

General Topics :: A Costly Neglect by Reggie Kelly**A Costly Neglect by Reggie Kelly - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2019/3/14 8:01**

Though circumstance defies, I felt I must put this down quickly. I realize I've said as much many times before, but feel this more urgently to be stressed now than ever. By its nature, my calling and part in the body has exposed me, far more than I could wish, to the inner workings of many strong and compelling lies that powerfully oppose and threaten the church's readiness to escape the unparalleled deception that Jesus said would both precede and accompany the unequalled tribulation.

Even now, throughout the far greater part of professing Christendom, the tribulation without parallel or equal, "the tribulation, the great one" (literal translation of Rev 7:14), is believed to be past. The tribulation has come and gone with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. A fast growing community called 'preterist' believe that Jesus' post-tribulational return has also come and gone, some stoutly affirming that the resurrection is also past. This, since Dan 12:1-2 so unequivocally connects the resurrection to the unequalled tribulation.

A less popular but still thriving view, particularly among Adventist groups, is the so-called 'historicist' view of Revelation. This view sees the 'great tribulation', not as a brief period of time at the end, but as extensive and ongoing throughout the inter-advent period. Many historic pre-millennialists view the half week (the 3 1/2 years of Daniel and Revelation), as beginning with the ascension, basing their view on Rev 12's presentation of the catching up of the man child, followed immediately in vision by the great tribulation.

Most evangelical lovers of Israel who painfully expect an Antichrist invasion of Israel, do not expect to be directly impacted by this great, unparalleled deception. They expect rather to be in heaven celebrating the marriage supper while the Jewish people experience their greatest hour of anguish without the church's witness. This means that those living on this side of the rapture will not be so critically and decisively benefited by taking close heed to Jesus' directive to read and understand Daniel in order to escape the deception that would imperil the very elect. The saints of the tribulation are regarded as belonging to another company of saints that is not the body of Christ.

Regardless then of one's view, any fair minded student of scripture should at least appreciate the reasonable cause for concern, taking at least some sense of what is ultimately at stake in one's perspective on the time and meaning of the tribulation and the question of the church's relation to it. Of all the competing views, the one that most insults and sleights the sacred trust of the canon, and the Reformed doctrine of the perspicuity of scripture, is the lazy indifference that comfortably proclaims that it is impossible to know much that is definite or certain when it comes to eschatology. But it is Jesus Himself that prescribes with utmost clarity and simplicity what I like to call, "the plain man's plain path through the millennial maze."

Even before understanding the 'what' or the 'when' the great tribulation, before discovering its approximate duration and then most importantly its meaning and purpose. Even before knowing what 'the' abomination of desolation might be, there is one simple directive that Jesus gives towards escaping the great deception that would threaten, if possible, the very elect. In Mt 24:15 Jesus is basically shouting, "pay attention to Daniel!" But much more particularly, He directs His sheep to one specific event that Daniel describes in considerable detail. In sum, He commands us to go to Daniel, find this particular event, "the abomination of desolation", and to be careful that we understand what we read.

The reasons for this simple obedience will prove most crucial, not only towards escaping the great deception, but to a glorious unfolding of the whole sweep of God's costly investment in scripture and history by which His Name is most fully glorified in all the earth. It is for the church's greater vision of God. Jesus well knew this to be the key that would open up the sealed vision that those of understanding (the 'maskilim' of Dan 11:32-33, 35, 12:3, 9-10) would be proclaiming during the last persecution. According to Rev 7:9, 13-14, the testimony of tribulation saints will result in the evangelization of an innumerable host who come out of 'the tribulation, the great one' (Rev 7:9, 13-14). This is not tribulation in general, the common experience of all Christians in this age (Acts 14:22), but much more specifically, this is the great tribulation, as evidenced by the use of the double article in the Greek text.

Moreover, when one traces the oft recurring theme of a final, unequalled tribulation and its centrality in the plan of God, so much opens up concerning the nature and goals of God's covenantal structure of history, and the conflict that rages over the authority of the Word, not only as to the moral and spiritual claims of the covenant, but particularly that greatest of

all offenses, most calculated to test and reveal the heart, namely, God's sovereign prerogative to choose as He will choose. This deep seated protest and presumption of entitlement traces all the way back to Satan's original envy (Ps 2; 48:2; Isa 14; note esp, verse 13; Eze 28). It is the basis of all antisemitism. It is why the Antichrist will be encamped on Mount Zion when the Lord returns (Dan 11:45).

