

Fulfilled Media, Presents
**Are Daniel 12:2 and John
5:28-29 the Same
Resurrection?**

Daniel Rogers

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Introduction

When one begins to see the force of the time statements, they begin to ask questions about nature and the fulfillment of specific passages. I call these “what about” passages: “Well, if that’s true, then what about Daniel 12:2?” Or “If that’s true, then what about 2 Peter 3?” These questions are fine to ask, and, at some point, they are necessary, but they mustn’t be used to avoid the actual issue when discussing eschatology: did Jesus and his disciples teach and expect the end of the age to come before the end of their generation?

To me, everything hangs on this. Theories of postponement of the kingdom or of the coming of the Lord are not satisfactory to me because the imminence of these things is emphasized again and again from the earliest to the latest books of the New Testament: from Mark and Thessalonians to 1 John and Revelation. If one cannot find a good answer to these passages, then I see no reason to trust Jesus and his disciples; they lose their rank as prophets and become a handful of good men and women who have some nice things to say about love and forgiveness. Still, it’s good to take a step back and demonstrate the unity of various texts, and that is my objective today.

One of the first “what about” passages I began to question in the summer of 2015, when I first began seriously asking these questions, was John 5:28-29. In the course of my studies, I realized that John 5:28-29 seemed connected to Daniel 12:2, which, as you will see, has major implications for the other resurrection prophecies in the New Testament. For example, if these two texts are talking about the same resurrection, then it becomes the lens through which one views other resurrection prophecies in John, such as the last day passages in John 6, Jesus’s

understanding of resurrection in general, and even Paul's defense of the gospel in the latter chapters of Acts.

Before we can look at John 5:28-29 and Daniel 12:2, however, we first need to try to peel back the curtain and understand what is happening in John.

A Brief Overview of John 1-3

John 1

John chapter 1 begins with identifying Jesus as the eternal Logos, who was both with God and was God. John writes that just as God has life in himself, Jesus, the Word of God, has life in himself (John 1:4). The Word of God, in order to reconcile the world to the Father, took on flesh and tabernacled among the people. Raymond Edward Brown wrote of the importance of this idea of Jesus dwelling or tabernacling among his people:

In rabbinic theology *shekinah* was a technical term for God's presence dwelling among His people... Though some of these works stem from a period later than the 1st century a.d., the theology of the *shekinah* was known at that time; and it is quite possible that in the use of *skēnōun* the Prologue is reflecting the idea that Jesus is now the *shekinah* of God, the locus of contact between the Father and those men among whom it is His delight to be.¹

John, then, follows Genesis 1 as a type of creation story. The entire book is about how God now dwells with his people through Jesus. This imagery of God dwelling with his people through Jesus as the tabernacle or temple is one that is consistent throughout John's writing. Here are four passages from John and Revelation to demonstrate this truth:

But he was speaking of the temple of his body. John 2:21

Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." John 14:23

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and be their God..." Revelation 21:3

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. Revelation 21:22

These passages may seem somewhat benign to us, but when we realize how this a major restructuring of the world and dismantling of conventional wisdom, then the subversive nature

¹ Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel according to John (I–XII): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Vol. 29. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008. Print. Anchor Yale Bible.

of these texts becomes more apparent. Jesus's insistence, for example, that mercy is "greater than the temple" serves to relocate the presence of God from a physical edifice to the lives and hearts both of the believer and the faith community, who function as stones in the walls of the spiritual house of God (Matthew 12:6; 1 Peter 2:4-5). While more could be said about John 1, these comments help to set the stage for a later conversation in John 4.

John 2

Having already made comments on the theme of the Messianic temple in John 1, I only have a few things I want to point out about John 2. In Jesus's first sign, the first of seven before his death, Jesus turns water to wine. This action did more than just make the wedding party happy, although a bit confused that one would serve the best wine at the end of the celebration; it introduced themes of a Messianic wedding and banquet, to be explored later in the Last Supper marriage proposal, for instance, and it lets the reader know that Jesus is bringing about the restoration of Israel (Messianic wedding: Isaiah 54:4-8; Isaiah 62:4-5; John 14:1-4).

