

2019 LECTURES HIP

The 30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectureship March 14 – March 17, 2019

PRE-MILLENNIALISM



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DEDICATION



FRANK R. WILLIAMS

It is very appropriate that we dedicate the 30th annual Oklahoma City Lectures book to the lovely couple in the above picture. We could refer to Frank and Martha (Martie) Williams as Team Williams or Partnership Williams or simply as dedicated servants. It is through their significant efforts that the book even exists, or that the quarterly One Heart journal is produced or that many other similar functions are accomplished. They truly have been a team in living their Christian lives, in raising a Christian family, in serving their Lord and master, the Church and currently the Barnes congregation.

They have spent years preparing themselves for the work of teaching, Frank from the pulpit and both in Bible classes and personal studies. Their words have not only been instructional but also edifying and uplifting. And just as important as their words has been the wonderful example they have provided. Due to this example this writer personally has a better understanding of the concept of Biblical love. Love that has as its basis self-sacrifice, sacrifices financially, of time and endurance of stress for example.

This partnership allowed Frank to attend, graduate from and eventually teach at the Northside School of Preaching in Harrison, AR. Together they have served as the local preaching family at congregations in four states and have supported Gospel meetings and lectureships in many more. The list of publications supported is impressive as is the effort producing weekly bulletins.

This dedication may sound more like a praise fest, but these few words cannot express the gratitude we who have been privileged to work with them feel. As time marches on and health issues begin to limit activities there will still be the legacy the comes from lives well spent in the service of God.

(The dedication submitted by Jerry Gore)

DEDICATION



THE CHRISTIANS WHO WORSHIP HERE

This year I am honored to dedicate the “30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” to the Barnes church of Christ! You have allowed me the opportunity to grow in Christ, as we worshipped together over the past fifteen years!

This spiritual growth has taken place in the following areas:

- 1) By being a member of the Barnes congregation;
- 2) By studying several subjects in preparations to teach in the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies;”
- 3) By teaching in the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies;”
- 4) By writing about 780 articles for the church bulletin;
- 5) By serving as Editor of the Church bulletin;
- 6) By allowing me to have a little fun in “Frank’s Corner,” as I wrote about a good number of you and even more having fun at my own experience;
- 7) By writing several articles for the Journal “One Heart” from it beginning;
- 8) By serving as Editor of the Journal “One Heart;”
- 9) By allowing me to speak on the “Annual Oklahoma City Lectures;”
- 10) By allowing me serve as Director of the “Annual Oklahoma City Lectures;”
- 11) By allowing me to preach the word of God; and finally,
- 12) By serving as one of the elders/overseers of the Barnes congregation, not once but two times!

It has been such an honor to worship God “*in spirit and in truth*” with you; to laugh with you; to shed a few tears as we tried to handle difficult problems; to plan with you as we upgraded the building; and to do a little physical work on the building with you!

With these things in mind, the “30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” is dedicated to the Barnes church of Christ, in all your loveliness!

A person had best take care of things when he has time to do so; less they go undone!

(The dedication submitted by Frank Williams)



PREFACE

This year we have reached a milestone in that this year's lectureship in the 30th year of The "30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures!" It does not seem possible that the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies" has served the churches of Christ in Oklahoma for thirty years but here we are: The 30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures!"

The theme of this year's lectures deals with a menace that has plagued the churches of Christ from the early 1930's. This proves that false doctrine never "dies" completely but it lays as an underground current just waiting for the right time to arise again! The Old Testament words of Hosea ring true even today: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children"* (Hos. 4:6). When the Lord's called out, are not well feed with *"the word of grace"* (Acts 20:32) they are subject to all kinds of false teaching! A well-versed congregation will be able to identify that which is false! Rejecting the word of the Lord is equal to not hearing it! In that both stand in danger of losing their souls! When preachers and overseers think that a false doctrine is dead, they are subject to the danger of those who would/will bring them false teaching! They may be like those of whom Paul wrote: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears"* (2 Tim. 4:3). False teaching/doctrine is a lot like the words of General MacArthur as spoken of "old soldiers: "old soldiers never die; they just fade away." We must all, and more importantly, elders/overseers must be aware of this simple truth, "old false doctrines never die, they just fade away" waiting for the time when elders fall asleep or take a nap when the teacher of false doctrine enters among them with an "old false doctrine" which is ready to arise from the "dead."

It is for the above reason that "The 30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures" will address the false teaching of "Pre-Millennialism." It is an "old" teaching that fills the denominational world and there are always a few members of the Lord's spiritual body who like the sound of doctrine that seeks to change the nature of the kingdom of Christ, from a spiritual kingdom to a physical one! Therefore, all the events that surround the present nation of Israel keep ringing in the ears of those who have just waited for the "right" time! Be it known that the "present nation of Israel" is not related to the Old Testament Israel. God removed that nation and put it to death in the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel! Man cannot breathe life into what God has killed and this is the case of David's kingdom!

Therefore, the 30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures" will cover the following subjects:

1. Introduction to the subject of "Millennialism
2. How Denominations teach "pre-millennialism
3. The so-called doctrine of the "A.D. 70" is false
4. The relationship between the rise of "The" Anti-Christ, and the concomitant persecution of the Church
5. The so-called relationship between Pre-millennialism" and the "great tribulation
6. The so-called "Conversion" of the Jews at the glorious visible return of Christ is false
7. The so-called "Rapture" as used in the Pre-Millennialism
8. The so-called Battle of Armageddon
9. The theme text: Revelation 20:5-7

10. The Last Days as used in the New Testament

11. Danial's 70 weeks – and concluding with:

12. The glorious reign of King Jesus Christ

May this, the “30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures,” fulfill its intended course! The “30th” year of these lectures has truly reached a milestone. In these “30” years many subjects have made their way into the lectures. There have been different reasons for the subjects; but each one has in the mind of those who have worked on the themes and subjects each year, have always intended that they do as Peter wrote his last inspired words:

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” (2Pet. 3:18)

Frank R. Williams,
director of the lectureship



Introduction to the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies

First, a little history of the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies. It was a dream of Marion R. Fox, as there was no such school in the metro-area of Oklahoma City; but neither was there such a school in the state of Oklahoma. Marion saw a spiritual need that was not being filled. Marion was serving as the local preacher at the Barnes church of Christ and upon discussing the subject with the men of the congregation, it was agreed to start the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies.” The school “opened the doors” in 1991 and the first classes were conducted in the Barnes church building.

The Barnes church building is in an excellent part of Oklahoma City. It is on 59th Street, between I-40 and I-240, just one block from the intersection of Anderson Road and 59th Street. The vision was larger than just the Barnes area; so, it was not long until classes were conducted in various locations in Oklahoma City, but not only here, classes were started in other parts of state of Oklahoma. Classes were conducted in Binger, Chandler, Hydro, Maysville, Piedmont, and Tuttle. At the same time, other congregation have contacted us concerning classes in their church buildings.

Second, at first the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” was designed to prepare men to be leaders in the Lord’s church; but it was also designed to help men who were serving as elders, deacons, teachers, and women to serve in teaching children and other women. Then, even this was enlarged to helping all, men and women, who desired to increase their Bible knowledge, which would help them grow in Christ; and to become better at teaching in home Bible studies! In this action, the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” has been able to render a great service to Christians in general!

Third, the curriculum is Bible-centered and designed to prepare the student to become an independent student of the word of God! It has been the intention of the school from its beginning, that each student should not be taught “what to believe,” but “how to learn” from the Scriptures the will of God. It has been the joy of faculty members to learn from our students! The faculty has never believed that they know it all!

Fourth, the full-time curriculum consists of four years of classes, but not limited to four years; one night per week presently. Now, this one night is Tuesday night, with classes starting at 6:30 P.M. On the other hand, students seeking advanced options may choose to attend extra courses in Greek and other subjects. Students are free, to be part-time students taking one class or more; they may be full-time students; and they are free to audit classes if they choose. The “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” offers a greater maturation in the learning process than a two-year program. In fact, some students have come for five, six, or more years!

Fifth, one of the advantages of the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” is that the student may continue to work a full-time secular job, without needing to raise support from family, friends, and churches. By offering a schedule that fits people’s busy lives, we allow our students to immediately increase their usefulness in their local congregations!

Those who are now serving the school: Marion R. Fox, is Director and teacher, and has degrees in: Associate of Science, Bachelor of science, Master of Science, and a Doctorate of Education, has preached for nearly fifty years, and is one of the elders of the Barnes church of Christ; Jerry Gore, teacher and he serves as one of the elders and teaches Bible classes for the Barnes church of Christ;

Chris Hill, teaches and is the local preacher of the church in Luther, OK and has served for nearly seventeen years. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University, class of 1997, with bachelor's degree in Bible and Ministry; and this year Howard D. Williams has been added to the faculty. Howard has graduated from the Northside School of Preaching in Harrison, AR and the Oklahoma School of Biblical Studies. He serves as one of the elders for the Nicoma Park church of Christ. An interesting point is that Howard was baptized by Frank Williams about forty-nine years ago in Jasper, AR. Finally, Frank R. Williams serves as Dean of Students.

Here is a point of interest! Four of those who serve the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies, is that four of the have been married for over fifty years: Marion and Cynthia Fox, Jerry and Judy Gore, Howard and Lenora Williams, and Frank and Martha Williams. Also four of these also serve as elders. Which other school can this be written?

Frank R. Williams
director of the Oklahoma City Lectures



A Word from the Dean of Students

The school year, 2018 – 2019, is about half way through! As most of us know, “time flies” when you are having fun. You may not think of school and going to classes as “fun” but there is sure enjoyment in studying and learning more of the Word of God!

The first semester started on August 28th, 2018 and ended on December 18th; the second semester started on January 15th and will end on May 7th. If there is bad weather; the ending date will be adjusted.

A student taking three hours of classes each week, for the twenty-four weeks, will have been in class for a total of seventy-two hours. This is seventy-two hours of studying the Bible and related subjects. How many members of the Lord’s people will study the Bible and related subjects this same amount of time? Few to fewer!

Then, there is the fellowship that takes place in classes! Fellowship is so needed in this time of unrest in our nation and in the churches of Christ! So many members of the Lord’s family meet at most three hours a week and about half of this number only have one to two hours of fellowship on Sunday; but a goodly number only have one hour of fellowship on Sunday as they do not take part in any other time of fellowship in the local church. It is sad but true, that only about half of those who are present Sunday morning do not come back for the Sunday evening fellowship. This is a mark of why the local congregations are so spiritually weak!

What this all means to the local church is the “Oklahoma School of Biblical Studies” offers a time for spiritual growth that is generally not found in the local congregations! There are at least two general problems with the present state: 1) Local congregations are not taking advantage of the “Oklahoma School of Biblical Studies;” and 2) The “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” is not well known! This is problem that the school has had before it from the time it started in 1991.

It is a fact, that the best recruiting for the school is our students. They know what is offered by the school and like to share this with others! At the same time, our students sometimes fail in this effort! Just think of the number of students the school could have, if only each student would bring to school just one or two members of the Lord’s church with them. The “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” would be running over with God loving students!

This year the students have been studying the following subjects:

- 1) Daniel
- 2) Beginning Greek
- 3) Fundamentals of the Faith
- 4) Romans in Greek
- 5) The Divided Kingdom
- 6) 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.

Just think of it, three hours a week of your time to increase your Bible knowledge! This reminds me of the words of the Prophet, who wrote: *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children”* (Hosea 4:6). This is just a general truth! Sound brethren, who give time to questioning the state of the churches of Christ today, will all arrive at the same conclusion, a lack of studying the Bible leaves behind an unknowledgeable brotherhood! There is just no way for a people, who have rejected the word of God; while others just do not know any better! Which is worse, I do not know! But I do know that God’s people are the ones who suffer!

There is the present danger of the local churches of Christ of falling into the “pit” of lack of knowledge, they reject the word of God; and the churches of Christ go this way and that way, but not the Lord’s way! Peter wrote: “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (2 Pet. 3:18).

With these few words, the “dean of students” will put the pen down for another year, the Lord willing!

Frank R. Williams,
dean of students

Our Faculty

Marion Fox, director

Marion is a graduate of the Elk City School of Preaching and has preached forty-seven years! He is now serving as one of the elders of the Barnes church of Christ. His college/university degrees include; an A.S. (1963) from Southwestern Oklahoma State University, a Baccalaureate (1965) and a doctorate (1991) from Oklahoma State University, and a Masters (1969) and a Masters (1969) from the University of Illinois. He has completed upper division Greek course at Oklahoma Christian College (now University). He has been a college professor (Engineering-Science division) and a National Science Foundation fellow in Engineering, Physics, and Semiconductor Manufacturing. Marion has authored several books and has engaged in several debates on various subjects.



Marion has served as teacher for the Elk City School of Preaching: Elk City, Oklahoma – 1973 – 1976; Westside School of preaching Duncan, Oklahoma – 1976 (Fall); Oklahoma School of Bible/Preaching, McLoud, Oklahoma – 1977 – 1981; Great Plains School of Bible/Preaching: Elmore City, Oklahoma – 1989 – 1991; Rocky Mountain audio and video Bible Institute Selmer, Tennessee - 1999 – 2005; and Online Academy of Biblical Studies: Dyersburg, Tennessee – 2000 – 2005. Marion has served as Director of the Oklahoma City school of Biblical Studies: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma – 1991 to the present.

Marion has held gospel meetings and preached by appointment in fourteen other states. He preached and lectured at two state universities in Russia on scientific evidences for the existence of God and the work of the Holy Spirit and the biblical flood in England,. He has also preached in Jamaica and Ghana.

Marion has authored seven books.



Our Faculty

Jerry Gore, instructor

Jerry was born in Amarillo, Texas, but has made his home in Midwest City, Oklahoma for many years. He served in the United States Army from June 1967 – June 1970. He received a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Oklahoma.

Jerry worked at Tinker Air Force Base for thirty-one years! Jerry and Judy have two children. Jerry has taught Bible classes at the Barnes church of Christ for many years and now serves as one of the elders! Jerry is a very good addition to the faculty of the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies. With his “engineering” mind, he is very detailed in his teaching.



Chris Hill, instructor

Christopher Hill graduated from Norman High School, Norman, OK and from Moore-Norman Technology Center in 1990. He passed his ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certifications and worked as an Automotive Technician while attending college. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University, class of 1997, with a Bachelor's degree in Bible and Ministry.

He is married to Joanna, who is also a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University. They have two children: Rachel and Luke, who are homeschooled and are students in the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies. Chris worked with the church of Christ in Honesdale, PA from 1997-2001. He traveled to the Philippines two times where he helped with the preaching and conducted auto repair seminars.

Chris has served as the local preacher with the church of Christ in Luther, OK for nearly 17 years where he also serves on the board of directors for the Luther Community Service Center which provides food and other necessities for low-income families in Luther.

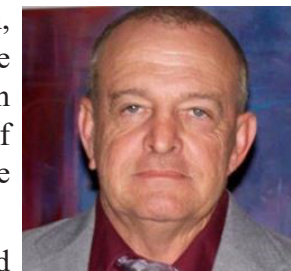
Chris has been a student at the Oklahoma School of Biblical Studies and is now one of the instructors and he is good addition to the faculty! Chris has spoken on the Annual Oklahoma City Lectures.



Howard D. Williams, instructor

Howard William is a graduate of the Northside School of Preaching, Harrison, AR where he received a Master's Degree in Sacred Literature and is a graduate of the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies where he received a Degree in Bible. This is his second year of teaching in the school. Howard serves as one of the elders for the Nicoma Park church of Christ. He has served as one of those who helps distributes food to the needy for many years.

Howard and Lenora Williams have been married for over fifty years and have they two children: Lori Herring and James, both living in the Oklahoma City area.



FORWARD

President Donald Trump moves the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem! Preachers in denominational churches go wild in America! You ask, “What is it all about?” It is about the fact that denominational churches teach “Pre-millennialism.” If denominational churches in America, believe in the doctrine of “Pre-Millennialism,” and they do; does it present a reason for the churches of Christ to be well informed on this subject? The answer to this question is a resounding, “Yes!”

If the churches of Christ are going to be evangelic, and they must be, there is a need for them to be well informed in what they are going to run (face) into when they “knock” on the door of the lost. The teacher sits down in a chair around the kitchen table but before any teaching takes place, the “student” (the one to be taught the truth) might ask the question: “What do you think about the American Embassy being moved to Jerusalem?” This home Bible teacher may be in serious trouble! You see, the local church, of which he is a member, never studied nor had the local preacher preached on this subject! Thus, the teacher is totally caught off guard!

If the home Bible teacher is caught off guard, as he may not have been alive on May 14, 1948, which was the date Israel was declared a modern nation. Trump chose this date as it is the date Israel was first recognized as a nation. In addition, this historic date, many, many, denominational churches believe this to be a preparation for the “second coming of Christ; notice the following: “

“Millennial Jerusalem, A glorious day is coming for Jerusalem, for when the Lord returns, He is going to reign over all the world and His reign of peace, righteousness and justice will be based in Jerusalem: *‘For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem’* (Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2).” (Quoted taken from: May 19, 2018/Israel’s Prophetic Future, no author found).

Here are two such preachers in their own words;

First: Robert Jeffress, who appears on Fox News a lot, he said: 1) “President Donald Trump was right to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel because the Bible tells him so.” 2) “President Trump is not only on the right side of history; he is on the right side of God,” and 3) “I thanked President Trump for having the guts to do what no other U.S. president has been willing to do in recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.”

Just who is Robert Jeffress? He is A Southern Baptist “poster” of a “megachurch” with 13,000-members. He hosts the program, Pathway to Victory, which is broadcast on more than 1,200 television stations in the United States and 28 other countries. He also has a daily radio program, Pathway to Victory, which is heard on 900 stations and broadcast live in 195 countries.

Second: here are a few words from John Hagee: has explicitly linked the establishment of the state of Israel to biblical prophecy and the second coming of Jesus, he has said: “The rebirth of Israel as a nation was an unmistakable milestone on the prophetic timeline leading to the return of Christ,” (He wrote this in his book “In Defense of Israel.” Then, he also said: “The Messiah will come and establish a Kingdom that will never end.”

Who is John Hagee? He is the founder and senior pastor of Cornerstone Church, a megachurch in San Antonio, Texas.” He also is the founder and National Chairman of the Christian-Zionist organization Christians He is also has United for Israel and his televangelist message is broadcast nationally in the United States as well as elsewhere, via his non-profit corporation Global Evangelism Television and others. (Wikipedia).

With this information, it is easy to see that much, if not most, of the denomination world is well versed in the doctrine/teaching of “Pre-Millennialism!” However, just in case you might disagree with this conclusion, here is just a little more to think about. In 1953, former president Harry Truman was

introduced as the man who help establish the State of Israel, he grumbled: “What do you mean, ‘helped create’? I am Cyrus!” Just in case you do not get the connection, the following is given: “the celebrated “King of Persia” (Elam) who was conqueror of Babylon, and issued the decree of liberation to the Jews (Ezra 1:1 Ezra 1:2).” (Easton’s Bible Dictionary). Harry Truman tied himself with Cyrus in being the liberator of Israel. Truman always did have a way with words! The point being, Americans foreign policy from 1948 has been tied to Israel!

Why Pre-millennialism? If the Lord’s “called out” people are going to evangelize the lost, and we must, we need to be well versed in the subject of “Pre-Millennialism! One might ask, why is “pre” attached to the word “millennialism?” The “Millennial” teaching is either “pre” or “post” “millennial.” The word “millennial” means a thousand and there has been and still is, an effort to tie the words found in Revelation twenty to the false teaching of “Pre-Millennialism;” which reads:

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (7) And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison” (Rev. 20:5-7).

“Pre-Millennialism” teaches that “they shall live and reign with Christ on earth a thousand years.” However, please note that John never used the word “earth” in the passage, which is used as the main text for those who hold to the teaching of “Pre-Millennialism.” This takes the “heart” and “soul” out of the doctrine, if those who hold it, will be honest with the text! Now, the “pre” relates to when “they” lived on the earth; was it before “the great persecution” or after, as in the following:

“Considering the information Christ gave us in Matthew 24:15-30,s it is easy to conclude that the beginning of the Great Tribulation has much to do with the abomination of desolation, an action of the Antichrist. In Daniel 9:26-27, we find that this man will make a “covenant” (a peace pact) with the world for seven years (one “week”; again, see the article on the Tribulation). Halfway through the seven-year period—”in the middle of the week”—we are told this man will break the covenant he made, stopping sacrifice and grain offering, which specifically refers to his actions in the rebuilt temple of the future. Revelation 13:1-10 gives even more detail concerning the Beast’s actions, and just as important, it also verifies the length of time he will be in power. Revelation 13:5 says he will be in power for 42 months, which is three and one-half years, the length of the Great Tribulation.

Revelation offers us the most information about the Great Tribulation. From Revelation 13 when the Beast is revealed until Christ returns in Revelation 19, we are given a picture of God’s wrath on the earth because of unbelief and rebellion (Revelation 16-18). It is also a picture of how God disciplines and at the same time protects His people Israel (Revelation 14:1-5) until He keeps His promise to Israel by establishing an earthly kingdom (Revelation 20:4-6).” (Taken from “Got Question,” an internet site).

If the above reads a little hard to understand, so the subject of “Pre-Millennialism!” The above is one view of the subject: “Premillennialism is the view that Christ’s second coming will occur prior to His millennial kingdom, and that the millennial kingdom is a literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth.” (From “Got-Questions,” internet site)

Here is “Post” view of the subject: “Postmillennialism is an interpretation of Revelation chapter 20 which sees Christ’s second coming as occurring after the “millennium,” a golden age or era of Christian prosperity and dominance.” (From “Got Questions, internet site).

It may be the case, that no two answers will be the same, which reveals the difficulty of the subject which the speakers of the “30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” have in trying to cover their subjects. It is hard to find, two that agree on the subjects that are to be covered in the “30th Annual Oklahoma

City Lectures.” The debate is so diverse, among even those who believe in it!

The Lord’s church has the responsibility to both teach the local members and when possible, to teach the church at large, but our responsibility does not stop here; no, we have the responsibility to teach the lost. It is these responsibilities, that justify the theme and the subjects of this lectureship. First, this lectureship will teach the local church, the church at large, and it will give the necessary tools to help in teaching the lost. It was the last of these areas that weighed heavily upon the mind of the “director” of the “30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures,” that the theme was determined. As the material covered in this “Lectureship” will increase the knowledge of those who hear it, will enlarge the ability of those who read and study the material in this book, and will help supply the necessary material to teach the lost.

With this before us, the “30th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” are commended to you!

Frank R. Williams, director of the lectureship

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Introduction to the subject of “Millennialism”

The meaning of “Post-millennialism.”

Bryan Hodge



BRYAN HODGE was born in Blytheville, AR on May 3, 1965. The family moved much as he grew up, due to his father's work with the Army/Air Force Exchange Service. The family finally settled in Texas, mostly South Texas. He attended Cedar Valley College, University of Texas – San Antonio; and the Brown Trail School of Preaching where he graduated.

Bryan and Melinda (Wilson) were married on February 13, 1988 and they have three children: Jasmine Juneau, who is married and has one child (Fort Worth, TX); Jasper Hodge (Fort Worth, TX); and Choe Hodge (Denton, TX). Melinda works for Central Texas College in the hospitality and Culinary Arts Department.

He started preaching in 1991 and has done local work with the church of Christ in La Junta, CO; Savannah, TN; Truth or Consequences, New Mexico; Talco, TX; Marshall, TX; Anchorage, AK; and is now working with church of Christ in Youngsport (Killeen), TX.

He has preached in gospel meetings and lectureships in: Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alaska, Wyoming, and Louisiana; he has also preached overseas in: India, Jamaica, Ghana, Panama, and England. He has written articles appearing in: the Gospel Journal, Think Magazine (Focus Press), Bulletin Digest, Bulletin Briefs, The Guide, The Apologist and One Heart, a work of the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies.

This is Bryan's third time to speak on the Annual Oklahoma City Lectures!

As a note of interest, Bryan had a debate with Kevin Miller a Seventh Day Adventist. Also, check out his website – bryanhodge.net; internet radio: Great Bible Texts on thegospelradionetwork.org.