I believe that at least part of the problem lies in what we bring to the scripture. When many read the Lord's plain directive in Mt 24:15, they do not read it with virginal simplicity. "I will go to Daniel and read of this event and pray to understand". Too often, there is already pre-conceived notions that have decided in advance what one will find, and even much more by what one must NOT find.

When we obey this all too neglected directive ("let the reader understand") with an honest and open heart, uninfluenced by preconceived notions, we are only part way there. It is here we learn that revelation, skill, and insight came to Daniel when he "set his heart to understand" (Dan 10:12), just as the prophets before and after him would "inquire and search diligently" (1Pet 1:11). We are called into the fellowship of mysteries that require searching out with intense, holy desire, not for pragmatic self interests, not even only for the purpose of avoiding deception. We are to have the attitude of "come and see" the place of His dwelling, the beauty of His courts, the secrets He has reserved for His friends. Our passion must be His glory, His wondrous handiwork, His costly investment, His manifold wisdom, and His greater glory in the fellowship of a 'hidden wisdom' ordained to our glory. It is therefore most interesting how the mysteries of God can be so well hidden in such plain sight.

It is not they they are intellectually obscure. On the contrary, there are basic protections built right in by the way that scripture interprets scripture. We will take for our best example what we find when we very simply obey Jesus by going to Daniel to look for the abomination of desolation. Jesus well knew that by so doing, we would discover, not only the meaning of this particularly event, but very importantly what precedes and what follows. This one event, by how it is set in history as climactic to the larger history of covenant and promise, wondrously pulls together and sets in order all the scattered strands of all the prophetic writings, even those of the NT. (see footnote below). *

Jesus well knew that this simple obedience would be the key that opens up, not only the order of the key signal events of the end, but Daniel's prophecy establishes the eschatological framework for the whole sweep of redemptive history from Genesis to Revelation. So what do we find concerning this event that will prove such a protection against deception and a key to opening up and setting in right order the framework of prophecy? I submit it is by a simple refusal to separate what God has joined.

I cannot here begin to confirm by example, but in all my study, every system of interpretation of prophecy, of which I'm aware, very obviously goes off at one of three places. Each of these is an example of separating what God has joined, but only by great violence to the text. I can only show a couple of examples.

The abomination of desolation is mentioned four times in Daniel (Dan 8:11; 9:27: 11:31; 12:11). In all four places, it is accompanied by the removal of the regular, daily sacrifice. In Dan 12:11, the sacrifice is taken away 1290 days from the time that Daniel and all the righteous are raised from the dead (Dan 12:1-2). In Dan 9:27, the sacrifice is caused to stop at the mid point of Daniel's final week. This is 3 1/2 years from the end. But what end? What kind of end would Daniel have understood? Was he wrong? This is greatly, I think very 'interestedly' debated, depending on prior presuppositions.

So a sacrifice stops 3 1/2 years before the final persecutor is destroyed. In Dan 9:27 the half week begins when the sacrifice is stopped. Is the "end" that ends the half week of Dan 9:27 the same "end" that brings the deliverance of Daniel's people and the resurrection of the righteous in Dan 12:1-2, 7, 11, 13? That is a question to be decided, but you can see how God has wisely given us pieces to a puzzle but not without also providing us a plain path through it.

What and where is this sacrifice? Neither Jesus nor Paul specifically mention the sacrifice, but both speak of a great violation and desecration that takes place in the temple in Jerusalem, as John will connect the temple to the final treading down of Jerusalem in Rev 11:1-2, again describing the half week of Daniel's prophecy. There is no need to specify the sacrifice since Daniel has supplied this at every mention of the abomination. And it is clear that a temple service in the 'holy place' in Jerusalem is not going to exist without a sacrifice, which, of course, cannot continue beyond the point that the Antichrist imposes himself.

Stubbornness comes when such things as presuppositions and preferences, even fears induced by taunts and the gross caricatures of a convenient 'guilt by association', are permitted to bias an objective handling of the evidence. All of this works to hinder us from making the otherwise obvious connections. The Lord sets a wise and perfect trap, particularly in t

he Word itself, for the pride of self reliance and the momentum of crucified presumption. The interpretation of scripture is itself a test of the heart.