To me, it is obvious that John, along with the other New Testament writers, lean heavily upon Isaiah, and this dependence means that any reference, even a subtle one, would have been noticed by the reader. So, when Jesus turns water to wine, I think this is a callback to Isaiah 1 in which the prophet cries, "How the faithful city has become a harlot, She who was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, But now murderers. Your silver has become dross, Your drink diluted with water" (Isaiah 1:21-22).

The city who became a harlot, which we know from Hosea means that redemption is on its way (Isaiah 1:27), has a drink that is diluted by water, so what does Jesus do as his first miracle? At a wedding banquet, he turns her water into choice wine! Jesus, in other words, is showing that the restoration of Israel is under way, and that he, as the bridegroom, is providing the best wine right at the start of his ministry.

What does the restoration of Israel have to do with resurrection? We'll begin to see that connection in the next chapter review.

John 3

Nicodemus, a prominent Pharisee, went to Jesus by night to inquire about the kingdom of God. He admits that the rulers of the Jews recognized that Jesus must be a teacher from God because of the signs he performed (John 1:2). Jesus's answer to a question behind the statement

was, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above” (John 3:3). When Nicodemus questions what Jesus means, he explains,

Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” John 3:5–8

While much could be said here about flesh and spirit, I’ll focus on this idea of being born from above (NRSV), which, in my opinion, is preferable to the rendering “born again” (NASB), despite its popularity. While it is true that one is born again, I think the word “again” may cause the reader to miss out on a neat motif in John’s writings (see 1 Peter 1:23). At the end of John 3, for instance, the text says that Jesus “comes from above,” which is the same word in the Greek. This opens up the door for an entire study on the “world above” versus the “world below” which I think helps build a biblical foundation for an understanding of a first century fulfillment of the “rapture” or, to be more specific and biblical, the gathering of the saints to Christ and the meeting in the air (for world above, see John 8:23 and John 17; for “rapture,” see Matthew 24:29-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).²

So, where does this idea of being born anew, through water and the Spirit, come from?

Richard D. Phillips, observed in his commentary:

The third and best view observes that in the Greek text the grammatical structure of “water and the Spirit” indicates a single event, not two different births. Moreover, since Jesus chides Nicodemus for his ignorance (John 3:10), he must be referring to things taught in the Old Testament. It turns out that Jesus’ description of “water and the Spirit” corresponds to God’s promise of the new birth in Ezekiel 36:25–27...This is a rebirth that a teacher such as Nicodemus should know, involving cleansing from sin as by water, giving us a new and righteous standing with God, and the transforming of the heart by God’s Spirit, giving us new life to live for God. This is what the new birth is all about.³

Bullinger, in his work of *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, agrees with this assessment, and he offers the further suggestion that the “water” in John 3 is not ceremonial or ecclesiastical water

² In my free PDF commentary on Thessalonians, I have an excuse which explores this idea. You can download it at <https://danielcrogers.gumroad.com>.

³ Phillips, Richard D. John. Ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani. 1st ed. Vol. 1. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2014. Print. Reformed Expository Commentary.

but is symbolic of the Spirit as it is used in Ezekiel 36 and further defined by John in John 7:37-39.⁴

But what exactly does Ezekiel 36 say?

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Ezekiel 36:24-27

This passage about new birth through water and spirit, which is the backdrop for John 3, is about the restoration of Israel and the pouring out of the Spirit. These two themes, which were introduced earlier in John (see John 1:23, 33), are necessary for one's understanding of the resurrection of John 5. Before we turn to John 5, however, we need to focus our attention on John chapter 4.

The Present and Coming Hour - John 4

Skipping the pleasantries, let's jump right to the conversation between Photini and Jesus.⁵ When the woman at the well approaches the well, Jesus asks her for a drink and she wonders how a Jew could ask a Samaritan for a drink. He responds, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10). The living water, as introduced in our overview of John 3, represents the Holy Spirit and brings about new birth, birth from above, and eternal life.

