

End Times Prophecy 314: **New Testament Exile**



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Introduction

This study will examine the possibility that the era spanning from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD until the reconstruction of the temple in the final years before Christ's return constitutes a period of exile.

Our consideration of this concept begins with New Testament teaching that it is only through faith in Jesus than anyone can participate in the covenant and promises of God. This covenant which Jesus inaugurated with his death and resurrection is a covenant with the people of Israel. However, Gentiles can become fellow participants and heirs along with Jewish believers. Though the New Testament is careful to recognize the ethnic and historical distinction between Jews and Gentiles, it is clear that participation in the covenant with Israel and the promises it includes are equally available through faith in Christ to persons of either Jewish or Gentile descent. Consequently, in the New Testament era, both believing Jews and believing Gentiles are part of the covenant people of Israel.

As we discuss in our Timeline of Biblical History, the concept of exile originates in the Old Testament culminating with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Babylonians. The accompanying developments resulted in the removal of the majority of the population from the area of Jerusalem and Judea. Only the poorest of the people remained. The rest of the people went into captivity in a foreign land for a predetermined length of time spanning a total of seventy years. Upon the completion of this period the Persian emperor Cyrus released the Jewish people from their captivity in Persia and Babylon and allowed them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. The cause of the exile was the failure of Israel to keep God's covenant and follow his commands. By contrast, although it was by no means perfect, the period after the exile in which the Israelites returned to their own land was generally accompanied by an affirmation of God's law and a willingness to keep his commands, even as exemplified by the leadership of men like Nehemiah and Ezra.

This historical background invites us to consider the possibility that the New Testament period includes a similar period of exile similarly triggered by a large portion of Israel turning away from God and accompanied by a destruction of the

city of Jerusalem and the temple and a diaspora of God's people into foreign nations, and possibly spanning a fixed amount of time. If there is an ongoing exile during the majority of the New Testament period, then it is possible that the end of this period of exile will similarly include members of God's new covenant with Israel (whether Jew or Gentile) returning to Jerusalem and a reconstruction of the temple.

The Olivet Discourse and Revelation: Two Periods of New Covenant Exile

New Testament indications regarding another period of exile begin with Jesus' teaching about the times and events which will lead to his return and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom on earth. Commonly called the Olivet Discourse, accounts of Jesus' teaching on this subject are found in Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21. All three gospel authors inform us that Christ's discourse began with a declaration about a future destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Matthew 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: **and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.** **2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**

Mark 13:1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, **Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!** **2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**

Luke 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, **6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**

We might note that both Matthew and Mark clearly inform us that the period identified by Jesus as "the end" is initiated by the abomination of desolation. For the sake of clarity, we should point out that according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary the word "desolate" means simply "devoid of inhabitants" and desolation means "the condition of a place or thing that has been damaged in such a way that it is no longer suitable for people to live in." It should also be noted that during this lengthy discourse, Jesus describes the future occurrence of many events that will occur prior to the end times. When he refers to the coming of false Christs, wars and rumors of wars, pestilences, earthquakes, his followers being persecuted, arrested, and put to death, and the proclamation of the gospel to the nations, Jesus specifically stipulates clarifies, "but the end is not yet" (Matthew 24:4-14). This stipulation indicates that there will be a period of time prior to the end and that period provides the time and opportunity for an exile.

Unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke does not mention the abomination of desolation by name. But, he does describe the desolation that the abomination causes. More importantly, Luke's account uses language that more clearly denotes a future period of exile, captivity, and desolation for Jerusalem. Just as Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 directly cite the Book of Daniel with regard to the abomination that causes desolation, Luke 21:24 also references Daniel's prophetic descriptions regarding the period of Gentile dominance over Jerusalem and God's people, which will end when the Messiah comes to establish his kingdom on earth.

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Though Luke's account employs the clearest language, it is apparent from all three gospels that Jesus prophesied at least some period of exile for God's people. For example, Matthew 24:15-20 and Mark 13:14-18 both speak of a flight from Jerusalem initiated at the abomination of desolation. But the abomination takes place around three and a half years before the return of Christ. So, the key question that emerges is whether these texts from Matthew, Mark, and especially Luke or any other New Testament passages suggest or allow for a period of exile prior to the abomination of desolation? Or to put it another way, is it scriptural to apply the term "exile" to the period between the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 AD and the future reconstruction of the temple just prior to Christ's return? Is it possible that there would be two periods of exile in the New Testament period, one involving the abomination of desolation in the final years before Christ's return and one beginning with the destruction of the first-century temple?

The occurrence of an early period of New Testament exile prior to and distinct from the final period of exile which will occur just prior to Christ's return is supported by several scriptural passages. First, Jesus' remarks about the destruction of the temple in Matthew 24:1-2 and Mark 13:1-2 clearly specify the stones of the Herodian Temple as those that would be demolished. This demonstrates that Jesus certainly predicted the destruction of 70 AD.

In our article series refuting the doctrine known as "Preterism," we demonstrate that the abomination of desolation prophesied by Daniel does not occur as part of the historical destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 AD. Therefore, the abomination of desolation, which Jesus and Daniel identify as occurring in the end of the age, just a few years before Jesus' return, cannot be identified with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. The fact that these two

desolations must be distinguished from one another based on scriptural and historical details indicates the occurrence of two exilic periods in the New Testament era. One of these exilic periods would accompany the abomination of desolation at the end of the age. The other would accompany the destruction of the Herodian Temple.

Second, the book of Revelation provides another piece of information that may suggest a period of exile prior to the abomination of desolation. Like Luke, the Book of Revelation also discusses the temple and the subjection of Jerusalem to the Gentile political powers. In the case of Revelation, a reconstruction, rather than destruction, of the temple is described.

Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, **Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**

Revelation 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, **Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?**

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and **power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle,** and them that dwell in heaven. 7 **And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 **He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.** Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Revelation 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there **a thousand two hundred and threescore days...14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place,** where she is nourished **for a time, and times, and half a time,** from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 11 and 13 are careful to specify that the period of desolation they are describing is confined to a 42-month period just before Christ's return (Revelation 11:2, 13:5, 10). As Revelation 12:6 and 14 explain, this final desolation will result

in the typical and anticipated flight of God's covenant people from the holy city. Additionally, Revelation 11 presents the rebuilding of the temple in the years just before this 42-month (3 1/2-year, 1,260-day) period begins. The close proximity of the temple's reconstruction to the final 42 month is established in Revelation 11:2. Verse 2 explains that the building of the temple should not include components of the larger temple structure (including any of the temple courts) which were outside the temple house itself. The reason that the reconstruction is limited to the temple house ("naos," 3485) alone is because of the pending period of Gentile conquest for 42 months. If the temple was to be rebuilt many years, decades, or centuries before this final 42-month conquest of Jerusalem, then the restriction against additional components of the greater temple complex would not be necessary. By contrast, the text explicitly explains that only the temple house itself should be rebuilt. It is not necessary to restore the rest of the courts and walls because of the imminent conquest of the city by Gentile authorities.

This examination of Revelation allows us to draw several important conclusions. First, there will be a period of desolation, captivity, and exile that occurs in the final 42 months before Christ's return. This corresponds to the period of flight that Jesus describes following the abomination of desolation in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. Second, the temple will only be reconstructed in the years just before this final 42 months. Therefore, these texts from Revelation indicate that the temple will not be rebuilt until sometime in the final years before Christ's return.

Most significantly, the fact that Revelation 11:1-2 presents the need to rebuild the temple confirms that Herod's Temple would not survive and would not be the temple in which the abomination of desolation would occur in the end times. This again points to two temple destructions and two corresponding exilic periods.

We can turn to the Book of Daniel to acquire more specific information about this timeline of the final exile and the temple which will be built in the final years before Christ's return. As we do we will find more support for an earlier period of New Testament exile that occurs prior to the final exile of the end times.

Daniel 9:27 presents the existence of a temple and temple activities for a final week of years. A week of years is comprised of seven years. As Daniel explains, in the midst of this final seven years, temple activities will be ceased and desolation will ensue. This conforms to the details of Revelation. Half of seven years is equivalent to 42 months. Or, as Daniel 12:11 explains, the abomination of desolation occurs with only 1,290 days left before the end. A comparison with Revelation 11:3 shows that the two witnesses will begin their 1,260-day prophetic testimony just 30 days after the occurrence of the abomination that causes desolation. From this comparison we can see that, like the Olivet Discourse and Revelation 11, Daniel 9:27 prophesies that a final conquest of Jerusalem and exile will occur in the last years before Christ's return.

Third, although both Revelation 11:2 and Daniel 9:27 discuss desolations which will occur with only 42 months (1,290 days) left in this age, Daniel 9:26 discusses the occurrence of an earlier desolation and destruction of the city and the temple

in the period after the Messiah's death. The Olivet Discourse clearly shows that Jesus understood and certified Daniel's prophecies. Jesus' anticipation of the destruction of Herod's Temple fits with Daniel 9:26's statement that after the Messiah would be cut off there would be a destruction of the city and the temple. Furthermore, Daniel's discussion of the angelic princes associated with the historic series of empires which precede the Messianic kingdom allows us to identify the people who will accomplish the destruction and desolation of verse 26 as the Romans. (For more in-depth analysis of this issue, see our "Prophetic Symbols" study.) And just as Daniel 9:26 indicates, the temple and city of Jerusalem were destroyed and left desolate in 70 AD, forty years after Christ's death and resurrection. However, like Revelation 11:1-2, Daniel 9:27 speaks of a final period of years wherein the temple is rebuilt and where offerings are made before the Lord.

The combination of these passages from Revelation and Daniel along with the Old Testament precedents established by the Babylonian exile allow for two periods of desolation and exile that would occur after Jesus' death and resurrection. The first would occur with the destruction of Jerusalem and Herod's temple by the Romans in 70 AD. While Jesus' remarks about the destruction of Herod's temple in the Olivet Discourse provide indications of the Roman exile, Daniel 9:26 seems to provide a more clear reference to it.

Our Premillennial Temple Study presents historical information confirming that the First Roman-Jewish War, which began in 66 AD, resulted in a period of desolation and exile began for the city of Jerusalem.

The First Jewish–Roman War – The First Jewish–Roman War (66–73 CE), sometimes called The Great Revolt, was the first of three major rebellions by the Jews of Judea Province (Iudaea) against the Roman Empire. – wikipedia.org

Aelia Capitolina – Aelia Capitolina (Latin in full: Colonia Aelia Capitolina) was a city built by the emperor Hadrian, and occupied by a Roman colony, on the site of Jerusalem, which was still in ruins from the Great Jewish Revolt in 70 A.D. Josephus, a contemporary, reports that: "Jerusalem ... was so thoroughly razed to the ground by those that demolished it to its foundations, that nothing was left that could ever persuade visitors that it had once been a place of habitation." When Emperor Hadrian vowed to rebuild Jerusalem from the wreckage in 130 A.D., he considered reconstructing Jerusalem as a gift for the Jewish people. The Jews awaited with hope, because Hadrian was considered a moderate. But after Hadrian visited Jerusalem, he decided to build Aelia Capitolina which would be inhabited by his legionaires. Hadrian also decided to never allow Jews to re-enter the city ever again....The city was without walls, protected by a light garrison of the Tenth Legion, during the Late Roman Period. The detachment at Jerusalem, which apparently encamped all over the city's western hill, was responsible for preventing Jews from returning to the city. Roman enforcement of this prohibition continued through the fourth century. – wikipedia.org

Up to the time of the manifestation of Christ the royal palaces in Jerusalem were in all their splendor: there was **their far-famed Temple,...no traces even of their Temple can be recognized, and their splendid city has been left in ruins, so that there remains to the Jews nothing of the ancient institutions;** while by the command of those who rule over them the very ground of Jerusalem which they so venerated is forbidden to them. - Gregory of Nyssa, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, s.2, vol. 5 (29), p. 940

Temple Mount – After the Third Jewish Revolt failed, all Jews were forbidden on pain of death from entering the city. - wikipedia.org

These historical and biblical details present a lengthy duration of exile for God's covenant people, Israel, spanning from 70 AD when the temple was destroyed until the time when faithful people will return and build a new temple in the final seven years before Christ's return. To summarize, we have found the following.

