The END TIMES

Letting the Bible speak for itself.

Timothy KLAVER

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THE END TIMES: Letting the Bible Speak for Itself
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Dedicated to my wonderful, beautiful, wife, Maria, who is my darling, my love, and my best friend; the greatest blessing God has given me in this life (aside from salvation). You are my greatest dream come true. Thank you for your amazing love.

"Proverbs 23:23 says, '*Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding.*' (NASB) The term '*buy*' here reminds us that there is a cost involved in owning the truth. We live in times where there is a plethora of theological opinions that are popular, but the truth is not. Every theological camp proclaims they have the truth, even if it doesn't fully square with the Scriptures. Every man is comfortable in his or her theological opinion, but is not willing to test it with Scripture. When we discover the theological view we hold to does not line up with what the Bible teaches, are we willing to '*buy*' the truth? Changing our view is hard, but necessary to be in the truth. The phrase '*do not sell it*' speaks of the infinite value of God's truth. Do we value God's truth so much that we will not part from it? My long time friend, and brother in Christ, Timothy, does just that in this book. He buys the truth and sells it not. He exchanges his Dispensational view for the truth of God's Word in this end times apologetic. Timothy really lays out in a simple manner for the lay person the biblical truth on the end times. His critique on Dispensationalist doctrine is like a surgeon's scalpel, yet in a concise manner. He cuts through all the surrounding issues until he gets to the heart of the matter and exposes it for what it is—unbiblical. To those who love the truth and sell it not, I highly recommend getting this book for your library, for your pastor or friend."

—Jerry Sheppard, *soul-reach.blogspot.com*,
Fellow NBBI Graduate and Friend

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Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my God, my Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus, for having provided me the opportunity to write this book and get it into the hands of my brothers and sisters in Christ so that they, too, may be set free by knowing the truth, for "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). This book is written with the purposes in mind to:

1. glorify God and honour His Son (Romans 15:6; Colossians 1:18), and
2. educate the body of Christ regarding truth (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 2:13).

Second, I would like to thank Jerry Sheppard, my fellow New Brunswick Bible Institute graduate and friend; Jake Klassen, a pastor and friend; and George Krahn, an elder and friend, for having read my manuscript and kept me accountable, making sure that I was coming across in a teachable manner and that I was not being too snarky with my responses.

Lastly, I would like to thank you, the reader, for picking up this book. It is by no accident that you have. I pray that you have picked it up because you are interested in learning the truth about what the Bible has to say, and that you are willing to conform yourself to the truths as revealed in God's Holy Word. As you read, may God open your eyes so that you can see precisely what He has written in His Word and what He has not. It is for you that I have put this book together. May God bless it for that purpose.

Thank you, one and all.

Introduction

The Wake-up Call Begins

It was early morning, May 25, 2004, and as was my practice, I entered into prayer before opening and reading my Bible. Since approximately 2002, I have made a habit of asking God to teach me according to *His* Word, and *not* according to how I was raised or what I was taught. At times, I may not like what I read because it is not what I want to hear, or it goes against what I was engrained with, but whether or not I like it, the truth is that the truth and God's Word still stands. It is our duty as obedient children to conform ourselves to the truths as revealed in Scripture. I want to believe *His* truths no matter what it might cost me. As such, little did I know where that prayer would take me. It is still a prayer I pray to this day because I want to conform myself to God's truths—not man's ideas and concepts.

As I was in prayer, my mind was considering where I might read in the Bible when I was finished. I believe I had been considering somewhere in the Old Testament, when something in the back of my mind, an inaudible voice, nudgingly suggested, "*Matthew*." As I continued praying, I was like, "*Okay. Where in Matthew?*" Again, that voice in the back of my mind nudgingly suggested, "*Chapter 24*." I had no clue what was contained in Matthew 24.

After I finished praying, I opened up my Bible and began reading Matthew 24. When I had finished, I was slightly perplexed. Something was not making any sense whatsoever. So I read it again. It still was not making any sense. I figured that I would take a break from it and come back to it later that day. Maybe it would make more sense then. Later that night, after having returned from work, I opened up my Bible and re-read Matthew 24 again, this time reading the parallel passages contained in Mark and Luke. I was digging

and sifting through the Bible, weighing and measuring the words I was reading from 6:00pm until 10:30pm. Yet again, something *still* was not making any sense.

The next day, I called up my friend, who had attended Bible school (the same one I would soon attend, little did I know), and asked if I could borrow all his Systematic Theology notes. I looked up every verse that was quoted in regard to the Rapture and then read them in my Bible. What I was reading and what the notes were telling me the verses said did not harmonize in the least. I believe I went over those notes and Bible passages for the next two or three days before writing a letter in regard to what I had found. I even sent a copy of my letter to the Theology Professor at New Brunswick Bible Institute (NBBI), where I would find myself only months later.

The Journey from Spoon-fed to Berean

In August of 2004, I applied to New Brunswick Bible Institute and was accepted. I figured that if I had made any kind of mistakes in my research, Bible College was the best place to help me sort them out and correct them.[1] But it did no such thing. As such, from the time I wrote my initial paper, to the response I had received from NBBI's Theology Professor, through my time at Bible College, and for a couple years afterward, I settled in my mind that whether there was a Rapture or not, I knew where I was going when I died or when Christ Jesus returned. So I put the whole concept behind me in the back of my mind.