After this brief conversation, the woman realizes that Jesus is a prophet, so she asks him where one should worship: Mt Gerizim or Jerusalem? Jesus's response is shocking: "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" (John 4:21). Writing from the perspective of someone who takes a later date of John, Ernst Haenchen observes,

In the time of Jesus' earthly life the temple still stood on Zion, while the sanctuary on Gerizim had long since been destroyed (128 BCE). He thus speaks here as a prophet. To be sure, only in verse 23 does it become evident how revolutionary

⁴ Bullinger, Ethelbert William. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. London; New York: Eyre & Spottiswoode; E. & J. B. Young & Co., 1898.

⁵ Here's a cool bit of church tradition: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/st-photini-samaritan-woman>

are his pronouncements concerning true worship. When the Evangelist wrote, the Jewish temple had long lain in ruins. The prophesy has been fulfilled.⁶

While I take an earlier date of John, I think his observation is valid: Jesus is predicting the fall of Jerusalem in this passage. The “hour to come” is the hour when the temple would be destroyed with no stone standing upon another (Matthew 24:1-2). But Jesus then says, “But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him” (John 4:23). That is, there are two stages of this transformation of the place of worship: the first is the availability of the presence of God through the resurrection of Jesus and the pouring out of the Spirit, and the second is the outward demonstration of this shift at the fall of the temple. The former is the “hour is coming and now is,” and the latter is the hour to come.

Continuing our themes introduced in the summaries of John 1-3, the place of worship, which is the thought under consideration—not the method of worship—is “in Spirit and Truth.” The Spirit has already been a major topic in John, but we mustn’t skip too quickly over the word “truth” either. Though left uncapitalized in our translations, I believe these two words refer to the other two persons of the Trinity: the Spirit and the Logos. In John 1, we learn that grace and truth come through the Christ (John 1:17). And later in John, Jesus calls himself “Truth” (John 14:6). And finally, Jesus prays that the disciples would be sanctified through the truth because “your Logos is Truth” (John 17:17).⁷

Thus, we approach the Father through the Son and the Spirit. As we saw earlier in John and in Revelation, we live in the temple of God as citizens of the kingdom. Haenchen similarly argues,

The true worshiper will worship neither in Jerusalem nor on Gerizim, but will worship the Father in Spirit and truth. True worship is thereby denied to Jews and Samaritans alike, since they think of him as connected with a holy place. But true worship is that which sees the Father (14:9) through the “Spirit of truth” (15:26) in Jesus, who is the truth (14:6).⁸

⁶ Haenchen, Ernst, Robert Walter Funk, and Ulrich Busse. *John: A Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984. Print. *Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*.

⁷ It could also be argued that Jesus is the Truth which undoes the murderous lie of the Devil (see John 8). Compare John 8:32 and John 8:36 - the “truth makes free” and “the son makes free.”

⁸ Haenchen

While this is certainly interesting, and a much better take than defining “spirit and truth” as attitudes and methods, our emphasis here needs to return to the two different, but connected, hours: the one that was to come and the one that was already available.⁹ The one to come, as we saw, would arrive when the temple would finally fall during the destruction of Jerusalem. With all of this information in mind, let’s move forward to John 5.

The Resurrection of John 5

In John 5, Jesus encounters a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. He tells this man to “arise” (*egeirō*), and the man is restored to health, so he stands up, takes up his mat, and walks away. This miracle took place on the Sabbath, so the people began to tell the man that he cannot be walking around with his mat. After they discover that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, they began persecuting Jesus. Jesus begins his defense by saying that he can only do what the Father does, and since the Father raises (*egeirō*) the dead, the Son does the same. Haenchen draws the connection,

The decisive term is ἔγειρε (“rise”). It reminds the reader of verse 8, where Jesus says to the sick man: “rise” (ἔγειρε). A relationship between two events thus emerges: between the “rising” of the lame man, which Jesus effects by his word of command, and the “rising” (“resurrection”) of the (spiritual) dead, in which the Father allows Jesus to participate.¹⁰

The raising of the lame man, then, points to a greater kind of raising: one of spiritually dead persons. Thus, Jesus says,

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not come under judgment but has passed from death to life. Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man. John 5:24–27

John, in one of his epistles, references this saying of Jesus and asserts that he and his fellow believers had already “passed from death to life” (1 John 3:14). He also says, in verse 27, that judgement has been given to the Son of Man. This is important to our discussion because it is an

⁹ I say that the hour was already available, but I think it is more accurate to say that the “present” hour would arrive at the resurrection of Jesus and the pouring out of the Spirit (see John 7:39).