First, there are scriptural and historical indications regarding two destructions of the Temple between Jesus' ascension to heaven and his return to reign. There are three pieces of evidence for this conclusion. First, there is the Olivet Discourse in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. To be clear, while Jesus mentions a flight from Jerusalem after the abomination of desolation in Matthew and Mark and although Luke mentions captivity specifically, such references do not provide any clear testimony regarding an exile prior to the abomination of desolation. However, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all begin with a description of the Herodian Temple being destroyed and Matthew and Mark's accounts seem to place a notable intervening duration of time between that destruction and the future abomination of desolation. Second, Revelation then depicts that the Temple will be reconstructed just prior to a period in which ungodly nations will once again trample Jerusalem for 3 1/2 years. The need for the Temple to be rebuilt and then subsequently trampled likewise implies a period of time between the initial destruction before the Temple is rebuilt in the end times. And third, the book of Daniel prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple by the Romans after the death of the Messiah. Consequently, the Temple would be destroyed in the first century AD and also that it would be besieged once again starting with the abomination of desolation within 3 1/2 years of Christ's return.

Second, we must also consider the historical indications that likewise support this conclusion. After the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple in the Old Testament period, there was a subsequent exile of the people of Israel from Jerusalem. The reconstruction of the Temple coincided with the end of the exile. From Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Revelation, we know that there will also be a future siege of Jerusalem as a flight from Jerusalem and captivity accompanying the abomination of desolation just 3 1/2 years before Christ returns. In both instances, the besieging of Jerusalem and of the Temple entails an exile. It stands to reason that the destruction of the Herodian Temple by the Romans in 70 AD would also entail an exile. And indeed history records that the Jewish people began to be expelled from Jerusalem at that time. Moreover, the historic precedent surrounding the Babylonian exile suggests that the future

reconstruction of the Temple as described in Revelation will also correspond to the end of the exile that began when the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 AD.

As Daniel and Revelation explain, the period involving the return of God's covenant people to Jerusalem and their subsequent restoration of the temple will only occupy 3 1/2 years. (This will be the first half of the final week of years.) It will be ended by the abomination of desolation initiating the period Jesus designates as "the end" of this age, which itself also lasts for 3 1/2 years (42 months).

To be clear, the conclusion that a period of exile began in the first-century AD is required from a combination of biblical and historical indicators. At the time Jesus gave the Olivet Discourse it was at least possible that Herod's Temple would last to the final 3 1/2 years of this age and be destroyed at the abomination of desolation. And it was possible that Daniel 9:27 was merely describing, in greater detail, the destruction of the city and the temple mentioned in Daniel 9:26. However, the destruction of Herod's Temple in 70 AD in a manner that does not correspond with the prophetic descriptions of the Antichrist, the abomination of desolation, and Christ's return as mentioned by Daniel, by Jesus, by Paul's remarks in 2 Thessalonians 2, in the Book of Revelation, and elsewhere, requires the identification of an early period of exile which would conclude before the coming of the end times.

On their own and at the time they were made, Daniel and Jesus' words could have been interpreted to allow either for one exile which would take place in the end times at the abomination of desolation just 3 1/2 years before Christ's return. Or, they could just as reasonably have indicated two conquests of Jerusalem with each conquest corresponding with an accompanying period of exile, one when Herod's temple was destroyed after Christ's death, and one occurring 3 1/2 years before Jesus' return. There are several reasons that it makes sense that the scripture would not provide decisive cues about this point. First, the Old Testament is careful not to clearly or openly disclose the nature Christ's first coming to accomplish atonement through his death and resurrection or to distinguish it from his second coming in glory to establish his earthly kingdom. Second, any possibility for an intervening exile before the end times would, as was the case with the Babylonian exile, be contingent on God's people ongoing disobedience to his covenant. If most of Israel had accepted Christ and his New Covenant, there would not be a need for an intervening exile. Lastly, the New Testament is clear that God explicitly did not reveal the timing of Christ's return to establish his earthly kingdom to the apostles. We cover this issue in more detail in our study entitled "The First-Century Apostolic Understanding of Chronology." As that paper discusses, the large span of time between Christ's two comings only became apparent after the close of the New Testament period (the first-century AD). It is historical developments including the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD coupled with the fact that prophecies of the end times and Christ's return were not fulfilled in the first century AD, which primarily serve to demonstrate both that there would be an early period of exile prior to the end times and that Christ's return would occur after a more lengthy span of time.

Lastly, in Acts 15:15-17, James cites a prophecy from Amos 9:11-15.

Acts 15:13 And after they had held their peace, **James answered, saying,** Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 **And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,** 16 **After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:** 17 **That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,** saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

Amos 9:9 For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. 10 **All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.** 11 **In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:** 12 **That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name,** saith the LORD that doeth this. 13 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. 14 **And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them;** and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 **And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them,** saith the LORD thy God.

Although James' doesn't quote the entirety of this passage from Amos, Amos concludes with a promise from God to bring his people back from captivity after his people had been removed from their land. The portion that James quotes includes a promise from God to return and rebuild "the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down" and in "ruins." When James made this statement, the Romans had not yet destroyed the Temple. Yet, James is applying Amos' words to the New Testament period in which the Gentiles were coming to faith in Christ.

As we look at this passage there are several questions that deserve consideration.

First, we should consider whether Amos is describing a single period of exile or two periods of exile. Verse 9 mentions a period of exile in which Israel is sifted among all nations. Then verse 11 speaks of a return of Israel to the land, a raising up of ruins, and a rebuilding of the tabernacle of David. These events seems to precede or be connected to Gentile or heathen peoples coming to faith in Christ (just as James' applies it in Acts 15). After this, however, verse 14 states that God will "bring again" the captivity of his people and rebuild the desolate cities. Here it is important to note that the Hebrew word translated as "bring again" in verse 14 does not necessarily imply a second or repeated event. Consequently, verse 14 doesn't automatically demonstrate that Amos has in view the end of two separate

periods of exile, but it is possible. We will continue to consider this possibility as we examine other issues below.

Second, we should establish that Amos' does in fact have the end times in view for at least a portion of this prophecy. Verses 14-15 in which God not only declares that he will "bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them," but God also concludes "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them." In other words, there will be no exiles after the return from exile that is mention in verse 14. The end of even the possibility of any future exile can only be explained by the onset of the millennial kingdom, which Daniel 2:44 and 7:22 describe as a kingdom being given to the saints, which will never pass under the control of another people. Because the kingdom will never again be conquered, there will never again be another exile.

Third, since we know that a portion of Amos 9 must refer to the end times, the question arises as to whether all of it refers to the end times or only some of it.

In the Old Testament period God brought back his people into the land only once after a period of exile. This return took place in the times of men like Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. James certainly understood that the Babylonian exile and captivity had occurred already and by James' day the people of Israel had already been regathered back to their land, the temple had been rebuilt, and the Gentiles were now coming to join them through Christ. Perhaps James perceived that verses 11-12 of Amos 9 referred to the end of the Babylonian exile, which eventually historically culminated in the people of Israel being in the land with a Temple at the time of Jesus when the Gospel would go out to the Gentiles. However, James was no doubt aware of verse 15 of Amos 9, which clearly refers to an end of exile in the end times. And, James was also aware of Jesus' statements that Herod's Temple would be destroyed and that the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel was yet to occur in the future. This makes it impossible for James to interpret all of Amos 9:9-15 in reference to the return and restoration that occurred after the Babylonian exile.

There are three possibilities for how James might have interpreted Amos' references to the end of exile. One, if James understood any part of Amos 9 to refer to the end of the Babylonian exile, it would have been necessary for James to interpret Amos 9 as referring to the end of two separate periods of exile, so that verses 9-13 perhaps referred to the end of the Babylonian exile while verses 14-15 referred to the end of the exile that would occur in the end times. Two, James could have interpreted all of Amos 9:9-15 as a singular reference to the end of the exile in the end times. And three, James could have interpreted Amos in reference to two periods of exile, one of which was the exile during the end times but the other of which was not the Babylonian exile.

Fourth, here another question arises. If Amos and James refer to an event that happens in the end times just before the onset of Christ's millennial reign, then

how would the text of Amos support James' acceptance of the Gentiles converts in Acts 15?

One, it is possible that in Acts 15:16 James is identifying Amos 9:11 with the return from the Babylonian exile and the subsequent coming to faith of Gentiles through Jesus which began in the first century. In this scenario, James would be applying the reference to the heathen that are called by God's name in Amos 9:12 directly to the conversion of Gentiles in the first century. If that is the case, then James must have interpreted the preceding verses in Amos 9:9-11 in reference to the return and restoration that followed the Babylonian exile and led to the state of Israel that existed in the first century when the Messiah would send forth the gospel to the nations.

Two, it is also possible that Acts 15:16-17 is intended by James to justify the acceptance of Gentiles on the basis of Amos 9:9-11 predicting that the Gentiles would return with the Jewish people from a future period of exile and join with the Jews in rebuilding the tabernacle in the end times. In other words, James would be arguing that it was acceptable to allow Gentiles into the church in the first century given the fact that God had made it plain through Amos and other prophets that he would accept the Gentiles in the coming Messianic kingdom. In this scenario, James wouldn't be arguing that Amos 9:12 described the first century situation directly, but instead that Amos 9:12 described a future setting in which God accepted the Gentiles. And that future acceptance would clear away any objections against accepting the Gentiles in James' present time.

Because both scenarios are possible, it remains unclear whether James' interpreted any part of Amos in reference to the Babylonian exile or if he viewed the entirety of this passage from Amos in reference to an exile in the end times. And in any case, neither interpretation would leave an indication of a long period of exile spanning from the first century to the present time. In order for Amos or James to be providing any evidence of an intervening exile starting in the first century, there would need to be something more indicative in either Amos or James' remarks.

This brings us back to our first question. Is there anything more indicative in Amos' or James' remarks, which would point to a period of exile spanning from the first century AD to the present? There is at least one potential line of argument that would suggest Amos' prophecy infers a period of exile after the Babylonian exile but prior to the final exile in the end times. The key is in verse 12 of Amos 9 where we find the phrase, "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this." This language seems reminiscent of Psalm 2.

Psalm 2:7 I will declare the decree: **the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.** **8** Ask of me, **and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.** **9** Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

In particular, notice that this is a prophetic psalm about the Messiah, which we see in the phrase “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” in verse 7. However, verse 8 is where we find similarity to Amos 9:12. Verse 8 of Psalm 2 states, “I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” This sounds somewhat parallel to the phrase “possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen.” Both verses are describing the people of God conquering the heathen nations. Moreover, verse 9 of Psalm 2 identifies the timeframe of Christ’s millennial kingdom because it describes the period when Christ will rule the nations “with a rod of iron” and “dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Given the similarity in the language between Psalm 2 and Amos regarding the conquest of the nations, it would be reasonable to conclude that Amos 9:12 is a reference to the millennial reign of Christ. If verse 12 is referring the onset of the millennial reign of Christ, then verses 9-11 of Amos 9 must be a description of events that lead up to and prepare for the onset of that kingdom, including an exile and a subsequent reconstruction of the tabernacle of David. If we assume that the reference to the “tabernacle of David” is a reference to the reconstruction of the temporary structure that David build for the ark of God on Mount Zion prior to the building of the temple by his son Solomon (2 Samuel 6:17), then Amos’ sequence of events would place an exile prior to the reconstruction of the temple or tabernacle that occurs in the end times. From this point, we simply need to follow the timeline forward and fill in what we know. From Jesus (Matthew 24:15) and Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:4), we know that the abomination of desolation entails the antichrist coming to sit in the rebuilt temple. From Revelation 12:17-13:10, we know that the final period of exile does not occur until after the abomination of desolation. After all, the phrase “abomination of desolation” refers to a depopulation that results from this abomination.