About two or three years after my graduation, I decided to re-visit my old paper and study the subject more in depth. I had *many* Bible study tools at my disposal now, which I did not have previously. You see, it was not until *after* I graduated from Bible college when I finally started to *read* and *study* my Bible for myself (rather than being *told* what it said) that I began to notice more and more inconsistencies in the Dispensational interpretation thereof. At first, I would turn to my Dispensational books (those which I received from Bible College) to try and sort out the confusion I was receiving from reading my Bible, and what they had to say seemed to make sense on the surface. That was until I read the verses they quoted in their context and cross-referenced everything. Then they, too, began to add to my confusion. I had been raised

[1] I have since learned that education merely serves to teach one to think and believe as one's teacher thinks and believes. Rarely is one taught objectively, teaching one the accurate methods of study required and allowing one to come to one's own conclusion based on the evidence. We need to be taught to think for ourselves, but not in a way that allows pre-suppositions, personal feelings, or personal opinions to lead the way. Opinions and feelings have very little place in the matter of evidences and truth.

under the beliefs of Dispensationalism and I had wholeheartedly believed in the Rapture. But the deeper I dug, the less convinced I was of the doctrine.

Did you notice my wording above? "*The confusion I was receiving from reading my Bible.*" You see, my problem was in thinking that the Bible was not measuring up to Dispensationalism, when really it was the other way around. When I started to believe what my Bible had to say *over* how I was raised and what I was taught, *then* I began to make progress through the confusion. As I read my Bible and studied the subject afresh, digging deep with all the verses that are often quoted, my position from my original study began to become solidified. The context of the verses they were quoting did not fit the interpretation they were giving it. In fact, a plain reading of the Bible was not supporting their claims. After studying the subject afresh, I began re-writing my original article. I addressed each verse quoted individually, digging deep into its context and original language. I compared Scripture with Scripture and soon had a proper foundation beneath my feet that was not made of sand.

Slowly, that little study began to grow. After I had disproved the concept of a "Rapture," a friend of mine wrote me and said that he had always had an issue with the gap inserted into Daniel's 70 Weeks. So I decided to look into it for him. Soon, my study would expand to examine everything Dispensationalists claim in regard to the end times. The book you hold in your hands now is the basic fruit of those studies in as basic a form as I could accomplish (without speaking over the heads of the majority of my intended audience). This book is my journey from the clutches of Dispensationalism into the truths of Scripture long held by tens of thousands of godly believing Christians before me; from the Apostles to the Early Church Fathers to the Reformers to the Puritans to Charles Spurgeon himself and beyond. What I was coming to see and believe from my personal reading and studying of Scripture was attested to by *many* great men of the past. May this work be a blessing and an eye opener for you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, as you continue to seek Him and His truth, drawing ever closer to Him.

The Purpose of This Work

I am not endeavouring to write an authoritative system of theology on this subject (yet…), because men far greater than I have already done such works and I doubt I have anything substantial to contribute. It is my desire, however, to help my fellow Christians to look at Scripture plainly and clearly, allowing it to say what it says without any interference by us. I have attempted to lay out each chapter as if it were a Bible study on its own. The aim of this book is to help clear away the fogs of confusion that are out there so that believers can return to a simple faith and acceptance of the teachings of the Word of God.

So many people shy away from the issues when they should be meeting them head on. Remember, we are *commanded* to "[Study] to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), and to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). It is *our duty* to be as the noble Bereans and to "…[receive] the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things [are] so" (Acts 17:11).

One of the problems with Christianity today is that people would rather be spoon-fed their beliefs by someone else instead of studying it themselves and coming to a proper understanding. Problem is, when you are spoon-fed, the beliefs never become real to you. All you do is parrot what someone else told you. Quite often, while you are parroting those beliefs, your own heart and the actions of your life are contradicting the words coming out of your mouth. It is because what you have been spoon-fed has only reached your head. Simply reading your Bible every day is *not* studying the Bible. Reading books that support your position is *definitely not* studying the Bible either—it is the *epitome* of being spoon-fed.

When you study the Scriptures for yourself (and I do mean *study*), as you go through the process you get to witness the result of that study come to fruition, which leads you to a faith of the heart, a faith you can claim. Your faith is no longer vain faith because now you believe it not because someone else told it to you, but because you worked it out for yourself and were convinced of what Scripture had to say. But if you are not willing to examine Scripture and prove whether what you believe is correct, and be willing to change your beliefs and conform yourself to what Scripture has revealed to you, then you will simply cling to whatever falsehoods you were taught and raised with because you are too proud to admit that you were wrong.

Most people will preach to you their pre-suppositions, speculative opinions, and feelings rather than the truth. My own pre-suppositions were those of Dispensationalism, because that is how I was raised and what I was taught. I thank God that He enabled me to be able to test the spirits and express a simple child-like faith that led me to His truths as He wrote them in His Word. If you do not test the spirits, you will simply follow the masses and fall for whatever wind of doctrine comes your way. When you study the Word of God for yourself and are convinced of what it truly teaches, you build yourself a foundation that cannot be moved, and that faith becomes something tangible. You provide yourself with answers for those who would ask about the hope that lies within you. You also show yourself to be "approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15).

It is my goal with this book that I would be able to teach you by leading you by the hand, showing you what *the Bible* has to say for itself, and letting

you see it with your own eyes so that you can be convinced of the truth. I ask that the reader comes to this book free of any idols in his/her heart, willing to seek God's truth regardless of what it means to himself/herself and regardless of what he/she was raised with or taught. Just because we are raised a certain way or taught a certain thing does not make it true. Just because someone isolates individual verses in order to convince you of their doctrine does not make it true. Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses do this every day, as do many other cults. I will urge you to test the spirits, test everything you are told against Scripture. If someone quotes a verse to you, do not simply read that verse on its own (because by itself it could very well convince you of what they are trying to tell you), but read that verse in the context of its surrounding verses, chapters, and the entire book, cross-referencing everything. I ask you to do the same with what I am going to teach you throughout this book, so that you may prove to yourself that what I am saying accords with the truths of Scripture and not the ideas and concepts of men. Remember, the Bible was not written with the divisions of verses and chapters as we have in our Bibles today.