¹⁰ Haenchen, parenthetical comments his.

allusion to Daniel 7:13, which will come into play later. For now, though, let's focus on the reference to the "hour" that was both coming and had already arrived.

In John 4, the present hour referred to what was currently available to the believer through the Spirit. The hour to come referred to the time when the temple would no longer stand. Similarly, the "hour that now is" refers to the opportunity for one to pass out of death and into life through faith in Jesus. Already, the dead were hearing the voice of the Son of God and coming to life. This life, as in John 1, is "in the Son." The judgement that already was occurring was the result of someone rejecting the voice.¹¹ Like Uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew*, the voice of Jesus was beautiful, but to those who closed their ears, the opportunity for life passed them by.

Then, Jesus says, "Do not be astonished at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out: those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28–29). I assert that the coming hour in John 5:28-29 is the same coming hour of John 4:21 just as the present hour between the two passages is the same. In 1 John, John writes, "Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18). Since I believe that John can write much better commentary than myself, I take this to mean that John felt like the coming hour had already arrived when he wrote 1 John 2:18. He affirmed the presence of the first hour (1 John 3:18), but he also affirmed the imminence of the "last hour."

While the expression "all who are in the graves" excites us and makes us think of a biological resurrection, I don't see any reason to read this differently than the early comment in verse 25 that the dead were already coming to life in Christ. I think, though, this passage makes much more sense if we remember what we discussed earlier about Nicodemus. In Jesus's discussion with Nicodemus, he drew from Ezekiel 36 to talk about water, Spirit, and a new birth. The very next chapter, Ezekiel 37, has this to say about resurrection:

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will

¹¹ See John 12:48, and pay close attention the themes of present judgment and coming judgment. "The last day" and the "hour to come" are connected just as the present judgment and "hour that now is" are connected.

bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.”
Ezekiel 37:11–14

Here we have a resurrection of people out of graves which is brought about by the word of God and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I think it is only natural to think that Jesus is drawing from this passage in John 5:28-29, especially because he has already used Ezekiel 36 to talk about similar themes earlier in John. But what does the resurrection and the restoration of Israel have to do with the fall of the temple? For that, we’ll need to take a detour to the life and teaching of Paul.

Paul, the Resurrection, and the Fall of the Temple

But First, Stephen

When we talk about the apostle Paul, we typically start with the very end of Acts 7 or the beginning of Acts 8 in order to point out that Paul, who was called Saul, persecuted the church. While Paul didn’t receive a divine name change, it’s interesting to me that the narrative of Acts begins using the designation “Paul” before the only sermon in which the Old Testament character of King Saul is mentioned (Acts 13:9, 21). This takes place, not when Paul lost his sight on the road to Damascus, but when he temporarily causes Elymas to lose his sight. Regardless, I think when we are considering the life and teaching of Saul/ Paul, we need to first consider how Stephen’s sermon may have impacted and influenced Paul’s later teaching and emphasis.

First, Stephen, like Jesus, had “false witnesses” brought against him. Though, as commentators such as Fitzmyer points out regarding Acts 6:13:, Stephen’s speech, again, like Jesus’s teaching, do seem to corroborate the charge:

As the story develops, the reader realizes that “[this] place” is the Jerusalem Temple, which becomes even more evident in Stephen’s speech, in which he does speak against it...It is never explained in what way Stephen has been speaking against the Torah.¹²

Another commentator suggests that Stephen was not only not speaking against the Law, but he was keeping the Law, which seems to be in line with what we know about the Jewish believers in Acts 21:20-21.

¹² Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 31. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008. Print. Anchor Yale Bible.

The false witnesses are reminiscent of the trial of Jesus; they are not found in Luke's account of the passion. We might ask in what sense they are "false" witnesses, since their charge appears to be confirmed by the speech which follows. But in Luke's view Stephen keeps the law (7:53)—thus they are lying.¹³

Thus, they could be false in that Stephen wasn't speaking *against* the Law; he was speaking in favor of the Law in the sense that he was *fulfilling*, or properly teaching, the Law. This was perceived by the council as speaking *against* the Law because they were blind to the nature and timing of the prophecies made by Stephen and others.