In other words, by placing an exile prior to the reconstruction of the temple in verses 9-12, Amos 9 would be demonstrating that there will be an exile that occurs prior to the reconstruction of the temple or tabernacle even while other passages tell us plainly that there will be another exile after the tabernacle is rebuilt. In simple terms, the rebuilding of the temple or tabernacle functions as a wall separating two periods of exile, one before it and one after it. And while the reconstruction of that temple is described in verse 11 of Amos 9, the comparison between Psalm 2:7-9 and verse 12 of Amos 9 suggests that the reconstruction of the temple in verse 11 relates to the millennial reign of Christ, not to the reconstruction of the temple that occurred after the historic Babylonian exile. Hence, the exile mentioned in verses 9-12 of Amos, which culminates in the rebuilding of the temple or tabernacle of David in preparation for Christ’s return, could not be the Babylonian exile or the final exile that occurs in the last 3 1/2 years after the temple or tabernacle is rebuilt. It must be an intervening period of exile after the return from Babylon but before the rebuilding to the temple or tabernacle and its subsequent defilement by the abomination, which in turn leads to one final, short period of exile. The best candidate, in fact the only candidate

for such an intervening period of exile, is the exile that began in the first century AD and continues today without the temple or tabernacle being reconstructed.

Ultimately, our historical perspective allows us to conclude that two periods of exile would occur in the New Testament period. One would occur in the end times at the abomination of desolation 3 ½ years before Christ's return. The other would occur when the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. As we have seen, this conclusion is warranted based on several biblical and historical facts. First, Daniel 9:26 specifies a destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple after the death of the Messiah by a future Gentile national power and the angelic prince that presided over them. This destruction occurred in 70 AD when the Roman people destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Second and similarly, Jesus' statements in Matthew 24:1-2, Mark 13:1-2, and Luke 21:5-6 all clearly specify the destruction of the Herodian Temple. This destruction occurred in 70 AD, some forty years after Jesus' death and resurrection just as Daniel 9:26 indicates. As we demonstrate in our Preterism study, prophecies of events and figures of the end times that are discussed by Daniel, Jesus, and other Old and New Testament passages did not occur in 70 AD. Therefore, the abomination of desolation (and its accompanying exile) are still future events which cannot be identified with 70 AD. And yet, there was a destruction of Jerusalem and the temple as well as an exile of God's people which occurred in 70 AD as a result of the Roman conquest. When these biblical factors are coupled with historical events that occurred at 70 AD after the Olivet Discourse, the conclusion that there will be an exile in the intervening period from 70 AD to the future reconstruction of the Temple as a period of exile becomes apparent.

The remainder of this study will focus largely on the exceedingly lengthy first period of exile, which began around 70 AD, rather than on the 42-month period that will occur in the final years just before Christ's coming. As was the case with the Babylonian exile, one of the defining elements of this exile is the lack of a temple in Jerusalem. The other defining element would be the lack of a faithful remnant in Jerusalem functioning with some divinely sanctioned authority and recognition.

Historical and Biblical Precedent, the Modern State of Israel, and New Covenant Exile

Further historical and biblical information confirms this long period of New Testament exile and allows us to add some additional details to our understanding of this concept.

First, though Jewish people have not been constantly banned from Jerusalem since 70 AD, the return of the land of Israel to the Jewish people didn't occur until 1948. In this respect, the diaspora that began in 70 AD didn't officially begin to subside until at least 1948. However, biblical precedent indicates that exile and

subservience to foreign political powers weren't considered to have ended until God's faithful people had not only returned to Jerusalem but also rebuilt a temple there. The modern nation of Israel didn't regain possession of Jerusalem until 1967. So, it is reasonable to conclude that the period of New Covenant exile didn't end until at least 1967.

However, these factors are only concerned with the return of an ethnically Jewish population to the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. Biblical exile is concerned with the return of God's faithful covenant people to Jerusalem and the restoration of the temple. While Jewish persons of any faith are allowed to return to Israel and Jerusalem, there is no provision for the return of Gentiles who are faithful to the New Covenant that Christ established with Israel. The fact that the New Covenant exile continues is further substantiated by the fact that at no point since 70 AD has a temple been reconstructed in Jerusalem. And, as Daniel and Revelation show, the reconstruction of the temple won't occur until seven years before Christ's coming. These factors allow us to conclude that this long, historic period of New Testament exile has yet to end. It will only be ended when God's faithful covenant people (both Jews and Gentiles) return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

Furthermore, Old Testament precedent and New Testament texts both indicate that exile is the result of the large-scale infidelity to God's covenant and commands. In the New Testament this takes the form of a rejection of Jesus Christ and his new covenant by the majority of Israel. (As a side note, though large numbers of Gentiles eventually came to faith in the late first and early second century, a study of Christian history shows that a large proportion of Gentile followers of Christ also became unfaithful to the new covenant beginning in the fourth century AD.) If a one of the precursors for the termination of exile is that a larger proportion of Israel is faithful to God's covenant, then neither 1948 nor 1967 would satisfy the biblical model for the termination of exile. From a New Testament perspective, the present exile was triggered when a large portion of the Jewish people in Israel rejected Jesus Christ as the God of Israel and messenger of a new covenant between God and Israel. Consequently, the termination of exile would have to likewise entail a similar large portion of Jewish people in Israel turning back to God through the New Covenant with Jesus. (By "large portion" we do not mean to imply that it would have to be a large majority of Jewish people living in Israel, simply that it would have to include a significant number of people.) Given that such widespread rejection of Jesus Christ as the God of Israel and the rejection of the new covenant remain, the end of the exile cannot yet have been fully achieved.

Before we continue, it is important to be clear. Concluding that the period of New Testament exile has not completely ended does not mean that the events of 1948 and 1967 should be completely discarded or counted as irrelevant regarding the termination of exile. Rather, the end of the Babylonian exile occurred in stages. First, Cyrus the Great authorized the return of the Jews back to Judaea and Jerusalem. As our Timeline of Biblical World History Study shows, this occurred in the year 538 BC. But not all of the Jewish exiles left Babylon. Those who did

migrate back to Judaea did not all depart at the same time or even the same year. Restoration occurred in stages. The date of the temple's reconstruction is commonly placed in 516 BC. Likewise, Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem is typically dated to 457 BC and Nehemiah's at around 444 BC. Although the actual biblical dates may vary somewhat from these commonly accepted secular dates, nevertheless even the common dates do acknowledge the biblical and historical fact that there was a notable period of time, which extended for decades beginning with the reign of Cyrus the Persian, which ended Babylonian authority over Jerusalem, and which continued through the return of Jewish exiles as well as the rebuilding of the temple. From these facts we learn that an exile can come to an end in steps over a larger period. But, the full restoration from desolation and exile requires a return of faithful covenant people from foreign lands back to Jerusalem, a restoration of their authority over the city, and the existence of a functioning, rebuilt temple. With regard to the New Covenant exile, this process may have begun with the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948 and their control of Jerusalem which began in 1967, but that exile will not be complete until the other aspects are fulfilled as well.

In addition, it is also possible to compare the existence of modern Israel with the biblical Samaritans. Samaria (08111) is a biblical name associated with the area of the northern kingdom of Israel.

08111 **Shom^crown**

from the act part of 08104, Greek 4540 *σαμαρια*; n pr loc; [BDB-1037b] {See TWOT on 2414 @@ "2414d" }

AV-Samaria 109; 109

Samaria= "watch mountain"

1) **the region of northern Palestine associated with the northern kingdom of the 10 tribes of Israel which split from the kingdom after the death of Solomon during the reign of his son Rehoboam and were ruled by Jeroboam**

2) the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel located 30 miles (50 km) north of Jerusalem and 6 miles (10 km) northwest of Shechem

As 2 Kings 17:24 explains, after the conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel (around 720 BC), the king of Assyria brought men from other nations and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel. These new inhabitants became known as Samaritans.

2 Kings 17:24 And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. 25 And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them. 26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. 27 Then the king of Assyria

commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. 28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD. 29 Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. 30 And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31 And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. 32 So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. 33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence. 34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; 35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: 36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. 37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods. 38 And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. 39 But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. 40 Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner. 41 So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

It is with these Samaritans that the Israelite exiles struggled as they returned from Babylon and sought to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Ezra 4:8-13, Nehemiah 4:1-2, 7-8). And initially, as Ezra 9:1-2 reports, some of the Jewish exiles who returned from Babylon took wives from the nations which dwelled in the area and had children by them. Ezra confirms that this practice didn't continue and the Jews separated themselves from these wives and children (Ezra 10:1-19). However, the result was that by the time of Christ, there was a large population of people known as Samaritans living in the area north of Jerusalem who were of mixed Jewish and Gentile descent. Before the Israelites returned from Babylon, the Samaritans claimed to be the adherents of the true form of biblical faith. And when the Israelites did begin to return from Babylon, the Samaritans claimed that the returning Jews were bringing an altered form of the religion, which deviated from the original scriptural traditions.

Samaritans - The Samaritans, are an ethnoreligious group of the Levant, descended from ancient Semitic inhabitants of the region. The Samaritans are adherents of Samaritanism, an Abrahamic religion closely related to

Judaism. Samaritans believe that their worship, which is based on the Samaritan Pentateuch, is the true religion of the ancient Israelites from before the Babylonian Exile, preserved by those who remained in the Land of Israel, as opposed to Judaism, which they see as a related but altered and amended religion, brought back by those returning from the Babylonian exile.

Ancestrally, Samaritans claim descent from the Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (two sons of Joseph) as well as from the priestly tribe of Levi, who have links to ancient Samaria from the period of their entry into the land of Canaan, while some suggest that it was from the beginning of the Babylonian Exile up to the Samaritan polity of Baba Rabba. Samaritans used to include a line of Benjamin tribe, but it went extinct during the decline period of the Samaritan demographics. The split between them and the Judeans began during the time of Eli the priest when, according to Samaritan tradition, Judeans split off from the central Israelite tradition. The Samaritans believe that Mount Gerizim was the original Holy Place of Israel from the time that Joshua conquered Israel. The major issue between Rabbinical Jews and Samaritans has always been the location of the chosen place to worship God; Jerusalem according to the Jewish faith or Mount Gerizim according to the Samaritan faith. – wikipedia.org

In the New Testament Samaritans are treated as a mixture of Jewish lineage unlawfully combined with Gentiles resulting from prohibited intermarriage and a false form of Judaism (Matthew 10:5, John 4:9-22).

Despite the Samaritans' claims regarding their Israelite lineage and the authenticity of their pseudo-Israelite religion, the Jews who returned from Babylonian exile under Nehemiah and Ezra refused to let them participate in the rebuilding of the Temple. And the legitimacy of the Samaritans' claims to be authentic descendants of Israel and the sole preservers of true Israelite religion has been challenged on religious, biblical, and historical grounds.

These biblical and historical facts offer a potential comparison to the New Testament situation. As we have seen, at some point in the final decade before Christ's coming, the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. This reconstruction will be accomplished by faithful participants in the New Covenant that Christ established with Israel. However, these persons may be of either Jewish or Gentile ethnic heritage. In this way those who will eventually rebuild the temple may correspond to the Jewish exiles who returned from Babylon. Similarly, those who precede them in the land may be compared to the Samaritans in some ways. They will have a form of biblical religion which is not scripturally authentic. They will have claim to Jewish ethnicity and heritage. And some of them may resist and obstruct the construction of the temple.