Introduction

1. *It seems natural to me that those, who profess to believe in God \ Jesus \ a second coming \ an afterlife, would be curious about, and even eagerly anticipating the things to come*
2. *Consider-*
 - a. Jesus promised to return (John 14:1-3)
 - b. Angels proclaimed that He would return (Acts 1:11)
 - c. The early Christians were to live patiently waiting for His return.
 - (1) Paul wrote of Christians at Thessalonica, “For they themselves declare... how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).
 - (2) Paul wrote to Christians at Philippi, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly await for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body” (Philippians 3:20-21).
 - (3) Peter wrote, “But the day of the Lord will come... Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...” (2 Peter 3:10-12).
 - (4) John wrote, “It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He

- is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).
- (5) Jesus seems to have cautioned that a long time may elapse before His return (Matthew 24:48; 25:5; 25:19).
- d. They partook, and we continue to partake, of the Lord’s Supper proclaiming “the Lord’s death, till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).
- e. Moreover, some in the Bible raised questions about the things to come.
- (1) The Sadducees: “Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become?” (Luke 20:33).
- *True, the Sadducees denied the resurrection (Luke 20:7).
- *However, until Jesus answered this question, it remained a mystery in scripture (Luke 20:34-36).
- **This is a question which could be asked by a curious believer.
- (2) Paul anticipated that some skeptics would ask: “How are the dead raised up? And With what body do they come? (1 Corinthians 15:35).
- *He may have had skeptics in mind but a curious believer could ponder such things.
- (3) Some at Thessalonica seem to have asked a question: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2
- *The word “concerning” (Peri) may indicate that Paul is answering a question. See: 1 Corinthians 7:1; 7:25; 8:4; 12:1; 16:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 4:13; 5:1.
3. ***It may be natural for man to be interested in, curious about, and even inquisitive concerning the things to come.***
- a. But our answers should come from what is clearly taught in scripture. Not the theories and speculations of man.
- b. And it should be understood that not all things have been revealed by God. We need to trust Him even though we may not have all the answers.
4. ***One last word of caution – It is a serious error to focus more on the things to come than on the here and now.***
- a. I have studied with those who are much more comfortable with discussing their theories concerning things to come than the here-and-now.
- b. I sometimes try to redirect the discussion. I say, “Let’s assume (for sake of argument) that all you say is true. I believe that God is good, and if I am in a right relationship with Him, then I’ll have nothing to fear. Now you tell me, what must I do to have a right relationship with Him?”
5. ***I have been asked to define some key terms and give some historical background.***

Definitions

I. Millennial

- A. ***Millennium is a noun meaning “a period of 1,000 years” Latin mille = 1,000 anni = years***

B. Millennial is an adjective “relating to a period of 1,000 years.”

In Bible study or eschatology (the study of end times) the millennial pertains to the 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation²⁰.

II. Millennialism

A. The suffix “ism” denotes a doctrine, theory, system or practice.

B. Therefore, the term ‘millennialism’ can refer to a doctrine or theory pertaining to the 1,000 years.

C. However, it is also used to mean the doctrine or theory that a golden age will appear on Earth prior to the final judgment (Wikipedia). e.g. Alexander Campbell’s Millennial Harbinger

III. Premillennialism

A. The prefix “pre” means before, prior to

B. Premillennialism refer to the doctrine or theory that the second coming of Christ will precede the 1,000 years reign. e.g. John Nelson Darby, Charles Spurgeon, Cyrus I. Scofield, R.H. Bells, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsey, Tim LeHay, Jerry Jenkins.

1. Some Premillennialists are post-tribulationists. They believe that the resurrection and rapture will come after a period of tribulation. Then, 1,000 years reign will occur.
2. Some premillennialists are pre-tribulationists. They believe that the saints will be raptured before tribulation. Then, a period of tribulation will occur. Those alive will have opportunity to repent and convert. Then, the 1,000 years reign will occur.
 - a. Dispensationalism is another term used to describe pre-tribulation Premillennialism.
 - b. “Dispensationalism believes that the Rapture will take place seven years before the millennium and that the events of the millennium will be centered around the Jews, Jerusalem, and a rebuilt temple” (David Vaughn Elliott, Nobody Left Behind, p. 17).
 - c. “Dispensationalists believe that the beginning of the millennium will be marked by two comings of Christ. One will be in the form of the rapture which will precede the great tribulation. The second will follow the tribulation in the form of the personal, visible coming of the Lord at which time the millennium will then begin. It is taught that the period between the two comings is the 70th week prophesied in Daniel 9 and the tribulation of Matthew 24” (Don Simpson, Kingdom Prophecy in Review, p. 15).
 - d. Why is it called Dispensationalism? It is called this due to the belief in various dispensations of time, with the millennium being a distinct dispensation. A popular view is of seven dispensations:
 1. Innocence (Genesis 1:1-3:7)
 2. Conscience (Genesis 3:8-8:22)
 3. Government (Genesis 9:1-11:32)
 4. Patriarchal (Genesis 12:1-Exodus 19:25)
 5. Mosaic (Exodus 20:1-Acts 2:4)
 6. Grace (Acts 2:4-Revelation 20:3)

7. Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:4-20:6)

IV. Post-millennialism

A. The prefix “post” means “after”.

B. Postmillennialism refers to the doctrine or theory that the second coming of Christ will follow the 1,000 years.

1. This is sometimes referred to as millennialism (see earlier point).
2. “Postmillennialism believes that the entire world will gradually be Christianized through the work of the church in preaching God’s word. It is believed this process will bring about a glorious period of peace that will culminate in the return of Christ” (David Vaughn Elliott, *Nobody Left Behind*, p. 17). e.g. David Whitby

V. Amillennialism

A. The prefix “a” means “no” or “not.”

B. Amillennialism refers to the doctrine or theory which rejects a literal 1,000 years.

1. “The Amillennial view is similar to postmillennialism in that it too denies that after the present dispensation there will be a 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth. However, the basic difference is that this view denies that the millennium has literal numeric meaning” (Don Simpson, *Kingdom Prophecy in Review*, p. 114).
2. “This view holds that the ‘thousand years’ of Revelation 20 is a figurative expression for an unspecified, long period of time... It does not look forward to a literal physical reign of Christ upon earth. Rather it places emphasis on the present spiritual reign of King Jesus as head of His church” (David Vaughn Elliott, *Nobody Left Behind*, p. 17).
 - a. Figurative language “1,000”: Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 50:10; Psalm 90:4
 - b. Figurative language in context: Revelation 1:1
 - c. e.g. Key (20:1); Bottomless Pit (20:1); Chain (20:1)
 - d. Foy Wallace Jr. - “There are twenty figures of speech in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters alone. In a series of symbols such as these, it is not reasonable to make a literal application of the thousand years and a figurative application of all the rest of the symbols, without a contextual or historical reason for doing so” (Foy E. Wallace Jr., *The Book of Revelation*, p. 403). e.g. Augustine, Duesterdieck, Kliefoth, Foy E. Wallace Jr., David Vaughn Elliott, Bryan Hodge

VI. Preterism or Realized Eschatology

A. The Latin “praeter” means beyond or past

B. The Greek “eschatos” means last or end

C. The idea is that since 70 A.D., man lived beyond or after the fulfillment of all things, including – Christ’s second coming, the resurrection, and judgment. The time of the end has come. The last things have been realized.

1. The second coming = Christ coming in Judgment in 70 A.D.
2. The Resurrection = Spiritual resurrection

3. The Judgment = Judgment of 70 A.D.
4. The End of the World = The end of the Jewish world e.g. James Stuart Russell, C.H. Dodd, C.D. Beagle, Max King, Don Preston, William Bell, Holger Neubauer

History

I. Date Setters

A. There have been many date setters throughout history.

1. Montanus (c. 172 A.D.) proclaimed the imminent return of Jesus. He declared that Christ would return to Pepuza, Phrygia and reign from there 1,000 years. He claimed to be guided by the Holy Spirit. “He made the fatal mistake of setting a date for Jesus to return. His followers gave away all of their goods and when Jesus did not return at that time, the poor Montanists had to pillage neighboring farms for good until they were scattered by the police” (F.W. Mattox, The Eternal Kingdom, p 78).
2. Hippolytus of Rome (c. 234 A.D.) predicted the return of Christ would be in 500 A.D. (Hippolytus of Rome: The Extant Works and Fragments, earlychristianwritings.com).
3. Other date setters have appeared, including: William Miller, Charles Taze Russell, Edgar Whisenant and others.

B. This is serious. Foy E. Wallace has written, “When innocent people learn that their credulity has been imposed upon, they seldom return to sensible attitudes toward the Bible; they suffer spiritual procrastination, a religious breakdown, they go into infidelity, lose their souls, and speculation is to blame for it” (Wallace, God’s Prophetic Word, p. 232).

II. Premillennialism

A. Premillennialism is an ancient belief system.

1. Philip Schaff, “The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment” (Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, p. 614).
2. Remember that our doctrine should be from scripture, and not from what some in history have believed.

B. Dispensational Premillennialism is relatively new.

1. It was developed in Britain by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) of the Plymouth Brethren.
2. It came to the United States following the civil war (Dispensational Premillennialism, christianitytoday.com).
3. R.H. Bolls (1875-1956) taught this theory in the church of Christ.

C. I believe that premillennialists make a similar mistake to that which was made by vast numbers of Jews long ago. However, it is not my assignment to deal with this.

III. Postmillennialism

A. This view was very popular in the 19th century.

1. Alexander Campbell published a magazine called Millennial Harbinger. Earl West has written, the name of this new periodical was particularly significant. “Campbell believed in the millennium. His view was that the millennium was a period of time when ‘the nations of this world are all to become the kingdoms of our king – they are all to submit to his government, and feel the benign and blissful influence of his scepter.’ Campbell believed that eventually Christianity would triumph over the whole world and the influence of Christ would be pre-eminent” (Earl Irvin West, The Search for Ancient Order, Vol. 1, pp. 71-72).
2. This was popular among Southern Baptist. “This position was popular among Baptists at the SBC’s founding in 1845 but became obsolete in the twentieth century, when the horrors of two world wars left few Christians believing the world would transition seamlessly into a period of harmony and peace” (David Roach, Baptist and the Millennium, sbclife.net).

IV. Amillennialism

A. This position is ancient.

1. Augustine (54-430 A.D.) held this position.
2. This was the most popular view in the west for almost a millennium and a half, following Augustine (David Wright, Amillennialism, christianitytoday.com).

B. This is the common position today, among members of the church of Christ. It is my belief that this is the correct position.

V. Preterism or Realized Eschatology

A. This view is relatively new.

1. James Stuart Russel (1816-1895), a congregational minister, taught this.
2. C.H. Dodd (1884-1973), a congregationalist minister, taught this.
3. C.D. Beagle began to proclaim this, in the church of Christ, in the year 1971.

B. It is a position which leaves much of the Bible irrelevant to us today. This is my opinion.

Conclusion

1. *I have not tried to analyze these various positions. Other speakers will do so.*
2. *I have simply tried to provide some definitions and history to introduce this lectureship.*
3. *I was asked to “bring a good conclusion.” Here it is: While I am interested in eschatology, and while I believe the Bible does address such, let us be more focused on preparing our lives for the things to come. If we do this, all will work together for good (Romans 8).*

How Denominations teach “pre-millennialism.”

Glen Elliott



GLEN ELLIOTT was born October 6, 1954. He and Colleen Fuher were married December 30, 1974 and they have been married for forty-four years. Too this marriage three children were born: Ben Elliott, who is deceased, and Jason Elliott and Elizabeth Elliott Benedict.

Glen started his full-time preaching work in 1977 and the place was Eudora, KS. He attended York College and Bear Valley School of Preaching /Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver, CO. He graduated from: York College with an Associate of Arts; Br Valley School of Preaching with a Bachelor of Theology; and, later he went back to Bear Valley for a Master's in Biblical Studies.

He worked with the church in Eudora, KS for nine and a half years; McPherson, KS for twenty-three years; and he is currently he is working with the church in Greenbrier, AR and has this congregation for nine and half years! He has preached in the following places: Oklahoma, Nebraska, Missouri, and in the Philippines.

During years he has preached, he has written articles which have appeared in: Gospel, the Four-State Gospel News; and he has had articles appear in House to House/Heart to Heart; and he has written articles that have appeared in the local News Paper.

Other thing Glen as done, he had a Radio program published a weekly Newspaper article, counseled and directed Bible Camps, worked in several campaigns, both in the states and abroad, he as authored a book, entitled: “Complete in Christ: Our Journey to Spiritual Maturity.

The belief that the return of Christ will be followed by His literal, one-thousand-year reign on earth is commonly referred to as premillennialism. It is the prevailing end-times doctrine of many religious groups and denominations across our nation. Most of us have heard the outlandish predictions and imaginative depictions so characteristic of this doctrine. But, relatively few non-premillennialists recognize how premillennialism seeks to influence the geo-political landscape of the world.

There are two primary views of premillennialism. Historical premillennialism dates back to the early centuries of the church when many of the church fathers held to a belief in a visible kingdom of God on earth following the return of Christ. For the most part, this view gradually disappeared when the Roman Catholic church rejected it in preference to a symbolic interpretation of the millennium.

Dispensationalism has been the predominate view of premillennialists over the past two centuries. It is a view that divides human history into dispensations, providing a distinction between the way God treats Israel and the way He treats the church in His redemptive plan. Another major distinguishing characteristic of dispensational premillennialism is the insertion of a second and secret return of Christ. Although “The Rapture”, as it is called, varies in its timing from one group of dispensationalists to another; it is, nevertheless, a doctrine that sets them apart from historical premillennialists.

Because premillennialism does not recognize denominational boundaries, it would be a formidable, if not impossible task, to name every religious group or denomination that teaches premillennialism. However, Adams assures us that

“Nearly every major denomination or sect claiming fundamental faith in the Bible, holds to some form of it. It is found in its rankest form among such materialistic groups as the Adventists and Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Baptist Church in the south is infested with it. Most all of the Holiness groups hold to some form of it, and I have encountered it more than once among preachers in the conservative Christian Church. It made inroads into the Lord’s church in the 1920’s and by the early 30’s was deeply entrenched...” (3).

It is often the case, that when we look at a particular denomination's website, we can discover their official view of end-time events. For example, on the Church of God website, in the 13th and 14th statements in their "Declaration of Faith", we read about their belief "In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years." While a little research may give us a pretty good idea about the eschatological beliefs of many denominations, it will not help us with some of the more recently established, entertainment-oriented, religious groups because it is often the case that their statements of faith are deliberately generic so as to appeal to the broadest base of prospective members.

One might argue that even our own websites generally reveal very little about our eschatological beliefs. This is because we reject human creeds. It is, therefore, highly unlikely that a definitive statement about second coming beliefs would be included on the website of most congregations of the Lord's church. But, this is not because we are watering down our message for the purpose of appealing to the masses; it is because we want to promote a healthy respect for the authority of God and encourage individuals to study His word for themselves (Acts 17:11).

The Evangelical Movement is a major factor contributing the rise of premillennialism among Protestant denominations. Its roots reach back to the 18th century to such Protestant reformers as Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, and Dwight L. Moody. In more recent years, the Evangelical Movement's interest in political change was evidenced by Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority of the 1980's. Although the Moral Majority dissolved in 1989, Evangelicals still play a major role in Americans politics.

Among the five beliefs that set Evangelicals apart from other Christians, Traci Schumacher says that, according to the Pew Research Center, is the belief that "there will be a rapture in the end times where the church will be 'caught up with Christ before the Great Tribulation, leaving non-believers behind to suffer on the Earth...'" ("5 Beliefs That Set Evangelicals Apart," 2015). Dispensational premillennialism is a fundamental pillar in Evangelical theology. BBC reports that "Premillennialism is a doctrine particularly popular among Evangelical Protestants in North America" ("End Times," 2011). In a report of the National Association of Evangelicals, we learn that, in an Evangelical Leaders Survey, 65 percent identified with premillennial theology ("Premillennialism Reigns" 2011). Wikipedia lists 153 different denominations calling themselves "Evangelical" ("Evangelical Denominations"). If such information is reliable, then there are nearly 100 different denominations in North America associated with premillennialism.

Some evangelical groups do not take definitive stands on the details of their premillennial leanings; but choose, instead, to leave that up to individual congregations. For example, Jeff Farmer, former president of Open Bible Churches, said that they had amended their "Statement of Faith to give ministers and constituents greater freedom in teaching eschatology" ("Premillennialism Reigns," 2011). Similarly, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association reports, "What is important is that all Christians hold in common that Christ will ultimately return bodily, visibly, and gloriously to reign and rule with His resurrected and transformed saints forever and ever. The details of this great event will be made known in God's own time" ("What Does the Term 'Evangelical' Really Mean?," 2018).

It is unlikely that a mainline, Protestant denomination would become premillennial without also becoming Evangelical because such a shift in theological interpretation would also take them away from their social agenda and symbolic interpretation of the Scriptures.

However, among cults, premillennial views abound but differ in some details from those views commonly accepted among Evangelicals. For example, in their own book entitled, *What Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, included as one of their "27 Fundamental Doctrines", is the following explanation:

"The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first

and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels.

At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever” (26).

The eschatological views of the Jehovah’s Witnesses are cumbersome and subject to change in accordance to their own progressive revelation. Charles Russell, founder of the cult, is best known for his predictions of the end—first in 1914 and, upon recalculation, in 1918. Numerous similar predictions have followed. According to their updated doctrine, Christ’s invisible presence has been with us since 1914. According to their teaching, after “Armageddon there will be a 1,000 year period in which people will be given the opportunity to prove themselves worthy of eternal life” (“Jehovah Witnesses,” 2011). This second chance will be afforded to everyone except their own unfaithful members and those who died as a result of God’s judgment (as in the Flood or at Sodom and Gomorrah). In 1920, Russell’s successor, Joseph Rutherford, wrote a book entitled, “Millions Now Living Will Never Die.” It’s hardly a credible claim and, with each passing year, confidence in its veracity grows dimmer. According to Jehovah Witnesses, “only 144,000 anointed ones will be in heaven as spirit beings”, a number believed to have been long-since fulfilled. Eternal life for everyone will be in a physical body on the renewed earth. The wicked will not suffer eternal torment, but will cease to exist” (“Jehovah Witnesses,” 2011).

How do religious groups and denominations teach premillennialism? As previously alluded to, one way is by setting dates for the Lord’s return. Even as dispensational premillennialism was beginning its resurgence, a considerable amount of attention was garnered by William Miller who was converted from Deism after serving as a captain in the War of 1812. After a two-year study of the Scriptures, Miller was convinced that the Lord would return around the fall of 1843. As many as 50,000 were convinced; but, as time passed by his initial prediction, and, then again, his second prediction, his followers became disillusioned and went back to their normal lives. But, some remained loyal and became the nucleus for a religious group known as “The Seventh-day Adventist Church” (“William Miller,” 2019).

In addition to the previously mentioned deception perpetrated by Charles Russell, founder of what is now called “The Jehovah Witnesses”, there have been numerous others who have sought to get the attention of the masses by predicting the coming of Christ and the end of the world. Jesus prepared His first-century disciples for this, saying, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son but the Father alone” (vs. 36). While excitement and interest may be generated by date-setters, “the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will” (vs. 44). The end result of such false predictions is mounting evidence that those making such predictions have proven themselves to be false prophets (Dt. 18:22).

Perhaps, the most successful means of promoting dispensational premillennialism in recent years is by means of books and movies. “Hal Lindsey’s 1970 runaway bestseller ‘The Late, Great Planet Earth’...sold 28 million copies in its first two decades...and spawned” a 1979 movie by the same title narrated by Orson Welles (“The ‘Left Behind’ series” 2016). Lindsey wrote over 30 books, most of which pound the same premillennial theme. Stafford North quotes from one of these works, The 1980’s, Countdown to Armageddon, where Lindsey says, “All these signs, and many more which are just as visible, point to the fact that this generation is the one that will see the end of this present world and the return of Jesus Christ” (North 5).

Lindsey’s time has come and gone without proof of the accuracy of his prophetic analysis. But, succeeding him in the dispensationalist market were Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins who pointed to a low-budget 1972 film, “A Thief in the Night”, as well as “The Late Great Planet Earth” as inspirations for their series of premillennial novels. Beginning with the 1995 bestseller, “Left Behind”, fifteen ad-

ditional novels were published and 65 million sold. Subsequent movies have been produced following the story line of those “left behind” following the rapture (“The ‘Left Behind’ series” 2016). It may surprise some to learn that there are even more Left Behind children’s novels than there are in the adult series. Sadly, a new generation has been largely indoctrinated into this false doctrine. With little knowledge of the context of biblical prophecy or its historical fulfillment as revealed in Scripture, many are deceived by those who embellish, misapply, and lift passages from their original contexts. Even among premillennialists, there are those who warn these authors about the danger of adding to “*the words of the book of this prophecy...*” (Rev. 22:19).

Earlier we made mention of the fact that dispensational premillennialism seeks to influence U. S. foreign policy. Before we discuss why we lean in that direction, it might prove helpful to briefly review a timeline of proposed events as put forth by dispensational premillennialists.

It is proposed by dispensationalists that Jesus came into this world in order to fulfill Old Testament prophecies and to establish an earthly kingdom. However, His plan was foiled by the unanticipated rejection of the Jews who put Him to death. When it became clear to Jesus that He was not going to be able to set up an earthly kingdom, He put the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies on hold and set up the church as a substitute until He could establish His earthly kingdom. As far as the future is concerned, we are told that Jesus will come secretly and silently in an event called “the Rapture.” At the rapture, Jesus will snatch away the saints, both living and dead, in a mysterious disappearing act that defies the imagination. Those who are left behind will continue on with their lives while the faithful will be with the Lord for seven years. During the first three-and-a-half years following the rapture, with the world populated entirely of unbelievers, there will be a revival of the Jewish nation along with the repossession of the Promised Land, the rebuilding of the temple and the re-establishment of religious services for the Jewish people. The last half of this seven-year period will be a time of immense suffering, appropriately called, the Great Tribulation. Dispensationalists believe that Jesus will return again at the end of the Great Tribulation at which time Satan will be loosed and all the wicked of the world will be gathered against Jesus in what is called, “the Battle of Armageddon.” Christ will eliminate all the opposing forces of wickedness and begin His thousand-year reign in a world populated entirely of believers. It is at this second coming that Christ will assume His rightful place on the throne of David to reign as King of the Jews. Then, at the end of the millennium, Jesus will hand the kingdom over to the Father and take His seat on the great white throne to judge the world and usher in eternity.

Although some details of these proposed events may vary between groups of dispensationalists, one can clearly see that dispensationalism requires the re-establishment of the Jewish nation in the land of Palestine. For that reason, along with the inherent interest in social and political change among Evangelicals, there is a natural marrying together of the interests of Zionism and the beliefs of dispensational premillennialism.

Modern Israel has an interesting but turbulent history. Following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Israel was displaced as a nation. Though they had been but a shell of their former glory—a nation subjugated to the will of Rome—nevertheless, they stood in the shadow of a rebuilt temple, a symbol of their national identity. But, with the destruction of the temple, along with all its genealogical records, the Jewish nation, for all practical purposes passed out of existence (Mt. 23:37-24:2).

“In the early 19th century interest in a return of the Jews to Palestine was kept alive mostly by Christian millenarians.” Zionism, a Jewish nationalist movement whose goal it is “to create and support a Jewish national state in Palestine”, did not originate until the latter part of the 19th century...” (“Zionism” 2019). Does this not suggest the sympathetic support of dispensationalists to “keep alive” the hope of a Jewish national state in Palestine? Does the goal of creating a Jewish state suggest that, at that time, there was no such Jewish state? We should keep in mind that, by the latter part of the 19th century, the Evangelical Movement was well underway and that one of the fundamental tenets of dispensational premillennialism requires the restoration of Israel to Palestine. Although it was a long and

arduous journey, the State of Israel was created on May 14th, 1948. It is not much of a stretch to say that dispensationalists provided aid and support to the cause.

There is little doubt but that the conservative right has both courted and enjoyed the support of politically active Evangelicals. Key issues, important to religious conservatives, can swing the vote substantially. Being a friend to Israel is one such issue. Those who believe in a future connection between the restoration of Israel and the rapture would certainly pay attention to any political party or candidate who expresses affinity with the state of Israel. There is little doubt but that President Trump, along with a number of presidents before him, covets the support of Evangelicals. Moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem plays well in the hearts and minds of politically conservative Evangelicals who believe in Christ's coming millennial reign on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

How does all this play out in the biblical history of the nation of Israel? God's three-fold promise to Abram included a land promise (Gen. 12:1-3). This promise was repeated several times and confirmed both to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 13:14-17; 17:8; 26:3-4; 28:13). The extent of this promise is clarified in Genesis 15:18 where God says, *"To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates."* In other words, God promised Palestine to the descendants of Abraham.

Dispensationalists claim that this promise has never been fully-fulfilled and, therefore, when Jesus comes in His earthly reign, He will finally make good on His promise to give to Israel the land of Palestine as an everlasting possession. Allan Ross of the Dallas Theological Seminary, a strongly dispensational institution, says that "Israel had never possessed this land in its entirety, but she will when Christ returns to reign as Messiah" ("Notes From The Margin" 1990).

However, Scripture paints a different picture. Joshua regarded the land promise as having been fulfilled. Following the conquest of the land, after the distribution of 48 cities and their pasture lands to the Levites, Joshua made this observation: *"So the Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the Lord gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass"* (Josh. 21:43-45). The land promise was completely fulfilled. All the land that was promised had been given. Not one promise failed.