It is the power of our presumption that robs our objectivity to make the otherwise obvious connections. For example, where in 52 A.D. when Paul is writing his second epistle, would the 'temple of God' be understood to be standing? It is preposterous to imagine that, apart from any qualification to the contrary, Paul would have expected the Thessalonians to have any other kind of edifice in mind, particularly since he is so plainly 're'-establishing the same order of events revealed in Daniel, referenced by Jesus, and rehearsed during his earlier visit. This is even further confirmed by noting Paul's use of language taken over from the Lord's Olivet prophecy (compare, "our gathering together unto Him" (2Thes 2:1) where Paul is quite obviously citing Jesus' well known reference to the "gathering together of His elect" (Mt 24:31).

Particularly in view of all that both testaments affirm of the climactic day of the Lord, it becomes quite impossible, even exegetically dishonest, to try to separate the resurrection of the righteous from the tribulation of the half week in Daniel and Revelation. This is why those who believe the tribulation passed with 70 A.D., but believe the resurrection is yet future, are called 'partial preterist'. In contrast, those who believe, not only that the tribulation is past but that the resurrection is also past, call themselves "consistent preterist", for good reason.

But before all the confusion and debate, it is plain for all to see what Daniel would have understood from his own prophecy. Go and learn what Daniel had inherited from the prophets that went before him who prophesied of these same events and goals of covenant and promise. For Daniel, the end of the 70 7's could only mean one thing, the end of gentile domination over captive Israel and the long expected (rightly expected) "post-tribulational" kingdom of God on earth. To suppose otherwise exposes an interested bias, apparently formed by presumptive prior conclusions. It is not enough to say that this was merely the immature hope of OT believers, since the basic order is clearly re-affirmed in the NT (Mt 24; Mk 13; Lk 21; Acts 3:18-21; Ro 11:25-29; 2Thes 2; Rev 6-20).

This has gotten too long for any but the most patient and determined, but you see my point. The neglect to follow through on the Lord's prescribed means of 'understanding' is not, of course, a blanket panacea against every possible form of deception, but it is going to be necessary. It is necessary now, not only for preparation against the ultimate deception, but for the much fuller picture of the overall context of the gospel, what I like to call, "the glory of the story".

It will be required of the church, or will it?. This brings the crucial question of the relation of the rapture to the resurrection of the OT saints, another example of separating what God has joined. This squabble of comparatively recent origins significantly appears just in time to stand between a complacent Laodicean church and readiness to be those 'maskilm' who have the key of interpretation that can instruct many and turn many to righteousness (Dan 11:32-33; 12:3). That this task should be delegated to a company that has only recently come to faith (no need for elders?) defies the biblical conception and definition of the body of Christ. It especially defies Paul's definition of the church (defined as the corporate assembly of regenerate saints), as "the pillar and ground of truth".

Once the context has been restored, we can begin to inquire of the very important question of the church's role, and of what God has invested in granting the last sufferers a very certain and definite knowledge of the time. This will be a merciful provision intended to get the church to the place it needs to be for the ultimate witness. Thankfully, prophecy assures us that "those having understanding" (the body?, of course the body!) will be ready. Anyway, you get the idea. It's a burden I have.

I fear we get too taken up with all the details, as there are indeed crucial details, but not to the neglect of the more critical, life saving basics, the plum line of holy simplicity that will bring us to an otherwise impossible unity, as we become more and more constrained, searched, pruned, and emptied by the ever clearer light of fulfillment that does not depend on getting it all right. The great falling away is greatly facilitated by the church's dereliction precisely here. For all the wrong reasons, though ordained as judgment, the church will not awaken to the truth of these things until the end is very near. But because judgment 'must' begin at the house of God, and in no small part because of the testimony of the Spirit of prophecy, the sleeping Bride will awaken, and when she does, hallelujah, what a glory! It will be the sweetest bitter, as the Jew will see his Messiah shining through weak jars of clay, a sight they'll not forget for a thousand years.

* It is no wonder then that Daniel is situated at the center of the seven millennia of God's prophetic schema of history, the "middle of the week", so to speak. Interestingly, when Daniel asks, "how long till the end of these wonders?", we under

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stand the primary application will be the final 3 1/2 years, but another viable, perhaps dual application would be that from Daniel's place in history, there would be 3 1/2 millennia till "all these things would be finished". On that view, which I think compelling, this would include the thousand year reign of Christ and His saints.