Likewise, it is possible to compare the modern political authorities of Israel with the ancient kings of Israel and Judah. In many cases, especially as time went on, these ancient kings were not godly men. Instead, many of them led the people of Israel astray in the worship of false gods and ungodly religious practices. Against these men God sent his prophets. Men such as Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. It is

possible that a similar relationship and dynamic may exist between the two witnesses and the government of the modern state of Israel.

Exile, the Remnant, Prophetic Gifts, and Aspects of the New Covenant

While these historical and biblical realities help us understand the nature of the New Covenant exile, other factors should also be considered in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

First, as we discuss in our Pentecostalism Study, the prophetic gifts of the Holy Spirit continued to be distributed to believing Jews and Gentiles until at least the second or perhaps early third century AD. The ongoing occurrence and use of these prophetic gifts and the existence of a faithful portion of God's covenant people does not in any way undermine a New Testament exile. Old Testament precedent demonstrates that even after the Babylonian exile had begun God continued to work with faithful persons among his covenant people.

For instance, Daniel and Ezekiel continued to exhibit the prophetic gifts for some time even after the period of exile had begun. Likewise, as our Timeline of Biblical History Study shows, the Babylonian exile was directly defined as a seventy year period of subservience to the Babylonians. (It should be noted that even after the destruction of the city and the temple by the Babylonians, God allowed the poorest of the people to remain in the land.) Likewise, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of Solomon didn't occur until 20 years after the Judean kingdom and Jerusalem were first subjugated by Babylonian authority and the first portions of the population had begun to be removed from the land. For forty years leading up to the destruction of the city and the temple, God continued to warn the kingdom of Judah through the prophet Jeremiah. In fact, we may compare the forty years of Jeremiah's prophecy leading up to the Babylonian destruction with the forty years spanning from Pentecost to the Roman destruction. Both of these forty year durations can be understood as involving a prophetic call by the Holy Spirit for the larger proportion of God's people to repent before destruction and exile occur.

These biblical facts demonstrate that the presence of prophetic gifts and the existence of a faithful remnant among God's covenant people (Israel) does not undermine or prevent the occurrence of exile. Rather, by design exile is intended to deal with the unfaithfulness of a large portion of those who are called God's covenant people, regardless of any ongoing faithfulness among a smaller remnant of God's people. This standard, which was applied in the Old Testament, is also reflective of the New Covenant period as well.

Romans 9:27 *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:*

Romans 11:5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

As was the case with the people of Israel during the Babylonian exile, the current situation also involves a time when God's covenant people live in foreign lands, do not constitute or exercise political power, and do not have a temple requiring regular attendance. In the New Testament, Jesus sets up the rules for his followers in accordance with the circumstances of exile. Several examples of this are readily apparent in the New Testament.

First, Jesus replaces capital punishment with excommunication as the consequence for violation of covenantal commands. This fact recognizes that Jesus followers will live under circumstances where they will not have the legal authority to execute people for transgressing Christ's law and where Christ's law will not be the law of the lands in which they live. Furthermore, passages such as Romans 12:18-13:5, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 11:14-16, 1 Peter 1:11, 2:11, Acts 8:1-4, Acts 11:19, James 1:1, and 1 Peter 1:1 all clearly indicate that in the present time God's covenant people are living as foreigners in a land where they will not constitute the governmental authority. All of these passages use terminology borrowed from concepts related to Old Testament exile.

Romans 12:17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 **If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.** 19 Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.** 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. **13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.** For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 **For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.** 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation (4175) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad (1289) throughout the regions of Judaea and

Samaria, except the apostles...4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad (1289) went every where preaching the word.

Acts 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad (1289) upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad (1290), greeting.

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers (3927) scattered (1290) throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

1 Peter 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning (3940) here in fear:

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers (3941) and pilgrims (3927), abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Below are the definitions for some of the critical Greek words found in the passages above. As we can see, the language in these passages inherently deals with the issues of exile and status as a foreigner among other nations.

4175 **politeuma**

from 4176; n n; TDNT-6:516,906; { See TDNT 649 }

AV-conversation 1; 1

- 1) **the administration of civil affairs or of a commonwealth**
- 2) **the constitution of a commonwealth, form of government and the laws by which it is administered**
- 3) **a state, commonwealth**
- 3a) the commonwealth of citizens

1289 **diaspeiro**

from 1223 and 4687; v; { See TDNT 723 }

AV-scatter abroad 3; 3

- 1) **to scatter abroad, disperse**

1290 **diaspora**

from 1289; n f; TDNT-2:98,156; { See TDNT 188 }

AV-dispersed 1, scatter abroad 1, scattered 1; 3

- 1) **a scattering, dispersion**
- 1a) **of Israelites dispersed among foreign nations**
- 1b) **of the Christians scattered abroad among the Gentiles**

3941 **paroikos**

from 3844 and 3624; adj; TDNT-5:841,788; { See TDNT 599 }

AV-stranger 2, sojourn 1, foreigner 1; 4

- 1) dwelling near, neighbouring
- 2) **in the NT, a stranger, a foreigner, one who lives in a place without the right of citizenship**
- 3) metaph.
 - 3a) without citizenship in God's kingdom
 - 3b) **one who lives on earth as a stranger, a sojourner on the earth**
 - 3c) of Christians whose home is in heaven

3940 **paroikia**

from 3941; n f; TDNT-5:841,788; { See TDNT 599 }

AV-dwell as strangers 1, sojourning here 1; 2

- 1) a dwelling near or with one
- 2) **a sojourning, dwelling in a strange land**
- 3) metaph. the life of a man here on earth is likened to a sojourning

3927 **parepidemos**

from 3844 and the base of 1927; adj; TDNT-2:64,149; { See TDNT 183 }

AV-pilgrim 2, stranger 1; 3

- 1) **one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives**
- 2) **a stranger**
- 3) **sojourning in a strange place, a foreigner**
- 4) in the NT metaph. in reference to heaven as the native country, one who sojourns on earth

We can compare these passages with verses like John 7:35 where the same terms are applied in reference to Jewish people who remained in foreign lands.

John 7:35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? **will he go unto the dispersed (1290) among the Gentiles,** and teach the Gentiles?

Acts 2:5 **And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven...**9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and **strangers (1927)** of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

1927 **æpidemeo**

from a compound of 1909 and 1218; v; { See TDNT 157 }

AV-be there 1, stranger 1; 2

- 1) to be present among one's people, in one's city or one's native land
- 2) **to be a sojourner**
- 2a) **of a foreign resident, among any people, in any country**

In addition, passages like Matthew 18:20 and John 4:20-21 indicate that Jesus withdrew the Old Testament requirements for God's people to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem. Along with Jesus' prophecy of the temple's destruction in

the Olivet Discourse, these allowances show Jesus' anticipation of a coming period when his people would have to endure for a long period without a temple in Jerusalem for worship. This too is explained by and corresponds with the circumstances of exile as defined through biblical precedent.

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

John 4:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

All of these New Testament texts show that Jesus and his apostles understood the impending period of history in terms of the precedent of Old Testament exile. In the section ahead we will discuss the possibilities regarding the length of this period of New Testament exile.

Possible Indicators of the Length of the New Covenant Exile

In our Timeline of Biblical History study, we discuss an idea posed by author Tim Warner who suggest that the duration of the first New Covenant exile would be comprised of a specific, fixed amount of time.

The possibility that the first historic exile of the New Covenant will span a predetermined amount of time is supported by several biblical facts and precedents. Jeremiah established that the Babylonian exile would last for a specified amount of time, which was 70 years. And biblical history records the accuracy of this prophecy. In addition, Daniel 9:2 indicates that Daniel was able to determine when the 70-year punishment was nearing its end. Likewise, the books of Daniel and Revelation indicate that there will be a second or final period of desolation which will occur in the end times and which is also restricted to 42 months. And, we also have statements such as Daniel 2:21, Acts 1:7, Acts 17:26, and 1 Thessalonians 5:1 which inform us that with regard to dominion over Jerusalem, the temple, and the kingdom of Israel, God determines the amount of time for various kings and nations to rule. Lastly, as all of these passages show, when God sets aside certain portions of history as periods for subjugation, dominance, exile, and the destruction of the temple, he uses increments of time based on multiples of seven years.

As we have noted, the initial punishment of Israel was comprised of a 70-year period of exile to Babylon. This is stated in passages such as Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 2 Chronicles 36:21.

2 Chronicles 36:17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had

no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. 18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. 19 And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. 21 **To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.**

In addition, the phrase “the land enjoyed her Sabbaths” in 2 Chronicles 36:21 relates this period of exile in Babylon back to statements made in Leviticus 26:33-35 where God warns his people of the consequences for disobeying his covenant.

Leviticus 26:31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. 32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. 33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. 34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. 35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it...43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes.

These warnings about exile from the land begin earlier in Leviticus 26 where God explains that if the people were faithful to the covenant they would remain in the land, have peace from their enemies, and God’s tabernacle would be among them. Verse 13 concludes these promises by referring back to when God delivered the Israelites from bondage to the foreign government of Egypt. However, as the text continues in verse 14, it explains what would happen if the people were unfaithful.

Leviticus 26:3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;...6 And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land...11 **And I will set my tabernacle among you:** and my soul shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. 13 **I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright. 14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15** And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: 16 **I also will do this unto you;** I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow

your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 And I will set my face against you, and **ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you;** and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

As Warner observes, between the description of exile and desolation in verses 14-17 and the subsequent description of exile and desolation in verses 31-43, we find a very intriguing statement repeated four separate times. Verses 18, 21, 24, and 28 of Leviticus 26 each reiterates a warning that if Israel remained unfaithful after their first punishment God would multiply their punishment seven times. On each of these four occasions, the text states that God would “add” this sevenfold punishment. The Hebrew word translated in verse 18 and 21 as “more” is the verb “yacaph” (03254) which means “to add, increase, do again.” Similarly, verse 24 uses the word “gam” (01571) meaning “also, even, moreover, again.” And verse 28 includes the word “aph” (0637) which likewise can convey the idea of addition or increasing.

Leviticus 26:18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. 21 **And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.** 22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate. 23 **And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;** 24 **Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.** 25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied. 27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; 28 **Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.**

We already know that the destruction of God’s temple and the exile of God’s people from Jerusalem by the Babylonians entailed a period of 70 years. The multiplication of this period by a factor of seven would result in 490 years. However, Leviticus not only mentions multiplying this 70-year period by a factor of seven, but God speaks of adding this 490-year period of punishment four times. If we are intended to add together four periods of 490 years, the result would constitute a 1,960-year period.

Of course, as might be expected, 1,960 years is itself a multiple of seven years. But more importantly, this period of 1,960 years is consistent with what is taught more simply and plainly elsewhere in both the Old and New Testaments. Passages such as Hosea 6:1-2, 2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-19, Matthew 24:42-51, Luke 12:38-48, John

7:33-35, John 8:14, 21-23, 13:30-33, Matthew 23:39, Luke 13:35, and Luke 10:33 all provide indications regarding a 2,000-year period following Christ's first advent and concluding with his return. As we discuss in our Timeline of Biblical World History and Sabbath Millennium studies, we have very good scriptural support for the conclusion that the span of time from Christ's first coming to his second advent would include around 2,000 years of history. Taking Leviticus into account would inform us that this 2,000 years may include a period of 1,960 years of exile and without a temple.

In summary, we find the following pieces of support for the possibility that there would be a predetermined period for 1,960 years without temple.

First, when God discusses the punishment of exile and domination by other nations in Leviticus 25-26, the same context also establishes parameters for the very same seven-year sabbatical calendar that both the prophecies in Jeremiah and Daniel employ. This suggests the statements about multiplying the punishment by a factor of 70, which are repeated four times in Leviticus 25-26, are related to the sabbatical cycle.

Second, as we have seen, biblical information coupled with the historical reality of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple indicate that a period of exile did begin in the first-century. Based on biblical precedent, we would expect that this period of exile would contain a predetermined amount in denominations of seven years.

