

precede the final 7 years. The purpose of the Great Pause is so the Lord can take from among the Gentiles a people for Himself. Once the church is complete the Lord will carry us away before turning again to Israel. This is consistent with Paul's statement in Romans 11:25 that Israel has experienced a partial blindness until the full number of Gentiles has come in. The phrase "come in" means to arrive at one's destination, as when a ship has "come in". According to John 14:2-3 our destination is Heaven. Once the church has been carried away to its destination in Heaven the blinders will fall from Israel's eyes, the Great Pause will come to an end, and Israel will complete its final seven years.

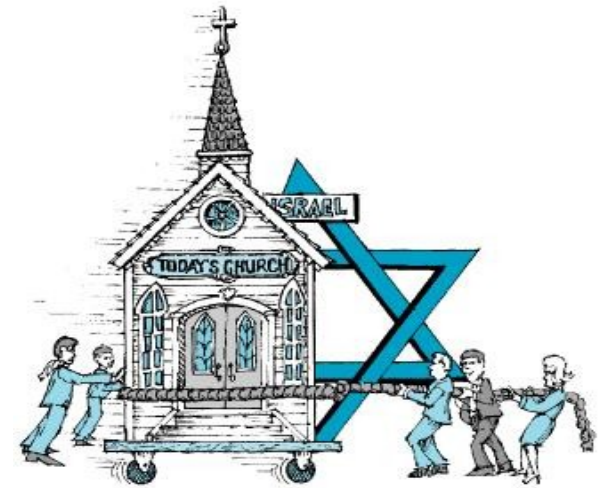
The Rapture has to happen before Daniel's 70th Week can begin, because the 70th Week is all about Israel. It's their final opportunity to be reconciled to God through the Messiah and prepare for the Kingdom He promised them so long ago. 2500 years before the fact, Zechariah prophesied that this would take place near the end of the 70th Week (Zech. 12:10).

Paul confirmed this and said it would happen after the rapture

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is

written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins" (Romans 11:25-27). And the Great Pause explains why post rapture salvation will be like it was in Old Testament times. The only difference is post rapture believers will be looking back to the cross whereas Old Testament believers looked forward to it. Speaking of the time when taking the mark of the beast will be required of everyone on Earth, the Lord said, "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus." (Rev. 14:12) Again, people have always been saved by faith, but during the Age of Law their faith has to be evidenced by obedience to the Law. It also explains why the 144,000 servants of God have to be sealed before undertaking their mission. (Rev. 7:3) If the church was still here they would be sealed just the way we are. But during the Age of Law believers were not, nor will they be, sealed with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of their inheritance as we are (Ephes. 1:13-14). The 144,000 is the only group in the post rapture world that is described as being sealed. By the way, some scholars believe this means only the 144,000 will be supernaturally protected from the demonic locusts spoken of in Rev. 9.

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(Written by Jack Kelley)

The Great Pause

Surely you have heard about the administration (dispensation) of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly (Ephesians 3:2-3). One of the most difficult things for someone unfamiliar with dispensational theology to understand is why Israel needs to exist at all in the last days, let alone rebuild their Temple. A recent discussion with a theology professor from a well known West Coast Christian school made this clear.

We were talking about our respective views of the End Times. When I mentioned the coming Temple and Israel's re-awakening into their Old Covenant relationship, he looked at me like I was from another planet. He graduated

from one of the main line denominational seminaries where he had been immersed in liberal theology, so what little he knows about the end times is all allegorical. He had never been taught anything like what I was saying. Why on Earth, he asked, would God bring Israel back when the Church has replaced Israel in His eyes? And even if He did, why would He bring them into an Old Covenant relationship when He's told the Church that since the cross the Old Covenant no longer applies?

Good Questions.....

Most Christians can't answer these questions, and even among those who take the Bible literally, many can only say, "Because the Bible says so." They can't explain why it says so.

It's only when you understand that the Age of Grace didn't end the Age of Law, but only interrupted it seven years short of its allotted time, that it all becomes clear. Here's what happened. Near the end of the Babylonian captivity the Angel Gabriel told Daniel that Israel was being given 490 years to complete 6 tasks.

“Seventy 'sevens' (490 years) are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy (place). (Daniel 9:24)

When the Lord was crucified, 483 of those years had passed. Remember, that's why the

disciples were astonished when He told them the Temple would soon be destroyed (Matt. 24:2). It's also why, 40 days after the Resurrection, they asked if He was going to restore the Kingdom to Israel now. (Acts 1:6) They thought they were only 7 years away from the Kingdom Age. Ten days later, on Pentecost, the indeterminate Age of the Church began, with the Age of Law still 7 years short of its prophesied end.

After 20 years had passed the Lord's half-brother James, who was the head of the Church in Jerusalem at the time, explained that Israel had been set aside while the Lord took from among the Gentiles a people for Himself (the Church). After that he would turn again to Israel and pick up where He had left off (Acts 15:13-18). About 18 years after that the Temple was destroyed and has never been rebuilt. In 135 AD the nation ceased to exist in any form. But the Lord's promise still stands. As soon as He has taken the Church, He'll turn again to Israel to complete the last 7 years of the Age of Law. These facts from both the Bible and history completely undermine any arguments for the validity of replacement theology. They explain why Israel has to exist in the End Times and why the Jews will need a Temple.

The Great Pause...

While Pentecost was the official beginning of

the Age of Grace, it didn't signal the end of the Age of Law, as so many in the Church wrongly assume. It was only a Great Pause while the Lord pursued His Church, something He intended to do all along, but had only divulged in a general way in the past. Speaking to His Messiah, the Lord said, "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)

When you understand the Great Pause, lots of other things fall into place. We've already discussed the re-birth of the Nation and the rebuilt Temple. Israel had to be re-born and will have to become a covenant people again in order to complete their final 7 years. This is what makes their re-birth such a powerful sign that the Great Pause is about to end. The only reason for Israel to exist again is to complete the 7 years remaining in the Age of Law. It also explains the return to animal sacrifice during this time. This is the way things were before the Great Pause began, and the way they'll have to be after it ends. Although people have always been saved by faith, during the Age of Law their faith has to be evidenced by obedience to the Law.

Understanding the Great Pause also helps us see why the Rapture of the Church has to