Next, notice the content of the accusation:

They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us."
Acts 6:13-14

To Stephen, the coming of the Lord would coincide with the fall of the temple and the fulfillment, and thus a change in garments, of the Law (Matthew 5:17-20; cf. 2 Corinthians 5). Stephen, in his defense, demonstrates the potential of the glory of God to appear outside of the temple, and apart from the Law, by appealing to Abraham and Moses, both who saw the glory of God and experienced his presence outside of the holy place (Acts 7:2, 33). The sermon reaches its climax when Stephen, quoting from Isaiah 65-66, declares that God does not dwell in a house made by humans hands (Acts 7:45-50).

To understand the significance, a quote from 2 Maccabees might be helpful:

But the Lord did not choose the nation for the sake of the holy place but the place for the sake of the nation. Therefore the place itself shared in the misfortunes that befell the nation and afterward participated in its benefits, and what was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty was restored again in all its glory when the great Lord became reconciled. 2 Maccabees 5:19-20

In speaking against the place, Stephen was speaking against the people. In effect, he was saying that God was preparing to pour out wrath on Israel for their rejection of the Prophet, the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of God, Jesus the Messiah. In condemning the place, he was condemning the people. This is why they reacted so violently towards him.¹⁴

¹³ Conzelmann, Hans. Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. Ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews. Trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juell. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987. Print. Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible.

¹⁴ This idea can be seen throughout Jesus's teaching in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, among other places. To speak against the place was, in a sense, to speak against the people.

Now that we see the connection between the coming of the Lord, the destruction of the place,¹⁵ the fulfillment of the Law, and the violence of the religious leaders in response to all of this, we can turn to see how these themes play out in the life of Paul.

Paul on Trial¹⁶

In Acts 21, Paul went to Jerusalem to visit the saints, make a report of his mission, and celebrate Pentecost (Acts 20:16). Having sent a collection to Jerusalem to bring unity among the Gentile and Jewish Christians, Paul expected to be received with open arms, but he was warned to not go to Jerusalem because of his impending arrest (Acts 21:10-14). Despite the warnings, he went anyway, and when he entered the temple to worship in order to prove that he also walked orderly and kept the Law, he was arrested by an angry mob (Acts 21:22-24).

The mob accused Paul of “teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place” (Acts 21:28). This is a similar accusation to the one levied against Stephen, but there is one addition, apart from the lie at the end concerning the Greeks being brought into the temple: Paul was teaching against the people. This may be confusing to some because Paul had written before leaving for Jerusalem that he expected “all Israel” to be saved and that he labored day and night for his kinsmen according to the flesh (Romans 9:1-5; Romans 11:25-26).¹⁷ But if we keep in mind the connection between the proclamation of the arrival of the kingdom and the fall of Jerusalem, then such a response shouldn’t surprise us (e.g. Luke 21:5-6, 31-32).

On one hand, Paul is accused of speaking against the people, the law, and the place, but on the other hand, Paul claimed that he was arrested for taking the gospel to the Gentiles and, more specifically, teaching the resurrection (Acts 23:6). Then, in Acts 24:14-15, Paul says again,

But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets. I have a hope in God—a hope that they

¹⁵ In 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul says that the Corinthians, as well as other saints, were calling on the name of the Lord in “every place.” I believe this is intentional, and it foreshadows Paul’s talk of the church being the building of God, the temple of God, and the dwelling place of the Spirit throughout both letters to the Corinthians.

¹⁶ The heading “Paul on Trial” is a reference to Don K. Preston’s book of the same name (JaDon Management, 2020).

¹⁷ It could be argued that Paul’s “all Israel” may correspond to Jesus’s “all who are in the graves” if they are both drawing from Ezekiel 37 since the dry bones refer to “the whole house of Israel” (Ezekiel 37:11).

themselves also accept—that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. Acts 24:14–15

Paul argues that he is saying nothing different than what Moses and the prophets said should come, and his main emphasis, and the reason he is on trial, is for the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. It's interesting to me that this is the only other place in the New Testament, that I am aware of, that speaks of the resurrection of the just and the unjust using this specific formula modeled after Daniel 12:2; the other being John 5:28-29. Notice that in both contexts, the place of worship—the temple—is under discussion as well as questions about the Law (in John 5, it was a debate about healing on the Sabbath).