In the final chapter of this book, I will attempt to help you to be able to better study the Bible, or at least have an understanding of how to do so. The lessons I will teach you there, I hope you will also put into practice with what I share in this book, because I am not above fallibility. Scripture alone is infallible, and we need to test everything according to it. Whenever you read any author outside the Bible, make sure you apply the lessons I will teach you in chapter 10. Some authors come across as if they are the authority on a given subject, and whether or not you think they are safe, it is still wise for you to test what they have to say against the whole of Scripture. Again, no individual is above fallibility. Remember this.

Lord God, those who pick up this book to read, I pray that You would cause them to leave behind the idols they are concealing in their hearts; the ideas and concepts that they want to see in Your Word, rather than what is truthfully contained therein. I pray that You would cause any scales that are on their eyes to fall off so that they can see clearly what You have said in Your Word. Bless each individual as they study these things themselves to come to a right understanding of Scripture and to strengthen their faith in You. May You receive all the glory from this project, Lord, for Your name's sake. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Yours because of Calvary,
Timothy Klaver

"*Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Thy name give glory*." **–Psalm 115:1**

"*Not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit.*" **–1 Cor. 2:13**

"*Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.*" **–Luke 24:45**

Explanatory Helps

Biblical Abbreviations

These are the only abbreviations that I have employed within this book, not saying anything of the abbreviations found within the quotations of my referenced media.

Gen. = Genesis
Ex. = Exodus
Num. = Numbers
Lev. = Leviticus
Josh. = Joshua
Neh. = Nehemiah
1 Sam. = 1 Samuel
2 Sam. = 2 Samuel
1 Chr. = 1 Chronicles
2 Chr. = 2 Chronicles
Ps. = Psalm
Eccl. = Ecclesiastes
Isa. = Isaiah
Jer. = Jeremiah
Lam. = Lamentations
Dan. = Daniel
Hos. = Hosea
Mic. = Micha
Zeph. = Zephaniah
Zech. = Zechariah

Matt. = Matthew
Rom. = Romans
1 Cor. = 1 Corinthians
2 Cor. = 2 Corinthians
Gal. = Galatians
Eph. = Ephesians
Phil. = Philippians
Col. = Colossians
1 Thess. = 1 Thessalonians
2 Thess. = 2 Thessalonians
1 Tim. = 1 Timothy
2 Tim. = 2 Timothy
Heb. = Hebrews
1 Pet. = 1 Peter
2 Pet. = 2 Peter
Rev. = Revelation

Use of Hebrew and Greek

The use of the Hebrew language within this book is as it appears in *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. The use of the Greek language within this book appears in two forms. When you see something like "*paralambano* (παραλαμβάνεται)," the transliteration is as it appears in *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, while the actual Greek is as it appears in the Greek manuscripts. This system applies only to *my* use of the Greek language. I mention this so that the resident Greek mastermind who may be reading this is not looking at the above and thinking, "*These are not representative of each other*," because he wants to see "*paralambano* (παραλαμβάνω)" or "*paralambanetai* (παραλαμβάνεται)."

I do it this way for a reason, so that the individual who desires to look up the main word can do so easily without trying to find the various forms or tenses of that word, such as παραλαβεῖν (Matt. 1:20), παρέλαβε (Matt. 1:24), παράλαβε (Matt. 2:13), παραλαμβάνει (Matt. 4:5), παραλαβὼν (Matt. 26:37), etc. There is a method to my madness, so do not knock it.

Uses of the Hebrew and Greek language that appear within the referenced media quotations are as they appear in those works.

Missing Citations?

If I happened to have missed any citations in this book, I humbly ask for the forgiveness of those whom I may have wronged, and I ask that you please bring these missed citations to my attention so that I may quickly make the necessary corrections. Please indicate the page number in my book of the missed citation, the exact citation itself, and the precise citation information (Author, *Book* (Location: Publisher), Page). To my knowledge, I do not think I have missed any citations, but this book was written and compiled in 2010 and so between then and now I may have overlooked something and forgotten to give a citation where one was due. If I have forgotten any citations, I would like to add them swiftly to give credit where credit is due. Thank you!

Delusion (noun):

1. A misleading of the mind.
2. False belief; a fixed misconception.
3. Something which one accepts as being true or real but which is actually false or unreal.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary
G. & C. Merriam Co. (1953)

"Three things cannot be long hidden:
The sun, the moon, and the truth."
–Confucius (551-479 B.C.)

"One word of truth outweighs the whole world."
–Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Our only rule of faith and practice is the Word of God. We have . . .
no *creed* to defend,
no *denomination* to maintain, and
no *confession* to bind our minds.
"*What do the Scriptures teach?*" This is and must be our only concern. If the plain teachings of Holy Scripture appear to destroy or contradict *our understanding* of any doctrine, then let us relinquish the doctrine, or acknowledge the fact that our minds are both depraved and miniscule, and bow down to the revelation of God.
–Don Fortner

It is a small and narrow mind that is afraid to change; it is a sign of greatness that one is prepared to admit at times that one has been mistaken, and that therefore you have had to change your position.
–D. Martyn Lloyd Jones (1899-1981 A.D.)

[God's] truth [is] not to [certain individual's] taste. We all know how soon a man will contrive, against the strongest evidence, to reason himself out of the belief of what he dislikes.
–Matthew Henry (1662-1714 A.D.)

"*Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.*"
–Luke 24:45

Chapter 1
Dispensationalism

What is Dispensationalism?

Charles C. Ryrie explains Dispensationalism in this way: "The essence of dispensationalism, then, is the distinction between Israel and the Church. This grows out of the dispensationalists' consistent employment of normal or plain interpretation, and it reflects an understanding of the basic purpose of God in all His dealings with mankind as that of glorifying Himself through salvation and other purposes as well."[2]

Mr. Ryrie's first sentence hits the nail square on the head. This is the only way in which you can define Dispensationalism as being separate and unique from any other system of theology. Dispensationalism is that system of theology that makes a fundamental distinction between Israel and the church: church-age saints form one body and all other saints form another. This is the only true statement that can be made in regard to defining Dispensationalism. This statement is the heart, crux and cornerstone of their system of theology. We shall deal with this issue in chapter 8.