While it is true that the land was not fully-occupied in the initial stages of the kingdom, this is not evidence of an unfulfilled promise. This was a progressive promise and there was reason for a slower, more gradual extension of occupied territory. In light of their challenge to *"dispossess nations greater and mightier"* than they (Dt. 9:1), Moses reassures the Israelites, saying, *"the Lord your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God. The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them quickly, for the wild beasts would grow too numerous for you"* (Dt. 7:21-22). The land had been given and the promise fulfilled. However, the actual occupation of the land required ongoing struggle and persistent faith in God who had been fighting for them (Josh. 23:3). Even as God kept His promise, He did so in a way that was to their advantage. *"The Lord did not set His love on [them] nor choose [them] because [they] were more in number than any of the peoples, for [they] were the fewest of all peoples..."* (Dt. 7:7). They could not have fully-occupied the land at the time the Lord fulfilled His promise to Abraham. Nor could they have driven out the inhabitants of the land without the Lord's help. In fact, the Lord's continued help in expanding their occupation of the land was conditioned upon their faithfulness. Again, in his farewell address to the people, Joshua exhorts them, saying, *"For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you"* (Josh. 23:12-13). Both God's

help in driving out the inhabitants of the land and their continued existence in the land were conditioned upon their faithfulness to the Lord. Yet, in the very next verse, Joshua goes on to assure his people that *“not one word of all the good words which the Lord your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed”* (vs. 14).

Eventually, the land that God had given was fully occupied. In the days of King Solomon, the nation of Israel stretched from the Euphrates *“to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt”* (1 Kgs. 4:21). In other words, all of Palestine was under his domain. The claim that God never fulfilled His promise to Israel is bogus. The underpinnings of the dispensationalist’s belief in the earthly reign of Christ, headquartered in Jerusalem, crumbles under the weight of biblical testimony.

A subtle confirmation of Israel’s complete possession of the land is indicated by the establishment of *“cities of refuge.”* These are cities to which someone guilty of manslaughter might flee for protection from family members of the deceased seeking retribution (Num. 35:6-28). God’s instructions provided for six cities of refuge; three on each side of the Jordan (vss. 13-14). Three cities of refuge were established in the early stages of conquering and occupying the land. Three additional cities of refuge would be added on a conditional basis. Take special note of the conditional nature of Moses’ instructions: *“If the LORD your God enlarges your territory, just as He has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land which He promised to give your fathers— if you carefully observe all this commandment which I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in His ways always—then you shall add three more cities for yourself, besides these three”* (Dt. 19:8-9). As Joshua divided up the land among the various tribes of Israel, he makes specific mention of six cities of refuge (Josh. 20:7-8). This is further confirmation that God had fulfilled His promise to give them all the land of Canaan. There were yet battles to be fought as they continued their expansion, but they were established in the land God had given them. Years later, in a spiritual revival following their return from Babylonian Captivity, certain Levites stood on a platform before the people and praised the Lord, saying, *“You are the LORD God, Who chose Abram And brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees, And gave him the name Abraham. You found his heart faithful before You, And made a covenant with him To give him the land of the Canaanite, Of the Hittite and the Amorite, Of the Perizzite, the Jebusite and the Girgashite— To give it to his descendants. And You have fulfilled Your promise, For You are righteous”* (Nehemiah 9:7-8). Hardly a promise can be found in Scripture so abundantly confirmed in its fulfillment as God’s promise to give all the land of Canaan to the children of Israel (see also Ps. 105:42-45). Even today, it is highly unlikely that we could find a faithful Jew who would deny the fulfillment of God’s promise to give Abraham’s descendants the land of Canaan. Doing so would diminish the glory of God in keeping His promises, deny the plain teaching of the inspired record, and abdicate their right to recreate the state of Israel in a land which, according to the dispensationalists, was never really fully theirs in the first place.

The quandary posed by such a realization has caused some to abandon the position that God has not fulfilled the land promise. Instead, they take the position that, while God did fulfill His promise, the “forever” nature of that promise is not currently realized. Therefore, say many of the dispensationalists, the state of Israel must be re-established on earth during the first half of the Great Tribulation.

When God renewed His promise to Abram, following his separation from Lot, He said, *“Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever”* (Gen. 13:14-15). In Genesis 17:8, God refers to *“all the land of Canaan”* as their *“everlasting possession.”* However, the word so translated in both instances “is not always used in the Bible in a completely unlimited sense” (“Examining Premillennialism”). “Age-lasting” seems to be its meaning in this context or, as Adam Clarke renders it: “to the end of the present dispensation” (99). If the word translated “forever” or “everlasting” always means “lasting forever”, then present-day Jews should still be celebrating the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Ex. 12:14, 17; Lev. 23:39-

42). They should still be observing the Sabbath, the practice of circumcision, and offering animal sacrifices on the Day of Atonement (Ex. 31:16-17; Gen. 17:10-13; Lev. 16:29-34). The priesthood of Aaron should still be in force along with “many other elements of the Law which are described as ‘everlasting ordinances’” (“The Time of the End”).

However, these are things which were never intended to last forever. They serve as “*a shadow of good things to come*” (Hb. 10:1). The Law of Moses has been taken away, having been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:14-15). Circumcision, as a religious ordinance, is no longer in force for “*in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love*” (Gal. 5:6). These aforementioned elements were part of the Law of Moses, which was never intended to be “everlasting” in the ordinary sense of the English word. The Law of Moses served as a “*tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor*” (Gal. 3:24-25).

We have already emphasized the conditional nature of the land promise made to the Jewish people. Their continued existence in the land was dependent upon their faithfulness to the Lord. Israel forfeited their right to the Promised Land when they abandoned the conditions upon which God’s promise was made. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was carried away into Assyrian Captivity in 722 B.C. and the Southern Kingdom of Judah into Babylonian Captivity in 586 B.C. As predicted by the prophets, Judah returned from captivity. The temple was rebuilt and the Messianic line preserved. The restoration of Judah to its homeland is one of the truly unique events of human history. However, many of the prophecies tied to the return of the Jewish people to the homeland are misapplied by dispensationalists to end-time events.

Just as it had been prior to their expulsion from the land, so also, following their return from captivity, their continued existence in the land of promise was contingent upon remaining faithful to God. Prior to captivity, the Jewish nation had a long history of rebellion and apostasy. After their return to the land, as the time drew near for the coming of the Messiah, the spiritual condition of the Jewish people had degenerated once again, especially among their religious leaders. They killed the prophets sent to them and crucified the Son of God. With the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70, “the Jewish nation was destroyed...[and] was so permanently scattered by the providence of God that it cannot be made whole again” (“Examining Premillennialism”). For this reason, we must reject the theory of dispensational premillennialism. At the same time, we must love the souls of Jewish people enough to point them to Christ as the promised Messiah. For, in Christ, “*there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3:28).

Under the old system, as a means of preserving the Messianic line, the Jewish nation enjoyed special favor with God. This became a prevalent theme in the Law of Moses. As a new generation was preparing itself for the task the previous generation had rejected, Moses encouraged them, saying, “*you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but the Lord loved you and kept the oath which he swore to your forefathers...*” (Dt. 7:6–8a cf. Ex. 32:13). It was not for any inherent worth which they possessed that they were chosen; nor was it because of their own righteousness that the Lord gave them the land of promise (Dt. 9:6). It was because God had made a promise to Abraham. They had merely stepped into that promise because they were his physical descendants. What really matters today is spiritual ancestry. “*For if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise*” (Gal. 3:29).

The special status of Israel under the Law was conditional. As Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments, God said, “*Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be*

to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:5–6). “If...then” expresses a conditional promise. Similarly, on Mt. Gerizim, from which the Lord pronounced His blessings, we read the following conditional promise: “Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth” (Dt. 28:1). So, even in the Mosaic Age, the special status of the Jewish people was conditioned upon their love and devotion for God.

Whether Jew or Gentile, Christians are the special people of God. Peter uses Old Testament terminology to describe our relationship with God, saying, “*But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY*” (1 Pet. 2:9–10). Or, as Paul said it, “*they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants...*” (Rm. 9:6–7). In Christ, we are the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

There is no longer any particular value in placing confidence in being a physical descendant of Abraham. John the Baptist rightly said that “*from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham*” (Mt. 3:9). Christ is our only hope; for He alone is the Savior of the whole world (Acts 4:12; Jn. 4:42).

So, in the light of what the Bible teaches, we must not push the nation of Israel into a position she no longer deserves; nor paint for her a fictitious future based on misapplied prophecies. Nor, should we encourage the re-establishment of a system which has been long since abrogated. If there is one thing we have learned in looking at the Law of Moses as a backdrop for the Christian faith; it is that justification is impossible apart from Christ and His sacrifice (Gal. 5:4; Hb. 10:4). Furthermore, any belief system that diminishes the glory of Christ by suggesting that He was unable to accomplish His intended purpose or fulfill His promises is unworthy of serious consideration. We must study these matters with an open mind, allow clearer passages to shed light on the more difficult passages, and remember that truth does not contradict itself. In the end, God’s word is always its own best commentary.

We need not delve into the fanciful realm of dispensational premillennialism to get excited about future events. It “*is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment...*” (Hb. 9:27). There will be one resurrection of the good and the evil (Jn. 5:25–29). The “*Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power...*” (2 Th. 1:7–9). He is coming with the clouds and “*every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him...*” (Rev. 1:7). The book of life will be opened and “*each one of us will give an account of himself to God*” (Rev. 20:12; Rm. 14:12). No secret coming of Christ and mysterious rapture. No thousand-year earthly reign of Christ on the throne of David. The “*heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up*” (2 Pet. 3:10). Following judgment, the wicked “*will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life*” (Mt. 25:46). No second chance for Christ to set up an earthly kingdom. His kingdom is the church and the church is His kingdom (Mt. 16:18–19; Col. 1:13). Perhaps, the reason why so many set their sights on the fantasy world of dispensational premillennialism is so that they might divert attention away from the simple and sober truth of man’s personal accountability before God.

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The so-called “A.D. 70” doctrine

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He graduated from Harding University's Christian Communication Program (Now the School of Biblical Studies) in 1980 – 1982, and he attended Oklahoma Christian College (now University) from 1967- 1968 and 1992 – 1993, receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Bible.

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As a note of interest, Dan attended the Barnes church of Christ in 1952 and attended the Schwartz school in the area. Schwartz was one of the last one room schools in the state and Dan was one of three in the second grade. The family moved to McCloud, OK in 1953.

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Introduction

A. *My assignment for this evening is to address what is known as the “70 A.D. Doctrine” and the fact that it is a false doctrine.*

B. *What we see happening with this is exactly what was foretold by the apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 4:3-4.*

1. **2 Timothy 4:3-4**, *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.”*
2. This false doctrine initially began in the 17th century with Spanish Jesuit Friar, Luisde Alcazar.
3. The modern seeds were sown by James Russell, A Congregational minister in the 1800's in his book “The Parousia”, A Careful look at the N.T. Doctrine of the 2nd Coming of Christ”.
4. In the Lord's church, from all I could find, it was first taught by Max R. King in a lectureship at the Bookwood Way c of C in Mansfield, OH. King was assisted in this by his father-in-law, C.D. Beagle.
5. One of the main promoters of this false doctrine here in Oklahoma is Don Preston who began this in the 1980's at the Eastmain church of Christ in Shawnee, OK, he then moved to Ardmore where he remains to this day.

C. *So, let's look at the main tenets of this doctrine and how the scripture proves they are false.*

1. There are several different names given to this doctrine.
 - a. A.D. 70 Doctrine

- b. Realized Eschatology (doctrine of completed things)
- c. Fulfilled Eschatology
- d. Covenant Eschatology
- e. Preterist

D. Simply stated, the AD 70 doctrine teaches that all Biblical prophecies were fulfilled by, or at, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

1. Simply stated, this means that the Second Coming of Jesus, the Resurrection, and the Day of Judgment all happened at that time.
2. Those who believe and teach this false doctrine have totally twisted the scriptures to fit what they want to believe.
3. The apostle Paul warns of those who would twist the scriptures concerning these things.
4. **2 Timothy 2:17-18**, *“and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some.”*

E. So, let’s look at the main points of this false doctrine and how they do not fit with God’s Word.

I. First – The Resurrection.

A. The 70 A.D. doctrine teaches that the resurrection happened at the destruction of Jerusalem and denies a bodily resurrection.

1. The apostle Paul had to deal with some brethren in the church at Corinth who did not believe there would be a physical resurrection of the dead.
2. Notice what Paul says to them about this in 1 Cor. 15:12-14.
3. **1 Corinthians 15:12-14**, *“Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.”*
4. Paul also points out here in previous vs. (4-8) that over 500 people were personal witnesses of the resurrection of Christ.

B. Paul is pointing out that it is an actual fact that Jesus was raised from the dead and that proves that there will be an actual resurrection of the dead for man also.

1. Paul emphatically says we will be raised from the dead.
2. **1 Cor. 15:52**, *“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”*
3. Jesus, Himself, taught this same thing very clearly as recorded in John 5.
4. **John 5:28-29**, *“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”*

C. One of the best passages dealing with this is in Luke 20:34-36 where Jesus, Himself, states very plainly that there will not only be a resurrection but describes what that resurrection will be like.

1. In this passages, the Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection themselves, try to trap Jesus with a story and question.
2. They describe a woman who was married to seven brothers – one after the other after each one died, according to the Law, having no children.
3. Their question – which one will she be married to in the resurrection?
4. Notice the Lord's answer to them.
5. **Luke 20:34-36**, "*And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; 36 for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."*
6. The 70 A.D. advocates say that here Jesus is referring to spiritual death and resurrection – no more spiritual death.
 - a. If that is the case that also demands no more cause of spiritual death, what causes spiritual death – sin.
 - b. Rom. 6:23 states very plainly the cause of spiritual death is sin and, if this is what Jesus means here in Luke 20 that means there cannot be any more sin that cause spiritual death.
 - c. If sin ended in 70 A.D. then, where is all the sin coming from that we see all around us in our world today?

D. It is obvious that the resurrection of man did not happen in 70 A.D.

E. The 70 A.D. proponents argue that the resurrection prophecied is the resurrection of the church from spiritual death in 70 A.D.

1. Their teaching is that all these prophecies of a resurrection are not referring to a physical resurrection of people but a spiritual resurrection of the church.
2. Here is a quote from Max King, "Out of the decay of Judiasm (destruction of Jerusalem) arose the spiritual body of Christ."
3. They say that Judiasm had spiritually choked and strangled the Lord's church till it was totally incapacitated and, therefore, when Judiasm was destroyed the church rose from the dead.

F. What about the church from its establishment up until 70 A.D. Was it spiritually dead, totally incapacitated?

1. Think about some of the New Testament books – Acts (about the establishment and growth of the church); Col., Phil., Eph. Written to congregations of the church, were these congregations spiritually dead?
2. Acts –

- a. 2:41 – 3000 souls added.
 - b. 2:47 – number being added day by day.
 - c. 5:14 – constantly more and more being added.
 - d. 5:42 – kept right on preaching and teaching.
 - e. 9:31 – churches throughout Judea, Galatia and Samaria continued to increase.
3. Paul's letters to the churches – read these, does it sound like these are congregations spiritually dead? Absolutely not! Paul praises them for their great faith and the great works they are doing.

G. The prophecied resurrection is about man being raised from the dead at the coming of Christ.

1. **John 5:28-29**, *“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”*
2. **1 Corinthians 15:52**, *“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”*
3. **Acts 24:15**, *“having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”*
4. These are not some symbolic statements! It's very obvious they mean exactly what they say!
5. In the resurrection our physical, decayed bodies are replaced with an eternal, imperishable body in which, those who are faithful to God, will live eternally with God and Christ.

II. Secondly, the Second Coming and Judgment.

A. The 70 A.D. people teach that Christ's 2nd coming happened at the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 A.D.

1. Again, total misuse, misinterpretation of scripture.
2. They use Matt. 24:29-34 as a their basis for this and apply all other references of the 2nd coming to this passage.
3. Back in the mid 80's I had not yet heard of this 70 A.D. teaching and we moved to the East Main congregation in Shawnee where this had been taught there by Don Preston who left.
 - a. In one of our elders/deacons meetings a couple of the deacons wanted to start teaching a class about this, not knowing about it I questioned them about it.
 - b. After hearing the basis of this doctrine – Christ's 2nd coming happened in 70 A.D. I had to ask them a question.
 - c. I said, I notice that you both still partake of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day. They said, “of course we do, why?”
 - d. I responded with **1 Cor. 11:26**, *“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.”* I asked them, if the Lord has already come, what is the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper?

- e. They just looked at me, at each other and gave no answer. Fortunately, 2 of the 3 elders stood up against them and refused to let it be taught.
- 4. Those who teach this totally ignore the overall context of what Jesus is teaching here in Matt. 24.
 - a. When you add the rest of the chapter beginning with vs. 36 its very plain that Jesus is discussing two separate comings here.
 - b. The first – vs. 29-34 He describes some great signs and says in vs. 33, “*When you see all these things know He is right at the door.*” In other words, you will know it is about to happen.
 - c. But, of the other coming, notice what Jesus says about it in vs. 36, “*But of that day and hour no one knows*”! No signs, no signals of any kind.
 - d. Obviously two different comings of His that Jesus is describing here.
- 5. Jesus did come in judgment on Jerusalem in 70 A.D. – NOT in person – no one saw Him or angels. No one heard trumpets in heaven when this happened as is stated concerning His literal 2nd coming.
 - a. And, how many were raised from the dead in 70 A.D. when Rome destroyed Jerusalem – None!

B. Jesus made very plain that His literal 2nd coming, that is, His final coming is something every person on the face of this earth will see.

- 1. **Revelation 1:7**, “***BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS***, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen.”
- 2. **Acts 1:11**, “and they also said, “ *Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.*”

C. But, Jesus 2nd coming will not just be seen by everyone, it will affect everyone.

- 1. We learn this from Jesus, Himself.
- 2. **John 5:28-29**, “*Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*”
- 3. The Apostle Paul also spoke concerning this.
- 4. **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**, “*Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.*”
- 5. Notice – not some will be changed, not certain ones will be changed – ALL will be changed at His 2nd, His final coming.
- 6. And, at that time, as Jesus said in Jn. 5:28-29, we will all stand in judgment before God.
 - a. For those who are faithful Christians, it will be a tremendously wonderful day.
 - b. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**, “*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in*

Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."

D. Brethren, it's pretty obvious that this did not happen in 70 A.D.

1. Are we all still here, YES!
2. Are people the world over still having to choose whether TO or NOT TO believe in and obey God, YES!
3. It's obvious that Jesus' 2nd Coming and Judgment Day have not happened yet.

III. Thirdly, Fulfillment Of Prophecy.

A. The 70 A.D. people insist that all Biblical prophecies were fulfilled in 70 A.D.

1. Add to this, they also teach that the Law of Moses was still in effect until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
2. They teach that from the Cross till 70 A.D. both, the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ were both in effect.
3. They say that the Cross of Christ did not end the Law of Moses but began a transition period that was completed, finalized at the destruction of Jerusalem.
4. This ended the Jews thus, ending their law. Their support for this is Heb. 8:13.
5. **Hebrews 8:13**, *"When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear."*
 - a. They ignore the fact that the writer of this letter is referring to the prophecy of Jeremiah he just quoted, a prophecy made approximately 600 years before Christ came as one of us.
 - b. Jeremiah gave the people a prophecy of what was to come many, many years in the future and was pointing out that God promised a new covenant that meant the one they now had, at that time, was going to disappear.
 - c. Jeremiah was not speaking to the Jews at the time of Christ, those people saw this prophecy fulfilled with the coming of Christ and the establishment of His church.

B. God makes very plain in His word that we cannot be subject to two laws at the same time.

1. The apostle Paul made very plain in Rom. 7:1-4 that one cannot subject themselves to two laws at the same time, to do so would be spiritual adultery.
 - a. Paul makes very plain in vs. 4 that when they became Christians they symbolically died to the Law of Moses.
 - b. **Romans 7:4**, *"Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God."*
2. In Gal. 3 Paul uses the allegory of Abraham and his seed to describe the difference between the old law and the new law.
 - a. Paul then says in vs. 24-25 that the old law was a tutor to lead us to Christ that we may be justified by faith. But, now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor, no

longer under that old law.

- b. This was written several years before 70 A.D., approximately 50 A.D.
- c. But, notice what Paul says in 5:4.
- d. **Galatians 5:4**, *“You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”*
- e. Paul plainly says here that they could not serve the law and Christ at the same time, it was the Law of Christ or not be right with God.

Conclusion

A. *With all we have discussed, I think it is very plain that all Bible prophecies were not fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.*

B. *There is one other thing we must consider as we close out this discussion, that is one more passage to look at.*

- 1. **2 Peter 3:10-13**, *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”*
- 2. Peter states plainly here that when Jesus comes for His 2nd, final coming the earth and all in it will be burned up.
- 3. He says we will be given a new heaven and a new earth, obviously referring to our eternal dwelling place.
- 4. Yet, there are those who say we got the new earth when Jerusalem was destroyed.
- 5. But, Peter said, it will be a place where “righteousness dwells”! If this is it, where is all the righteousness? Our world is totally being destroyed by sin.
- 6. I have never, in my life, seen the horrible things happen like they are today.

B. *Brethren, I think it is very plain and obvious that this 70 A.D. doctrine is totally false, totally contrary to God’s Word!*

- 1. We must remember we are not allowed to interpret or twist God’s word to make it say what we want it to say or wish it said.
- 2. There is only ONE interpretation of God’s word and that is God’s interpretation.
- 3. **2 Peter 1:20-21**, *“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”*
- 4. The Lord is going to actually, literally come again!
- 5. At that time all those faithful to the Lord, dead or alive, will rise to meet Him in the air and will be with Him for eternity in the most wonderful dwelling we will have ever

known.

6. At the same time, those unfaithful to God will rise to stand before Him in judgment and be sentenced to an eternity in the fires of hell with the Devil and his angels.
7. Every one of us has been given the opportunity, the freedom to choose which one of these two groups we will be in.
 - a. It is up to each one of us to choose – to believe in, serve and be fully faithful to God and our Savior, Jesus Christ OR to choose to go our own way and do what we want to do the way we want to do it.
8. If the Lord were to return right now, during this service, which of these two groups would you be in?

“The Last Days” as Used in the New Testament

Gary Smith

GARY SMITH was born in Memphis, TN on January 9, 1952. He and Peggy (June) Smith were married on February 12, 1971, this means they have been married forty-eight years. To this marriage two children were born: Brent who preaches for the Trenton church of Christ and Rachel Smith Rezach who is a Registered Nurse.

Gary started preaching in 1973 and working with Mount Zion church of Christ (TN). He has preached for forty-six years. He attended the Memphis School of Preaching and the University of Arkansas and he graduated from the Memphis School of Preaching.

He has local work with the churches in Clarkesville, GA, Dahlonega, GA, Ozark, AR, Kingston, TN, Shirley, AR, and Obion, TN. Gary has preached in gospel meetings with the church in Steubenville, OH, Eastview, TN and the Barnes church of Christ in OK.

Gary has written articles appearing in: Contending for the Faith and The Gospel Standard. Gary has spoken on the “Annual Oklahoma City Lectures.”

The expression “last days” has been variously interpreted by commentators, preachers, and Bible students. Suggestions of the proper meaning of the term include, Christian dispensation, the last days of the reign of Judaism, the last days of the earth, the days of the millennial reign of Christ. In this treatise no extensive effort is made to detail the credentials or fallacies of these views; but due diligence shall be given to the words of the prophets who have patiently paid the price to have their words heard, heeded, and heralded.

Upon hearing the words, “last days” one should immediately respond with the question, “last days” of what? We shall begin by allowing the prophets to guide us in our thinking; for such was their mission; for such was their determination; and for such a mission they were equipped.

Peter, quoting the prophet Joel, spoke of the last days using these words:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: (Acts 2:17-18)

Peter spoke these words in response to those who were saying, “... *These men are full of new wine.*” (Acts 2:13b). Peter explained the tongue speaking phenomena by quoting from the prophet. Peter said, “*But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.*” (Acts 2:16). Since Peter was explaining that the linguistic abilities of these men was not due to wine (but rather Joel had prophesied of this event as indicated by the words “this is that”) many have concluded that the expression “this is that” refers exclusively to the speaking in tongues of the apostles. Yet Joel applies his prophecy to “sons and daughters.” The apostles were not daughters, and neither did daughters prophesy on this day. That daughters did not prophesy on this day is evidenced by the fact that the audience responded by saying, “*Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?*” (Acts 2:7b) If we allow Peter to explain Joel, and also carefully examine the words of Joel, then we must recognize that the expression “this is that” cannot refer exclusively to the apostles; for their group did not include any women. All of the apostles were from Galilee. But in a broader sense of application it can be said that the speaking in tongues of the apostles is included in the outpouring of the Spirit that was promised by Joel. But was this the beginning of the outpouring of the Spirit? More importantly - Is this the beginning of the last days? If this is the beginning of the last days where are the sons and daughters?

The Sons and Daughters did prophesy as was spoken by the prophet Joel, but their prophecies were not heard on the day of Pentecost; and it is the sons and daughters that Joel prophesied about in Joel 2:28. If one takes the view that the prophesying of the sons and daughters is what marks the beginning

of the last days then according to their logic the last days did not begin on Pentecost since no daughters prophesied on Pentecost. This eliminates the theory that the last days began on Pentecost. However, Pentecost did take place “in the last days” though it certainly did not mark the beginning of the latter days.

The “last days” are the last days of prophecy. The application of the expression “last days” is astutely applied by Joel to the times and events of the days of prophetic utterance. The “latter days” describes the interval of prophesies from beginning to end. And if we follow Joel and the corroboration of other inspired writers our eyes will be focused as the signs of the times unfold revealing the Prophetic Dispensation beginning with the dreams of Joseph and the wisemen, and the prophecies of Elisabeth and Zacharias.