Before we go on with this comparison, and our attempt to tie it back to Daniel 12, I need to take a few moments longer to finish out the book of Acts with two more quotations:

And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, Your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? Acts 26:6–8

“For this reason therefore I asked to see you and speak with you, since it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain”...After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. Acts 28:20–23

What does the hope of Israel have to do with Paul's mission to the Gentiles? And what does this have to do with resurrection? If Paul wanted to save Israel, shouldn't he have gone to Israel? Yet, Jesus had told Paul that he needed to leave Jerusalem because his testimony wouldn't be accepted by the Jews (Acts 22:17-18).

The Law, the Place, the People and Resurrection

For Paul, the resurrection was directly tied to the salvation of Israel, and the salvation of Israel was somehow connected to the fall of the temple and the fulfillment of the Law, but all of this had to do with the inclusion of the Gentiles into the covenant. In this section, we'll explore how all of these, seemingly different ideas, could be connected. Let's start with the Law.

It's important to note that the Law did not end at the cross. As we've already seen throughout this essay, Stephen and all of the believers in Jerusalem were still zealous for the Law. In fact, Paul himself demonstrated through his purification offering that he too kept the

Law to some extent. In Hebrews 8:13, the text says that the Old Covenant would “soon disappear.” Similar to the discussion of the present hour and the coming hour in John 4-5, the Law had both grown old and was ready to vanish away, but the church was waiting on the final sign of the Old Covenant’s fulfillment, and thus, its passing: the fall of the temple. This was the sign that Jesus pointed to, and until it fell, the Law was seen as still in effect.

In Hebrews 9, this theme is explored by the author:

By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing. This is a symbol of the present time, indicating that gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper but deal only with food and drink and various baptisms, regulations for the body imposed until the time comes to set things right. Hebrews 9:8-10

The tabernacle in this passage does not just refer to the tent of Moses, which was replaced by the temple under Solomon, but it refers to the temple as well (see Hebrews 13:10). As long as that tabernacle stood, and as long as the priests entered it to offer gifts and sacrifices, the people remained under the “present time.” But when this symbol of the “present time” would fall, it would mean that the time to “set things right” had arrived and that the way into the holiest of all would be disclosed. While the outer veil, the one seen by the Centurion, had been ripped, the inner veil awaited its turn to be torn down at the fall of Jerusalem.

But when would the temple fall? When would Jerusalem be destroyed? And when would the Law be fulfilled and pass away? Remember, Jesus said that not one stroke of the Law could pass until all of it was fulfilled (Matthew 5:18-20; cf. Luke 21:20-22). In Matthew 24:14, he gives us the clue we need that will bring all of this together: “And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

This is why Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles was so important, a mission he believes to have been accomplished (cf. Colossians 1:6, 23). But the reasoning behind his many travels is further explained in his epistle to the Romans. Concerning Israel, he asks,

So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their stumbling salvation has come to the gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their stumbling means riches for the world and if their loss means riches for gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! Romans 11:11-12

What would their inclusion mean? Paul explains,

Now I am speaking to you gentiles. Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the gentiles, I celebrate my ministry in order to make my own people jealous and thus save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, then the branches also are holy. Romans 11:13–16

To Paul, the resurrection of the dead ones *is* the salvation of Israel, but this requires the gospel going to the whole world! For this reason, Paul could tell Timothy from prison, “Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:10). Who are the elect here? Or, one could ask, who are the chosen people? It’s Israel. By preaching to the Gentiles, Paul hoped to bring Israel to Christ through jealousy. And when he completed his mission, then the end would come as Jesus said. This would mean, according to Jesus, the fall of the temple (Matthew 24:2), the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel (Matthew 24:15), a time of tribulation (Matthew 24:21), the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:27; remember Daniel 7:13), and the gathering of the saints (i.e. resurrection, Matthew 24:29-31; cf. Isaiah 25:8 and Isaiah 27:13).