Dispensationalism's eschatological (end times) doctrines teach that the church shall be raptured 7 years prior to Christ Jesus' second coming, when He will set up His 1000-year Millennial Kingdom on the Earth. The 7-year period between the Rapture and the Second Coming is referred to as The Great Tribulation. Within this book, we are not only going to examine Dispensationalism's eschatological claims to see whether or not there is any truth to substantiate them, but also their claim of "literal" interpretation. If

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[2] Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1965), 67-70.

they are true, then they should withstand the test and prove to be biblical. If they are not true, then as Christians we must reject anything that does not stand up to biblical scrutiny. So where does Dispensationalism stand?

If you examine chart A (pg.199), you will see how the Dispensationalists lay out the end times. In our study, we are going to start on the left at the Rapture and make our way to the right to the Millennial Kingdom, examining what the Scriptures have to say in regard to the end times. Chart B (pg.200) compares the Dispensational layout with the biblical data and is a representation of just some of the information that we shall examine as we determine the truth of this issue. Chart C (pg.201) is the biblical testimony of these things.

Normal System of Interpretation

Dispensationalism boasts that "From Genesis to Revelation holds to a consistent, literal, and normal system of hermeneutics."[3] As you noticed in Mr. Ryrie's quote, he stated that Dispensationalists use a "consistent employment of normal or plain interpretation." But can their claims be substantiated? Is what they say true? I submit to you that, *no*, it is not.

"Consider one example. Dispensationalists understand Ezekiel 40-48 to be a prophecy of the future millennial temple and the worship that will occur there. The problem is that there are numerous passages in these chapters that depict the practice of animal sacrifices (40:38-43; 42:13; 43:18-27; 44:11, 27, 29; 45:13-25; 46:2-7, 11-15, 20). These verses should not be interpreted literally and placed in a future millennium. Hebrews 10:10-18 forbids it: 'Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin' (v. 18). According to Hebrews the purpose of the sacrificial system has been fulfilled. The once-for-all sacrificial death of Christ has *forever* ended the offering of animal sacrifices."[4]

Gleason L. Archer, Jr. says that these sacrifices have nothing to do with atonement for sin. "Some dispensationalists answer that these animal sacrifices will merely be memorials offered in remembrance of Christ's death. But that is not what Ezekiel *literally* says. Ezekiel calls these offerings 'sin offerings' (40:30; 43:19, 21, 22, 225; 44:27, 29; 45:17, 22, 23, 25; 46:20). And Hebrews 10:18 says that after Christ's death there is no more offering for sin. Moreover, the offerings in Ezekiel 45:15, 17 are *literally* said to make atonement:"[5]

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[3] Mal Couch, *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2000), 51.
[4] Keith A. Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1995), 7.
[5] Ibid.

> "This is the offering that you shall offer: a sixth of an ephah from a homer of wheat; a sixth of an ephah from a homer of barley; and the prescribed portion of oil (namely, the bath of oil), a tenth of a bath from each kor (which is ten baths or a homer, for ten baths are a homer); and one sheep from each flock of two hundred from the watering places of Israel--for a grain offering, for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, *to make atonement* for them," declares the Lord GOD. "All the people of the land shall give to this offering for the prince in Israel. And it shall be the prince's part to provide the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the libations, at the feasts, on the new moons, and on the sabbaths, at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel; he shall provide the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, *to make atonement* for the house of Israel."
>
> (Emphasis supplied.)

As you will witness for yourself throughout the course of this book, the claims of Dispensationalists to employ a "consistent, literal, normal system of hermeneutics" are false and ill-founded. You will see that the only thing they are consistent with in their interpretation is a literalistic fictionalizing of the text.

A Brief History of Dispensationalism

Dispensationalism has its origins rooted firmly in the early nineteenth century in Great Britain within the Irvingite movement, and later within the Brethren movement, of which John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) was part of. As early as 1825, Edward Irving (1792-1834) had been teaching some of Dispensationalism's key aspects. Charles Ryrie writes, "John Nelson Darby gave the greatest initial impetus to the systematizing of pretribulationism. This is because he saw the church as a special work of God, distinct from His program for Israel. This, integrated into his premillennialism, led him to the position that the church would be raptured before the Tribulation period when God would again deal specifically with Israel."[6] But this is false credit. In 1825, Edward Irving referred to "the dispensations both Jewish and Gentile" and the "restoration" of "the Jews…to their own land," which Darby copied, among other things, in his 1829 paper. Despite these copied statements, Darby was still a post-tribulational defender until the late 1830's.

When this teaching caught fire among certain Brethren, they churned out volumes of literature that influenced several well-known Christians from the United States, among whom were D. L. Moody (1837-1899) and C. I. Scofield (1843-1921). Scofield popularized the doctrines of

[6] Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 562.

Dispensationalism in his 1909 *Scofield Reference Bible*, where the "Rapture" received its first theological use ever. Scofield had no formal theological training, however, and began deceitfully adding a non-conferred "D.D." after his name in the 1890's, calling himself "Dr." Had it not been for Scofield's Bible, the teachings of Edward Irving and J. N. Darby would have fallen by the wayside and would have been unknown to the world at large.

Influenced by Scofield, this system of theology was later championed by Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952), founder of Dallas Theological Seminary (1924), in his *Systematic Theology*, who in turn influenced such men as John Walvoord (1910-2002), J. Dwight Pentecost (1915-2014), and Charles C. Ryrie (1925-2016), to name a few. The eschatological view of Dispensationalism was aggressively advanced through such works as John Walvoord's *The Rapture Question*, J. Dwight Pentecost's *Things To Come: A Study In Biblical Eschatology*, Hal Lindsey's (1929-) *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and Tim LaHaye's (1926-2016) *Left Behind* series (co-written with Jerry B. Jenkins).