Re: A Costly Neglect by Reggie Kelly - posted by CofG (), on: 2019/3/14 8:45

Hi Jeremy. Thank you for the post. I don't have a good handle on eschatology. My understanding is that teaching overall is meant to correct, edify and build up the body unto perseverance, maturity and Christlikeness. Can you let me know how the end times debates generally are thought to feed into that goal of teaching. I ask that sincerely as I have always stayed away from these issues as far as discipleship goes. Perseverance through trials and sufferings and Christlike responses in the midst of them would seem appropriate no matter where one lands in their eschatology. I'm not challenging any viewpoint but trying to understand how those who pursue these distinctions see how the answers factor into the larger goals of discipleship and teaching. Again, not trying to challenge. Just understand objectives and goals.

Re: A Costly Neglect by Reggie Kelly - posted by savannah, on: 2019/3/14 9:31

"In Dan 9:27, the sacrifice is caused to stop at the mid point of Daniel's final week. This is 3 1/2 years from the end. But what end? What kind of end would Daniel have understood? Was he wrong? This is greatly, I think very 'interestedly' debated, depending on prior presuppositions.

So a sacrifice stops 3 1/2 years before the final persecutor is destroyed. In Dan 9:27 the half week begins when the sacrifice is stopped."

Of whom does the prophet speak? Who is this that causes the sacrifice to stop? Is it the same one you're calling, "the final persecutor?"

Please tell us if you know!

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2019/3/14 11:03

15 "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Matthew 24:15-16

20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, Luke 21:20-21

It is SO SIMPLE: the abomination of desolation = the armies that surround Jerusalem "namely" Roman armies in 70 AD.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/14 11:14

It's also a very simple and observable fact that after almost 2,000 years Jerusalem is again controlled by a Jewish nation and is surrounded by hostile armies and peoples intent on its destruction as an attempt is made to wrest away control of Jerusalem from its Jewish owners. Why have we come full circle with the distinct possibility of seeing the events of 70 AD repeated?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2019/3/14 11:59

The end of the Jewish temple system cannot be repeated. It was wiped out in the Jewish War.

<http://www.joeledmundanderson.com/jesus-the-olivet-discourse-and-all-that-end-times-speculation-that-isnt-about-what-tim-lahaye-claims-its-about-part-1-the-jewish-war-series/>

<http://www.joeledmundanderson.com/jesus-and-the-olivet-discourse-and-why-it-isnt-about-the-second-coming-part-2-the-jewish-war-series/>

<http://www.joeledmundanderson.com/jesus-and-the-olivet-discourse-the-abomination-of-desolation-and-other-cosmic-stuff-part-4-the-jewish-war-series/>

<http://www.joeledmundanderson.com/jesus-and-the-olivet-discourse-the-sign-of-christs-coming-false-messiahs-wars-famines-and-tribulation-part-3-the-jewish-war-series/>

Re: The Sending of sacrifices mentioned more than once - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/14 12:30

Everyone knows of the much debated scripture of Daniel 9:27: "Then he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering and on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even the consummation which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

This is usually presented as Christ bringing an end to sacrifice and offering by His atoning once for all sacrifice. Yet, comparing scripture with scripture, no mention is ever made of the other three places where an abomination and the stopping of sacrifices is mentioned.

Daniel 8:11-12: "He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to OPPOSITE THE DAILY SACRIFICES; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered."

Was Christ a horn? Did Christ cast truth to the ground?

Daniel 11:30-31: "So shall he return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; they shall TAKE AWAY THE DAILY SACRIFICES, and place there the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION."

What forces were mustered by Christ to defile the sanctuary and take away the daily sacrifice and place an abomination of desolation?

Daniel 12:11:

"And from the time the DAILY SACRIFICE IS TAKEN AWAY, and the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION IS SET UP, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

Did Christ do this? So, if an evil personage is seen in Daniel 8:11-12, 11:30-31 and 12:11, why is all of a sudden the good guy Christ being spoken of in Daniel 9:27 as he who takes away the daily sacrifices? In designating Christ as being spoken of in Daniel 9:27, why is mention never made of the other three places where mention is made of taking away the daily sacrifices? And every time the abomination of desolation is spoken of in these other verses it is always accompanied by the taking away of daily sacrifices. Shouldn't the practice be to examine all four references and not just the one from Daniel 9:27.