May we now examine the utterance of Joel again: *“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:”* (Joel 2:28). When did these sons and daughters begin to dream dreams? Matthew records the event of an angel speaking to Joseph as Joseph contemplated putting Mary away: *“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”* (Matthew 1:20) Then again, we read about the dreams of the wisemen: *“And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.”* (Matthew 2:12). While it is true that the Greek word for dream is *ὄναρ* - pronounced **onar** in Matthew 1:20 and the word used by Peter in Acts 2:17 is *ὀράσεις* - pronounced **horaseis** (sight, vision, appearance) it should be noted that dreams are a class of visions. Joel said young men would have visions and old men would dream dreams as did the wisemen when they were warned of the angel. *“...your sons and your daughters shall prophesy ...”* According to Joel, Peter, and Luke;

Elisabeth is one of the daughters of Joel’s prophecy.

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. (Luke 1:41-42).

Simeon is one of the sons of Joel’s prophecy:

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. (Luke 2:25-26)

(And - “Even) on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:” This expression “servants and handmaidens” is Hebrew parallelism that references the “sons and daughters” in the previous verse. The sons are the servants and the daughters are the handmaidens. The Hebrew word “and” may rightfully be understood as “even,” and as such it emphasizes that these sons and daughters who prophesy are “servant prophets” and “servant prophetesses.” By this it is meant that they do not hold the office of a prophet, rather they prophesied on a particular occasion, and they could not choose to call on the gift of prophecy. The apostles were prophets of the highest order in that they could prophesy at their choosing and also could pass on the power of prophecy to others by the laying on of their hands. Those who had hands laid on them could likewise prophesy at their choosing and they were prophets, but they were not apostle prophets. They could not pass on the power of prophecy to another. Paul said to Timothy, *“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”* (2 Tim 1:6-7). Paul was encouraging Timothy to use his gift more often and not allow fear to restrain him from teaching

others the gospel. Timothy could prophesy at his own choosing, and the expression “stir up the gift of God” implied that Timothy could have been teaching more than he was. The prophesying however of the servants and handmaidens were the early signs of the new prophetic era. The beginning of the last days was signified by the prophesying of the male and female servants (*doulous* and *doulas*) of God. They were not prophets in the sense of holding the office of a prophet or in having the ability to call on the gift of prophecy at their choosing.

The beginning of the last days was also marked by the breaking of prophetic silence. For more than 400 years God did not speak through any prophet. Four hundred years of silence was shattered by the voice of John the baptizer:

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (Matthew 3:1-3).

Jesus said of John:

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: (Matthew 11:9-11a).

John was the first earthly prophet (endowed with prophecy; the gift of prophecy) that broke the era of silence; and in the wilderness he reigned in the DISPENSATION OF PROPHECY.

Joel explains a portion of his prophecy in these words: “*And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:*” The wonders in heaven above are manifested when the sun is “*turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.*” The signs in the earth beneath are revealed by “*blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.*” Joel says these events are in the last days. Joel does not say, and Joel does not imply that these events were the beginning of the last days (beginning, first day of). There is no need to search for the proper interpretation of these words. Joel speaks of events that precede “*the great and notable day of the Lord.*” Peter also speaks of events that come before “*the great and notable day of the Lord.*” But what great and notable day does the apostle Peter address? The day of complete forgiveness being offered through the blood of Christ. This particular Pentecost is the beginning of forgiveness. This day marks the forbearance of God bringing it to an end. This day is the Lord’s Day. Does the apostle not go on to say, “*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved?*” (Acts 2:21). Joel’s prophecy includes dreams, prophecy, tongues, and visions. But all of these things were to bring about the salvation of man. The prophecy of Joel is not about the miracles; rather it is about what the miracles bring to man through the knowledge of the Son of God. Joel’s prophecy is about all the things that signified the “*great and notable day of the Lord.*”

The “*great and notable day of the Lord*” is here according to Peter. What revealed this day to the audience that he addressed? The preceding events described by Joel in the words “*wonders in the heaven above.*” What were these wonders? Peter says, “*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.*” (Acts 2:20) When did this occur? Peter says it occurred, “*before the great and notable day of the Lord come:*” (Acts 2:20b). The great and notable day is Pentecost and these events came before Pentecost. The wonders in heaven above took place when Jesus was crucified: “*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.*” (Matthew 27:45). What else would take place before the great and notable day of the Lord? There shall be “*signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.*” These signs in the earth beneath are blood (the blood of Christ), fire (fire from the renting of the earth) and vapor of smoke (from the earthquake) occurring

immediately after the crucifixion:

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. (Matthew 27:51-53).

The last days begin with the prophetic utterances of angels that predict the birth of Christ to Joseph (Matthew 1:20); utterances that warn Joseph of the evil intentions of Herod (Matthew 2:13) and warn the wisemen not to return to Herod (Matthew 2:12). The latter (last) days define that era of time wherein God speaks again to his people after 400 (approximate) years of divine silence. Whether by heavenly harbingers, apostles, inspired penman, prophets, or the Only Begotten Son, God is speaking in the latter days. So, when do the last days begin? They begin when God through inspiration speaks. When do the last days end? They end when God no longer speaks through inspiration. Malachi was one of the last Old Testament books written, and shortly after the writing of Malachi God ceased to speak through his prophets. Malachi however foresaw that God would begin a new prophetic era, and he describes the beginning of that era in these words: *“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.”* (Malachi 3:1). The messenger that would prepare the way for Jehovah is called Elijah; but this Elijah is John the baptist who came in the spirit of Elijah: *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”* (Malachi 4:5-6). The angels, John the baptist, and Jesus, are the early prophets that mark the beginning of the New Prophetic Era (the last days). GOD IS SPEAKING AGAIN.

The Dispensation of Prophecy embraced that period of time when the Kingdom of God began; and the Kingdom began when men and women obeyed the gospel at the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. The last days did not begin when the Kingdom began; but the beginning of the New Covenant Kingdom fell within the era of the last or latter days. Isaiah prophesied of the New Covenant Kingdom when he said, *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”* (Isaiah 2:2). Isaiah did not say, nor did he imply, that the beginning of the Lord’s house was the beginning of the last days.

The New Prophetic Era encompassed that period of time that captured the inspired expressions of God, whether by dream, vision, or spoken word, and placed those expressions in written word. Jesus is the chief prophet of the New Covenant Kingdom, and He speaks to us today through the inspired written word. However, the Prophetic Era (last days) is that period of time, the interval of time, wherein and whereby those revelations are captured and placed in written form. The Hebrew author describes this Prophetic Era in these words: *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”* (Heb. 1:1-2). We are amenable to the New Covenant of Christ today, but the expression *“hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son”* describes the days of captured inspiration wherein angels spoke to men; wherein inspired prophets revealed the will of Christ, and apostles spoke only what they had authority to speak in behalf of the Anointed. When did the latter days begin? They began when God began to speak. When did the latter days end? They ended when the inspired expressions of God had been recorded (written) and disseminated to all the earth.

The so-called Relationship between Pre-millennialism” and the “Great Tribulation

John Raddish



John Reddish was born March 22, 1939 in McAlester, OK. He and Irene have been married for fifty-seven years. From this marriage two children were born: Cherie DeAnn and Malinda. Cherie DeAnn Richardson is now a Doctor and Malinda Douglas holds a PHD.

John started preaching in 1957, at the age of nineteen. He first preached in Scipio, OK. Scipio is twelve miles northwest of McAlester. An interesting fact about Scipio, is that it was named after a nearby creek, which was in turn named for the Roman general Scipio Africanus. John has been preaching off and on for sixty years. He has never done local work as a preacher.

He has attended Eastern Oklahoma State, East Central State, Northwestern State and the University of Oklahoma and he graduated from East Central State and Northwestern State.

He hosted the Serving the Savior Study Series where he met many of the old-time preachers and teacher of the gospel.

This article presents the purpose and place of the tribulation related to millennialism based on a pre-tribulation “Rapture.” A speaker’s commentary that refutes the teaching of millennialism closes the article. According to this doctrine, a seven-year tribulation starts after the Rapture and precedes a 1,000-year earthly reign of Christ (millennialism). A key premise in this doctrine is that Christ was not to be crucified, but was to establish a 1,000-year earthly reign over God’s people.

Those who believe in millennialism and the tribulation use the book of Daniel, Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, and Revelation 4 thru 20 as the scriptural basis. Another key premise is that the first-century Jews unexpectedly rejected Jesus as the Christ, causing God to postpone the tribulation and the earthly kingdom.

The following materials are from a variety of Millennialist-related websites and are for informational purposes only. In no way does it reflect the teaching of the Bible or of this speaker.

This assumed postponement leaves many Old Testament prophecies unfulfilled. This provides us some insight into the place of the tribulation. In order to fulfill some prophecies in Daniel, they believe they must revive the Roman Empire and rebuild the Temple. Although the Roman Empire (legs of iron, Daniel 2) has been dead for approximately 1,500 years, the belief is that it will be revived in the tribulation period, as the ten toes-horns (countries, nations).

The figure shown comes from a Millennialist website. It illustrates their view of the timeline of the tribulation. The four kingdoms that were supposed to come before the kingdom of Christ (Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, Daniel 2) are represented in the figure as a statue of a man.

According to Millennial doctrine, the ten toes on Nebuchadnezzar’s vision-statue, along with the legs of iron, represent the Roman Empire. According to the vision, God would raise up a king during the time of the ten toes. To accommodate millennialist doctrine, the toes must extend disproportionately through the time of the tribulation.

As for the purpose of the tribulation, the same Millennialist website uses Daniel 9:24 to demonstrate what was to happen during the Rapture and tribulation. The last week of the seventy weeks mentioned in Daniel 9:24 is supposed to represent the seven years of the tribulation. During this time, the following would occur:

- Finish the transgression,

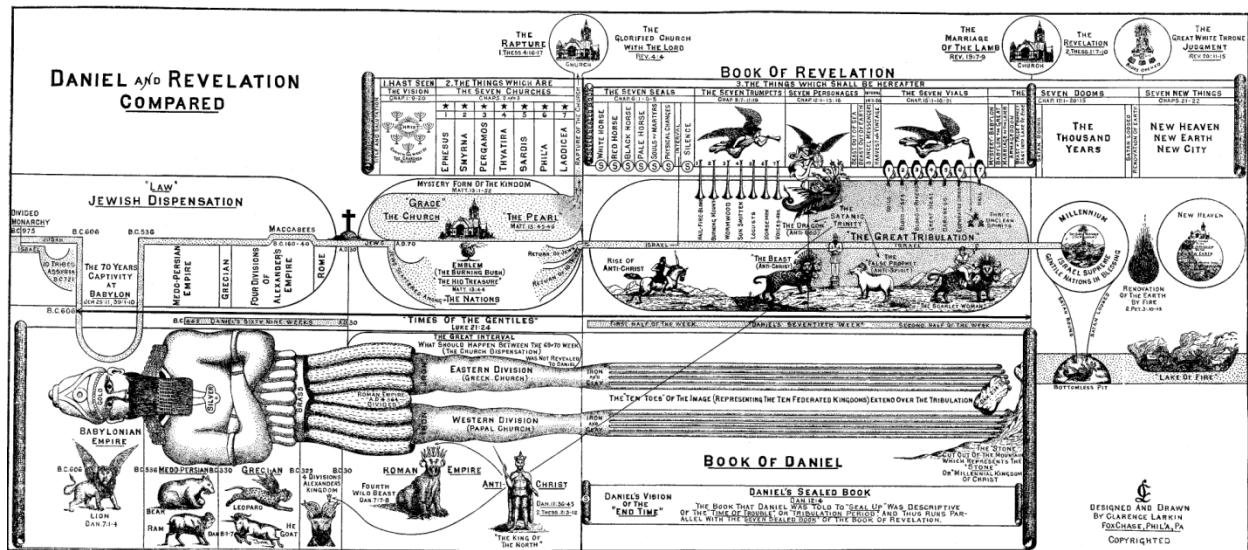


Figure 1. Millennialism-based illustration of the tribulation and 1,000-year reign.

- Make an end of sin,
- Make atonement for iniquity (accept Jesus' sacrifice),
- Bring in everlasting righteousness (reign of King Jesus),
- Seal up vision and prophecy (fulfillment of prophecy about Jesus and Israel), and
- Anoint the most holy place.

Another Millennialist website provides a more detailed outline regarding the place and purpose of the tribulation. Its timeline of the tribulation (first 3.5 years) and the great tribulation (last 3.5 years) describes events using scriptures to support its doctrine.

Tribulation Events

1. The revived Roman Empire: a 10 league-federation-union of nations that comes out of the ancient Roman Empire.
2. The rise of the antichrist over this revived empire: Some terms used to describe him are little horn (Daniel 7:8); the prince that shall come (Daniel 9:26); the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3); and the mouth that speaks against God (Revelation 13:3). The antichrist will:
 - a. Make a seven-year pact with Israel (Daniel 9:27),
 - b. Break the pact (Daniel 9:27b),
 - c. Deceive many with false peace (Revelation 6:2),
 - d. Magnify himself (Daniel 8:11, 25 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4),
 - e. Speak against God (Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:5),
 - f. Not regard God (Daniel 11:37),
 - g. Wear out the tribulation saints (Revelation 13:7),
 - h. Receive his power from Satan (Revelation 13:4),
 - i. Desire worship from man (Revelation 13:4b),
 - j. Sit in the new temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4),
 - k. Institute the mark of beast (Revelation 13:16), and

1. Stop Jewish sacrifices in temple (Daniel 9:27b and Daniel 12:11).
3. The false prophet, the second beast ruling over the religious system left on earth after the Rapture, will rise and give his allegiance to the antichrist (Revelation 13).
4. The sealing of God's chosen 144,000, Jews who will preach to the masses (Revelation 7:4).
5. Two witnesses will prophesy (probably Elijah and Enoch of the Old Testament as neither of them experienced a physical death (Revelation 11:3).
6. The seven seals are opened and the four horsemen ride (Revelation 6-8).
7. The seven trumpets sound (Revelation 8-11).

Great Tribulation Events

1. Antichrist stops Jewish sacrifices (Daniel 9:27, 12:11),
2. Antichrist sits in temple and claims to be god (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4),
3. Antichrist breaks pact with Israel and persecutes them (Revelation 12),
4. Devil cast down to earth and no longer can accuse the brethren (Revelation 12),
5. The antichrist is numbered 666 (Revelation 13:18),
6. Seven vials poured out upon earth (Revelation 16),
7. The harlot/the harlot destroyed (Revelation 17),
8. The Lord Jesus Christ comes back and destroys the armies of the antichrist, casts him and false prophet in the lake of fire, crushes the last gentile empire, and sets up His glorious reign (Revelation 19:1).
9. Antichrist and false prophet are thrown into lake of fire (Revelation 19).

Another Millennialist website presents a summary of the events that hints at the purpose of the tribulation.

- Destruction of false religion with surprising speed (Revelation 17: 1, 5; Revelation 18:9),
- Political powers represented by the United Nations carry out God's will (Revelation 17: 3, 15),
- Coalition of nations will try to annihilate those who practice true religion; however, God will protect his worshippers from destruction (Ezekiel 38:1, 9, and 18),
- Judgment of earth's inhabitants by Jesus who will separate people one from another (Matthew 25:31),
- The basis for his judgment will be the support, or lack of support, that each person gave to Jesus' "brothers," those who will rule with him in heaven (Matthew 25:34),
- Gathering of Kingdom rulers, faithful ones who have been chosen to rule with Christ will finish their earthly course and be resurrected to life in heaven (Matthew 24:31 and 1 Corinthians 15:50),
- Those judged adversely by Christ will be destroyed (Zephaniah 1: 18 and 2 Thessalonians 1:6), and
- Destruction of the worldwide political system, pictured in the Bible by a seven-headed wild beast (Revelation 19:19).

SPEAKER'S COMMENTARY

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRIBULATION SCRIPTURES

The Bible is an all-or-nothing book. It is all true, or we are left to determine what is true and what is false – as is the case in many religions where only the clergy are supposedly able to determine truth and error. A preacher once said, “The Bible accurately states what happened.”

If there are any unfulfilled Old Testament prophecies, we are still under the Law of Moses and Jesus is made to be a liar and a fraud – because He said:

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Matthew 5:17).

And elsewhere:

The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail (Luke 16:16).

The Millennialist's interpretation that there are seven years of tribulation left to be fulfilled from Daniel 9 is somewhat akin to the situation of a man who asks another man, “How far is it from Memphis to Los Angeles?” The other answers, “Seventy miles.” “How could it be only seventy miles?” the first man inquires. “Oh,” replies the other man, “you go sixty-nine miles, then there is a great parenthesis of two thousand or more miles, after which only one mile remains.”

The misuse, mistreatment, or misunderstanding of these passages of scripture can lead to the abuse of additional passages of scripture in order to support the belief. You may have heard of target fixation - where a pilot gets so fixated on the target that he/she flies the plane into the target. So it is with the tribulation doctrine. Millennialism requires that we progress in a circular fashion from the Nation of Israel, the Temple, and the Mosaic Priesthood to the church age and the priesthood of Christ, then back to the Nation of Israel, the Temple, and the Mosaic Priesthood, to the 1,000-year reign of Christ. How do we justify this view when the New Testament fails to provide us with the answers?

First, it is necessary to turn a past event into a future event. For example, the destruction of Jerusalem has occurred, but it must be an event yet to occur if the Millennial view of the tribulation (also a future event accompanying Jerusalem's destruction and affecting the entire world) is to be accurate. However, the writers of the Gospels – correction: the Holy Spirit - said that it would happen during the time of the first century.

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away (Matthew 24: 34).

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away (Mark 13: 30).

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away (Luke 21: 32).

Moreover, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE (aka AD 70) is a documented event and the tribulation of the Jerusalem inhabitants has been documented as well.

Matthew 25 is used to support the notion of a judgment of the righteous only, occurring at the beginning of the seven-year tribulation, followed by a second judgment of the rest of the world at the end of

that tribulation. However, it is clear that a single judgment of all will occur at the end of time

*Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which **all** who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth 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)*

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

We sing in a song, “Judgment is surely coming, coming for you and me. We will be judged that morning for all eternity. Some will go into heaven others will be denied. Oh, what an awful picture, standing outside.”

The same seven-year restriction is erroneous concerning the purpose and place of the tribulation related to the seals, the trumpets, the bowls of the wrath of God, the dragon, the beasts, and the harlot. To confine them to a seven-year period and a single generation doesn’t accomplish their mission. No one generation suffered these plagues while another was spared: each generation faces its own disasters. In my understanding of the Revelation letter, the events beginning with chapter 6 and ending in chapter 19 are like the start of a Grand Prix. When the flag drops, they all start at the same time. Once a seal has been broken, a trumpet sounded, and a bowl poured out, they continue until time ends.

The messages of the seal, a trumpet, and a bowl of wrath may all be provided in the same event depending on whether you live or die. They are said not to harm the faithful whose future home is heaven for which the fear of death is meaningless.

- Seals – people die every day and death and Hades, like a combine and a truck, reap the souls and store them away for judgment. God gives comfort to his children as in Luke 16.
- Trumpets – warning the world that death is waiting just around the corner. An old cigar ad went this way: “We are going to get you sooner or later we are going to get you!” Trumpets do the same.
- Bowl of wrath – kills and therefore seals the fate of the victims who die.

The events of the so-called tribulation period that are associated with Revelation 6-11 and 13-19 have been actually going on since the first century and some from the beginning of time. The events in these chapters can be summarized like this:

- **People Are Born Pure** – *Truly, this only I have found: that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes (Ecclesiastes 7:29).*
- **People Are Given Instructions** – *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).*
- **People Respond to Instructions** – *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:7).*
- **People Are Tested** – *I said in my heart, “Concerning the estate of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like beasts” (Ecclesiastes 3:18).*
- **People Respond to Tests** – *For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil (Proverbs 1:32).*
- **People Are Warned** – *Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me (Ezekiel 3:17).*
- **People Respond to Warnings** – *To whom shall I speak and give warning that they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; they have no delight in it (Jeremiah 6:10). Again, when I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’ if he turns from his sin – he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live (Ezekiel 33:14).*

- **People Die** – *In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return (Genesis 3:19).*
- **People Are Judged According to Their Responses** – *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).*
- **People Are Rewarded in Line with What They Did and Said** – *And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work (Revelation 22:12).*
- **Remember, a Reward Can Either Be Good (Heaven) or Evil (Hell)** – *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.... And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.... And these will go away into everlasting punishment– but the righteous into eternal life. (Matthew 25:34, 40-41, 46).*

Trials and tribulation accomplish two different results.

1. They make the righteous stronger.

- *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (James 1:2).*
- *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:6-9).*
- *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Romans 5:3-5).*

2. They cause the unrighteous to curse God.

- *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts (Revelation 9:20-21).*
- *Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9).*

CONCLUSION

What then are the tribulation and the great tribulation? Are they the missing seventieth week of Daniel Chapter 9? **No!** Are they the fulfillment of Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21? **No!** Are they the seven years between the Rapture and the second coming of Christ? **No!** Are they? **NO! NO! NO!**

Back to what the tribulation was supposed to accomplish - Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and proph-

ecy, and to anoint the most Holy (Daniel 9:24). Christ and the Church fulfill all of these purposes:

- **Finish the transgression** – *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking.... But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him, who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy* (1 Peter 2:1, 9-10).
- **Make an end of sin** – *'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,' says the Lord: 'I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,' then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.'* Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin (Hebrews 10:16-18).
- **Make atonement for iniquity (accept Jesus' sacrifice)** – *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ* (Hebrews 6:19-20). *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek* (Acts 2:36).
- **Bring in everlasting righteousness (reign of King Jesus)** – *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father; when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet the last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For 'He has put all things under His feet' but when He says 'all things are put under Him,' it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted* (1 Corinthians 15:24-27).
- **Seal up vision and prophecy (fulfillment of prophecies about Jesus and Israel)** – *Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love* (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).
- **Anoint the most holy place (Hebrew "anoint most Holy")** – *And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:17-22).

Trials and tribulations come to all people in all places during all generations. As they say, no one in their right mind is exempt from tribulation. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world* (John 16:33). The blessing that allows us get through these trials is given in scripture: *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say* (1 Corinthians 10:11-15).

The battle for the hearts of mankind goes on every hour of every day. Jesus spoke about this conflict

in what we call the parable of the sower. The main players, as explained by Jesus, were Satan, tribulation and persecution (or cares of this world), and the deceitfulness of riches. This parable encapsulates the Book of Revelation about as well as any set of verses in the Bible. Jesus throughout the Book of Revelation is pictured as having a sword proceeding from his mouth.

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him - the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak (John 12:48-50).

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:12-13).

These verses sound a lot like Revelation 19:20-21: *Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

Now the question before this large and intelligent audience is this - When did the words, i.e. the two-edged sword, start judging the world? It began in Acts 2, not Revelation 19. As I have said,

"The devil came to my house you know I let him in. He came and whispered in my ear it's such a little sin. He played my favorite program and the games I like to do and with a voice so soft and sweet said, "no one there misses you." The devil came to my house was a frightful thing to see. Because the devil that came to my house was the other half of me!"

As a closing remark concerning tribulation each of us are locked in continuous combat with ourselves every hour of every day. So, in sunshine or rain, in happiness or sorrow, in good days or bad, in sickness or health and so on and so on remember what Solomon said after he had tried them all: *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments. For this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).* If you wake up some morning and someone is standing between you and salvation, turn around it is more than likely you.

As to the premise that the unexpected rejection of Jesus by the first century Jews caused God to postpone the 1,000-year earthly reign of Jesus and put the church age in place as a stopgap solution with Jesus's reign coming in the future, Peter refutes this an undeniable way: *Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know Him, being delivered by the **determined counsel and foreknowledge of God**, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it (Acts 2:22-24, emphasis mine).*

Notice that Peter notes two different conditions - **determined counsel and foreknowledge of God** - to show that what happened to Jesus was neither unexpected nor was it a mistake. According to Paul, *...He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:22).* Does this sound like the church was an afterthought or last gasp measure?

If the bottom of the bucket has a hole in it, i.e. a false premise, then no matter how tall and strong you make the sides it still won't hold water. So it is with the doctrine of a seven-year tribulation and all the doctrines neatly attached to it.

A CONCLUSION TO THE CONCLUSION – The tribulation teachings along with many other false and erroneous teachings fall under my “Suitcase Theory of Bible Understanding”: how you understand the Bible's teachings depends on how much baggage you bring to the study. For if you laid all the scriptures concerning a given subject on the table side by side, you on your own would never come to the false conclusions taught by so many.

The so-called “Conversion” of the Jews

James Rennaker



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There is an uncountable number of “Christians” who believe that the end of the world will be heralded by a series of horrible events. Weather catastrophes (Hurricane Katrina, tsunamis in Indonesia), evil actions of man against man (9/11, school shootings), and ongoing wars (Iraq and Afghanistan) are simply fulfillment of Biblical prophecies which serve as warnings that the return of Christ is imminent. This secret return, called the rapture, will be for the purpose of “snatching away” saints who are living and faithful. Those left will endure the great tribulation and the antichrist before the Lord returns again to finally defeat evil and usher in the millennium.