In the tradition of their Brethren predecessors, the Dispensationalists have churned out volumes of literature to advance their theology. However, in their doing so, their works have been filled with sloppy and dishonest scholarship, blatant plagiarism, copy errors, selective citations, truncated quotations of text, and creative editing (for evidence of this, pick up *The Great Rapture Hoax*, *The Rapture Plot*, or *The Incredible Cover Up* by Dave MacPherson). Hitler had said that if you repeat a lie loud enough, long enough, and often enough, people will eventually believe it. If you drown the Christian world with enough literature based on literalistic, sensationalized, and fictionalized interpretation, eventually you will win them because, unfortunately, many of them are not willing to "test the spirits to see if they are from God" (1 John 4:1). They are "carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14) because they do not "[examine] the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things [are] so" (Acts 17:11).

"In his book *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith*, Charles Ryrie says that the historical argument is of the 'utmost importance.' However, in *Dispensationalism Today*, he vehemently criticizes those who use the historical argument as if it were 'partly valid.' Which is it? Is the historical argument of the utmost importance or is it not even partly valid? It certainly cannot be both.

"The importance of the historical argument seems often to depend on the particular doctrine under consideration. Dispensationalists enjoy pointing out the historical antiquity of premillennialism. But when it comes to other doctrines, those which first appeared around 1830, dispensationalists downplay the significance of the historical question.

"Historical arguments are not the final test for the truthfulness of any

doctrine. Scripture is our sole authority for both doctrine and practice. Yet the history of a doctrine can be highly relevant. We have much more reason to be confident of a doctrine such as the Trinity, which has been taught since the first centuries of the church age, than of a doctrine first taught 150 years ago. As a rule, Christians should be cautious about accepting any doctrine that has never been taught in the history of the church."[7]

Even Dispensationalists will admit that their system of theology is relatively new. With regard to informed Dispensationalists, Charles Ryrie states, "They recognize that as a system dispensationalism was largely formulated by Darby."[8] He goes on to admit, "It is granted by dispensationalists that as a system of theology dispensationalism is recent in origin."[9] Origins of doctrines are *very* important. For a more thorough examination of the history of Dispensationalism, pickup Clarence Bass' book, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*.

Conclusion

Whether they want to admit it or not, Dispensationalism is a relatively new system of theology in the history of Christianity. Aside from their pre-millennial standpoint, none of their other doctrines can be verified or substantiated through church history. The *ill-informed* Dispensationalist will argue about the origins of the Dispensational system of theology, denying the verifiable facts. I have encountered these folks by the dozens, who argue based on the ill-informed comments they have read in books that support their position. But the *informed* Dispensationalist will admit to the fact that the system of theology was largely constructed by J. N. Darby (even though Darby got his ideas from reading the Irvingite journal, *The Morning Watch*) and that it has its origins quite recently in history.

[7] Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?*, 11-12.
[8] Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 66.
[9] Ibid, 67.

Chapter 2
Defining the Terms Biblically

What Does "That Day" Signify?

In the New Testament, Jesus and the Apostles refer to a specific point in time as "that day." But the term "that day" does not really tell us very much, does it? What day? When does this day occur? What significance is there regarding this day? In the next few passages of Scripture we are going to try and get an understanding of what Jesus and the Apostles were referring to when they said "that day."

Matthew 7:21-23 says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on *that day*, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" From the sound of this passage, "that day" involves judgment. From the context, we learn that these individuals did things in the name of Jesus but that they were not obedient to the will of the Father in heaven. They were lawless, and John says, "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). Because of this, certain judgment befalls them. This passage also informs us that "that day" includes individuals who will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 24:35-39 says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away. But of *that day* and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving

in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Cf. Mark 13:31-32). This passage informs us that heaven and earth will pass away on "that day," whenever that day might be. According to Jesus, nobody, not even Himself, knows when that day will occur. From the context, it appears to connect the passing of the heavens and Earth to the coming of the Son of Man. I hope we can learn a little more about this as we continue on.

Luke 10:8-12 says, "And whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat what is set before you; and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I say to you, it will be more tolerable in *that day* for Sodom, than for that city." Again, this passage carries the weight of judgment on "that day," whatever that day is and whenever it takes place. Here we are informed that cities that were destroyed hundreds of years earlier because of their sin will receive less punishment on "that day" than the ones the disciples were being sent to. Why? Let us look to what Jesus said, which will reveal more information to us: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in *the day of judgment*, than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the day of judgment*, than for you" (Matt. 11:21-24, emphasis supplied). Jesus *clearly* identifies "that day" as "the day of judgment."

1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 says, "Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that *the day* should overtake you like a thief." This passage gives us a little hint as to what "that day" is. In fact, the term "thief" is mentioned in conjunction with both the term, "that day," and what that term refers to. Here, "that day" refers back to "the day of the Lord." It looks like we are getting somewhere.

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10 says, "And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on *that day*, and to be

marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed." Yet again, we have a passage that deals with judgment, but this time there is more added to it. We are informed that "that day" involves Christ Jesus being glorified in His saints. This passage reveals to us both blessings and curses.

2 Timothy 1:16-18 says, "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me, and found me--the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on *that day*--and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus." This passage speaks in regard to blessings to be received on "that day." Paul speaks of his own blessings to be found on that day in 2 Timothy 1:12.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on *that day*; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." Yet again, we have another passage that speaks of blessings taking place on "that day." Paul looked forward with expectancy to the rewards he would receive on that day, and warned evil doers of the curses that awaited them.

In the passages we have just examined, we have learned that "that day" includes both blessings and curses. Blessings for those who belong to Christ, and curses for those who are in rebellion against Him. We also learned that "that day" involves the passing away of the heavens and Earth, is called "the day of judgment," and that it has something to do with "the day of the Lord," whatever that is.

When is the "Last Day"?

"All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on *the last day*. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on *the last day*. … No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on *the last day*. … He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on *the last day*" (John 6:37-40, 44, 54).