It would be at this time, once Paul’s mission was completed, that resurrection could come and the Law would be fulfilled. To Paul, resurrection couldn’t be fully realized, though it was available in part (John 5:24; Ephesians 2:6), because “the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law” (1 Corinthians 15:56). And this brings us back to the connection to Daniel 12.

Daniel 12 and the Resurrection of the Just and Unjust

Remember that Paul said his resurrection hope came from Moses and the prophets and that it is the hope of Israel (Acts 24:14-15). The only place I know of which specifically talks about the resurrection of the just and unjust in the Old Testament is Daniel 12:2, but, just to be sure of the connection between Acts, John, and Daniel, here are a few commentaries:

Fitzmyer: Paul’s belief in the resurrection of the dead is based on Dan 12:2–3.¹⁸

Marshall: The resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous is based on the prophecy of the end in Dan. 12:2–3, which indicates two groups of people, some being raised to eternal life and others to eternal reproach and shame, and then

¹⁸ Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 31. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008. Print. Anchor Yale Bible.

refers to the “righteous” or to “righteousness.” Clearly this passage lies behind Paul’s statement, although the wording is different.¹⁹

This hope was shared with the Jews, or at least with the Pharisees, being based on such Old Testament passages as Daniel 12:2f.²⁰

Bruce: The resurrection of both categories was held, on the basis of Daniel 12:2, by most of the Pharisees.²¹

Jesus’ reference to the resurrection in 5:29 (“those who have done what is good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment”) may hark back to Dan. 12:2 (“some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”).²²

While commentators do see these three texts connected (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15), I think the best evidence is the text itself. While a full examination of Daniel 12 would be beneficial, starting in Daniel 10, I think a few notes will suffice. First, Daniel was being told of things that would happen to his people in the last days (Daniel 10:14). I think this is important to note because of the concern for “the people” throughout Acts during the trials of Stephen and Paul. Following the lead of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, Daniel 11-12 chronicles the history of the coming kingdoms: Greece and Rome.²³

Finally, when Rome arrives towards the end of Daniel 11, the time of the end, not the end of time as some translations offer, is ready to come despite three tries to make it arrive prematurely (Daniel 11:14, 27, 35). As Jesus said at the beginning of his ministry, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near” (Mark 1:15). Peter likewise said, “The time has come for judgment to begin...” (1 Peter 4:17). Paul wrote, “But when the fulness of time had come...” (Galatians 4:4). And John, unlike Daniel who was told to seal his book *until* the time of

¹⁹ Marshall, I. Howard. “Acts.” Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007. 598. Print.

²⁰ Marshall, I. Howard. Acts: An Introduction and Commentary. Vol. 5. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980. Print. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries.

²¹ Bruce, F. F. Acts: Bible Study Commentary. Nashville, TN; Bath, England: Kingsley Books, 2017. Print.

²² Köstenberger, Andreas J. “John.” Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007. 442. Print.

²³ When you read through Daniel 11, notice the difference between the “named” kings of the north and south and the unnamed king, which both fought, who arrives in Daniel 11:36. The only kingdom left unnamed in Daniel, when taking into consideration Daniel 8, is Rome.

the end, was told, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near” (Revelation 22:10; cf. Daniel 12:4, 9).

So, at the time of the end, what happens?

“At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Daniel 12:1–3

There’s a lot here, so let me break it down: there’s a great tribulation, deliverance for the remnant, a resurrection, and some will shine like the brightness of the sky. We’ve already mentioned a period of tribulation (Matthew 24:21). And I’ve discussed the salvation of the remnant briefly throughout the essay. While we won’t focus on the righteous shining brightly, Jesus does cite this passage in Matthew 13:43, which is a parable about the end of the age (Matthew 13:37-43; cf. Matthew 24:3). But it’s this resurrection part that we need to pay attention to for now.