Number one, the Babylonian desolations and captivity was fixed to a seventy-year period. Number two, Daniel 9 provides a timetable, which counted down to Christ's first coming and which is based on seven-year groupings.

Number three, in Daniel 4, the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, is driven from his palace and authority for a seven-year period at the decree of God and his watchers. As we discuss more in our study entitled "Sealed and Unsealed in Prophecy," the watchers mentioned in Daniel 4 are seven godly angels (including Gabriel who speaks to Daniel). Both Daniel 4 and Revelation indicate these seven angels have some relationship or role regarding these declared seven-year periods, which we see used as the basic intervals in prophecies regarding exile, dominion over the earth, and the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom. Even the correspondence between the number of these angelic watchers and the groups of years provides further confirmation that the period between Christ's advents would be governed by a number of years divisible by seven, such as 1,960. Of course, our argument is not that there would be 1,960 years between Christ's two advents. Rather, our argument is that the period spanning from the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 AD may constitute a period of exile that will end shortly before Christ's return. The total amount of time between Christ's advents would include this 1,960-year exile, but it would not be limited to just these 1,960 years. For instance, it would also include the period before the Roman destruction and exile as well as at least a seven-year period after the exile concludes at the end of the age leading to Christ's return. By arguing that the period between

Christ's two advents might be divisible by seven-year increments, we have shown that it is also likely that the exile would likewise be governed by a period of seven-year increments, such as that 1,960 years that would result from the factors we've discussed in Leviticus 25-26.

Number four, we know that the initial punishment discussed in Leviticus was a period of desolation and subjugation spanning 70 years. But this contingency did not remain a mere theoretical possibility. The Israelites did eventually disobey and God did indeed bring this punishment upon them. Given the fact that the initial punishment of 70 years did actually occur over the course of history, it is reasonably implied that Leviticus' subsequent warnings regarding the multiplication of the punishment by a factor of seven would also be fulfilled if there was further disobedience. And, as it turned out, the New Testament records that a large portion of Israel has been unfaithful to God's new covenant through Jesus Christ (Romans 11:5-7). Consequently, we should naturally expect the sevenfold punishments mentioned in Leviticus 26 would also have been implemented with as much certainty as the initial period of punishment, which occurred under the Babylonian Empire.

Number five, we already know from Daniel 9:26-27, the Olivet Discourse, and Revelation 11:2 that the 2,000-year period between Christ's advents would include at least one period of exile in which God's people would be removed from the land, Jerusalem would be subjugated to foreign powers, and there would be no functioning temple service for a 42-month span immediately preceding Christ's return. A period of 42 months is 3 ½ years, exactly half of one seven-year cycle. Consequently, if the Roman destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem in 70 AD likewise indicates that a longer period of exile was beginning, it would likely also entail a period of time related directly to these seven-year intervals. As of 2015, the absence of a temple had continued for 1945 years.

In conclusion, if the first New Covenant exile is comparable to the Babylonian exile, then it might be natural to conclude that it would also be comprised of a predetermined period of time. The text of Leviticus 26 and biblical precedent (including the seventy years under Babylonian dominion) give us good reason to consider that the amount of time has been determined as 1,960 years. Likewise, as was the case with Daniel in Daniel 9:1-2, it is likely that astute observers among God's people would be able to anticipate when the exile was about to conclude based on identifying when the period first began.

In the next section we will consider possible starting points for a longer, historic period exile during the New Testament era. However, as we conclude this portion of this study we should cover two related issues that might arise.

The first concerns Jesus' statements in the gospels that no man knows the day or hour of his coming. It is important to state that the inclusion of a 1,960-year period of exile within the approximately 2,000-year period of time between Christ's advents wouldn't undermine this statement from Jesus. There are several reasons for this. First, though this 1,960-year period may have been mentioned in

the Old Testament it wasn't certain if it would be warranted when Jesus made the statement recorded in the gospels. The application of this period of exile was only necessary if and when a majority of Israel rejected Christ. As was the case with Jeremiah's prophecy, it is reasonable that God would have given Israel a period of time (up to forty years) to repent before initiating any subsequent punishment. From a human perspective, it was possible that this longer period of exile would not be necessary. As such, anyone hearing Jesus explain that no man knew the day or the hour of his return would not have known whether or not to factor in 1,960 years of exile prior to Jesus' second advent.

Second, this 1,960-year period wouldn't comprise the exact total number of years between the two advents. Christ's statement is specifically referring to the amount of time prior to his return, not the amount of time of any potential intervening exile. To determine the exact amount of time before Christ's return, it would first be necessary to identify the exact amount of time before the exile began. The exact starting and ending points would have to be identified with certainty. Though precedent might be helpful in some respects on these points, it doesn't necessarily provide us with clear answers. And certainly, any estimations that might be available to us with our historical hindsight weren't available when Jesus made the statements recorded in the gospels. Therefore, even knowing that the space between the two advents would include 1,960 years still wouldn't identify the exact total amount and Christ's statement would remain valid.

The second issue involves what is known as a jubilee year. We have already identified that the Israelite calendar system was based upon cycles of seven years. After seven such cycles, totaling 49 years, the Israelites were also commanded to mark the 50th year as a year of jubilee. The period of 1,960 years that we have discussed so far is strictly a total of seven-year cycles without adding in a separate jubilee year after each period of seven cycles. If a separate jubilee years should be incorporated, resulting in the addition of an extra year every 49 years, then an additional 40 years would need to be included in the total amount of time bringing the total to an even 2,000 years. While this scenario is possible, it is also worth noting that the jubilee-inclusive calendar was only enjoined on the Israelites when they were in the land of Israel (Leviticus 25:1-10). Since the period we are discussing is, by definition, a period wherein the people of Israel are removed from the land, it cannot and should not be assumed that the jubilee year is intended. It is true that Daniel 9:25 does refer to a grouping of seven weeks of years which adequately indicates the occurrence of a jubilee cycle. However, as Daniel 9 explains, the period of time circumscribed by the seventy weeks concerns a duration in which Israel is living in the land after having returned from their captivity in Babylon.

The conclusion that God proscribes exile periods comprised of seven-year cycles without including jubilee years is also supported by the fact that the Babylonian captivity itself was a seventy-year duration. Seventy years is not a multiple of fifty-year (jubilee) cycles. And yet the text of Leviticus 26 (which provides the basis for deriving an exile of 1,960 years) is based on multiplications of this initial seventy-year punishment. It is reasonable to conclude then that since the original

punishment is not prescribed with concern for jubilee cycles that the multiplication of that punishment would also not include jubilees every 49 years. Additionally, in Daniel 4 Nebuchadnezzar is punished for a seven-year period with no apparent or inherent connection to the jubilee cycle. These factors allow us to conclude that measurements of seven-year periods by the seven angels known as watchers do not necessitate the inclusion of an additional year every 49 weeks (of years). Therefore, we have a reasonable, biblical basis to theorize an exile of 1,960 years without including additional jubilee years, which would bring the total to 2,000 years.

An Exile that Lasts for Many Generations

Over the course of this study, we've discussed the historic Babylonian exile, which lasted for 70 years, and an exile during the times of the future antichrist, which will span the final 3 1/2 years prior to the return of Jesus Christ. We've also been discussing the evidence that the lengthy period of time spanning from the first and second centuries AD to the modern era should be considered a period of exile as well. One critical piece of evidence in favor of such a lengthy period of exile comes from Isaiah 61. We've included the text of verses 1-4 of Isaiah 61 below because the content of the first few verses will become important momentarily. However, for now our focus is primarily on verse 4.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. 4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

In verse 4, Isaiah describes a hopeful period of time when the "old wastes" will be rebuilt, the "waste cities" will be repaired, and "the former desolations" will be raised up. As we mentioned earlier, the word desolation refers to a location that has become uninhabited. But the critical phrase comes at the very end of the verse, which says, "the desolations of many generations." In simple terms, Isaiah is prophesying a period in which Jerusalem and the land of Israel would remain desolate, or virtually uninhabited, not for a mere 70 years or 3 1/2 years, but for "many generations." This is certainly not a description of the Babylonian exile. Nor is it a description of the future exile during the times of the antichrist. In fact, the only candidate for Isaiah's prophecy is the lengthy period of time spanning from the first and second centuries AD to the modern era. We will discuss specific dates in our next segment, but during this lengthy period, the Jewish

nation ceased to exist beginning with uprisings against the Roman Empire until the state of Israel was reestablished in the middle of the twentieth century. This is the only time in history when the land of Israel has been effectively uninhabited by the nation of God's people for "many generations."

In fact, when we turn our attention to the first two verses from Isaiah 61, we notice that Jesus quotes this passage in Luke 4.

Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

As we can see, Jesus quotes only the first two verses from Isaiah 61 before he closes the book and sits down. Then in verse 21 he explains to the audience that, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." According to Jesus, the timetable for the prophecies recorded in Isaiah 61 was underway when he read those words in the synagogue in Nazareth. This means that the desolations that Isaiah described as spanning many generations would also necessarily come after Jesus' read these words in the synagogue. Because the exile of during the reign of the antichrist only lasts 3 1/2 years, it cannot be the future period of desolations described by Isaiah. Jesus' citation of Isaiah affirms that the desolations of many generations prophesied by Isaiah must occur after Jesus' first advent but before the final 3 1/2 years leading up to his return. These factors strongly favor the conclusion that the term exile is the correct, biblical description for the lengthy period in which the land of Israel ceased to be inhabited by the nation of Israel from the first and second century to at least the middle of the twentieth century.

The Beginning Point of the First Period of New Covenant Exile

The next important question is when the first New Covenant exile began. The most obvious date would be 70 AD when Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and Israel was forced into another diaspora. However, while this date seems to be a good candidate, particularly as perhaps the latest possible point for the exile to begin, it may not be the only or most likely option. A few earlier options are possible.

The Roman Empire had ruled over the Jewish nation for a long time prior to 70 AD. And the revolt which led to the Roman destruction of the city and temple was not the first Jewish rebellion against Rome. In his writings, Josephus records several riots and revolts of Jerusalem against Rome in the century before 70 AD. Likewise, in their article on the First Roman-Jewish War, wikipedia provides a summary of first century uprisings against Roman authority.

The First Roman-Jewish War – Background – Following increasing Roman domination of the Eastern Mediterranean, the initially semi-independent Herodian dynasty was officially merged into the Roman Empire in the year 6 CE. The transition of the client kingdom into a Roman province brought a great deal of tension and a Jewish uprising by Judas of Galilee erupted as a response to the Census of Quirinius. This revolt was quickly put down by the Romans. The years 7–26 were relatively calm, but after 37 the province again began to be a source of trouble for Emperor Caligula. The cause of tensions in the east of the Empire was complicated, involving the spread of Greek culture, Roman Law and the rights of Jews in the empire. Caligula did not trust the prefect of Egypt, Aulus Avilius Flaccus. Flaccus had been loyal to Tiberius, had conspired against Caligula's mother and had connections with Egyptian separatists. In 38, Caligula sent Agrippa to Alexandria unannounced to check on Flaccus. According to Philo, the visit was met with jeers from the Greek population, who saw Agrippa as the king of the Jews. Flaccus tried to placate both the Greek population and Caligula by having statues of the emperor placed in Jewish synagogues. As a result, extensive religious riots broke out in the city. Caligula responded by removing Flaccus from his position and executing him. **In 39, Agrippa accused Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, of planning a rebellion against Roman rule with the help of Parthia. Herod Antipas confessed and Caligula exiled him.** Agrippa was rewarded with his territories. Riots again erupted in Alexandria in 40 between Jews and Greeks. Jews were accused of not honoring the emperor. Disputes occurred also in the city of Jamnia. Jews were angered by the erection of a clay altar and destroyed it. In response, Caligula ordered the erection of a statue of himself in the Jewish Temple of Jerusalem, The governor of Syria, Publius Petronius, fearing civil war if the order were carried out, delayed implementing it for nearly a year. Agrippa finally convinced Caligula to reverse the order. **In 46 an insurrection by the Jews broke out in Judea province.** The Jacob and Simon uprising was instigated by two brothers Jacob and Simon and lasted between 46–48. The revolt, which concentrated in the Galilee, began as sporadic insurgency and in 48 was put down by Roman authorities and both brothers executed. – wikipedia.org

These historical details establish that Jerusalem came under the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire long before 70 AD. Likewise, there were Jewish revolts against Roman rule before the First Roman-Jewish war began in 66 AD.