Whenever the "last day" is, *four times* in this passage Jesus states that He will raise the righteous to life on that day. Could this be the day in which the Rapture takes place? We will soon find out. In John 11:24, Martha acknowledges that Lazarus would be raised up on the "last day." So we

definitely know that there is a resurrection that takes place at this point in time.

John 12:44-50 says, "And Jesus cried out and said, 'He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at *the last day*. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.'" According to this passage, judgment also takes place on the "last day." Resurrection unto eternal life for the righteous, and condemning judgment for the wicked. The "last day" also seems to include blessings and curses. Sounds an awful lot like Matthew 25:31-46:

> "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' … Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

What Does the Term "Thief" Signify?

In Matthew 24:37-44, Jesus says, "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the *thief* was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He

will."

In Luke 12:36-40, Jesus says, "And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the *thief* was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

In both of these passages, Jesus is describing His second coming like that of a thief. How can we be sure? Because in Revelation 16:15 Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming like a thief." Let us take another look at what 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 had to say: "Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a *thief in the night*. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief."

Notice the parallels here, brothers and sisters? In describing the coming of the Son of Man, Jesus relates it to the days of Noah where sudden destruction came upon them while they thought that everything was just perfectly fine. Likewise, Paul also informs us that they will think everything is perfectly fine until sudden destruction comes upon them. As we noted before, the term "thief" in this passage is attached to both "that day" and "the day of the Lord." All of these terms *must* be related.

2 Peter 3:10 says, "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." Again, we have "the day of the Lord" connected with the term "thief." We also have the passing of the heavens and Earth tied to it, too. So, we have the passing of the heavens and Earth connected to "that day" and "the day of the Lord," and we have the coming as a thief connected to "that day" and "the day of the Lord." Things are starting to take shape now, brothers and sisters.

The Destruction of the Heavens

Job 14:12 says that man will be resurrected when "the heavens be no more." Jesus said "Heaven and earth will pass away…but of *that day*…no one knows…but the Father alone" (Matt. 24:25-26, emphasis supplied). In 2 Peter

3:10-12, Peter states that "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" (emphasis supplied). This is exciting indeed, brothers and sisters. We already learned that the resurrection takes place on the "last day," but we were not sure when that day was. Here, we are told that man will be resurrected when the heavens and Earth pass away. Further, we are told that "the day of the Lord" brings the passing of the heavens and Earth. Is the picture starting to become clearer?

How Many Resurrections Are There?

According to the Dispensational interpretation of Scripture, 7 years prior to the Lord's *actual* return, the righteous will be resurrected; at His Second Coming, the Tribulation saints will be resurrected; and, finally, at the end of the Millennium, everyone else will be resurrected. At the secret Rapture, the righteous are judged and receive rewards; at the Second Coming, the nations are judged; and at the end of the Millennium, everyone else is judged. Dispensationalism has three comings, three resurrections, and three judgments. Count them for yourself.

Tim LaHaye describes it thus: "The multiple resurrections will take place in this sequence:

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ as the first fruit of many to be raised (Romans 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:23; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:18)
2. The resurrection of the redeemed at Christ's coming (Daniel 12:2; Luke 14:14; John 5:29; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 20:4, 6)
    a. Resurrection of the church at the Rapture
    b. Resurrection of Old Testament believers at the second coming (Jews and Gentiles)
    c. Resurrection of all martyred Tribulation saints at the second coming (Jews and Gentiles)
    d. Resurrection of all Millennial believers after the Millennium
3. The resurrection of the unredeemed (Revelation 20:11-14)"[10]

This view, however, is dealt a serious death blow when one actually *reads* Scripture. As we have already seen, Job 14:12 says that man will be resurrected when "the heavens be no more." Jesus declares *four times* in John 6:38-40, 44-45 and 54 that the righteous will be resurrected "on the last day." 1 Corinthians 15:23-26, 50-54 states the same truth: "But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's *at His coming*." In John 11:24, Martha acknowledged that Lazarus, a Jew, would be

[10] Tim LaHaye, *Charting the End Times* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001), 121-122.

resurrected "on the last day." Jesus stated in John 5:28-29 that there is "*a*" resurrection of "*both*" the just and unjust. Daniel 12:2 concurs with this truth, as does Acts 24:15. One resurrection! Not three!

Some people try to get two resurrections out of Revelation 20 by mangling the text. But what does it say? "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power" (20:6). As if it was not obvious, there is a key here as to how we are to interpret this resurrection. What is the second death? "This is the second death, the lake of fire" (20:14). The second death has no power over Christians because we have been born again. In other words, the first resurrection is spiritual. It cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, refer to a bodily resurrection because, according to Dispensationalism, when the Lord Jesus returns, not everyone is going to be resurrected. If it refers to a bodily resurrection, then what do we say about those who will still be alive at His coming? Since they do not participate in this "bodily" resurrection, the second death must still have power over them. Think about it. We are all spiritually dead until we are spiritually resurrected, wherein the second death has no hold on us. Christians are partakers of the first resurrection. Those who have not been spiritually resurrected *will* face the second death.

Saints	**Wicked**
First (physical) death	First (physical) death
First (spiritual) resurrection	
	Second (spiritual) death
Second (physical) resurrection	Second (physical) resurrection

[11]

"'They came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.' Premillennial interpreters…understand these words as describing a literal, physical resurrection from the dead, and therefore find in this passage proof for a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth after his Second Coming. … But is the 'first resurrection' a physical resurrection—a raising of the body from the dead? It would seem not, since the raising of the body from the dead is mentioned later in the chapter, in verses 11-13, as something distinct from what is described here. Premillennialists understand what is described in verses 11-13 as the resurrection of unbelievers which, they claim, occurs after the millennium, since the resurrection of believers has taken place before the millennium. The separation of the resurrection of unbelievers from that of believers by a thousand years, however, must be challenged, particularly in

[11] William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 12:540.

view of Jesus' words in John 5:28-29, 'The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs 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 judgment'. … The thousand year period during which these souls live and reign with Christ is, as we saw, the entire gospel era, from the first coming of Christ to the Second Coming. In other words, the millennium is now, and the reign of Christ with believers during this millennium is not an earthly but a heavenly one."[12]

What is the "Day of the Lord"?