Central to the doctrine of Premillennialism is the land promise to Abraham. Advocates of this view state that during the great tribulation all the Jews will return to Israel and be restored to their promised land. A mass conversion of these Jews to Christ (not doubt miraculous) will follow allowing literal Israel to be saved per Romans 11:26.

We . . . are convinced that the Jews are the physical descendants of Israel, they as a nation will turn to Christ, and also that they will occupy the central place in the millennial age when Jesus Christ personally brings to this earth universal peace, prosperity, and justice.

Moreover, restored Israel shall inherit the land God gave to Abraham and his seed as an everlasting possession (Richard DeHann, Israel and the Nations in Prophecy).

The Jewish people are going to have to be Believers in Jesus as their Messiah in order to be rescued by Him at the second advent. This is exactly what will happen (Thomas D. Ice, God's Purpose for Israel During the Tribulation).

The same prophets who predicted the world-wide exile and persecution of the Jews also predicted their restoration as a nation...This restoration was to come about in the general time of the climactic seven-year countdown and its finale – the appearance of the Messiah to deliver the new state from destruction (Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth).

Most denominational preachers and leaders join these writers in teaching the salvation of the Jewish nation per the Premillennial teaching. Some will give the standard reply, “The Jews are still God’s chosen people” without being able to explain why. Others will go even farther away from the truth than Premillennialism by referring to the continuation of the covenant God had made with Israel.

While church tradition has taught that Christianity superseded Judaism as the “new Israel,” we do not believe that earlier covenantal relationships have been invalidated or that God has abandoned Jewish partners in covenant (United Methodist Church, Book of Resolutions).

This is what has become known as Two-Covenant Theology which affirms that there are two separate ways for Jews and Christians to be saved. While Christians believe in Jesus as the Messiah of the Old Testament, the Jews reject Him as such but can continue in the Mosaic covenant and be pleasing to Jehovah. This mindset has developed to the point that some denominations refuse to evangelize among the Jews referring to it as an unacceptable form of anti-Semitism.

Our effort will be to understand the promise God made to Abraham concerning the land of Canaan. Was it a never ending promise with no strings attached or were there conditions concerning faithfulness to their Maker? Is the hope of Israel tied up in the retention of this land? Is God really that concerned with whom occupies the dirt in this area of the world?

Israel and the Land Promise

God's Promise to Abraham

Premillennialism stands on the premise that God unconditionally promised Canaan to Abraham and his descendants. The doctrine also states that this promise has never been completely granted, therefore, the Jews will eventually be restored to their land in fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.

The Bible records the following in relation to the land promised to Abraham.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I shall will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed - Genesis 12:1-3

Brother Foy E. Wallace Jr explains the above passage as following:

Here is the twofold promise God made to Abraham: First, as it related to Christ – the spiritual seed of Abraham, through whom all nations should be blessed: second, as it was connected with the land, that “land grant,” promised in the seventh verse to the posterity of Abraham. It reads: “And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.” (Foy E. Wallace Jr., God's Prophetic Word)

The land promise was repeated several times to the patriarchs. After Lot separated from Abram, God said to him, “*For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever*” – Genesis 13:15. Again to Abraham, “*And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger; all the land of Canaan*” – Genesis 17:8. See also Genesis 26:1-3; 28:1-3 and Exodus 6:6-8.

Notice particularly what Moses recorded in Genesis 15:18, “*Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.*” The context of this passage reveals that Abraham's descendants would not occupy the land until after four hundred years of service in a strange land. But God would judge that nation and deliver His people from their bondage. In time, Abraham's great grandson Joseph, despite being sold into slavery would rise in authority in the land of Egypt. He sent for his family and they lived in Egypt with Joseph. This good life eventually turned to bondage after the death of Joseph and the Pharaoh. Through the leadership of Moses, these people would be delivered from their slavery just as God swore. Joshua eventually would lead these people to the Jordan River and have them ready to enter the land promised by the Almighty.

Fulfillment of the Land Promise

Just prior to crossing the Jordan River, Joshua reminded the people of the promise.

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness

and this Lebanon even unto the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast – Joshua 1:2-4

With such a wonderful promise repeated several times, surely God must have meant what He said. Is it possible to find fulfillment within the Scriptures or does one find a failure of God's word coming to pass?

The night before crossing the Jordan River, Joshua told the people of God, “*Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you*” – Joshua 3:5. The children of Israel entered Canaan, defeated the inhabitants and prepared to make the land their home. Joshua records the fulfillment of the promise given years before.

And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore to their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass – Joshua 21:43-45

The book of Joshua also records that Israel was assigned six cities of refuge: Kedesh, Shechem, Kirjatharba, Bezer, Ramoth and Golan – Joshua 20:7-8. These six cities are proof that God had given all the land to His people.

Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee. And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I have commanded thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three – Deuteronomy 19:7-9

Notice that if God gave Israel “*all the land which he promised*” then they were to add “*three cities more.*” Joshua records the existence of six cities of refuge, therefore, God gave Israel all the land!

Retention of the land was conditional

God kept His promise to bless them with the land but God also promised to remove them from the land if they were unfaithful. Moses delivered this warning multiple times in Deuteronomy.

But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it – Deuteronomy 30:27-28. See also 4:25-31; 6:10-15; 8:18-20

One of the last recorded messages that Joshua gave to Israel concerned their faithfulness and the land promise.

Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your side, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore, it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your

God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you – Joshua 23:12-16

A restoration to the land?

What about the Old Testament passages that refer to the restoration of Israel to the land of promise? Granted, there are such passages but the question is to which restoration do they refer? The prophet Jeremiah lived during the final days of the southern kingdom. Israel already had been led away into Assyrian captivity in 721 BC and now Judah is in the process of deportation as well. Jeremiah (and others) had spoken of the coming of Babylon to take the people of God away from their homeland for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:4-14). Just a few chapters later, the same prophet again declared that these people would be taken by Babylon but added that God would “restore them to this place” (Jeremiah 27:20-22). When the time of this “return” was at hand, Ezra the scribe wrote of the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem – Ezra 1:1-3

Ezra 2:1ff records the names of some who returned to Judah just as the prophet foretold. Nehemiah 7 lists another group of Jews returning to their homeland.

The question is not whether Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others wrote of a restoration of the Jews to Palestine. The proper question is, “Which prophets writing after the exile speak of a restoration to the land?” The answer is a resounding NONE! Malachi, a post exilic prophet, wrote of the coming of John the Baptizer to prepare the way of the Lord (Malachi 4:5-6, Luke 1:17. John’s message was to the Jews declaring, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:1-2). What was about to be established did not pertain to the nation of Israel as a whole but to individuals who were willing to accept the terms of admission.

Is There Hope for Israel?

Only through misapplication can our premillennial friends force the Old Testament prophecies to refer to a hope of national Israel that is still future. Consider some New Testament passages which address this hope.

And now I stand and am judged of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews – Acts 26:6-8

Paul argues that the hope he preached was based on the promise made to the patriarchs. So many of his fellow Jews looked and hoped for the fulfillment of that promise in the establishment of the Messianic kingdom on earth. But the apostle’s preaching declared that that hope was grounded in the resurrection of Jesus and the establishment of His spiritual kingdom. This teaching is what caused Paul to be imprisoned in the first place. So is it possible that Paul taught the same thing as the Jewish religious leaders concerning the hope of Israel? Did he teach that the Jews will be saved despite their rejection of the Savior? If so, why was he in chains? It was “*for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain*” (Acts 28:20).

The hope for which he suffered was twofold: (1) the expectation of the Messiah as bringing in the kingdom of heaven, which was cherished by every Israelite; (2) the hope of the resurrection from the dead,

which he proclaimed as attended to by the resurrection, which proved that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God – (H Leo Boles, Commentary on Acts).

Implications of Premillennialism

There is more than one hope

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all – Ephesians 4:4-6

Do the Jews truly have a hope that is different than the Gentiles have? If Premillennialism is true, then the answer is yes. But notice that the text declares that there is but one. Obviously, proponents of this doctrine do not understand what “one” means.

God is a respecter of persons

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins – Acts 10:34-43

Our text makes it evident that those in every nation can be “accepted with Him.” It was “the word” that was the key to this acceptability. This word was sent to the “children of Israel and published from Jerusalem.” What was the message of the word? That Jesus was anointed by the Father, went about doing good works, was slain and resurrected from the dead. It was “through His name” that all men must believe to be saved.

Jews and Gentiles continue to be separated

And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith – Acts 15:9

Peter proclaimed a fundamental truth that all men are on equal ground at the foot of the cross. His message specifically called attention to the fact that the Gentiles were no different than the Jews so far as the requirements for their salvation. The Gentile heart would be purified “by faith” or as recorded earlier, they would “hear the word of the gospel, and believe” (Acts 15:7). Now if there is “no difference” between these two peoples, then what is required of one is required of the other. Both are in sin and in need of a Savior.

Will All Israel be Saved?

Romans 11:26 is the sugar stick passage for this question, therefore, it is needful to study its context to properly understand the verse. Remember that the first eight chapters of Romans teaches the doctrine of justification by faith as we find in the Christian system. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 preempt the question of how fleshly Israel fits into this system. Obviously these three chapters cannot contradict the preceding eight, so consistency must be sought. Thankfully, Paul penned the theme of the book early in the first chapter allowing the reader to see this thread as it weaves its way through the following chapters.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith – Romans 1:16&17

This has to be remembered when studying the book so as to arrive at the conclusion the apostle had in mind. If the Gospel is the power of God to save, can it be possible for the Jew to be saved outside the Gospel? If the Gospel is God's power to save the believer, can the non-believing Jew be saved? Let's consider a few passages in chapters 9-11 to see how fleshly Israel can be saved.

Chapter 9 begins with Paul expressing his great love for fleshly Israel and how it grieves him to know of their disbelief. His sorrow is so great that he could wish himself "accursed from Christ for my brethren" (Romans 9:3).

He points out that Israel had had all of the opportunities and the promises and the instructional advantage of the former dispensation and normally and naturally they are the ones who should be the "hard core" of the new system and strong people of faith – JD Thomas, Romans).

Sadly, fleshly Israel did not express their faith in Jesus but chose to allow their hearts to remain hardened. This was no different during the personal ministry of our Lord. The Jews were always quick to point to their lineage as the trump card to any teaching that they didn't like. One such occasion saw them responding to Jesus, "Abraham is our Father" (John 8:39) as if this alone would silence the Lord. The Master simply replied, *"If you were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."* Likewise, Paul added, *"They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God"* (Romans 9:8). It is the children of promise who are the offspring of Abraham. The family tree of salvation does not consist of paper and pen. Rather, it is written in heaven where God adds those who are faithful to His call. Christians are children of Abraham's faith not Abraham's flesh.

Chapter 10 also begins with Paul emphasizing his desire that fleshly Israel be saved. The problem was in their righteousness which he described as "their own." By continuing to hold to the old law, which had been nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14), they *"had not submitted to the righteousness of God"* (Romans 10:3). In fact, they had not really learned nor submitted to the law of Moses *"For Christ is the end (goal, purpose) of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth"* (Romans 10:4). The purpose of the law of Moses was to make man righteous in Christ not outside of Him. The same is taught in Galatians as Paul again writes that the old law's purpose was to bring the Jews to Christ *"that we might be justified by faith"* (Galatians 3:23-24). Truly to be a child of God is *"by faith in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:26).

Chapter 11 contains the favorite verse most often cited as proof of fleshly Israel's salvation, *"And so all Israel shall be saved"* (Romans 11:26). It is the responsibility of the serious Bible student to examine this text in its context to see what the writer had in mind. The beginning of the chapter asks the question of whether or not fleshly Israel has been utterly rejected by God. Whiteside comments that Paul, "Gives himself as an example that the rejection of the Jewish nation had nothing to do with the salvation of individual Jews" (RL Whiteside, Commentary on Romans). There was a remnant of Jews like himself, who believed in Jesus as the Messiah (11:4-5). The simple truth is that the majority of Jews had not obtained salvation due to their disbelief (11:7). This was because of the choice they made! that Paul also used the illustration of the olive tree to describe the status of fleshly Israel before God. Some branches were broken off and some were grafted onto the tree but who is being considered? *"And thou being a wild olive tree, were grafted in"* (11:17) obviously refers to the Gentiles as Paul wrote in verse 13, *"For I speak to you Gentiles."* Those branches broken off refer to the Jews and the reason for this separation was unbelief (11:20). Did this refer to permanent dismissal from God's fellowship? NO! The apostle penned that *"If they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in again"* (11:23). How is it then that Israel shall be saved? "So" is an adverb of manner, therefore, *"so all Israel shall be saved"* means in this manner they shall be saved. What manner is that? By not abiding in unbelief, the same manner in which the Gentile are saved!

Conclusion

Just as certain as the Bible does not teach the other facets of Premillennialism, it does not teach the salvation of national Israel. Individual Jews have the same opportunity as anyone else to be saved but they must abandon the deadness of the old law and respond to the message of the New Testament.

The so-called “Rapture” as used in Pre-Millennialism

Marion R. Fox



MARION R. FOX was born in Sayre, OK on September 20, 1943. He and Cynthia Kay were married on December 23, 1966 and to this marriage three children have been born: 1) Brent, 2) Marcey, and 3) Melanie.

Marion began preaching in 1970 in western Oklahoma. Over the years, he attended: 1) Sweetwater Public Schools, 2) Sayre Jr. College, 3) Southwestern Oklahoma State University, 4) the University of Illinois, 5) Oklahoma University, 6) East Carolina University, 6) The University of Texas, 7) Rose State College, 8) The University of Maine, 9) Oklahoma Christian College, 10) Pittsburg State University, 11) Oklahoma State University Technical Institute, 12) Honeywell Field Engineer's School, 13) FFA Academy, and 14) Elk City School of Preaching. Marion graduated from: 1) Sweetwater Public School, 2) Sayre Jr. College, 3) Oklahoma State University, 4) the University of Illinois, 5) Honeywell Field Engineer's School, 6) FFA Academy, and 7) Elk City School of Preaching.

Marion has done local work: 1) Sayre, OK 2) Mountain View, OK, 3) Maysville, OK, and 4) the Barnes congregation, Oklahoma City, OK. He has also held gospel meetings and lectureships in: 1) Wyoming, 2) Colorado, 3) Nebraska, 4) Kansas, 5) New Mexico, 6) Texas, 7) Oklahoma, 8) Missouri, 9) Arkansas, 10) Tennessee, 11) Indiana, 12) Ohio, 13) Georgia, 14) Connecticut, 15) Maine, 16) Russia (Yaroslavl), 17) England (Cambridge and Liverpool), 18) Jamaica (several congregations), and 19) Ghana (around Takorade).

Marion has also written articles appearing in: 1) One Heart, 2) Firm Foundation, 3) Think Magazine, and 4) Gospel Standard.

Introduction: Does 1 Thess. 4:13-18 teach that there will be two comings of the Lord? Will there be a “rapture?”

The most common view of a rapture is that the church will be raptured just before what they call “the tribulation.” This supposedly saves the church from suffering in “the tribulation.” There are a few premillennials who claim there will be a rapture of the church after the supposed “tribulation.” There are even some who claim the church will be raptured in the middle of “the tribulation.” There are a few who claim that only the most exalted Christians will be raptured and the others will remain on the Earth.

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) was probably the originator of this doctrine in about 1830. The Darby translation of the New Testament was made by John Darby (there were three editions – the last one in 1884).

This doctrine was popularized by the Scofield Bible (the footnotes and center references are premillennial). These notes were compiled by Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921).

Explanation and Inconsistencies of the Premillennial View of the Rapture

The premillennial doctrine claims that Jesus will come and take the righteous into heaven, then return after a period (usually either 3 ½ or 7 years) with the righteous and then reign upon the Earth in Jerusalem for 1,000 years.

The word “rapture” is defined as: “(Latin *raptus*) ... 1 a: a state or experience of being carried away by overwhelming emotion b: a mystical experience in which the spirit is exalted to a knowledge of divine things. 2: an expression or manifestation of ecstasy or passion” (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition)

The word “rapture” is not found in either the KJV or the ASV. The doctrine of a rapture is not found in the Scriptures either. The rapture is supposed to be an invisible coming of the Lord. The Scriptures neither explicitly teach that the Lord will have an invisible coming, nor do they implicitly teach that the

Lord will have an invisible coming.

There is supposed to be a period referred to as “the tribulation” that begins when the faithful are raptured. The word “tribulation” (θλίψις [pronounced *thelisis*] “[θλίβω], prop. *a pressing, pressing together, pressure* ... Grk. metaph., *oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits*” [Thayer, p. 291]) just means a period of persecution. The church was already in a state of tribulation or persecution (1 Thess. 3:4).

1 Thess. 3:4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

Rev. 1:9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Passages that are Misunderstood by Premillennials

The doctrines of a rapture and a tribulation are linked with a misunderstanding of 1 Thess. 4:13-18. The doctrines of a rapture and a tribulation are linked with a misunderstanding of Dan. 9:24-27. The doctrines of a rapture and a tribulation are linked with a misunderstanding of Jn. 5:24-29 and Rev. 20:6. The doctrines of a rapture and a tribulation are linked with a misunderstanding of the Parable of the Tares (Mt. 13:24-30 and 36-43) and the Parable of the Dragnet (Mt. 13:47-50). In addition, the doctrines of a rapture and a tribulation are linked with a misunderstanding of Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

Inconsistencies in the Premillennial Doctrine of a Rapture

No passage states that Jesus will ever set foot upon the Earth again. Jesus cannot be a priest and king at the same time upon His throne if His throne is upon the Earth. He is to be both priest and king on His throne at the same time (Zech. 6:12-13).

Zech. 6:12-13 and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; 13 even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

Jesus cannot be priest while upon the Earth (Heb. 8:4-5).

Heb. 8:4-5 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount.

Since He is to be both priest and king at the same time on His throne, His throne cannot be upon the Earth, but must be in heaven.

A consideration of some passages that are misunderstood by dispensational premillennialists.

Paul's words of 1 Thess. 4:13-18 is misunderstood by premillennialists.

1 Thess. 4:13-18 But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall

descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 17 then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

It is the body that sleeps (1 Thess. 4:13). The Scriptures do not teach soul sleeping. The Scriptures speak from appearance here. Christians should not have sorrow like the non-Christian sorrows when a loved one who is a Christian has died. The dead in Christ (faithful Christians) will be raised and those Christians who are alive when the Lord comes will be caught up to meet the ones who have died in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-17). The ones who are raised will ever be with the Lord (so – adverb of manner – 1 Thess. 4:17). The premillennial rapture doctrine is supposedly a secret thing. However, Paul tells us that it will occur with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and a trumpet (1 Thess. 4:16).

Things Misunderstood by Premillennialists

The doctrine of the first resurrection (Jn. 5:24-29 and Rev. 20:6) is misunderstood by dispensational premillennialists. The first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection (Rev. 20:6).

Rev. 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The second death has no power over those who have a part in the first resurrection. The second death is the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

Rev. 20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.

Those who have part in the first resurrection are priests of God and of Christ (Rev. 20:6). Christians are priests of God at the present time (Rev. 1:6).

Rev. 1:6 and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Christians are priests of God in the church (1 Pet. 2:5 and 9).

1 Pet. 2:5, 9 ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ... 9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

The church is the holy nation (Mt. 21:43). How can Christians be priests if Jesus cannot be priest (assuming that He serves as priest after His second coming)? Remember that Jesus cannot be a priest while upon the Earth.

Mt. 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The Lord spoke of two resurrections (Jn. 5:24-29).

Jn. 5:25-29 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself: 27 and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man. 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, 29 and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of

judgment.

The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead (spiritual dead) shall hear ... (Jn. 5:25). The ones hearing would live (spiritual life). There is a resurrection of all that are in the tombs (Jn. 5:28-29). Both good and evil people will be resurrected in the same hour. However, the premillennial doctrine of the rapture has the good being resurrected before the evil (not in the same hour). Since both are resurrected in the same hour, the premillennial doctrine of a rapture must be false.

Baptism is a resurrection (Rom. 6:3-11). It is likely that baptism is the first resurrection.

Summary

Premillennials link their doctrine of a rapture and a tribulation with each other. They do not find the word “rapture” in reputable translations of the Bible.

The Scriptures reveal that both the good and the evil will be resurrected in the same hour. This shows that the supposed “rapture” is contrary to the Scriptures.

1 Thess. 4:13-18 does not even hint that Jesus will set foot on the Earth again when He returns. This passage is dealing with the error that the resurrection had already occurred. This passage relates to what happens to Christians who have died. It does not contemplate all people (Christians and non-Christians). Jesus discusses the resurrection of all people in (Jn. 5:24-29).

The so-called Battle of Armageddon

Johnny Hinton



While originally from Missouri, he is a 1980 graduate of Highland High School, Hardy, AR. He earned his Associates Degree in Paragould at Crowley's Ridge College (1982). Afterward, he earned a Bachelor's Degree at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City (1984). He's done further graduate studies and continuing education courses. His studies have focused on things related to preaching and Bible teaching.

Johnny became a Christian at the age of 11 and preached his first sermon a year later. He's been in fulltime ministry for 35 years. In his earlier years he served as a Youth Minister as well as in Education and Worship. His passion is the study of God's Word to preach and teach with clarity and boldness. Besides local preaching, he's been an instructor for three Schools of Biblical Studies and adjunct teacher for Oklahoma Christian University.

Johnny's ministry has taken him to two foreign countries, Republic of Panama and Ukraine. He's worked with Christian Summer Camps in four states and Future Preachers Training Camps in two states. He's preached for churches in Connecticut, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Special workshops and meetings have taken him to Oregon, Ohio, Missouri, Nebraska, and Illinois.

He has spoken on this program several times and appears annually on the Bible Lectureship at Crowley's Ridge College and other similar programs. He submits manuscripts to many of these and has written for some religious periodicals. For several years Johnny conducted radio programs in Tennessee and Oklahoma.

Johnny is a family man married to his wife Cindy for 35 years. They have 5 children (ages 19 to 29) and 3 grandchildren. They met at Crowley's Ridge College and married after graduating from Oklahoma Christian University. Her degree is Early Childhood and Elementary Education. She is Assistant Director of the Extended Day Program for the Union Public School System in Tulsa, supervising 1,000 children in 14 elementary schools.

Doesn't the title alone just catch your attention? The very term "Armageddon" sends chills up the spine for some folks. Even Hollywood is aware of the term.

In 1993 Michael Bay directed a film entitled "Armageddon". It starred Bruce Willis, Ben Affleck, and a host of other. This movie was nominated for 4 Oscars and won several other awards. But there was a problem. It had absolutely nothing to do with the Bible. The plot was about saving earth from a global killer level event of an asteroid the size of Texas impacting the planet. You can find other titles which are just plays on the term: AmeriGeddon, Stormageddon, Farmageddon, etc. [Internet Movie Database – IMDb]

Amazon lists over 6,000 books with a title or content referencing Armageddon. Some are in the sci-fi category. Many of those suggest some hi-tech apocalyptic disaster. Others use the term in reference to previous wars. [www.amazon.com]

Christian Book Distributors has 127 different titles referencing Armageddon. At least these "tend" to be more biblically focused as a whole. Unfortunately, too many are more sensation than substance. [www.christianbookdistributors.org]

The discussion pertaining to the "Battle of Armageddon" falls typically under the Systematic Theology category known as Eschatology. This latter term refers to the biblical teaching concerning last or final things. Other matters included in this category are death, the final coming of Christ, Judgment Day, Hades, Heaven, Hell, the resurrection, etc. Some denominations would also include what they call the Rapture and the Millennium.