The First Jewish–Roman War – The First Jewish–Roman War (66–73 CE), sometimes called The Great Revolt, was the first of three major rebellions by the Jews of Judea Province (Iudaea) against the Roman Empire. The second was the Kitos War in 115–117, which took place mainly in the diaspora, and the third

was Bar Kokhba's revolt of 132–135 CE. **The Great Revolt began in the year 66 CE, originating in the Roman and Jewish religious tensions.**

– wikipedia.org

In light of the fact that the Romans began to dominate Jerusalem even prior to the first century and the fact that there were numerous revolts by Jerusalem, it is helpful to consider Old Testament precedent when attempting to identify when to mark the starting point of the long period of New Testament exile. In particular, it is important to note that the Old Testament desolation and exile were not counted starting from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Babylonians or from the point when Israel first became subject to a foreign power.

Instead, as our chronology study shows, Old Testament texts establish that the kingdom of Judah had been subjugated to the Egyptians before it came under the authority of Babylon (2 Kings 23:32-24:7). Then, the Babylonians took control of the region from the Nile to the Euphrates away from the king of Egypt. But the Babylonians did not destroy Jerusalem or the Temple right away. In fact, scripture clearly states that the seventy years of exile actually began 20 years before the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Jeremiah 25:1, 32:1, 46:2, 52:12). So, if neither the onset of domination by Egypt nor the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple marked the start of the 70 years of exile, then what did? The first time the Babylonians entered the temple and confiscated its treasures was 11 years before the destruction of the city and the temple (2 Kings 24:13, 2 Chronicles 36:7.) But biblical authors do not use that event as the starting point of the 70 years either. Based on a comparison of texts like 2 Kings 24:6-12, 15-18, and 25:2, 8-9, the Israelites began to count the seventy years of servitude and exile to Babylon, not from the time when Jehoiakim began to pay tribute to Babylon in but rather from the third year of Jehoiakim's reign when he revolted against Nebuchadnezzar at which point Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin, began to reign over Israel and in the first year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and first deported a portion of Israel's population to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1-4, 8-16). This all began in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim.

When these biblical precedents are applied to the New Covenant several alternate dates can be suggested as possible beginning points of the historic New Testament exilic period.

If we leave behind our discussion of the Babylonian exile and return to our consideration of the New Testament period, it is possible to use the revolt of the Jewish people against Rome which led to the destruction of the city and temple in 70 AD as the starting point. If this is the case, then the first period of New Testament exile can be dated to 66 AD, the start of the Jewish uprising. It is in this year that the initial Jewish revolt, cessation of Temple prayer and sacrifices, and confiscation of Temple treasures all took place. As such, this is a reasonable approach. Following the Old Testament model regarding the Babylonians would allow us to start the New Covenant exile in the year 66 AD, which is the year that the Jewish revolt began.

The First Jewish–Roman War – The First Jewish–Roman War (66–73 CE), sometimes called The Great Revolt, was the first of three major rebellions by the Jews of Judea Province (Judaea) against the Roman Empire. – wikipedia.org

However, 70 AD and 66 AD are not the only options for the onset of the first New Covenant exile.

The New Testament indicates that Jesus and the apostles all knew this exile was coming. Likewise, they also taught that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and the new covenant that Jesus inaugurated with the nation of Israel allowed for both Jewish believers and Gentiles believers to be deemed part of the commonwealth, or state, of Israel (Ephesians 2:12-19). The inclusion of believing Jews and believing Gentiles among the citizenship of the commonwealth of Israel is important because it widens the net of who might first begin to be exiled from Jerusalem. Instead of looking for non-Christian Jews or Jewish political elites to be the first (or only) exiles, it is possible to look for when Jewish and Gentile Christians first began to be expelled from Jerusalem to the larger region of the Roman empire or brought directly to Rome.

These factors allow us to consider other indications from New Testament texts regarding when the apostles felt the Roman exile began. All of these possible indicators relate to precedent from the Babylonian exile. In the case of Babylon's subjugation of Judah and Jerusalem, the removal of God's covenant people from Jerusalem began 20 years prior to the destruction of the city and the temple. Though there isn't a great deal of direct information available in the New Testament on this subject, a few points may be worth considering in relation to this precedent. These points come from New Testament statements referring to members of Christ's covenant with Israel in terms corresponding to exile in foreign lands.

First, we have remarks in James and Peter's epistles. The Epistle of James is considered to have been written by Jesus' brother and dated to sometime before his death around 62 AD or possibly 69 AD.

Epistle of James – Authorship – There are four views concerning authorship and dating of the Epistle of James:

- that **the letter was written by James before the Pauline Epistles**,
- that **the letter was written by James after the Pauline Epistles**,
- that the letter is pseudonymous,
- that the letter comprises material originally from James but reworked by a later editor.[4]

The writer only refers to himself as "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." [Jas 1:1] There are seven possible authors of James. As many as six different men may be referred to in the Bible as James, and if none of these men wrote this letter, a seventh man not mentioned in the Bible by the name of James could be the author. Jesus had two apostles named James: James, the son of Zebedee and James, the son of Alphaeus, but it is unlikely that either of these

wrote the letter. James, the son of Zebedee, was martyred about 44 AD. This would be very early for him to have been the writer. The other apostle James, the son of Alphaeus, is not prominent in the Scriptural record, and very little is known about him. Rather, **evidence points to James the brother of Jesus, to whom Jesus evidently had made a special appearance after his resurrection described in the New Testament. This James was prominent among the disciples.** The writer of the letter of James identifies himself as "a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ", in much the same way as did Jude, who introduced the Epistle of Jude by calling himself "a slave of Jesus Christ, but a brother of James". (Jas 1:1; Jude 1) Furthermore, the salutation of James' letter includes the term "Greetings!" in the same way as did the letter concerning circumcision that was sent to the congregations. In this latter instance it was apparently Jesus' brother James who spoke prominently in the assembly of "the apostles and the older men" at Jerusalem. **From the middle of the 3rd century, patristic authors cited the Epistle as written by James the Just, a relation of Jesus and first Bishop of Jerusalem.** Not numbered among the Twelve Apostles, unless he is identified as James the Less, **James was nonetheless a very important figure: Paul described him as "the brother of the Lord" in Galatians 1:19 and as one of the three "pillars of the Church" in 2:9.** He is traditionally considered the first of the Seventy Disciples. – wikipedia.org

James (the brother of Jesus) – Died: 62 AD (according to Josephus) or 69 AD (Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius of Caesarea) Jerusalem.
The Epistle of James – Authorship – The Epistle of James has been traditionally attributed to James the Just since 253...*Death* – **According to a passage found in existing manuscripts of Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, (xx.9) "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James" met his death after the death of the procurator Porcius Festus but before Luceius Albinus had assumed office (Antiquities 20,9) – which has been dated to 62.** – wikipedia.org

James 1:1 is addressed to "the twelve tribes scattered abroad."

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, **to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad (1290),** greeting.

The Greek word for "scattered abroad" is "diaspora" (1290). Since, both Jews and Gentiles are considered part of the nation of Israel through faith in Jesus Christ, it is possible to understand James' remark to refer to Jewish and Gentile Christians who had entered into a period of exile. However, since it was widely recognized that Jews had lived across the Roman world even prior to the First Roman War (John 7:35, Acts 2:5), it is also possible that James' comments do not indicate the onset of a new period of exile.

1 Peter 1 also uses the Greek word "diaspora." Unlike James, Peter addresses his letter to the strangers who are scattered and he later refers to his Christian audience using terms related to sojourning and being pilgrims and strangers in foreign lands.

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, **to the strangers (3927) scattered (1290) throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,**

1 Peter 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, **pass the time of your sojourning (3940) here in fear:**

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you **as strangers (3941) and pilgrims (3927),** abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

When viewed together it seems unlikely that both James and Peter are using these terms to refer exclusively to Jews who were exiled prior to the New Testament rather than to both Jewish and Gentile participants in the new covenant. Moreover, Peter concludes this epistle by using the term "Babylon" as a reference to his location at the time when he wrote the epistle.

1 Peter 5:13 **The church that is at Babylon,** elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

While it is not necessary to identify Babylon with the historical city of that name in modern day Iraq, it is necessary to recognize that Peter's use of this term inherently contains an allusion to the Babylonian exile especially when coupled with his other remarks to pilgrims, strangers, and those who are scattered.

It is possible then that James and Peter provide some indications that in their minds and those of their audiences the predicted exile had already begun. If this is the case, then the dates of these two epistles become significant. James epistle is typically dated to before 62 AD, the commonly given year of his death. Likewise, Peter's death is typically dated to 64 AD, which means his epistle would have also have been written prior to 64 AD.

Saint Peter – Saint Peter; died c. 64 AD, also known as Simon Peter, Simeon, or Simōn, according to the New Testament, was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, leaders of the early Christian Church. – wikipedia.org

These considerations would possibly indicate the start of the first New Covenant exile as early as 60 or, perhaps 62-64 AD.

Likewise, Acts 8:1 and 11:19 report a diaspora of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem beginning at the time of Stephen's death in around 34 AD.

Acts 8:1 **And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad (1289) throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles... 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad (1289) went every where preaching the word.**

Acts 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad (1289) upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

However, this scattering abroad of Jewish Christians occurred as a result of persecution from fellow countrymen of the Jewish nation and religious authorities. So it does not fit the biblical precedent. As Leviticus explains and the Babylonian exile demonstrates, biblical exile is the result of God's punishment of his covenant people as a nation by removing them from the land under the authority of foreign power. Despite the fact that the punishment was directed toward those who rejected God's covenant, righteous members of the covenant were also included, as demonstrated in the case of Daniel and Ezekiel who were both among the exiles. Consequently, it is not surprising that we would expect to see Jewish and Gentile Christians among the exiles, even though they had faithfully accepted God's new covenant with Israel through Jesus. However, in the case of Stephen, the Gentile authorities were not involved in exiling Jewish followers of Christ from Jerusalem to foreign lands. Likewise, the Roman Empire continued to recognize the Jewish nation and allow it to remain in the city of Jerusalem for another three and a half decades after Stephen's death. For these reasons, the scattering of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem after the martyrdom of Stephen in 34 AD does not seem to be a sound candidate for the onset of the long, historic exile during the New Covenant era.

Lastly, we may consider Paul's arrest and deportation to Rome. The New Testament account of these events begins in Acts 21 and continues through the end of the book. Unlike the diaspora of Jewish Christians after the death of Stephen, Paul's deportation from Jerusalem to Rome was conducted by Roman authorities in whose legal custody Paul was bound as a captive.