Obedience to Christ:

24:3 "Tell us, When will these things be and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?"

24:15 "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Obedience to Christ would entail going and examining what Daniel spoke on the subject. It's Christ Himself who gave this key and going to Daniel to see will therefore be an act of obedience.

The result of the abomination of desolation and the stopping of the sacrifices: 24:21 For then will be great tribulation since as not been since the beginning of the world, until this time, nor ever shall be.

Christ's much neglected key to interpretation, go to Daniel and see, can simplify things to a very large degree in my opinion. Daniel 12:1-2 and other places show the Jewish expectation was a time of unparalleled trouble before the end which would eventually lead to a final purging of the wicked and the resurrection of the dead. I'm positive the resurrection of the dead ("I will raise you up on the last day") did not occur in 70 AD. Christ agreed positively with the expectation of a time of trouble near or right at the end when He said "Then will be a time of trouble such as never seen since the beginning of the world nor ever shall be again." Highlighted by, if you want to know of these things, so and see what Daniel said. Whoever reads, let him understand.

Re: The end Daniel spoke of - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/14 12:49

It would be "the time of the end, the appointed time" (Daniel 11:35), "the consummation which is determined" (Daniel 9:27), when all previous kingdoms "shall be broke in pieces and consumed as the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44), when "the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the Most High" (Daniel 7:27), when "the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdoms of His Lord and Christ" (Rev 11:15).

Daniel 12:13 - "But you (Daniel), go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

Combined with the above, this is the end Daniel saw and wrote of. The end. The end of the days is when Daniel would rise. Resurrection day. Which is when Christ comes after the unequalled tribulation of those days (Matt 24:29-31).

Re: The end of the Jewish temple system - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/14 12:59

The end of the Jewish temple system is not that which the whole debate centers upon. The debate is whether this "end" of the Jewish temple system brought an end to God's commitment to never forsake Israel in spite of its manifold sins. Even in spite of its rejection of their Messiah. Does this "end" mean Israel reached the zenith of God's purposes for it and is now to be viewed as just any other nation and is therefore to be placed in the prophetically non relevant category? Will the still outstanding promises made to them be fulfilled or have they been forever given to someone else? Does God's word go there or does the replacement tradition of men take us there? This is part of the whole debate and not just whether the temple system ended.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2019/3/14 14:46

The idea that there are two peoples of God is completely contrary to the Christian faith. There is only one people of God: those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. These people are the living stones who make up the true spiritual House of God. As Paul says in Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Throughout Paul's writings, it is plain that the redeemed remnant of Jews who put their faith in Jesus (and Paul and the other apostles happen to be in this group) and the "full number" of Gentiles who respond to the Gospel and put their faith in Christ together are one people, the true Israel of God.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/15 11:00

Of course the idea of two peoples of God is completely contrary to the Christian faith. There's no dispute there. The writer of the article doesn't believe in two peoples of God. It must surprise some to find out that many who believe Israel and the Jewish nation still have a future in Christ are not going the way of Darby and Scofield. It's many times I guess a erroneous guilt by association type of thing.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2019/3/15 12:10

Yes David but it's the idea that God is currently dealing differently with a group of people because of their race. Those days have passed. We are now in the New Covenant.

That does not mean that we don't pray and care for the Jewish people, just like we should be praying and caring for Chinese and Hindus and Muslims.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/15 12:27

God is currently dealing differently with a group of people because of their race?

Can you elaborate as to what you are speaking of?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2019/3/15 14:22

I'm not saying that- I thought you and Reggie believed that.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/15 16:56

I'm of the opinion, along with Reggie, that the doctrine of two peoples of God has been as damaging to the body of Christ as the early rapture theory that accompanies it. If there are two separate peoples of God, one part of the body of Christ and one not part of that body, though both are saved by the same Savior and the same atonement then what it has always meant to be part of the body of Christ has been altered at its very foundation.