Daniel is told that the vision he saw is not for his time, so he is to seal the book, and before he can even ask the question, he sees two angels have a conversation about when these things would be fulfilled:

Then I, Daniel, looked, and two others appeared, one standing on this bank of the stream and one on the other. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was upstream, “How long shall it be until the end of these wonders?” The man clothed in linen, who was upstream, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven. And I heard him swear by the one who lives forever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be accomplished. Daniel 12:5–7

The end of these wonders—including the resurrection of the just and the unjust—would occur when the “shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end.” What is the power of the holy people? Could this not be a reference to the Law, symbolized by the temple like in Hebrews 9:8-10? I believe this makes sense, and it explains why Paul and Stephen were accused of speaking against the people and the place. To make things clearer, Daniel is told, “From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the desolating sacrilege is set up, there shall

be one thousand two hundred ninety days” (Daniel 12:11). Other versions call this the “abomination of desolation,” which is what Jesus said would mark the arrival of the end:

So when you see the desolating sacrilege, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; the one on the housetop must not go down to take things from the house; the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. Matthew 24:15–18

So for Daniel, Jesus, and Paul, the fall of the temple would mark the “last hour” and the consummation of the resurrection that began at Jesus’s resurrection. The New Covenant would be completely revealed, and the Old Covenant, being fulfilled, would vanish away. What would this mean for Daniel, who was told to go on his way and wait for the end? “But you, go your way, and rest; you shall rise for your reward at the end of the days” (Daniel 12:13). Again, some versions, like the NASB, say “the end of the age.”

Do you see how Jesus in John, with his two hours, Stephen, and Paul all are drawing from Daniel? Even Jesus in John 5 and Matthew 24 reminds his audience of Daniel by calling himself the Son of Man (Daniel 7:14). But just to bring the point home, allow me one more passage.

Daniel Receives His Reward

Daniel was told that when the final days begun, it would last for a times, time, and half a time. Some have interpreted this to be three and a half years. For example, John Joseph Collins writes in his notes on Daniel 7:25, “The expression is generally understood as three and a half years, the equivalent of the last half week of years in 9:27.”²⁴ This is interesting because it corresponds with the war on Judea and the time it took for the temple to fall. Jesus had told his disciples that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, it would be time to leave the city because “all things written would be fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-22).

But this figure of three and a half years comes up again in Scripture in Revelation 11:

Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth.” Revelation 11:1–3

²⁴ Collins, John Joseph, and Adela Yarbro Collins. Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel. Ed. Frank Moore Cross. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993. Print. Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible.

The holy city under consideration in this passage is the city “where also their Lord was crucified” (Revelation 11:8). And what would happen when this city would fall at the end of the times, time, and half a time? At the last trumpet,

There were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.”

Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, singing, “We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for judging the dead, for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints and all who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple, and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. Revelation 11:15–19

At the last trumpet, the kingdom would fully arrive (Luke 21:31), the dead would be judged (John 5:28-29), and the prophets, including Daniel, would be rewarded! This is most definitely the same reward Daniel was promised in Daniel 12:13. Furthermore, as Hebrews 9 said, when the first tabernacle would fall, the way into the sanctuary would be made manifest, and this is precisely what happens: God’s temple in heaven was opened.” Keeping in mind that Revelation affirms again and again that the prophecies within the book would soon be fulfilled, I believe we must apply the same logic to John 5, Acts 24, and Daniel 12 (e.g. Revelation 1:1, 3).²⁵

In this essay, I have attempted to show conclusively the relationship between John 5, Acts 24, and Daniel 12. The resurrection is the restoration of Israel, and if we want to understand its timing and nature, i.e. a spiritual resurrection restoring the people to God through the New Covenant culminating in the fall of Jerusalem, then we must allow both Testaments to speak, and we must allow their view of the timeline to inform ours.

To end, I’ll offer a quote from James Wm. McClendon Jr. from the first volume of his Systematic Theology titled *Ethics*. He writes that eschatology is “the doctrine about what *comes last*, but also from what *lasts*” (p. 317—emphasis his). In other words, eschatology isn’t just the study of the end; it is the study of a new beginning. Eschatology is the protology of the new creation. While these things have been fulfilled in the past, they are for us to enjoy forever!

²⁵ In various interlinear translations of Acts 24:14-15, the text says that the resurrection was “about” to take place: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/acts/24-15.htm>.