Acts 21:10 And as we tarried there many days, **there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.** **11** **And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles...****30** And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. **31** And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. **32** Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. **33** Then **the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains;** and demanded who he was, and what he had done. **34** And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, **he commanded him to be carried into the castle.** **22:24** **The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging;** that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. **25** **And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?** **26** When the

centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: **and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.** 30 **On the morrow**, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, **he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.** 33:10 **And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.** 11 **And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.**

Acts 23:32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: 33 **Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.** 34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia; 35 **I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.**

Acts 24:22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, **When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.** 23 **And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul,** and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him. 24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, **Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.** 26 **He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him:** wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. 27 **But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.** 25:1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem...6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and **the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought...9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?** 10 **Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged:** to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. **I appeal unto Caesar.** 12 **Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar**

shalt thou go. 13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus. 14 And when they had been there many days, **Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:** 15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. 16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. 17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth...20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. 21 But **when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar...**31 **And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.** 32 **Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.** 27:1 **And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.**

Acts 28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. 17 And it came to pass, that after three days **Paul** called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he **said unto them,** Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was **I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.** 18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. 20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that **for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.**

These passages report Paul being bound by the Roman authorities in Jerusalem and ultimately taken to Rome while in the custody of state officials. Greek words such as “desimos” (1198), which means “captive,” and “paradidomi” (3860), which means “delivered,” are applied to Paul in Acts' account of these developments.

This language concerning Paul being taken in captivity to Rome connects with Jesus' statements in the Olivet Discourse. In Matthew 24:9, Jesus states that his disciples will be delivered (3860) into prisons and be brought before kings and rulers. Matthew 24:14 subsequently mentions the going forth of the gospels to the nations. Mark 13:9-11 couples these two items even more closely so that the deliverance (3860) to councils and rulers and kings is immediately followed by the gospel being preached to the nations. And lastly, Luke 21:12 also uses the word “paradidomi” (3860) to refer to Jesus' followers being delivered into prisons and brought before kings and rulers right before Jesus prophesies about a future

desolation of Jerusalem and captivity of God's people to all nations (Luke 21:20, 24).

In addition, Acts 15:21 references Moses being preached in every city. This statement explains the connection between the exile and the spreading the gospel that we find in Jesus' statements in the Olivet Discourse. We also find the Greek word "diaspora" (1290), which relates to the idea of scattering seed. "Diaspora" (1290) is a noun, which is derived from the Greek verb "diaspeiro" (1289). And "diaspeiro" is a compound word formed from the Greek word "dia" (1223), which means "through," and the Greek word "speiro" (4687), which means "to sow, scatter, seed." It is difficult not to connect the concept of "scattering seed" to Jesus' parable in Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23, which metaphorically depicts the preaching of the gospel in terms of sowing seed. In fact, Jesus uses the word "speiro" (4687) seven times during this parable in Matthew 13. Correspondingly, Paul's case also connects the exile to the sharing of the gospel to all nations due to the fact that Paul's travels to Rome further facilitated the spread of the gospel throughout the Roman empire.

These biblical facts connect captivity under Gentile authorities with the going forth of the gospel to the nations. When taken together, they imply that an exile to the Gentile nations would result from this delivering up of God's people to Roman authority and under Roman authority. Moreover, these connections indicate that Jesus' statements about his followers being delivered up before kings, put in prison, giving a testimony, and the going forth of the gospel to the nations have some connection with a coming desolation and captivity which would continue until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

It is apparent from these texts that the record of Paul's arrest and deportation by Roman authorities in Acts is supposed to be connected with Jesus' statements in the Olivet Discourse, which culminate in a desolation and captivity of Jerusalem. As such, we have good reason to conclude that the binding and deportation of Paul to Rome might indeed have signified the onset of the first period of New Testament exile.

Paul's arrest in Jerusalem is dated to around 57 upon which he was sent to Caesarea where his case was heard in 59 AD. It is at that point that Paul's journey to Rome began. He is said to have arrived in Rome in 60-62 AD.

Saint Paul – *Last visit to Jerusalem and arrest* – **Paul arrived in Jerusalem on his fifth and final visit [Acts 21:17ff] in 57** with a collection of money for the community there. Acts reports that he was warmly received. But Acts goes on to recount how Paul was warned by James and the elders that he was gaining a reputation for being against the Law, saying "they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs". [Acts 21:21] Paul underwent a purification ritual in order to give the Jews no grounds to bring accusations against him for not following their law. **Paul caused a stir when he appeared at the Temple, and he escaped being killed by the crowd by**

voluntarily being taken into Roman custody. When a plot to kill Paul on his way to an appearance before the Jews was discovered, he was transported by night to Caesarea Maritima. **He was held as a prisoner there for two years, until a new governor reopened his case in 59. When the governor suggested that he be sent back to Jerusalem for further trial, Paul exercised his right as a Roman citizen to "appeal unto Caesar".** *His final days spent in Rome* – Acts recounts that on the way to Rome for his appeal as a Roman citizen to Caesar, Paul was shipwrecked on "Melita" (Malta), [Acts 28:1] where he was met by Publius [Acts 28:7] and the islanders who showed him "unusual kindness". [Acts 28:2] **He arrived in Rome c. 60 and spent another two years under house arrest (beyond his two years in prison in Caesarea).** – wikipedia.org

Ephesians and Philemon are thought to have been written from Rome in 60-62 AD.

Epistle to the Ephesians – *Place, date, and purpose of the writing of the letter* – **If Paul was the author of the letter, then it was probably written from Rome during Paul's first imprisonment (3:1; 4:1; 6:20), and probably soon after his arrival there in the year 62,** four years after he had parted with the Ephesian elders at Miletus. – wikipedia.org

In these letters Paul identifies himself as a captive or prisoner using again using the Greek word "desmios" (1198) and the related word "desmos" (1199) (Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, Philemon 1:1, 9, 10, 13). Likewise, Philippians 1:7, 13, 14, 16, Colossians 4:18, and 2 Timothy 1:8-9 are all thought to also have been written from Rome and each of them refers to Paul using "desmos" (1199) or "desmios" (1198).

Epistle to the Philippians – **Biblical scholars are in general agreement that it was written by St. Paul** to the church of Philippi, an early center of Christianity in Greece **around 62 AD** – wikipedia.org

Epistle to the Colossians – *Date* – **The letter may have been written by Paul at Rome during his first imprisonment. (Acts 28:16, 28:30)** – wikipedia.org

First Epistle to Timothy – *Date* – The dating of 1 Timothy depends very much on the question of authorship. **Those who accept the epistle's authenticity believe it was most likely written toward the end of Paul's ministry, c.62–67 CE.** – wikipedia.org

We can also note a possible similarity between the prophecy of Paul's captivity in Acts 21 and Jeremiah's prophecy of the impending exile to Babylon (Jeremiah 27-28).

Jeremiah 27:1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, 3 And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the

king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, **by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah;** 4 And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters; 5 I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. 6 **And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon,** my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. 7 **And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come:** and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. 8 And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. 9 **Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon:** 10 **For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish...** 18 But if they be prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon. 19 For thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city, 20 Which **Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem;**... 28:10 **Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.** 11 **And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years.** And the prophet Jeremiah went his way. 12 **Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the prophet, after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying,** 13 **Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.** 14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also. 15 Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie.

For comparison, here again are the words of Agabus, the Christian who prophesied Paul being bound and taken to Rome in Acts 21.

Acts 21:10 And as we tarried there many days, **there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.** 11 **And when he was come unto us, he took**

Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles...

In both cases a single individual (Jeremiah and Paul) are depicted as being bound in signification of impending captivity and exile from Judaea under the Gentile authorities. In the case of Jeremiah this signification occurred at the start of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah (Jeremiah 27:1). This is less than four years before the first deportation of Jewish people from Judah by Nebuchadnezzar in Jehoiakim's fourth year (Jeremiah 25:1). If the prophecy of Agabus in Acts 21:10-11 is intended to parallel Jeremiah 27:1-2, then Paul's captivity in the hands of the Roman state could very well be taken as a sign indicating the imminent onset of exile.

It should also be noted, that early Christian writers inform us that Peter, too, was in Rome right alongside Paul. Writing in the second century AD, Irenaeus states that Peter and Paul both founded the Church in Rome. This statement is interesting because it directly connects Paul's captivity in Rome to the spreading of the Gospel in Rome, which further confirms the connection between exile and preaching the gospel.

Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews(3) in their own dialect, **while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church.** After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. – Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book III, CHAP. I.--THE APOSTLES DID NOT COMMENCE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, OR TO PLACE ANYTHING ON RECORD, UNTIL THEY WERE ENDOWED WITH THE GIFTS AND POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEY PREACHED ONE GOD ALONE, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

Notice that Irenaeus moves directly from discussing Peter's work alongside Paul to establish the church in Rome to a brief mention of Peter's "departure," by which he means Peter's death. This is at least consistent with the early Christian traditions that, like Paul, Peter died in Rome. In fact, the lengthy excerpt below from Wikipedia.org lists the early Christian attestation for several interesting facts related to Peter.

Irenaeus, Rome – Irenaeus of Lyons wrote in the 2nd century that Peter and Paul had been the founders of the Church in Rome and had appointed Linus as succeeding bishop.[65] **Clement of Alexandria states that "Peter had preached the Word publicly at Rome. (A.D. 190)"**[66] Lactantius, in his book called Of the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died, written around 318, noted that **"And while Nero reigned, the Apostle Peter came to Rome,** and, through the power of God committed unto him, wrought certain miracles, and, by turning many to the true religion, built up a faithful and stedfast temple unto the Lord."^[67]...**Church historians consistently consider Peter and Paul to have been martyred under the reign of Nero,**^{[44][45][46]} **around AD 65 such as**

after the Great Fire of Rome.[47][48][49] Presently, most Catholic and Protestant scholars,[74] and **many scholars in general,[75] hold the view that Peter was martyred in Rome under Nero...Death** – Early church tradition (as indicated below) **says Peter probably died by crucifixion (with arms outstretched) at the time of the Great Fire of Rome in the year 64...Clement of Rome, in his Letter to the Corinthians (Chapter 5), written c. 80–98, speaks of Peter's martyrdom in the following terms: "Let us take the noble examples of our own generation. Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most just pillars of the Church were persecuted, and came even unto death. ... Peter, through unjust envy, endured not one or two but many labours, and at last, having delivered his testimony, departed unto the place of glory due to him."**[82] **The death of Peter is attested to by Tertullian at the end of the 2nd century, in his Prescription Against Heretics, noting that Peter endured a passion like his Lord's:[83] In his work Scorpiace 15, he also speaks of Peter's crucifixion: "The budding faith Nero first made bloody in Rome. There Peter was girded by another, since he was bound to the cross".**[84] **Origen in his Commentary on the Book of Genesis III, quoted by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History (III, 1), said: "Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downwards, as he himself had desired to suffer."**[34] The Cross of St. Peter inverts the Latin cross based on this refusal, and claim of unworthiness, to die the same way as his Saviour.[85] **Peter of Alexandria, who was bishop of Alexandria and died around A.D. 311, wrote an epistle on Penance, in which he says: "Peter, the first of the apostles, having been often apprehended, and thrown into prison, and treated with ignominy, was last of all crucified at Rome".**[86] – Wikipedia.org

According to Wikipedia.org, Clement of Alexandria (190 AD) and Lactantius (318 AD) both agree with Irenaeus testimony that Peter was in Rome with Paul. Moreover, writing in 80-98 AD Clement of Rome mentions the death of Peter, in which case Clement's own location in Rome suggests an attestation that Peter died in Rome. Second-century writer Tertullian and third-century writer Origen both testify that Peter was killed by the Romans. Another author named Peter of Alexandria writes in 311 AD that Peter was not only killed by the Romans but was actually apprehended and thrown into prison by the Romans prior to being put to death by them. In fact, the Wikipedia article summarily asserts that "Church historians consistently consider Peter and Paul to have been martyred under the reign of Nero" and "many scholars in general, hold the view that Peter was martyred in Rome under Nero." In fact, Encyclopedia Britannica regards the martyrdom of Peter in Rome as a simple matter of fact.

Saint Peter the Apostle – original name Simeon, or Simōn (died c. ad 64, Rome)...
– britannica.com

Moreover, if Peter's epistles were written while he was in Rome, then Peter's assertion that he was writing from a location metaphorically identified as "Babylon" in 1 Peter 5:13 would further suggest that Peter himself understood his time in Rome as comparable to the Babylonian exile.