Meanwhile, if the Jewish nation and its people do not come by way of the cross they won't be coming to the kingdom of God. What God has required of others will be required of them.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2019/3/15 17:23

David you wrote earlier in this thread (or you may have been quoting Reggie)
"Does this "end" mean Israel reached the zenith of God's purposes for it and is now to be viewed as just any other nation and is therefore to be placed in the prophetically non relevant category? Will the still outstanding promises made to them be fulfilled or have they been forever given to someone else? Does God's word go there or does the replacement tradition of men take us there? This is part of the whole debate and not just whether the temple system ended."

This seems to be implying that God has something for Israel because they are Israel (ie Jewish).

If that is not what is implied then I must be missing something.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/15 18:23

Ok but I don't have time to respond right now. I'm off to church for a special Fri night meeting. I will get back as soon as possibly I can. More meetings tomorrow and Sun as our congregation as a whole will be studying Stephen the martyr.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2019/3/15 19:39

No rush David- especially given what you are doing. Be blessed!

Re: TMK - posted by docs (), on: 2019/3/21 12:49

I believe that although the church participates in the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic promises, Israel still possesses the ancient promises and will have them fulfilled to her at a future time of national salvation, restoration to the ancient land, and rebuilding of Jerusalem. Those future promises correspond to all that other Scriptures teach about premillennialism.

I don't believe when Christ returns He is going to abandon history by destroying everything that exists and going straight to the eternal state. God is going to clean up the scene of the crime so to speak and manifest His salvation and blessings in history before moving on. History is where Adam's original crime of rebellion and self reliance occurred. The Hebrew patriarchs and prophets and average Hebrew believer knew nothing of a coming kingdom that would be heavenly in nature only and forsake the earth. God is going to make a difference ON THE EARTH before moving on. Fulfillment in the e

ternal state only does not do justice to God's purpose of vindicating Himself among the nations of this earth. And even in the eventual eternal state there will be a new heavens and EARTH. The Hebrews never knew the kingdom of God as so me far away heavenly realm divorced from anything earthly.

If the Jewish people are going to be used as the instruments to mediate these Messianic blessings to the world in that day after Christ's return then why would other Gentile parts of the body complain? If one part of the body is honored isn't the whole body honored? Land promises have been so spiritualized as to make them unrecognizable to the original Hebrew author's intent. Jesus didn't say the kingdom will not be restored to Israel. He basically said not now and not at this time.

Israel's choice to be the head of the nations will be a thousand year demonstration in the sight of the nations of God's sovereign right to elect those whom He chooses to elect without having to consult anyone regarding His choice. If Israel's election offends people then it was intended to do so. It mitigates against the natural man and his earthly view of who should be chosen and why. And these will not be secular Jews who will be honored in this way. They will be full brothers and sisters in Christ who have come the way of the cross as all others have been required to do so. So if a portion of the body of Christ is to become head of the nations what is wrong with this group of fellow believers in Christ becoming the head of the nations? Gentiles have been partaking of these blessings for almost two thousand years. Why should it bother them to see the beginning of a long promised fulfillment of the covenant they as Gentiles were allowed to become part of?

None of this destroys the equality of everyone who is in Christ. It means a certain group among the redeemed have been ELECTED for a special honor. That begs the question, what will be the make up of this people. Zechariah 3:12-13 says:

12 I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.

13 The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth;

The main characteristic of Israel in that day shall be contriteness and humility after their final time of trouble they will have passed through (Daniel 12:1; Matt 24:21) and been saved out of. In their contriteness, under the leadership of their long ascended but now returned Messiah (who Himself is the Suffering Servant), they will humbly become the chief servant to the nations. It was this their very own Messiah who said if you want to be considered the greatest then become the servant of all. Their exaltation and honor in that day will be because they will be the CHIEF SERVANTS to the nations as the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth like the waters cover the sea.

The nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing against Israel basically because they are quarreling with God's right to choose whom He wills to choose. The over spiritualization of obviously physical promises of land etc. is another way of getting softly around God's election by couching it in spiritual sounding phrases. Meanwhile, none of God's promises to a certain group of His elect has anything to do whatsoever with "exalting one group above the others." To argue this is a way of arguing with God's choice in election.

I like very much the idea of God cleaning up history before moving on to the eternal state. If God has chosen one specific people and nation to be instrumental in this then why dwell on the conflict this brings (the nations and even parts of the body of Christ rage) instead of eagerly anticipating the world wide blessings that will flow out of this choice?