign was only stopped when one of its heads was wounded (Rev 13:3).

<sup>xv</sup>The word “ἐκκλησία” is not found in Rev 4-22:15 because of the nature of the genre of the book which is apocalyptic. Hence the church is portrayed in symbolically. For example, in Rev 12 it is presented as a woman. In Rev 19:7, it is portrayed as the bride of the Lamb (cf. Eph 5:23-33). In Rev 21:2, it is depicted as the New Jerusalem, the bride.

<sup>xvi</sup>In addition to the arguments above, in favour of the Spiritual Israel it is clear that Mount Zion in the NT is no longer the earthly Mount Zion but the heavenly (Heb 12:22). It is also clear that the people of God, the Church (both Jews and Gentiles), in the NT is also called the Israel of God (Gal 6:16). The Church as spiritual Israel is called a spiritual house of God, a holy priesthood (1 Pet 2:5); Jesus as their cornerstone (1 Pet 2:6); they are called as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people (1 Pet 2:9). Take note that this letter was addressed to Christians of Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, and most likely composed of Jews and Gentiles (1 Pet 1:1). It is also worth noting that the term “διασπορά” was also referred to the Christians who were scattered in different places of the Roman empire (1 Pet 1:1). Andrews Study Bible notes that James also metaphorically called them, in his letter as “twelve tribes which are scattered abroad (διασπορά)” (Jas 1:1) (2010, p. 1621). The nation of Israel as a chosen has already forfeited the promised of the covenant as indicated in the Jesus’ statement in Matt 21:43 “the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it.