Dispensationalists claim that "The Day of the Lord may be defined as an extended period of time beginning with the Rapture of the church (as a thief in the night) and continuing until the Great White Throne Judgment after Christ's millennial reign."[13] But the terms "that day" and "last day" tend to define it more appropriately, and limit it to a specific point in time. Our treatment of it should be no different. The fact that Scripture describes the "day of the Lord" as coming like a thief is also very telling (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). All of this reveals that it is *extremely impossible* for the "day of the Lord" to refer to an extended period of time—*especially* 1,007 years, as the Dispensationalists want us to believe.

Moreover, notice the Dispensationalists' mishandling of the Word of God. They claim that the Rapture is what is in view with the "thief in the night." But what did we just finish learning from Scripture's treatment of the phrase? We learned that Christ Jesus' second coming is what is defined as a "thief in the night." Brothers and sisters, Scripture must be its own best interpreter. The term "thief in the night" refers to one event only, and it *is not* the Rapture.

Let us recapitulate for a moment here. We have just examined the terms "that day" and the "last day," the coming as a "thief," the destruction of the heavens and the Earth, and how many resurrections there will be. Thus far we have discovered that the term "thief" is connected to the term "that day" as well as "the day of the Lord." We have seen that the resurrection is connected to the term "last day." We have also observed that the passing of the heavens is connected to the resurrection, the terms "that day" and "thief," and to the "day of the Lord." We also concluded that there is only one bodily resurrection—not two, not three, not four. Are the pieces of the puzzle starting

[12] Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 232-233.
[13] David Doherty, *Introduction to Eschatology* (Victoria Corner, NB: NBBI, 2005), 10.

to fall into place for you?

The day of the Lord is *a* specific event at a specific point in time. We have learned that the "day of the Lord" will come like a thief (Matt. 24:37-44; Luke 12:36-40; 1 Thess. 5:1-4; 2 Pet. 3:10-12; Rev. 16:15). We have learned that the heavens and the Earth will pass away on the "day of the Lord" (Matt. 24:25-26; 2 Pet. 3:10-12). We have learned that the resurrection will take place when the heavens and the Earth are no more (Job 14:12), at Jesus' second coming (1 Cor. 15:22-24), which Jesus said was the "last day" (John 6:38-40, 44-45, 54; 11:24). We learned that judgment takes place on the "last day" (John 12:44-50; cf. Matt. 25: 31-46). We also learned that there is *one* resurrection (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-39; Acts 24:15) and *one* judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; John 12:44-50). Lastly, we learned that blessings and curses are associated with both "that day" and the "last day."

Scripture repeatedly teaches us that the "day of the Lord" will consist of *both* blessings (Isa. 4:2-6; 30:26; Hos. 2:18-23; Joel 3:9-21; Amos 9:11-15; Mic. 4:6-8; Zeph. 2:7; Zech. 14:6-9) and curses (Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18-20; Zech. 1:14-15). As we saw earlier when we examined the term "that day" and "last day," we found both blessings and curses. If we examine Matthew 25:31-46, we see this taking place:

> "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' Then they themselves also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of

> You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Jesus said, "An hour is coming, in which *all* who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 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*" (John 5:28-29, emphasis supplied). The above passages reveal to us that there is one judgment for both the righteous and the unrighteous. They also reveal that there are blessings in store for the righteous while there are curses in store for the unrighteous. To receive eternal life is a blessing; to receive eternal damnation is a curse. Dispensationalists like to try and separate this passage from the truth and reality of Scripture by declaring it to be associated to the second coming of Christ for only those who go through the 7-year Great Tribulation, while there awaits another judgment at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

According to Scripture, the terms "that day," "last day," and the "day of the Lord" are one and the same and refer to the second coming of the Lord Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters, you have witnessed this evidence with your own eyes from the Holy Scriptures. Do not allow the Dispensationalists to try and tell you something different, no matter how convincing they might appear to be. Remember, even the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be convincing. But we are to "test the spirits to see if they are from God" (1 John 4:1), "[examining] the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things [are] so" (Acts 17:11), studying "to present [ourselves] approved to God as [workmen] who [do] not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Word Games Dispensationalists Play

Because the following terms are not commonly used in ordinary English, it is almost absurd for me to even address them in this book. However, I feel the need to do so simply because the Dispensationalists mention them quite frequently in their works in an attempt to obscure the lines between reality by playing word games that even children can recognize.

Brothers and sisters, in the Greek there are three words used in conjunction with Christ Jesus' return. They are: *epiphaneia* (ἐπιφανεία), meaning "manifestation, appearance;" *parousia* (παρουσίας), meaning "coming, presence;" and *apokalupsis* (ἀποκαλύψει), meaning "appearing, coming, revelation." The Dispensationalist claims that *parousia* speaks of the Rapture, while *apokalupsis* speaks of the Revelation (Second Coming). They claim that the "Rapture" and the "Revelation" are two separate events.

Brothers and sisters, if you are expecting me to show up at your home, whether you speak of my showing up as my "coming" or my "arrival," you are not speaking of two different events. Neither does the Bible. These terms speak of one and the same event.

For your consideration, here are the passages that use the term *parousia* in Scripture: Matt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 15:23; 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6 (Titus' *parousia*), 7 (Titus' *parousia*); 10:10 (Paul's *parousia*); Phil. 1:26 (Paul's *parousia*); 2:12 (Paul's *parousia*); 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8, 9 ("whose *parousia* is in accord with the activity of Satan"); James 5:7, 8; 2 Pet. 1:16; 3:4, 12 ("the *parousia* of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat"); 1 John 2:28.