Notice the various ways the location of this “battle” is defined or explained:

1. Armageddon: “Mount Megiddo” in Hebrew. Megiddo, also called the Plain of Megiddo (2 Chr. 35:22; Zech. 12:11), was an ancient city that Solomon fortified (1 Kgs. 9:15). Megiddo was strategically located along the main highway from Egypt to Syria in the Jezreel Valley and was the site of key battles (Jud. 5:9-12; 2 Kgs. 23:29). Some read this as a literal reference to the site of the final battle, while others interpret Armageddon as a symbol of the final conflict between God and the forces of evil. [Notes on Revelation 16:16, NIV Zondervan Study Bible, pg. 2613]
2. Armageddon (the hill or city of Megiddo). Rev. 16:16. The scene of the struggle of good and evil is suggested by that battle-field, the plain of Esdraelon, which was famous for two great victories, of Barak over the Canaanites and of Gideon over the Midianites; and for two great disasters, the deaths of Saul and Josiah. Hence it signifies in Revelation a place of great slaughter, the scene of a terrible retribution upon the wicked. The Revised Version gives the name as Har-Magedon, i.e. the hill (as Ar is the city) of Megiddo. – ED.) [A Dictionary of the Bible, Teacher’s Edition. Smith and Peloubet. © 1884, pg. 54]
3. Armageddon (WH, Rev. Ver., Har Magedon; TR Armageddon; Lat. Hermagedon; Syr. Magedon). The assembly-point of the apocalyptic scene of the great Day of God Almighty (Rev. 16:16; unknown elsewhere). If it is symbolic, geographical exactness is unimportant. The earliest known interpretation, extant only in Arabic, is ‘the trodden, level place (Arabic = the Plain?)’. Of four modern interpretations, namely, ‘mountain of Megiddo’, ‘city of Megiddo’, ‘mount of assembly’ and ‘his fruitful hill’, most scholars prefer the first. The fact that the tell of Megiddo was about 21 m high in John’s day, and was in the vicinity of Carmel Range, justifies the use of Heb. Har, used loosely in the OT for ‘hill’ and ‘hill country’. The ‘waters of Megiddo’ (Jg. 5:19) and the ‘valley-plain of Megiddo’ (2 Ch. 35:22) have witnessed important battles, from one fought by Thutmose III in 1486 BC to that of Lord Allenby of Megiddo in 1917. The ‘mountains of Israel’ witness Gog’s defeat in Eze. 39:1-4. This may be in the writer’s mind. [New Bible Dictionary, 2nd Ed., Tyndale House Pub., © 1982, pg. 83]
4. Armageddon (Heb. ‘Mount Megiddo’). The word occurs only in Rev. 16:16 as a Greek transliteration of the term claimed to be Hebrew. It represents the location of the final cosmic battle of the forces of good and of evil, according to the apocalyptic view of the writer. However, no such term appears elsewhere in Hebrew, and there is no mountain known to ancient or modern geographers by that name. The spelling of the term differs in various manuscripts (Harmagedon, Armagedon, Mageddon). Translations suggested therefore have included “city of Megiddo”, “land of Megiddo”, “mount of assembly”, “city of desire”, and “his fruitful mountain”.

Megiddo, situated at the north end of the major pass through the Mount Carmel range where the coastal road moved up from the south into the Plain of Esdraelon, was the site of many well-known ancient battles (Deborah and Barak versus the Canaanite king Sisera, Jg. 5:19; Jehu versus Ahaziah, 2 Kg. 9:27; Josiah versus Neco, 2 Kg. 23:29). The archaeological data reinforce the literary portrait in showing frequent extremely heavy defense facilities at the site. It may have appeared, therefore, an excellent symbol to the apocalyptic writer for the ultimate conflict he saw as the culmination of history. [Harper’s Bible Dictionary, Harper Collins © 1985, pg. 64]
5. Armageddon. A place name found only in Rev. 16:16, where it is identified as the “Hebrew” name for the location where the kings of the earth will assemble to fight against God. Scholars generally explain Armageddon (NRSV: Harmagedon) as a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew phrase “har mediggo” (the mountain of Megiddo). The city of Megiddo, strategically located in the western part of the Esdraelon valley at the crossroads of two trade routes (Map 1:X3), was the site of several important battles in ancient times. The reference to the “mountain” of Megiddo is, however, more problematic, corresponding to no evident geographical feature in

the area. Although Armageddon appears only once in the Bible, it has become a familiar designation for the future final battle between the forces of good and evil. [The Oxford Companion to the Bible, Oxford University Press © 1993, pg. 56]

6. Armageddon, Harmagedon (mountain of Megiddo). A gathering place or battleground (Re. 16:16). It was apparently the great plain of Megiddo lying between the Galilean hills and the mountains of Israel, a notable battleground in Old Testament history. Here Barak defeated the Canaanites and Gideon the Midianites (Ju. 5:19, 7:9). Two national tragedies were enacted at or near the place: the slaying of Saul (1 Sa. 31:8); and the slaying of Josiah (2 Ki. 23:29). [New Analytical Study Bible, John A. Dickson Pub. Co., Bible Dictionary, © 1973, pg. 38]

In many ways these sources say much the same thing in regard to the historical and geographical location. They describe various battles fought at this location. What is lacking is agreement on the sights significance as used by John in the book of Revelation.

As one might imagine there are quite a variety of opinions relating to both Eschatology and Prophecy. When it comes to the book of Revelation these two arenas merge significantly. With the book as a whole, there are Preterists (hyper and partial), Futurists (premillennial and dispensational), and so forth. Concerning the millennium, you find varying views as well. Just among the premillennialists we have the pre-tribulation group, the mid-tribulation group, and the post-tribulation group.

Beyond that we find a great difference in particular groups concerning these matters and specifically the “Battle of Armageddon.” Evangelicals differ with each other. They differ from the Jehovah’s Witnesses who differ from the Seventh Day Adventists who differ from the Christadelphians. Strangely enough there are at least three different views held by those of the Bahai faith.

The final battle of good and evil between the hosts of heaven and Satan’s minions seems to me to be the most common understanding. At least this seems to be so from what I’ve read in popular literature, as well as what I’ve seen and heard on religious television and radio programs.

But what does the text of Scripture actually say?

“And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.” (Revelation 16:16, NKJV)

This verse falls within the paragraph (vss. 12-16) concerning the sixth of seven “*bowls of the wrath of God on the earth*” (16:1). This section contains highly symbolic imagery: an angel pouring out the bowl, unclean spirits like frogs coming from a dragon’s mouth and that of a beast, the spirits of demons working signs. Given these things one should be cautious about taking this “battle” as literal.

Interestingly, there is no record of a battle actually occurring at this point. It merely describes the gathering of kings in order to battle. It isn’t clear at this juncture as to who the combatants are. Is it the kings against each other or the kings against God or His people? The paragraph as discussed just sits between two others concerning the fifth and seventh bowls.

Many commentators and such connect the reference of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16) with another event described later (Revelation 20:7-10). But there are several things which occur in between.

1. The introduction of the Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast (ch. 17)
2. The Fall of Babylon the Great and its Mourning (ch. 18)
3. The Celebration of God’s judgment and vengeance on this Babylon (ch. 19)
4. The Binding of Satan and the Reign of the Saints for 1000 years (ch. 20)

Following those events, we see that Satan is released from his prison to go out to deceive the nations once more to bring persecution upon God’s people. He gathers his forces for battle.

Drum roll please... Anticipation...

NOTE: *“And fire came down from heaven and devoured them.” (Revelation 20:9b).*

What? Where is the battle? The very next thing mentioned is the devil being cast into the lake of fire to be tormented forever. That is almost anti-climactic. Given how so many wax eloquent about this battle, you'd think there would be more details.

Back to chapter 16 and so-called "Battle of Armageddon" it should be noted that the bowls of God's wrath are punishment upon the persecutor for their evil against the church. Also, there were three entities mentioned: the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. These are the allied forces against God's people.

Ray Summers commented, "The battle is not one in which material, physical armaments will decide the issue; the battle is between righteousness and evil, and righteousness is the certain victor." [Worthy is the Lamb, Broadman Press © 1951, pg. 190].

Consider this. What if the reference to Armageddon and the gathering of the kings of the earth, in light of the history of battles formerly fought there, was akin to us today saying that someone has "met their Waterloo"? Could it be that the first readers of the text understood by such a reference that there was really nothing to fear, but that God was in control and the victory was already as good as theirs?

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Like a Thief in the Night, by Stafford North, 21st Century Christian © 2004

Armageddon Again, by Stafford North © 1991

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The so-called Relationship between the Rise of “The Anti-Christ,” and the Concomitant Persecution of the Church

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Many believe that one should expect the appearance of an individual, the embodiment of evil, who will rule the world and be the ultimate persecutor of those holding to Christian faith. Those who hold to this view often identify this person as the coming “antichrist.”

Since the time of John’s epistles 1 John and 2 John, many have speculated on the identity of the antichrist he wrote about. Some of the speculations are preserved in various art forms. In a piece of art work by Herrad von Lansberg dated around 1180 A.D. he interpreted the antichrist as a cruel king, an authoritarian figure. Luca Signorelli’s 1501 depiction of the face of the antichrist, from the Orvieto Cathedral in Orvieto Italy interpreted him to be a man with horns protruding from his head. In a fresco at Osogovo Monastery in the Republic of Macedonia the antichrist was depicted as a beast who brutally rules over the world. An inscription in the fresco reads “All kings and nations bow before the Antichrist.”



Figure 1: Antichrist (authoritarian figure on the left, with the attributes of a king) by Herrad von Landsberg (about 1180), Hortus Deliciarum

Some have claimed that a person they call “the antichrist” was Nero, the wicked ruler of Rome who persecuted many Christians in the first century – 12th century A.D. Others believe the antichrist to be Domitian, another wicked ruler of Rome who persecuted Christians. Centuries later some believed this person to be Mohammed, the conquering Arab warlord who founded the religion of Islam. Others speculated that the antichrist could be one of several of the Popes of the Roman Catholic Church, due to the immoral ungodly behavior of some of them including the selling of indulgences¹ to increase funding to the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church claimed that the reformer Martin Luther was the antichrist, because he opposed many of the practices of the Catholic church. Some have even made the claim that the

¹ An indulgence was a payment to the Catholic Church that purchased an exemption from punishment (penance) for various types of sins. The customers for indulgences were Catholic believers who feared that if one of their sins went unnoticed or unconfessed they would spend extra time in purgatory before reaching heaven or worse, end up in hell for failing to repent. The sale of indulgences spread to include forgiveness for the sins of people who were already dead. That is evident from a sermon by John Tetzel, the monk who sold indulgences in Germany and inspired Martin Luther’s protest in 1517.

German leader Hitler was the antichrist because of his brutality focused toward the Jews and others. People are still making wide ranging assertions about the identity of the antichrist even to this day.

Some of those teaching the system of doctrine called, “premillennialism” claim “the lawless one” the apostle Paul writes about in 2 Thessalonians 2 and the beast John writes about in Revelation 13 are “the antichrist.” Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12:

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

According to those who follow the doctrine of premillennialism, the antichrist is supposed to be a world ruler who demands worship and is supposed to plunge the world into the third world war and consequently, the battle of Armageddon. Many say that he will rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and have peace for 3 ½ years, then will be unmasked as the antichrist. The trouble with this viewpoint concerning the antichrist is that it is vastly different than what is presented in the Bible.

The title “antichrist(s)” is only used in the Bible by the apostle John in his epistles 1st John and 2nd John. By looking at those passages which deal with the antichrist, more can be learned about the Bible’s teaching on the subject.

The word “antichrist” ἀντίχριστος (pronounced *antichristos*) is a compound word consisting of “ἀντί meaning “against” and Χριστός meaning, “Christ.”² When the word “anti” is in a compound word it can mean either “against” or “instead of.” Because we cannot just take the meaning of the two Greek words from which this compound word is derived, we must allow the context of the Scriptures to fully define this word. We can gather three important facts about the “antichrist” from John’s epistles.

The first fact that John reveals about the antichrist is that he denies that Jesus is the Christ.

In 1 John 2:22, John writes: “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

In John’s description of the antichrist, we learn that he is a liar. His lies lead to the greatest falsehood of all, the denial that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. For the antichrist, the truth about Jesus as the Messiah cannot be allowed to stand. In John 8:44 Jesus describes



Figure 2: Passional Christi und Antichrist, by Lucas Cranach the Elder, from Luther’s 1521 Passionary of the Christ and the Antichrist, signing and selling indulgences.

2 Thayer, Joseph (1970). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House. P. 51

the devil in this way, "...He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." Those who deny that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God are doing what pleases the devil, which is promoting lies. The antichrist spreads lies about the nature of Jesus.

The church faced constant opposition from those who denied Jesus as the Christ because they wanted to silence the truth of the gospel. Since they couldn't silence it, they promoted a changed message about the gospel that promoted lies about the nature of Jesus.

John writes in 1 John 4:2-3, "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world."

The spirit of the antichrist taught against the Bible's teaching of Jesus, that is the word becoming flesh, living in a physical, earthly body. In John's day, those people following the spirit of the antichrist were spreading a new anti-Christian message, which denied the humanity of Jesus and proclaimed that false message to the world. The antichrists denied the incarnation and humanity of Jesus the Christ. In their doctrine and work, they were anti-Christ!

Comparing what John states about the origin, beliefs, and activities of the antichrists with the historical knowledge we now have of the various religious elements and movements of the 1st and 2nd Centuries A.D., it is likely that John's "antichrists" are adherents to the false doctrine of Gnosticism.

Fully developed Gnosticism occurred around the Second Century A.D. However, in the latter part of the First Century A.D., most scholars agree that there were Gnostic movements which were posing a serious threat to Christianity because followers of Gnosticism denied the combination of the deity and humanity of Jesus the Christ.

Gnosticism made a sharp division between light and darkness, good and evil, spirit and flesh. They reasoned that God was light, He was good, He was spirit; therefore, He could not be represented in flesh which, to their reasoning, itself was evil. To them all flesh was sinful. According to their faulty way of reasoning, if Jesus had flesh, he would also have had to be sinful. Jesus is God and is not sinful; therefore, he could not have had a human, flesh and blood body. They would proclaim Jesus may have seemed to have a body but, in reality, he had no body or humanity. To the Gnostics' way of thinking, God did not become flesh. To believe that He did would also mean that Jesus was full of sin.

The most well-known Gnostic of John the Apostle's day was a man named Cerinthus. Cerinthus who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians and lived in the same area, in Asia Minor near Ephesus, where the Apostle John ministered. Before his death, Cerinthus had acquired a large following including many who were once faithful members of the church. Some contend that much of John's first and second epistle were written to refute the false doctrines that Cerinthus held to and promoted.

Gnosticism was more fully developed and taught in the early part of the Second Century A.D., by false teachers such as Valentinus and Marcion. In his writings, "Gospel of Truth," Valentinus claims that Jesus, the Christ, came in what looked like a real earthly body, but in reality, was just a spiritual body.

Marcion, born to an elder of the church in A.D. 85, broke from the church in A.D. 144, denying the reality of Jesus' earthly, physical, flesh and blood body. Gnosticism, along with its denial of Christ's incarnation and humanity, took hold and became a significant stumbling block to many believers in the first three centuries of the church's existence. Just as some denied the deity of Jesus, others denied the humanity of Jesus. One key truth about Jesus that is stressed in the New Testament is the deity of Jesus coming in the flesh. John writes in John 1:1-5, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the

life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” The first characteristic that John reveals about the antichrist is that he is a liar who denies that Jesus is the Christ.

The second fact that John reveals about the antichrist is that he refuses to confess that Jesus the Christ has come in the flesh.

John writes in 1 John 4:1-3, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already.”*

No false christ could confess that Jesus is the Christ or that He has come in the flesh because that would interfere with their goal of leading people away from Jesus. Matthew 1:20-23 declares,

“...Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: *“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear A Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,”* which translated means, “God with us.”

John writes, *“Prove the spirits,”* if one would not even accept something so basic as the truth that Jesus the Christ came in the flesh, and proclaims something to the contrary, then one would know that he is a false prophet. This is one who boldly declares lies about Jesus to deceive people. John is not describing someone who is coming in the distant future, but a class of people who were living in John’s time in the first century A.D. These false prophets were already standing opposed to Jesus and the church by refusing to confess Jesus as the Christ who came in the flesh

The third fact that John reveals about the “antichrist” is that he is a deceiver.

John writes in 2 John 7, *“For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”*

John uses the word “antichrist” to describe a class of people who deny that Jesus came in the flesh. Note how Jesus warned of even the elect being deceived by a false message. Some were able to work lying signs in order to deceive. Matthew records Jesus warning about false Christs’ and false prophets’ ability to deceive, *“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”*³ The apostle Paul also describes these deceitful workers in 2 Thessalonians 2:9, *“even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, They came in the last hour of Israel.”* The “last hour” that Paul writes about is not some distant time in the future or even some time that is now at hand. The “last hour” is the last hour of Israel or the Jewish age. John’s writing clarifies this time frame in 1 John 2:18. He writes, *“Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have their arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us.”*



Figure 3: Luca Signorelli’s 1501 depiction of the face of antichrist, from the Orvieto Cathedral

3 Matthew 24:24, NASB. All subsequent Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Version unless otherwise stated. See also Mark 13:22.

John declares, in his day, that it is “the last hour.” That coincides with the last hour of Israel that Paul writes about. The antichrists were already in the process of spreading their lies at the time of John and Paul’s writing to the church. John, in his inspired writing, reveals that the future coming of a single ‘antichrist’ is not supported by the scriptures by asserting that there were “many antichrists” that had already arisen in his day. John states that these antichrists “*went out from us, but they were not of us.*” John writes, “*it is the last hour.*” In fact, he uses this statement twice to show that the “last hour” refers to the time of his writing his epistle in the first century A.D. The antichrists were known to the church at the time of John’s writings. Many people view that the Antichrist is some radically evil person or evil being that will come in the future, yet John describes the antichrist(s) living and working in his day. “The last hour” John writes about best fits the last days of the Jewish Age of the first century, not the end of time or the second coming of Jesus that has yet to come.

The purpose of John’s writing was to give a timely warning and instruction to Christians living in his day who may soon encounter or are already encountering the antichrists and the false doctrine they promote. John writes in 1 John 2:26-27, “*These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray. And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you; concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him.*” At the time of John’s writing the antichrists were already seeking to lead people away from the truth.

The Bible foretold that the Messiah was to be a prophet.⁴ A prophet of God is one who speaks for God to reveal His will and judgement. This is confirmed by God himself in Matthew 17. During the transfiguration a voice out of the cloud said, “*This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!*” One who falsely claimed to be “the Christ” was a false prophet and would not bring the true Word of God. Since Jesus is the true Christ, the antichrist, false christs, false prophets, and false teachers must deceive people in order to get them to think that he (the false christ) is the true Christ. The false christs would have to deny that Jesus is the Christ in order to claim that they are the Christ.

Where did these antichrists come from? John reveals something unexpected and almost unthinkable in 1 John 2:18-19; he writes, “*Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.*” In 2 John 7, John continues with a description of the antichrists acknowledging that they have already gone out into the world. He declares, “*For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.*”

The antichrist denies the incarnation and humanity of Christ. They and their blasphemous doctrine are dangerous because they present a Christ that is much different than the one in the Bible. There are many Scriptures that clearly speak of Jesus Christ’s incarnation and humanity. For instance, the writer of Hebrews writes in Hebrews 10:5, “*Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, ‘Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But A body You have prepared for ME.’*” This clearly declares that God prepared a body for Jesus. In the first chapter of the book of John, John declares the deity and the humanity of Jesus. He writes, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ⁵.... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*”⁶

4 Deuteronomy 18:5

5 John 1:1

6 John 1:14



Figure 4: Antichrist – detail from a fresco at Osogovo Monastery in the Republic of Macedonia. The inscription reads “All kings and nations bow before the Antichrist.” Photo by: Edal Anton Lefterov

The apostle Paul also writes of Jesus' deity and his humanity. In his letter to the Christians in Phillipi he writes, *"who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*⁷ Paul describes the humanity of Jesus in pointing out His obedience to the point of death, even death on a cross. Spirits or ghostly figures do not die on a physical cross. He also writes of this great spiritual truth to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:16, *"By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory."*

Jesus himself gives irrefutable evidence of His fleshly body. In Luke 24:39 Jesus plainly states, *"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."*

Jesus' humanity was required for Him to be a propitiation for sins. John writes in 1 John 2:2, *"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."*

Jesus' humanity was required for Him to be our redeemer. In 1 John 1:7 John writes, *"but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."* If Jesus did not come in the flesh and shed His blood for us, there would be nothing to cleanse us of all our sins.

Jesus' humanity was required for Him to be our mediator. In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:5-7, *"For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth."*

Jesus' humanity was required for Him to be our merciful and faithful High Priest. The Hebrew writer declares in Hebrews 2:17-18, *"Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."*

Because Jesus, the Son of God, came in the flesh and lived a sinless life and unjustly died on a cross he became the propitiation for sins; the redeemer of those who were lost in sin; a mediator between man and God; and a faithful and merciful High Priest for those who have obeyed his Word.

Conclusion

There is a story that demonstrates how dangerous assumptions can be without understanding one's biases and the context of the information one receives.

A photographer for a national magazine was assigned to get photos of a great forest fire. Smoke at the scene hampered him and he asked his home office to hire a plane. Arrangements were made and he was told to go at once to a nearby airport, where the plane would be waiting. When he arrived at the airport, a plane was warming up near the runway. He jumped in with his equipment and yelled, "Let's go! Let's go!" The pilot swung the plane into the wind and soon were in the air. "Fly over the north side of the fire," yelled the photographer, "and make three or four low level passes." "Why?" asked the pilot. "Because I'm going to take pictures," cried the photographer. "I'm a photographer and photographers take pictures!" After a pause the pilot said, "You mean you're not the instructor?"⁸

⁷ Philippians 2:6-8

⁸ David Swank. <http://mycentral.coop>. 12 20, 2016. Quoted in his article. original source unknown, <http://mycentral.coop/Home/Newsroom/ArticleID/96/Thoughts-from-your-CEO-Strategic-Business-Decisions.aspx> (accessed 11 09, 2018).

Some have misidentified the antichrist, just as the photographer misidentified his plane, because of preconceived ideas about what the antichrist looks like, how he behaves and the time of his appearance. The identity of most of these so-called “antichrists” just won’t fly because the descriptions do not match the descriptions that the Apostle John, the only New Testament writer who uses the term, gives in his writing.

The apostle Paul gives wise instruction to the church in Corinth when he writes that “you may learn not to exceed what is written.”⁹ If one filters out the descriptions of the antichrist that do not appear in John’s writing, it becomes clear, who the antichrist is not and more importantly, who he is and why John warns his readers about the antichrist.

The five uses of the term “antichrist(s)” found in the Bible do not present a single, future day, individual oppressive ruler, but a class of people that were living in John the Apostle’s day at the time of his writing during the first century A.D. The class of people called the “antichrist” are not described as a people who have horns coming from their heads, but as a class of people who stand opposed to Christ in their beliefs and teachings and seek to deceive others. John describes the class of people called “antichrist” with three clear facts. The first fact that John reveals about the “antichrist” is that he is a liar who denies that Jesus is the Christ. The second fact that John reveals about the “antichrist” is that he refuses to confess that Jesus, the Son of God, came in the flesh. The third fact that John reveals about the “antichrist” is that this term describes a class of people living and actively deceiving people about the deity and humanity of Jesus at the time of his writing in the first century A.D.

Because of Jesus’ planned and willing bodily sacrifice, Christians have forgiveness through his blood. John declares in 1 John 1:7 “*...if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*” John’s writings should be taken as an encouragement for Christians today. As Robert Lowry once asked and answered in a song he wrote:

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my cleansing this I see—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!
For my pardon this my plea—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

Jesus says, “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” Let’s not place our faith in speculation and tradition, but in the truth of God’s Word.

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The Truth on the Theme text: Revelation 20:5-7

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Introduction: Few chapters of the Bible are misunderstood more than this chapter. Several major false doctrines are “read into” this passage. Premillennialism is one false doctrine that is read into this passage.

Different systems of interpreting the book of Revelation

There are four different systems of interpreting the book of Revelation: The first system is the *historical* system of interpretation of the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation is supposedly a prophetic record of the course of history (usually from the time of John's writing of the book to the end of time). Many denominational churches hold to this interpretation of the book of Revelation.

The second system of interpreting the book of Revelation is the *spiritual* system of interpretation of the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation supposedly depicts the struggle between good and evil with good winning in the final day. The fulfillment might be viewed as continually being fulfilled through historic events. The principles of the book of Revelation are viewed as gnomic (timeless truths).

The third system of interpreting the book of Revelation is the *preterist* system of interpretation of the book of Revelation. The word “preterit” or “preterite” means: “past tense” (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.) This view has the book being fulfilled not long after the book was written or at least it is past tense for us today. This view may have the fulfillment being at the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). This view may have the fulfillment being during the time of the Roman Empire. There are other interpretations that may place the fulfillment in the past. This would be valuable to the Christian by the fulfillment of prophecy.

The fourth system of interpreting the book of Revelation is the *futurist* system of interpretation of the book of Revelation. This view has the majority of the prophecies yet to be fulfilled in the future. Most futurists interpreters have everything from chapter 4 onward being fulfilled in the future. All Premillennials are *futurist* interpreters of the book of Revelation.

Background information regarding the book of Revelation

The nature of the book of Revelation.

The book is written in symbolic language (Rev. 1:1-2).

*Rev. 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, **even** the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified **it** by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, **even** of all things that he saw.*

This passage (particularly verse 1) warns the reader that the book is written in symbolic language. The word ἐσήμανεν - 3rd per. sing. aor. 1 ind. act. of σημαίνω (pronounced *sēmainō*) “to give a sign, to signify, indicate” (Thayer, p. 573) “(σημα, a sign, mark) to indicate by a sign, to signal; to indicate, intimate, ... to make known, communicate, ... to specify” (Moulton, H. K., p. 365) is found in Rev. 1:1. This word is also found in: Jn. 12:33, 18:32, 21:19, Acts 11:28, 25:27. This word is translated “communicated” in the NASB and it should be translated *signified* in Rev. 1:1. Since God only does what is necessary (principle of parsimony), it must be necessary for one to be warned that the book is written in symbolic language.

This implies that the language of Scripture (both prose and law) must normally be written in literal (non-symbolic) language. Some parts of the Scriptures are darker (more difficult to understand) than other parts (Jn. 16:25 and 2 Pet. 3:15-16).

The book of Revelation is largely prophetic in nature (Rev. 1:3, 22:7, 10, 18, and 19).