While the early Christian writings do not establish whether or not Peter was brought to Rome as a captive or came willingly, Peter's death at the hands of the Romans would indeed demonstrate that Peter at least ended up a captive of the state in Rome, right alongside Paul. While Paul's own circumstances provide a basis for concluding that the long, historic exile of the faithful was impending in the early 60's AD, that conclusion would even be more well-founded if Peter himself was likewise captive in Rome by that time.

These events in the life of Peter and especially the life of Paul fit with the language found in Peter's epistle and possibly may denote an understanding expressed by the apostles that the captivity had already begun even before the onset of the First Roman-Jewish War in 66 AD. Indeed, if these dates are used to mark the beginning of the exile, then it may be possible to identify the beginning of the long, historic New Testament exile as early as the beginning of Paul's arrest and deportation to Rome by the imperial authorities in Jerusalem. As we have seen, this took place at around 57 AD. This would be conceptually parallel with the fact that the beginning of the Babylonian deportation is scripturally identified with the first exiles who were taken from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Precedent and What to Expect as the Exile Draws to a Close

With these possible dates in mind for the beginning of the first period of New Covenant exile we can turn our attention to questions about what to expect when this exile draws to a close. In this regard we can note that our Timeline of Biblical World History Study concludes that Cyrus' release of the Jews from exile to return to Jerusalem took place in Fall (with the onset of a jubilee year) at Rosh Hashanah. Though temple reconstruction took several years to complete, the chronological details provide good reason to conclude that the release of God's people to return from exile took place during the final year of the prophesied captivity rather than after that final year had been completed. Therefore, the Jewish exiles arrived in Jerusalem at the onset of the 71st year (measured according to Rosh Hashanah in Fall) having completed seventy full years in exile.

Regardless of whether the Jewish people were released in the 70th or 71st year, biblical precedent would lead us to expect for God to release his people from the long, historic New Testament exile to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the Temple either during the final year of the current exile or just after the final year is completed. Applying potential indicators from Leviticus 26 regarding the length of this exile would mean that God would release his people to return to Jerusalem and begin reconstruction of the Temple in the 1960th year after a starting date between 57 and 70 AD.

The next set of relevant questions concern what might be expected in terms of events leading to the release of God's people from exile.

As was the case with the beginning and ending of the Babylonian exile, the end of desolation and captivity may take place in stages rather than all at once. The end of the Babylonian captivity involved several waves of God's people returning to Jerusalem. The rebuilding of the temple took even longer. However, in the modern era, travel to Jerusalem would not take months or years as it may have for some Jewish exiles returning home from parts of the Babylonian Empire. Likewise, with modern building methods, materials, and technology, construction of the temple is not likely to require years. We can also take into account that the premillennial temple will only require the holy house itself and the items of priestly service that are placed within it, rather than the entire temple complex, sacrificial altars, and courts. Therefore, the rebuilding may only take months to complete.

In addition, the end of the Babylonian exile corresponded to a transition of dominion from the Babylonians to their successors the Persians. The modern state of Israel was created after World War II when the western powers came into possession of territories formerly held by the defeated Ottoman Empire. These events could fit the pattern established in the Babylonian exile and mark an initial stage in the ending of the long, historic period of New Covenant exile.

Likewise, we might also consider the possibility of an authoritative decree such as the decree given by Cyrus, which allowed God's people to return to Jerusalem. The United Nations declarations which allowed for the creation of the modern state of Israel could parallel such an authorization. While the United Nation's declaration would be too early to coincide with the end of the timetable provided in Leviticus 26, it could still be the case that the authorization to return may have at least begun in 1948 as groups of Jewish people migrated back to Israel.

Israel – On 29 November 1947, the United Nations General Assembly recommended the adoption and implementation of the Partition Plan for Mandatory Palestine. This UN plan specified borders for new Arab and Jewish states and also specified an area of Jerusalem and its environs which was to be administered by the UN under an international regime. The end of the British Mandate for Palestine was set for midnight on 14 May 1948. That day, David Ben-Gurion, the Executive Head of the Zionist Organization and president of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, declared "the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel, to be known as the State of Israel," which would start to function from the termination of the mandate. The borders of the new state were not specified in the declaration. – wikipedia.org

Still, the fact that 1947 is too early to coincide with the timetable of Leviticus 26 exemplifies the kind of difficulties that arise if we expect that the end of the current exile will exactly parallel end of the Babylonian exile.

In addition, earlier we discussed the centrality of Jerusalem and the site of the temple with regard to the period of exile. With regard to Jerusalem and the Temple site, we find additional issues that seem to further undermine any exact parallel between the end of the Babylonian exile and the official authorization and

change of dominant world powers which accompanied the creation of the modern state of Israel. As stated earlier, there was no corresponding legal authorization for Israel to annex the city of Jerusalem in 1967. Even today the city is not internationally recognized as part of the state of Israel by the United Nations or the United States. Most importantly, this legal status pertains to eastern Jerusalem which includes the sites of the former temples.

Status of Jerusalem – There is significant disagreement in the international community on the legal and diplomatic status of Jerusalem. Legal scholars disagree on how to resolve the dispute under international law. **No country in the world except for Israel has recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Many do not recognize it as a city that is properly Israel's. Many UN member states formally adhere to the United Nations proposal that Jerusalem should have an international status. The chief dispute revolves around Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem,** while broader agreement exists regarding the Israeli presence in West Jerusalem. **De jure, the majority of UN member states and most international organisations do not recognise Israel's ownership of East Jerusalem which occurred after the 1967 Six-Day War, nor its 1980 Jerusalem Law proclamation, which declared a "complete and united" Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.** As a result, foreign embassies are generally located in Tel Aviv and its suburbs. Jerusalem is one of the key issues in the Israeli–Palestinian peace process. Both Israel and the Palestinians want it as their capital. **The European Union has stated that Jerusalem's status is that of corpus separatum. United States policy on Jerusalem refers specifically to the geographic boundaries of the "City of Jerusalem" based on the UN's corpus separatum proposal. De jure, Jerusalem is part of the Palestine Mandate and has not been under sovereignty of any country since.** – wikipedia.org

East Jerusalem – East Jerusalem or Eastern Jerusalem is the sector of Jerusalem that was not part of Israeli-held West Jerusalem at the end of the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War...**On being captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War, East Jerusalem, with expanded borders, came under Israeli rule. It includes Jerusalem's Old City and some of the holiest sites of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, such as the Temple Mount, Western Wall, Al-Aqsa Mosque, Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.** – wikipedia.org

Ultimately, it may not be the case that the end of the current exile will exactly follow the pattern of the close of the Babylonian exile. We do see some potential basic similarities involving a transition of dominion, official authorization, phases of migration, and the eventual repossession of Jerusalem. But these things may not happen in precisely the same order or with the exact same chronological relationship as occurred at the end of the Babylonian exile. Nevertheless, biblical and political considerations create the expectation that at some future point in time there will be a notable movement of Jewish and Gentile Christians to return to Jerusalem and begin reconstructing the temple. Even if an official political authorization for such a development does not occur, a return of Gentile Christians to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple will likely entail a divine prompting

or call of some kind and it is certainly not something that any individual Christian should undertake for subjective reasons.

One possible indication of such a divine prompting to return to Jerusalem may be found in Revelation 17-18, which records a call for God's people to come out of Babylon.

Revelation 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 **And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH...** 18 **And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.** 18:1 And after these things **I saw another angel** come down from heaven, **having great power**; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 **And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon** the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4 **And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins,** and that ye receive not of her plagues.

This passage in Revelation 17-18 describes events in the end times, not long before Christ's return. Chapter 17:4 introduces the symbolic woman. Verse 5 identifies her with the name "Babylon the Great." And verse 18 explains that this woman, known as Babylon, symbolizes the "great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Verse 18 is the last verse of chapter 17 and the first four verses of chapter 18 inform us right away that it will also discuss this same great, ruling city known metaphorically as "Babylon." And in chapter 18:4, find the call for God's people to "Come out of her." Certainly, the expressed purpose of this call is to prevent God's people from receiving the plagues that will punish this city. However, given that the historic Old Testament exile was identified with Babylon, it is impossible to ignore that this statement in Revelation 18 is unavoidably a call for God's people to leave the place of exile. And since the historic declaration for the Old Testament Jewish to leave Babylon inherently involved a return to Israel and Jerusalem to rebuilt the temple, Revelation 18 may indeed carry similar connotations even in the midst of its prophetic declaration of the impending destruction of this great, ungodly ruling city.

This raises another question. What can we expect in terms of how a call to return from exile will be manifest? Previously, we have the precedent of Cyrus' official decree releasing the Jews to return, but we also have the precedent of the Exodus in which God miraculously brought his people out of bondage against the will of the ruling power through the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Revelation 11:8's reference to Egypt alongside Revelation 12:6 and 14's references to the wilderness and the wings of an eagle both invoke the precedent from Exodus.

These passages may indicate that God will end the long, historic period of New Covenant exile by leading his people from the foreign lands in which they dwell to Jerusalem under the guidance of the two witnesses who will conduct plagues and oversee the rebuilding of the temple, just as Moses and Aaron conducted plagues and oversaw the construction of the tabernacle.

Conclusions about New Covenant Exile

Indications from Daniel, Revelation, the Olivet Discourse as well as from history allow us to conclude that the New Covenant era will include two periods of exile from Jerusalem where the temple is either non-existent or non-functional due to defilement. The second of these periods will occupy the final 42 months of this age before Christ's return and coincide with an eventual siege of Jerusalem by armies associated with the antichrist. The first of these two periods would be initiated in relation to the events leading up to and culminating in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. In accordance with biblical precedents drawn from the Babylonian exile, the exact starting point for the first of these two periods of New Covenant exile may have begun prior to the actual destruction of the city and temple in 70 AD. It will end at some point involving a return of faithful believers to Jerusalem to reconstruct the temple in the final seven years of this age.

Connections between the Olivet Discourse's remarks about desolation and captivity, the going forth of the gospel to the nations, Jesus' followers being bound and delivered before kings and rulers, and Acts' account of Paul's arrest and deportation to Rome allow for the onset of the first period of New Covenant exile to have begun possibly as early as 57 AD or as late as 70 AD.

Leviticus 26 provides the initial set of instructions and warning by God concerning punishments of exile. It is cited in Old Testament texts discussing the Babylonian captivity which contained a period of seventy years. However, Leviticus 26 may contain indications of additional periods of punishment involving a multiplication of the initial period of exile by a factor of seven and a compounding of this addition by a factor of four. Multiplying the initial period of seventy years by seven would yield a sum of 490 years. If this figure is added four times then the total amount is 1960 years. This number fits with other biblical indications that the span separating Christ's first and second advents would encompass around 2,000 years. Since other periods of exile were fixed according to predetermined amounts of time, it is reasonable to conclude that the same will be the case for the first period of New Covenant exile. If this is the case, then a return to Jerusalem by Jewish and Gentile followers of Christ and a subsequent rebuilding of the temple can be expected to start 1960 years after whatever the initial starting point of the exile is determined to be.

While the creation of the modern state of Israel may correspond to an early stage in the ending of this exile, it is important to be aware that biblical exiles and

prophecies about them are centered on God's faithful people being in Jerusalem and reconstructing the temple. These factors indicate that the establishment of Israel in 1948 should not be taken as the definitive ending to the first period of New Covenant exile. Precedent allows for an exile to end with God's people returning to Jerusalem in stages ultimately followed by the building of the temple itself. These biblical and historical observations lead to the expectation that there will still be a future migration of Jewish and Gentile Christians to Jerusalem to reconstruct the temple. The Book of Revelation provides indications that this will occur under the leadership of the two witnesses and may involve a divine calling for God's people to come forth from the nations.