Rev. 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.

The prophesies were of things that must shortly come to pass (Rev. 1:1 [above] and 22:6).

Rev. 22:6 And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angels to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass.

Jesus promised to come quickly (Rev. 3:11, 22:7, 12, and 20).

The meaning of the 1,000 years of chapter 20 determines how one views chapters 20-22. The views on the 1,000 years can be grouped into three categories. First, the *premillennial* view has the 1,000 years to be a literal 1,000 years (in the future). Second, the *postmillennial* view has the 1,000 years to be either literal or figurative (but in the past). And third, the *amillennial* view has the 1,000 years to be figurative language.

Broad outline of the book of Revelation

Chapter 1 contains both introductory and background information needed to properly interpret the book.

Chapters 2-3 have admonitions to the seven churches of Asia. The faithful are exhorted to continue in their faithfulness. The unfaithful are exhorted to repent and return to their service of God.

Chapters 4-19 contain prophecies that were written in symbolic language.

Chapters 20-22 are usually separated into a different section relating to the 1,000 years and aspects of it. This is an attempt to separate it from the obviously figurative expressions of the prior chapters.

Hermeneutical principles that must be used to understand parts of Revelation 20

Literal language is easier to understand; therefore, figurative language is overruled by literal language. In order to illustrate this principle, we will look at some words of Jesus. Jesus used figurative language when He said one must drink His blood (Jn. 6:53-56).

Jn. 6:53-56 Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. 54 He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.

The apostles prohibited the drinking of blood (Acts 15:28-29).

Acts 15:28-29 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

Therefore, the literal language of Acts 15 overrules our interpretation of John 6. We will apply this same principle to our interpretation of the book of Revelation (including chapter 20).

No prophecy of a true prophet ever failed. John the baptizer (a true prophet) prophesied that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Mt. 3:1-2).

Mt. 3:1 And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, 2 Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Jesus prophesied that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Mt. 4:17).

Mt. 4:17 From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The apostles prophesied that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Mt. 10:5-7).

Mt. 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Doctrinal errors that are read into Revelation 20

The first error to be considered is the error that the kingdom is to be established when the Lord returns to the Earth. The kingdom was established during the lifetime of the apostles (Mk. 9:1).

Mk. 9:1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.

The kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom (Jn. 18:35-36).

Jn. 18:35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

The Jews tried to make Jesus king by force (Jn. 6:15).

Jn. 6:15 Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make

him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

The kingdom of God is within men (Lk. 17:20-21).

Lk. 17:20 And being asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.

The kingdom of God was established during the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44).

Dan. 2:44 And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Since the Roman empire no longer exists, either the kingdom has been established, the Roman empire will be re-established, or Daniel is a false prophet. Daniel is not a false prophet and there is no evidence that the Roman empire will be re-established. Therefore, the kingdom of God has been established.

The Premillennial teacher claims that Jesus will reign from Jerusalem upon His throne when he returns in the second coming. Jesus is sitting on His throne during the time of the new birth (Mt. 19:28).

Mt. 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Either there is no new birth at the present time, or Jesus is presently on His throne, or Jesus is a false prophet. There is a new birth at the present time and Jesus is not a false prophet. Therefore, Jesus is presently on His throne.

Jesus cannot be a priest while upon the earth (Heb. 8:4-5).

*Heb. 8:4-5 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve **that which** is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned **of God** when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount.*

Jesus was to be both a king and a priest on His throne (Zech. 6:12-13).

Zech. 6:12-13 and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; 13 even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

Since He cannot be a priest while upon the Earth, He cannot reign from an earthly throne in Jerusalem. Therefore, His throne must be a heavenly throne.

None of the seed of Jeconiah (Coniah) would prosper, reigning in Judah (Jer. 22:30).

Jer. 22:30 Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah.

Jesus is of the seed of Jeconiah (Mt. 1:11).

Mt. 1:11 and Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon. 12 And after the carrying away to Babylon, Jechoniah begat Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel;

Jechoniah (Jeconiah) is also called "Coniah." Therefore, Jesus cannot prosper as a King in Judah (including Jerusalem).

The doctrine of premillennialism implies that the church was an afterthought of God. Isaiah prophesied of the establishment of the house of God (Isa. 2:1-4).

Isa. 2:1-4 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

The house of God is the church (1 Tim. 3:15).

1 Tim. 3:15 but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

By the law of identity the house of God is the church; therefore, Isaiah prophesied of the establishment of the church.

Paul preached only what Moses and the prophets said would come to pass (Acts 26:22-23).

*Acts 26:22-23 Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; 23 how that the Christ must suffer, **and** how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.*

Therefore, since Paul preached concerning the church, Moses and the prophets must have prophesied of the church.

The doctrine of premillennialism implies that Jesus died in vain (He neither intended to die nor did He need to die to redeem mankind). This implies that God was weaker than Satan. Jesus came to the earth to die for our sins (Gen. 3:15, Isa. 53:1-ff., Acts 3:18, etc.).

Gen. 3:15 and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Acts 3:18 But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled.

Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission (Heb. 9:22).

Heb. 9:22 And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.

The blood of Jesus was shed for remission of sins (Mt. 26:28).

Mt. 26:28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of

sins.

The doctrine of premillennialism implies that the church is not the temple of God. The church is the temple of God (Eph. 2:19-22).

Eph. 2:19-22 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

God never intended to dwell in a temple made with hands (Acts 7:44-50).

*Acts 7:44-50 Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen. 45 Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered on the possession of the nations, that God thrust out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; 46 who found favor in the sight of God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built him a house. 48 Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in **houses** made with hands; as saith the prophet, 49 The heaven is my throne, And the earth the footstool of my feet: What manner of house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: Or what is the place of My rest? 50 Did not my hand make all these things?*

Jesus is God (Deity – Jn. 1:1-3).

Jn. 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

Jesus does not dwell in a temple made with hands; therefore, He will not dwell in a man-made temple in the city of Jerusalem.

Additional problems with premillennialism

When Israel pleased God, they were protected from attack during their three feasts (Ex. 34:24).

Ex. 34:22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, even of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. 23 Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel. 24 For I will cast out nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou goest up to appear before Jehovah thy God three times in the year.

Yom Kippur was in the seventh month, 10th day (Lev. 16:29).

Lev. 16:29 And it shall be a statute for ever unto you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and shall do no manner of work, the home-born, or the stranger that sojourneth among you: 30 for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before Jehovah.

The feast of tabernacles was in the seventh month 15th day (Lev. 23:33-34).

Lev. 23:33 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, 34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto Jehovah.

The modern nation that calls itself “Israel” was attacked on Yom Kippur (Oct. 6, 1973 and the war

lasted until Oct. 26, 1973). The feast of Tabernacles was during this war. This proves that they were not pleasing to God at that time.

The modern nation that calls itself “Israel” has been at war during some of the other feasts (other wars). The Arab-Israeli War (1947-1949) went through several years (including all three feasts more than once).

Things not mentioned in Revelation 20

These things are assumed to be there by premillennial teachers. First, the second coming of our Lord is not mentioned in Revelation 20. Second, there is no mention of a reign by Jesus upon the Earth in Revelation 20. Third, there is no mention of a bodily resurrection in Revelation 20. Fourth, there is no mention (either explicit or implicit) of present-day people in Revelation 20.

REVELATION 20

Introduction: This chapter has several difficulties in interpretation.

The binding of Satan (20:1-3)

Rev. 20:1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

The number 1,000 is used for emphasis in: Lev. 26:8, Josh. 23:10, 1 Chron. 16:15, Ps. 50:10, 84:10, 90:4, 91:7, 105:8, Ecc. 6:6, 7:28, Song of Sol. 5:10, Isa. 30:17, 60:22, Dan. 7:10, Hos. 8:12, 1 Cor. 4:15, 14:19, 2 Pet. 3:8, Rev. 9:16, 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

A spirit being (Satan) cannot be bound with a literal chain. Therefore, the chain is a figurative chain.

*Rev. 20:3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut **it**, and sealed **it** over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.*

The reign of the witnesses (20:4-6)

*Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and **I saw** the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

The apostles were to set upon thrones judging (Mt. 19:28 and Lk. 22:30). The apostles obviously judge mankind through their words (through the New Testament [Jn. 12:48]). The apostles were given authority to judge (Mt. 19:28 and Lk. 22:30).

These souls are of those who had been witnesses for Christ. The first reason they were beheaded (murdered) is because they were witnesses for the Lord (His resurrection). (Since we cannot be witnesses today, this was referring to those of the first century who died rather than change their testimony that Jesus was resurrected.)

The second reason they were beheaded (murdered) is because they taught the word of God. This fits the apostles and other witnesses of the Lord’s resurrection who preached/taught the Scriptures (the New Testament).

Rev. 20:5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the

first resurrection.

The first resurrection is also discussed in verse 6. Since the things in this book (including this chapter) are figurative language; the resurrection is not likely to be a literal resurrection.

Rev. 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Note the present tenses – the one continuing to have part in the first resurrection continues not to have to fear the second death.

Since this is a book of symbols, the second death is not likely to be a literal death.

One becomes a priest when he obeys the gospel. This cannot be a rejuvenated Law of Moses because Jesus cannot be a priest under it.

Logical argument:

First Premise: If one is a priest of God, then he has a part in the first resurrection.

Second Premise: One is a priest of God (he is a Christian).

Conclusion: He has a part in the first resurrection.

Rev. 20:7 And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Satan has never been in a literal prison from which to be loosed.

Rev. 20:8 and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

This is figurative language telling us that there will be large numbers of these people in this army (remember that this is figurative language).

Rev. 20:9 And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them.

The word “city” (πόλις) is used to refer to heaven (Heb. 11:10, 16, 13:14, etc.).

The word “city” (πόλις) is used to refer to the church (Heb. 12:22).

The word “city” (πόλις) is used to refer to various physical cities in the New Testament (Rome, Corinth, etc.).

Since the book of Revelation is a book of symbols (Rev. 1:1), the word “city” (πόλις) probably either refers to heaven or to the church. It is most likely that it refers to the church. It most likely depicts spiritual warfare between God’s people and Satan’s people.

Since the book of Revelation is a book of signs or symbols (Rev. 1:1) the fire is not likely to be literal fire. The fire of this passage most likely depicts God’s protection of His people linked with His punishment of evil people.

Rev. 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The final judgment (20:11-15)

Rev. 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth

and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

This assurance of a resurrection is both a promise with hope (for the faithful) and a warning to the unbelievers (no person can escape God's judgment).

Rev. 20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. 15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

The book of life is mentioned in Ps. 69:28, Phil. 4:3, Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 15, and 21:27.

Daniel's 70 weeks

Lucian Farrar



LUCIAN FARRAR, JR. was born in Natchez, Mississippi, on September 15, 1939. He and EuEllen Kay (Ousley) were married on September 2, 1962. To this marriage four children were born: 1) Monte, 2) Michael, 3) Melisa, and Mark. EuEllen departed this life on April 16, 2015.

Lucian began his preaching life in January, 1961 and it was in Chickalah, OK. In preparing for his preaching work, he attended: 1) Harding College, 2) Arkansas State Teachers College (one semester) and he graduated from Harding College in 1962, receiving a BA with a Bible Major, and a History Minor. He has done local work in: Ozark, AR (1962 – 1964), Aurora, MS (1964 – 1966), Qulvira Heights in Topeka, KA (1966 – 1971 and 1979 – 1989), Danvill, AR (1971 – 1974, the Fifteth & Greenwich congregation in Russellville, AR (1974 – 1979), the 49th & Tacoma congregation in Tulsa, OK (1989 – 2001) and at Sperry, OK 2001 to the present).

In the course of these years, Lucian held gospel meetings at: Burlington, KS, Emporia, KS, Junction City, KS, Mount Vernon, AR, Russellville, Ar, Overcup, AR. New Blaine, AR, Quivira Heights, KS. And he preached in the Oklahoma City Lectures starting in 2017. Also, in his years of preaching, he had three books publishing through James Kay Publishing and through Amazon: 1) The Minor Prophets – God's Spokesmen, 2) The Book of Daniel – The Most High Rules, and 3) The Victorious Church in the Book of Revelation, 2016 edition with over 1,000 copies of the of the 2006 edition are in circulation.

Other interesting events that have taken place in the life of Lucian Farrar, Jr.; he taught high school history and civics for one year at Danville, AR (1971 – 1972). He also spoke on a weekly radio while with the Russellville, AR church. His teaching history and Bible at the Greater Tulsa Christian Academy (1993 – 2002) led to his being included in Who's Who Among America's Teachers. He is now teaching at the Owassa School of Biblical Studies beginning in 1990 to the present and this year he is teaching the book of Revelation.

Pre-millennialists teach that the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Daniel 9 covers a period from the rebuilding of walls in Jerusalem in 444 BC to the second coming of Christ. However, they teach there is a gap between the 69th week and the 70th week. They say this gap is necessary because the Jews as a nation rejected Christ and his sacrifice for our sins. His kingdom had to be postponed until after his second coming. During his thousand-year reign, all of Israel will be saved. The last week of seven years will be the time of the Anti-Christ, the “one” mentioned in verse 27, “*who makes desolate*” with his “*abominations.*” At first, the Anti-Christ will make a covenant with the Jews and rebuild their temple. But after three-and-a-half years, he will stop the sacrifices and begin the great tribulation which will last until Christ returns at the end of the seventieth week. The purpose of my lesson this morning is to show that all of these claims are false.

To have a true understanding of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9, let's look at the setting at the beginning of the chapter. Daniel says,

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of years specified by the word of the LORD though Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession...” Daniel 9:1-4

The first year of Darius was 538 BC. Daniel was among the first captives to be taken to Babylon in 606 BC, and he was anticipating the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in just two years to rebuild

the city and the temple in 536 BC, because God had said through Jeremiah,

“After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place ... Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.” Jeremiah 29:10 and 12

Daniel concludes his prayer in Daniel 9:4-19 by saying,

*“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act!
Do not delay for your own sake, my God,
for your city and your people are called by your name.”*

While Daniel was praying, **the angel Gabriel came to him with the prophecy** of the seventy weeks. He is the angel who would appear to the virgin Mary, hundreds of years later, announcing the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of God. Luke 1:26-37 Gabriel begins the prophecy by saying,

“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city.” Daniel 9:24

Notice that this period of time is for Daniel’s people, the Jews—it is not for all the nations. And the seventy weeks are for Daniel’s city, Jerusalem—they are not for all the cities of the world. And Gabriel ends the prophecy by predicting the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, by saying,

“And on the wings of abominations shall one who makes desolate, even until the consummation which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.” 9:27b

Jesus made reference to this prophecy and applied it to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. He said, *“When you see the **abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ... then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains ... Assuredly I say to you, this generation will by no means pass till all these things take place.**”* Matthew 24:15, 16, 34 Jesus states that the seventieth week would be fulfilled in the first century—not at His second coming! That should settle the question. Let’s listen to Jesus!

Christians in the first century understood Jesus’s explanation of Daniel’s prophecy of the seventy weeks. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus reports that the abominations of the Jews caused the destruction of Jerusalem. The Roman army was called upon to put down a rebellion in Galilee that was stirred up by a Jewish zealot named John. These rebels escaped from Galilee and fled to Jerusalem. Upon entering the city, John made the temple his stronghold, and the sanctuary became the zealot’s “refuge and a shop of tyranny,” according to Josephus, who was an eyewitness to these events.¹ When Christians in Judea saw these “abominations” in the temple and the Roman armies closing in on the city, they fled to the city of Pella in Perea beyond the Jordan River.² They escaped the great tribulation in Jerusalem and Judea, because they heeded the warnings of Daniel and of Jesus. This is further proof that the Seventy Weeks were completed in the first century – not to be completed at the second coming of Christ, as taught by pre-millennialists.

What then is the period that is represented by the seventy weeks? I don’t know anyone who takes the seventy weeks to be a literal 490 days by multiplying the 7 days in a week by 70. The weeks are not sevens of days, but sevens of years—490 years. However, some take the 490 years to be literal years, while others say they are symbolic years. **We will see that a literal interpretation does not fit all the periods being described by the seventy weeks.** However, all the numbers used in the vision of the seventy weeks have symbolic meaning.

Why 490 years? A Sabbath rest for the land was to be observed every seventh year, according to Leviticus 25:1-4. The Jews were captives in Babylon *“until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths ... to fulfill the seventy years.”* (2 Chronicles 36:20-21) From the time of the Judges to the exile in Babylon,

1 Flavius Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book IV, Chapter III, Sections 1-8

2 Paul L. Maier, Eusebius – *The Church History*, Section 3.5, p. 95

it appears that God's people had failed to observe the land Sabbaths more than seventy times. The "seventy years" are symbolic for all the Sabbaths they had failed to observe. (Leviticus 26:33) Since the land Sabbath came every seventh year, this would be a period of seven years times seventy, or 490 years.

As Daniel anticipates the completion of the seventy years in Babylon and the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, the angel Gabriel tells him of another symbolic period of 490 years. When the 3 "seventy weeks" are finished, God will be finished with his covenant relationship with the Jews. **The nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem will have served God's purpose of bringing the Christ into the world.** Isaiah had written about Christ's new covenant of peace that would provide forgiveness of sins. (Isaiah 55:3-7)

With this setting in mind, let's return to the prophecy of "the seventy weeks." Gabriel said,

*"Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and
To anoint the Most Holy." Daniel 9:24*

The forgiveness of sins through Christ's atoning sacrifice is described as finishing the transgression, making an end of sins, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. Romans 5:18-19 tells us that sin entered the world through of the transgression of one man, Adam, but through the righteous act of one Man, Christ, many will be justified. Hebrews 10:10 states, *"We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,"* and Hebrews 10:17 promises, *"Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."* The apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:19, *"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."* Paul also wrote in Philippians 3:9 that he wanted to be found in Christ, *"not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through the faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."* The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Christ, according to Romans 1:16-17.

Vision and prophesy have been sealed up. Hebrews 1:1-2 states that God *"has in these last days spoken to us by his Son."* Jesus said to his apostles in John 14:26 and in John 16:13, *"The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things ... He will guide you into all truth."* Jude 3 exhorts us *"to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."* Paul wrote in Galatians 1:9, *"If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accused."* And in 1 Corinthians 13:8 we read, *"Love never fails. But whether there are prophesies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease."* With the writings of the apostle John, vision and prophecy were sealed up by the end of the first century. The end of inspired prophecy is also predicted in Zechariah 13:1-4.

The Most Holy has been anointed. *"Christ came as High Priest ... with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption ... for Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands ... but into heaven itself."* Hebrews 9:11, 12, 24) Christ anointed the Most Holy in heaven with His own blood.

Daniel 9:25 contains the key to understanding the prophecy of "seventy weeks." Gabriel said,

"Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks."

The "seventy weeks" begin with **the command to restore and build Jerusalem.** When was this command given? The obvious answer is when the exiles were allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and the temple in 536 BC. However, pre-millennialists tell us that Artaxerxes gave the

command in 444 BC. But the prophet Isaiah tells us that the command was given by Cyrus king of Persia. In fact, it was God who gave us this important information! His prophecy begins, ***“Thus say the LORD, your Redeemer”*** in Isaiah 44:24.

“Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built.” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”

Isaiah 44:28

“Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held ...” Isaiah 45:1

And I will direct all his ways; he shall build My city and let My exiles go free.” Isaiah 45:13

The one who would let God’s exiles go free would also be the one who would give the command to build Jerusalem, God’s city. These passages from Isaiah should settle the questions of **when** was the command given to build Jerusalem and by **whom** was the command given. **Let’s listen to God**—not to pre-millennialists.

The time and the reason for the command is revealed in Ezra 1:1-2.

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing, saying,

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel.

Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC. For the next three years, he continued his conquests, while Darius the Mede ruled the kingdom. Daniel 5:30-31 The first year of Cyrus was 536 BC, which was seventy years after the first Jews were taken to Babylon. God no doubt stirred the spirit of Cyrus to make this decree with the words of Isaiah 44:28 – 45:13, which were written over 150 years before Cyrus came to power. In this passage God tells Cyrus how He would help him *“subdue nations before him.”* 45:1 And God said to Cyrus, *“I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me.* 45:4-5 The Bible should remove all doubts concerning who gave the command to build Jerusalem. **The command was given by Cyrus king of Persia in 536 BC.**

The seventy weeks are divided into three periods. Gabriel said that *“from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.”* Daniel 9:25 There would be seven weeks plus sixty-two weeks plus one week. If the *“seventy weeks”* are 490 literal years, the prophecy misses the birth of Jesus by 46 years. Do the math; 536 minus 490 equals 46. Jesus was not born in 46 BC. Literal years would miss the beginning of Christ’s personal ministry by more than 70 years. The years must be symbolic years. Remember, the literal seventy years of exile in Babylon were representing *“seventy symbolic years”* in which the Sabbath rest for the land had not been observed.

Daniel 9:25 says, *“the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.”* **During the first seven weeks**, adversaries troubled the Jews in their building the temple and the city of Jerusalem. (Ezra 4:1-4, 11-16) And years later, their enemies made trouble for those who were building the wall. (Nehemiah 4) The time from the decree of Cyrus in 536 BC to the completion of the wall by Nehemiah in 445 BC was a period of over 90 years, not 49 years. This is further proof that the *“weeks”* must be symbolic. Seven is a perfect and complete number. **Seven times seven means that God would completely restore the temple and Jerusalem during this period.**

The sixty-two weeks represent the period from the completion of the Old Testament to the coming of Christ, the Messiah. Sixty-two is not a symbolic number, but 62 times 7 equals **434**. You may find in a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia under “Numbers” that “**four**” is the symbolic **number for the world** and “**three**” is the symbolic **number for the Godhead**. During the period between the writing of the Old Testament and the New Testament, there were no inspired writers or prophets. However, God was working in a providential way during the time of Antiochus IV. Daniel was given detailed prophecies of God striking down this persecutor who would defile the temple in Jerusalem and kill over 100,000 Jews in the second century BC. This was the period of God (3) demonstrating his providential power in the middle of the world (4). **The number 4-3-4 perfectly describes the time between the Testaments.**

The seventieth week, the last seven years of the 490 years, represents the first century when Christ, the long-awaited Messiah, came to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place in heaven. We have seen that Christ came after a total of sixty-nine weeks or **483 symbolic years**. **What is symbolic about 4-8-3?** Early Christians used the number “8” for Christ, since He was raised from the dead on the first day of the week, which is also ‘the eighth’ – the day after the seventh. Read the numbers from right to left, and you have God (3) was in Christ (8) reconciling the world (4). 2 Corinthians 5:19 says, “*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*” The number “8” represents God’s power. Jesus was “*declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead.*” Romans 1:4 Both the Greek king Antiochus IV and the Roman king Domitian were the eighth rulers of their kingdoms, and they claimed to be god in the flesh. Only Jesus Christ is the true incarnation of deity. 1 Timothy 2:5, “*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*” **Between the world (4) and God (3) there is Christ (8) our mediator, 4-8-3.**

Every one of the numbers in the prophecy of the “seventy weeks” has a symbolic meaning that describes the period of time that it represents. Fausset’s Bible Dictionary under the topic “Number” says, “Daniel and Revelation use several numbers to characterize periods, rather than indicate arithmetical duration.” This is also true of the “*one thousand years*” in Revelation 20.

Pre-millennialists insist that the 490 years should be literal years. They start with the decree of King Artaxerxes in 444 BC for Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Robert Culver, a well-known pre-millennialist, in the Wycliffe Bible Commentary, admits that from this decree to Christ’s ministry, his interpretation misses it by over 13 years (470 years instead of 483 years), but he said that is close enough. They also miss the first seven weeks. The walls of Jerusalem were completed in just 52 days, according to Nehemiah 6:15—not in 49 years, the first seven weeks!

Even the non-premillennialists who interpret the 490 years as being literal years have similar problems. They start with the decree of Artaxerxes in 458 BC, instead of the obvious decree by Cyrus in 536 BC. At first, this sounds good. By adding 483 years to 458 BC, the date would be AD 25. The ministry of Jesus began when he was 30 years of age, and if you adjust for the five-year error in our calendar, the date would be AD 25. However, this theory does not match the beginning and the end of the seventy weeks. The first seven weeks, or 49 years, were for restoring Jerusalem. The city was completely restored by 444 BC with the rebuilding of the walls by Nehemiah. Instead of 49 years for rebuilding the city, it would be only 14 years. This does not fit! In the seventieth week, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was not three-and-a-half years after the death of Jesus. It was 37 years later. That’s not even close!

For an interpretation to be true, **all the facts must agree**. If the prophecy of the seventy weeks is to be interpreted literally all the facts must agree. But as we have seen, they do not. However, **all the numbers have symbolic meaning and accurately describe the time they represent**. Therefore, the seventy weeks are symbolic.

Gabriel predicted **the death of Christ** during the first century, saying,

*“And **after sixty-two weeks** shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. Daniel 9:26a*

The death of Christ for our sins came **after** the period of **sixty-two weeks**, or after a total of 69 symbolic weeks. (Seven weeks plus sixty-two weeks.) Pre-millennialists teach that Christ’s ministry and death were during the 69th week; but Daniel 9:26 plainly says Christ’s death would be **after** the 69th week. Pre-millennialists also teach that because the Jews rejected Jesus, the seventieth week has been postponed until seven years before Christ’s second coming. Where is the book, chapter and verse that says that? Gabriel said there would be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks **before** the coming of Messiah. Christ’s birth, personal ministry, death & resurrection, and the completion of His new covenant would be in the last seven symbolic years, the 70th week. The prophecy of “the seventy weeks” is about the first coming of Christ—not His second coming.

Gabriel also predicted the destruction of Jerusalem would be during the 70th week. He said,

*“And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war, desolations are determined.”
Daniel 9:26b*

“The people of the prince” were the Roman soldiers under the command of Titus, the son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian. The army of Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. Jesus had predicted that this destruction would be in the first century in Matthew 24:1-34.

Gabriel begins the last verse of the prophecy of “seventy weeks” by saying,

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” Daniel 9:27a

The antecedent of “he” is the Messiah in verse 26. The “one week” is the seventieth week. During the first century, Christ made and confirmed the new covenant that the LORD had promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34, saying, *“I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”* It is *“the everlasting covenant”* that provides *“the sure mercies of David”* as predicted in Isaiah 55:3. And according to Hebrews 2:3-4, this covenant of salvation *“was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.”* The confirmation of the new covenant of Christ is the purpose of the seventy weeks as was revealed in verse 24. Christ came to cause sacrifices and offerings to cease by His one perfect sacrifice at the end of his three-and-a-half-year ministry. His sacrifice was once for all people for all time, according to Hebrews 10:1-10. Pre-millennialist say that the Anti-Christ *“shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering”* in a restored temple in Jerusalem. Why would God want to restore temple worship in Jerusalem in light of what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well? Christ said to her, *“The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, **nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father** ... But the hour is coming, and **now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.**”* John 4:21, 23 Why do pre-millennialists fear that a supposed Anti-Christ would stop animal sacrifices? Don’t they know that Christ has already done away with animal sacrifices? They are not listening to Christ! What Christ did, they tell us that the Anti-Christ will do it! Their own teaching is Anti-Christ.

Gabriel concluded the prophecy of the seventy weeks by saying,

“And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation.” Daniel 9:27b

We already have noted that Jesus said that this prophecy is predicting the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in AD 70. The Jews brought this great tribulation upon themselves. In Matthew 21:33-39, Jesus told the Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers, in which the vinedressers kill the son of the owner of the vineyard. Then Jesus said to the Jewish rulers in verse 43, *“Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of*

God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” The physical nation of Israel would no longer be God’s holy nation. In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter writes to those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, *“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people.”*

This is the basic problem with pre-millennialism; the doctrine teaches physical Israel is still God’s holy chosen nation. They say that Christ came to establish an earthly kingdom, but because the Jews rejected him, the kingdom had to be postponed until his second coming when all the Jews would receive him. If Jesus had set up an earthly kingdom as Satan tempted him in Matthew 4:8-9, our sins would not be forgiven! Jesus said because the Jews rejected him, Israel is no longer God’s chosen nation. The rejection of Jesus was predicted in Isaiah 53:3, which says, *“He is despised and rejected by men.”* Isaiah 53 concludes, *“And He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.”* The good news is *“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”* 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. The gospel of Christ is God’s power to save both Jews and Gentiles, according to Romans 1:16. **The Jews will be saved by Christ’s sacrificial death—not by a millennial kingdom on earth.**

When we compare what the pre-millennialists teach about Daniel’s Seventy Weeks with what the Bible actually says, we must conclude that pre-millennialism is a man-made doctrine of unbelief. **Pre-millennialists do not believe that Christ has already accomplished what the seventy weeks were determined to do, according to Daniel 9:24.**

*“To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.”*

Jesus has fulfilled the purpose of the “seventy weeks.” Ephesians 3:10-11 says, *“The manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church ... according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

The Jews are to be saved in the same way as those of all the other nations—not as a nation but as individuals when they believe and obey the gospel of Christ. The apostle Paul said,

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” Romans 1:16

And Romans 11:20 says concerning the Jews, *“because of **unbelief** they were broken off.”* But **verse 23** promises, *“and they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in.”* This is the meaning of **verse 26**, *“And so all Israel will be saved.”* When one turns from his unbelief to faith in Christ, he will be saved. Isaiah 27:12 describes their salvation with these words: *“And you will be gathered **one by one**, O you children of Israel.”* They would be saved as individuals—not as a nation. To be part of God’s holy nation, they must believe and obey the gospel of Christ.

Jesus instructed his disciples,

*“Go into all the world and **preach the gospel** to every creature. **He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.**” Mark 16:15-16*

The individual Jew who does not believe in Jesus Christ and his good news of salvation will be condemned.

Conclusion:

Those who put their faith in Christ and his atoning sacrifice, are now in the kingdom of Christ. The apostle Paul instructs us to be *“giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and*

conveyed us into **the kingdom of the Son of His love**, in whom we have redemption through His blood the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:12-14

Are you now in the kingdom of Christ?

Are you walking in the light of God and His word?

Is the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing you from all sin, as promised in 1 John 1:7?

On the day of Pentecost after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, Peter concluded his sermon with these words: *"Let all the house of **Israel** know assuredly that God has made this **Jesus** whom you crucified, both **Lord** and **Christ**."* Acts 2:36

*"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, '**Men and brethren, what shall we do?**'"* Acts 2:37

*Then Peter said to them, '**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**.'* Acts 2:38

*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized, and that same day **about three thousand souls were added to them**."* Acts 2:41

Acts 2 plainly shows how all Israel will be saved. It is the same way of salvation that is offered to everyone who believes and obeys our Lord Jesus Christ!

The End of the Glorious Reign of King Jesus Christ

Brian L. Berry



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Introduction

When I was a boy we often sent messages to our friends in elaborate, encrypted symbols that nobody but we would understand. This is one reason why the book of Revelation has always appealed to people. There is something about a good mystery that stirs the curiosity and Revelation, with its vivid images, certainly fulfills this curiosity. Just like us boys, it is as if the author assumes the reader is familiar with the interpretation of these symbols, so no explanation is needed.

Thus, the result has been that the book of Revelation has become proof texts for many false doctrines, i.e. premillennialism. Herein lies the challenge for Christians.

I'm convicted Revelation is clear enough that we can understand its message. Just as with any other New Testament book, let the reader ask, "What did it mean to those to whom it was written? What does it mean for us today?"

The lesson will be as follows: 1) The background of the book of Revelation; 2) Jesus as King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and our great High Priest; 3) Christian's living faithfully; and 4) Then cometh the end.

Background

John, the apostle, is banished to Patmos, a wind-swept island in the Aegean Sea, by the Romans for being a "trouble maker." He is here to receive a message from God in what would become the last book in the Bible. The ruling Roman government was oppressing Christians. In a secular world that was polytheistic, Christians firmly believed there is only one God. Thus, they began to find the government suspicious of them. They were disrespected, hated, and questioned whether they should even be allowed to live in society. It would drive Christians to their knees. Even Nero, circa A.D. 64, would fiddle while Rome burned, and then falsely accuse the massive conflagration on Christians. It often looks like evil is winning and is going to win. Especially in times like these, the Christian has only one place to go, and that is to God. The promise of Revelation is that God will ultimately be the victor. Christians represent that which is good. The Romans represent that which is evil. The question "Who's going to win?" Remember: Revelation 1:9 - *"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."* What would John, our brother, write while he's on an island, on a Sunday morning, all by himself, when God reveals Himself to him in a miraculous and amazing way? Here's the message: it's a battle between two spirit world forces, God and

the devil. And it's ultimately not much of a battle, although it looks like it is from earth's perspective. The Christians ask, "What's going to happen, God?" The Romans say, "We're in charge!" But in the middle of this good versus evil battle, God says to John, *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."* (Revelation 1:1-3). This is not John's revelation, it's Jesus' revelation to John so that all Christians will know they are dealing with a battle that is between God and the devil. The challenge is that we can't see God and we can't see the devil.

Thus, John will write an amazing message to Christians in an amazing vision. Numerology of Jewish apocalyptic literature will be evident, being quite popular at that time. Some prominent numbers that will be used in the text: The number for spiritual perfection is seven. The number xix is one less than seven, thus spiritual imperfection. Relating to the earth, man's world, like the four corners of the earth, would be the number four. The number three is often the number for deity, or the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The number two is a strengthened number, like two witnesses. Relating to physical or human sense of completion is the number 10. And the number 12 stands for spiritual completion, like the twelve tribes, the twelve apostles. When John used the word "revelation," the Greeks would use a word where we get our English word, "apocalypse," meaning to literally, "remove the cover." This same type writing is used in Ezekiel in the Old Testament, where there is also a great conflict. In both cases, there is an "apocalypse," there is always a great conflict. As the cover is gently pulled back, what is the message? God wins!

Jesus Christ: King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Our Great High Priest

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Revelation 1:4-6). *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."*

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Revelation 1: As God begins to gradually reveal what's really happening with things the reader cannot see, John starts by writing about an amazing scene. This scene will be the center of all that happens in the book. John sees Jesus among seven golden candlesticks, representing seven churches in Asia Minor. Jesus desires these messages be shared with these Christians. In the midst of these candlesticks, Jesus shows Christians on earth, who may be worried, that they are not alone.

Jesus, standing in the midst of these candlesticks, and being described as having bronze feet, flashes of fire coming out of his eyes, a golden girdle, etc., has a message for all these churches.

Revelation 2 & 3: All of these churches, positioned on the Aegean Sea, receive a letter from Jesus Christ, their King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and great High Priest, both condemning, and commending them. The first letter is to Ephesus, a hard-working, truth-defending congregation, who needed to return to their first love. The second letter is to Smyrna. While poor, reality was this congregation was rich, but they were going to be imprisoned, persecuted, and death awaits, so hold on. No condemnation is received. To the church at Pergamum, the third letter, He says they desperately need to repent, because the synagogue of Satan was in their city. The fourth letter is to Thyatira, whom had a female

false prophetess that is referred to as a Jezebel. Sardis, the fifth letter, had a reputation for godliness, but they were dead and asleep. Enduring patiently, with great faith, Philadelphia, the sixth letter receives no condemnation. And the seventh letter, to the Laodiceans, who were lukewarm to the extent it sickened the Lord. Seven times in the book of Revelation the phrase, “Hold on” or “be victorious” is used. The Greek word for “victory” is a vivid reminder that the message of the book for all is, “Don’t give up. Don’t let go. Hold On.”

Revelation 4: In this amazing throne room scene there are four beasts: one beast has the face of a lion, another beast has the face of a calf, still another the face of a man, and finally one with the face of an eagle. Each had six wings and was full of eyes. So we have Jesus in the midst of the candlesticks, and now this amazing throne room scene. This must have been absolutely overwhelming to John. What is the reader being shown? This is where the power is located. Revelation’s message: the emperors and the empire look overwhelming, but the truth of the matter is they are nothing compared to Almighty God. Every time in the book we see the absolute beauty of God and Jesus Christ, and how all – powerful they are, we are reminded, “God wins !” We must never forget this message!

In this scene there’s the throne in the middle, with a sea in front of it, and there are 24 elders circling around this awe-inspiring throne. These four beasts, full of eyes within, are aware of everything. Why do we have these four beasts ? The lion is the king of the beasts. The most majestic, mightiest and swiftest of all the birds is the eagle. The calf or ox is the strongest of all the beasts of burden. The wisest of all on earth is man. What do they do ? They cry out, *“Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”* (verse 8b). Hearing this, the elders fall to their knees, and they toss their crowns down at the feet of the One who sits on the throne. It is their way of saying there is no power, there is no might, there is no dominion that is not under the feet of God Almighty. Amen ! We can just quit right here, end of story, but John has so much more to say, because he wants all to understand God’s plan.

Faithful Unto Death

Revelation 5: In the right hand of the One who sits on the throne, who has these streaks of lightning and a beautiful rainbow that surrounds Him, there is a book. This book is sealed with seven seals and can only be broken by the one with the appropriate authority. Who is it that has this authority ? There is a lamb that is in this powerful, amazing throne room. This lamb, however, is an intriguing lamb, because it’s not just a regular lamb. This lamb, with seven horns and seven eyes, is all-powerful with absolute awareness. And that’s not all, this lamb looks as though it had been slain. Thus, this lamb with seven horns, seven eyes, and having been slain, is Jesus Christ, in all His power and glory. He is complete ! This lamb is the only one who has the authority to this book. *“And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”* (vss. 7-10).

Revelation 6: When the Lamb breaks the seal, there are three sets of visions or woes, and the three woes begin with these seven seals. In chapter 5, no other can open the seals, except the Lamb. Surrounding this fact that the Lamb can open the seals, there is obvious excitement. The lamb is the only one worthy of passing any kind of ultimate judgment. Then literally, everything breaks loose, because when He starts breaking the seals amazing, terrible events begin to happen. The first four seals become horsemen. The first horseman is conquest. War is the second horseman. The third horseman is famine. And death is the fourth horseman. These seals are raining down extreme difficulty on the earth. What about the Christians on earth ? God’s message is there will be suffering, difficulty, and the pain of war, famine, and death. When the fifth seal is broken, there is an altar, and underneath this

altar are souls who are crying out to God. These souls are extremely important, because they are those who have been martyred for the cause of Christ. They willingly gave up their lives for God's Word. These martyrs underneath the altar are crying out for judgment and justice, saying, *"How long, O, Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"* (v. 10). Would John be able to look at these souls and see his brother, James, who was executed for the cause of Christ (Acts 12) ? As the sixth seal is opened, there is a great earthquake, shaking the very core of the world to the point of *"...who shall be able to stand ?"* (v. 17b). These are six of the events, and then a seventh one, but before the seventh seal is broken, there's a break, a parentheses, a silence, right now (Revelation 8:1).

Revelation 7: Six seals have been broken, and now we have a break, a parentheses, a silence, before the seventh seal is broken. Here we see the 144, 000. In the opening of the sixth seal there was a great earthquake. The seventh seal is a pause, a wait. Now, think about it: famine, death, war, conquest, an earthquake. Wow ! This had to be overwhelming. Now wait ! Hold on ! God is going to assure all, because they are probably terrified about what is going to happen. And why wouldn't they be ? We have this figure of 144,000 people, the saved of the earth, who will have an angel who will reach down and mark them. This will be important later, because the beasts will attempt to do the same thing. However, here, God does not want His people destroyed. For a first century Christian hearing this would be fantastic news. The faithful will be sealed. He will prepare them. He will take care of them. However, there is no guarantee there will not be difficulties or even martyrdom. So facing all these amazing visions of difficulty, there is a great multitude of witnesses who are now praising God, and lifting their voices up to them. Again, why wouldn't they ?

Revelation 8: And then, there is silence. Tucked right here in the middle of the vision, silence, as God dramatically shows all the previous seals, and now silence, time to soak it all in. When the seventh seal is opened, what is going to happen ? There is a powerful angel, and this powerful angel comes down and takes a censor in his hand. Containing hot coals, a censor would be used in the temple. Taking the hot coals from the altar, representing the cries and prayers of the people of God, the angel casts them down to the earth. This is the seventh seal. When the seventh seal hits the earth, it is time for the seven trumpets. These seven trumpets, blown by angels, God's messengers, each contains calamities that will happen on earth. The first trumpet is hail and fire mixed with blood and a third of the trees are burned. The second trumpet is a fiery mountain that is thrown into the sea. The third trumpet is the wormwood that is thrown into the rivers and the rivers become bitter. Many die because of the bitter water. The sun, moon, and the stars are blacked out is the fourth trumpet; day shone not for a third of it. We see this over and over again that one third of the things on the earth are going to be impacted ? What does a third mean ? Is it complete ? No. It is partial. The hand of God is pressuring people. Are they listening ? Are they paying attention ? God wants them to know trouble and tribulation are coming. It's going to be all around them. The question is, "Who will they turn to ?" "What will their answer be ?" "When they are oppressed, will they repent or not ?"

Revelation 9: The fifth angel sounded, a star falls from heaven, opens the bottomless pit, and locust's emerge. This is a powerful army of locusts, they invade the earth, destroy, sting, and hurt. These locust's victims will wish they could die, but they won't. This is overwhelming. *"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts"* (v. 20-21).

Revelation 10 & 11: This marks the last of the first round and we're halfway through the book. Everyone take a deep breath, because now the entire story starts over again. What's been the story thus far ? Trouble, tribulation, but God is here. Christians are going to be saved, and it's going to be extremely difficult, but more than worth it.

Revelation 12: As the story begins again, this time there is a woman who is pregnant. The message is there is a battle going on in heaven, and the battle is between the pregnant woman, and a dragon. This dragon desires to destroy the baby the woman will bear. This is one of the first times we're introduced directly to Satan in Revelation. Satan is represented as a dragon even as he's represented as a serpent in the book of Genesis. This dragon is aggressive, not passive, as he stands before the woman who is giving birth in order to devour the child. This pregnant woman represents one of the most vulnerable figures on earth. Not many are less able to defend themselves than a pregnant woman during childbirth. She is vulnerable, miserable and she's enduring the travail, because she wants to give birth to her child. Here's the confrontation: a pregnant woman, confronted by a dragon. Who's going to win? *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death"* (v. 11).

Revelation 13: The dragon is active by empowering two beasts: a sea beast and an earth beast. With seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns, this sea beast has the body of a leopard, with one of its heads wounded and then healed. People worship the dragon and the beast. The second beast has two horns like a lamb, the voice of a dragon, and it emerges from under the earth. It's interesting as Satan begins to do his work he creates these various beasts to attract people's attention. It's the second beast that says to the world that if one wants to have commerce, then a mark on the right hand and forehead will be needed so the beast will know those aligned with it. It's called the mark of the beast: six hundred, three score, and six, or 666. This represents man's number. The number in many ways, if you will, equals perfect incompleteness. Thus, people are worshipping these beasts, and these poor people don't even realize that by choosing to worship the beast they are aligning themselves with the devil. Look at the seductive nature of these beasts. They're ugly. They're terrible. They're awful, and for Christians on the earth John is attempting to get them to see who it is that is worthy to be worshipped, that is worthy to be honored. The answer: God only, not the beasts, nor the dragon.

Revelation 14: At this point, the last set of visions or sorrows will be unleashed. After the mark of the beast is given, John wrote, *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."* (v. 13). There's 144,000, the saved, singing and praising God. Then we have the winepress, and the image of angels trampling out the winepress of the wrath of God. In order to get the juice out of a grape in a winepress, they're not just squished, they are crushed. And there is blood to the horses' bridle.

Revelation 15 & 16: In heaven and also appearing in the clouds, is the temple of God. Out of the clouds emerges an angel. This angel carries a vial. In fact, there's not just one vial of wrath that is going to be poured out upon the world, but seven. Each one of these vials is going to contain more terrible news, more fury, and more awfulness. There is so much terror, blood, war and destruction raining down. The vials feel much like the ten plagues on Egypt in the Old Testament. The first vial is sores. The sea turning to blood is the second vial. The third vial involves the rivers turning to blood. The sun scorching me upon the earth is the fourth vial. The fifth vial is darkness on the beast's kingdom. The Euphrates dries up and spirit frogs emerge and gather together for a great battle is the sixth vial. It is the battle of Armageddon and it sounds awe-inspiring, except there's not even a battle. The seventh bowl is when the angel pours out the vial and a great voice thunders from heaven, *"It. Is. Done."* What's done? Here's the final pronouncement that vengeance is going to happen. There's not going to be any more delay. God has a plan and His plan includes His justified vengeance, but here's the question: On whom?

Now imagine a city, but it's more like John doesn't really want the reader to think of a city, but look intently at what's behind this city. It's called Babylon. There's so much discussion about what Babylon represents, but when the destruction rains down on Babylon, it's not Babylon as a city, it's Babylon as a harlot sitting on a beast. This harlot is the figure of every seduction ever dreamed of and everything

that is evil. Dressed in purple, and red, with gold and pearls, she's also holding a cup of wine, but it's not only a cup of wine she is holding, it is a cup of destructive abomination. It is a cup of everything that is evil. This is critical: How far will man go until he realizes he is drinking poison ? Until he realizes he is drinking death ? Here is this harlot, she is on a beast, and her desired end is to get man to the point that he is so numb to sin that he doesn't even think there is any right or wrong at all. When we get to this woman, this is the tragic result.

Then Cometh The End

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:20-24).

What happens immediately after the clause: *"they that are Christ's at his coming,"* (v. 23), and the empathic statement: *"Then cometh the end,"* (v. 24). Let's be clear, Paul's view of what will occur immediately after the second coming of Christ is far different than those who believe, teach and preach the system called dispensationalism or premillennialism doctrine. Notice that Paul states: *"Then cometh the end,"* when He, Christ, shall have delivered up the kingdom, the church, to God, even the Father, not to set it up for a thousand year reign. Instead, He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, not set it up, (verse 24), but to deliver said kingdom up to the Father. No rapture. No invisible appearance by Jesus, either. It. Is. The. End.

Revelation 19: All the amazing visions seen to this point, with their accompanying messages of hope and victory in the face of intense trials, are exactly why the next image seen is of King Jesus riding out on the white horse of victory. And when the king rides out on His horse, He rides out with a sword in his mouth. Recall, it's the same sword He had the first time we see Him in the book standing in the midst of His churches (Revelation 1). He's riding on this powerful steed, this white horse, and as He rides out, and as the curtain pulls back, we finally see where all this has been leading. From the very beginning of the book, the throne room has been preparing for this. It is the final battle. It is Armageddon. It is the battle of all that is good against all that is evil. It is the battle that all on the earth have been asking, "Who's going to win ?" Is it going to be God or the devil ? And God's message resonates through John that if you don't remember anything else from this amazing, fantastic, inspired book remember this: in the end: God wins ! In the end, Jesus is the conqueror. In the end, it is God who finally says, *'It. Is. Over.'* The Scripture says the celebration was on when God's victory was final. Evil was finally destroyed. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (vss. 6-7).

Revelation 21: In book of Acts, chapter 2, the church began in the city of Jerusalem. At the end of the book of Revelation, we now see the new Jerusalem. It is interesting that the new Jerusalem is not so much a city as much as it is a cube. It is foursquare . In other words, it's the same height, the same width, and the same length. Why in the world would it be square ? It's not literal. It is a figurative picture. Recall one of the only other structures in Scripture that was a perfect structure: It's the tabernacle in the Old Testament and in it the holy of holies. We get to live, John says, in the holy of holies, in God's place, in the Lamb's place, because in the middle of this city there is no temple, for God and the Lamb are the temple. Because of this, John says things like, *"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no*

night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (vss. 23-27). It is the perfect place, being where we want to be, with the ones we want to be with, with the ones whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Forever.

Revelation 22: What's John's message ? He says that the river of life will flow and the tree of life will be for the healing of man. Ultimately, man will live at peace with His God. And the last message in the book of Revelation is a very simple one: Jesus says, "*Surely (yes).*" God are we going to be the winner ? "Yes." Lord, are you going to see us through ? "Yes." God is it going to be tough sometimes ? "Yes." Will it feel like all the beasts and the dragons are going to overwhelm the good ? "Yes." Jesus, are you ever coming back to get us ? "Yes." Do you know Jesus' last words in the book of Revelation ? "*Surely (yes), I come quickly.*"

Conclusion

A story is only as good as its ending. Without a happy ending that draws us on in eager anticipation, our journey becomes a nightmare of endless struggle.

The door on which we have been knocking our entire lives will open at last. "*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*"

Our hearts cannot live without hope. That's why Thoreau said, "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." They simply have lost hope. The great apostle Paul said it even better: "*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*" (1 Corinthians 15:19).

We're created for so much more. "*He also hath set eternity in their heart...*" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Our longing for heaven whispers to us in our disappointments and screams through our agony. And once we find in ourselves desires this world cannot satisfy, the only logical conclusion is that we were created for another world.

There's a reason most people don't live with a lot of hope. Most have never really heard the fabulous news Jesus brought with Him. Jesus preached far more than sin management. He came to announce the coming of the kingdom.

What exactly is the kingdom ? What does it mean for our lives ? A kingdom is a realm where the king has full sway. What the king desires is what happens.

What happens when we find ourselves in the kingdom ? Human brokenness in all its form is healed. The kingdom brings restoration. Life is restored to what it was meant to be. The kingdom brings abundance. Love, faith, and hope reign. Man's address was once paradise, the Garden of Eden, thus, our hearts know there is a better life we were meant to enjoy. That's what "heaven" is all about.

Now in heaven, things are not stained or broken, but everything is as it was meant to be. Think for a moment of the wonder of this. Every one of our sorrows on earth is the result of things not being as they were meant to be.

Heaven is just the beginning of an adventure in intimacy, a world of love where God is the fountain. The Holy Spirit, through the human authors of Scripture, chose the imagery of a wedding feast for a reason. It's not just any kind of party, it's a wedding feast. What sets this feast apart from any other

feast is the unique intimacy of the wedding night. The Holy Spirit uses the most secret and tender experience on earth, the union of husband and wife, to convey the depth of intimacy that we will partake of with our Lord in heaven. He is the Bridegroom and the church is His bride. In the consummation of love, we shall know Him and be known. Forever. What a glorious, glorious thought.