Remember, Dispensationalists claim this term refers to the Rapture. Are we to understand the use of this word in these verses in terms of being "raptured"? *No*, we are not. We are to understand them precisely by what they relay, which is the individual's coming or presence, or perhaps coming presence. What does "presence" signify, brothers and sisters? It signifies that that individual is in your midst. They are present among you.

The Bible was not written with the divisions of verses and chapters as we have today. In 1 Thessalonians 1:7, it speaks of "the revelation (*apokalupsis*) of our Lord Jesus" (Literal translation)—ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ. Only mere verses later in 2:8, it speaks of "the appearance (*epiphaneia*) of His coming (*parousia*)"— τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας. Brothers and sisters, is not "the manifestation of His presence" the same concept as "His revealing"? I submit to you that *it is*. What we have here are different terms used to describe the same event. As I said earlier, if I am coming to your home, whether you refer to my coming as a "coming," an "arrival," an "approach," an "appearance," or an "advent," it is *all* the same thing. It does not mean I am showing up in multiple manners at multiple times. It is merely a matter of semantics (from the Greek σημαντικός—*semantikos*, the study of meaning), which Dispensationalists are trying to divide and make doctrines out of. Such suggestions are sheer nonsense and a wrongly dividing of Scripture.

When Christ Jesus returns *bodily* and *visibly* in all His majesty and glory for *all* the world to see, it will indeed be the αποκάλυψε ἐπιφανεία την παρουσία του – revealed appearance of His coming presence.

Conclusion

Once again we state the fact that the day of the Lord is a *singular* event referred to as "that day" and the "last day." The day of the Lord is that day wherein Jesus Christ returns like a thief (Matt. 24:37-44; Luke 12:36-40; 1

Thess. 5:1-4; 2 Pet. 3:10-12; Rev. 16:15), both the righteous and wicked dead are raised (Job 14:12; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 6:38-40, 44-45, 54; 11:24; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:22-24), all men and nations are judged (Matt. 25:31-46; John 12:44-50), receiving blessings (Isa. 4:2-6; 30:26; Hos. 2:18-23; Joel 3:9-21; Amos 9:11-15; Mic. 4:6-8; Zeph. 2:7; Zech. 14:6-9; 2 Tim. 1:12, 16-18; 4:7-8) or curses (Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18-20; Zech. 1:14-15; Matt. 7:21-23; 24:35-39; Luke 10:8-12; 2 Thess. 1:9-10; John 12:44-50), and the heavens and Earth are destroyed (Job 14:12; Matt. 24:25-26; 2 Pet. 3:10-12).

Chapter 3
Examining the Rapture Proof Texts

The Rapture in the Synoptic Gospels?

The term "synoptic" means "presenting or taking the same point of view." The Synoptic Gospels consist of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, because a significant portion of their information can be located in parallel passages of each other, sometimes with *more* or *less* detail. One example, found only in the pages of Matthew and Luke, is the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew, it begins with chapter 5 and continues through to the end of chapter 7. Three whole chapters! But in Luke, it begins in chapter 6 with verse 20 and continues through to the end of verse 49. A second example is Jesus' parables by the sea. You can find them in Matthew 13:1-35; Mark 4:1-34; and Luke 8:4-18.

The first proof text that we shall examine in connection with the Rapture is Matthew 24:40-41. Certain individuals will quote this in support of the Rapture, but they fail to connect it to both its immediate context, from verses 37-39, and its parallel passage in Luke 17:34-37. It reads: "Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left." Concerning these verses, William Hendriksen has incorrectly written, "Of the two men engaged in the same kind of work, probably even toiling next to each other in the field, *one* is taken. By the angels he is gathered to be forever with the Lord. *The other* is left behind, assigned to everlasting perdition."[14]

If we examine the parallel passage, Luke adds a question that the disciples had asked. It reads: "I tell you, on that night there will be two [people] in one

[14] Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, (1973), 1:870.

bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left. And answering they said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' And He said to them, 'Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered.'" Concerning these verses, Mr. Hendriksen has also incorrectly written, "What does 'taken' mean? The answer is found in I Thess. 4:17, 'They shall be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air.' And what does 'left behind' signify? It signifies 'left to their doom.'"[15] The question "Where, Lord?" makes little sense if you try to apply it to those "left."

Brothers and sisters, the word translated "left" is the Greek *aphiemi* (ἀφίεται), which, in one of its three chief meanings, means "to send forth, let go, forgive, or pardon." If two people are in a field, and one is taken and the other left, do you really have to ask "Where?" regarding the one that was left? Obviously he is still in the field where he was in the first place. The word translated "taken" is the Greek *paralambano* (παραλαμβάνεται), which means "to take, to receive." In certain contexts, such as this one, it means "taken violently in judgment," as can be seen in Matthew 27:27 of the "taking" of Jesus by the soldiers to be scourged, and in John 19:16 of the "taking" of Jesus to be crucified.

> "In Matt 24:40, 41; Luke 17:34, 35, *paralambánō* in the passive form is used as the opposite of *aphíēmi*, to let be. In these verses, those who are taken are not to be misconstrued as those whom the Lord favors, as if they were the same saints spoken of in 1 Thess 4:17... The verb *paralambánō* in most cases indicates a demonstration in favor of the one taken, but not always. ... In John 19:16 it is used of taking Jesus to lead Him to the cross. ... The verb *paralambánō* is to be contrasted in Matt 24:40, 41 to *aírō*, to take up and away. It is used to refer to those in the days of Noah who were taken away, not being favored but being punished, while Noah and his family were left intact. ... It refers to those who, as in the days of Noah, are taken to destruction."[16]

> "*one to be led off as a prisoner*, Jn xix. 16)"[17]

The disciples asked, "Where, Lord?" This hardly makes sense if you apply it to those who are left. That answer would seem obvious. It makes sense in the question of "Taken where?" or "Received where?" to which Jesus gives His reply. Those taken are taken in death—*not* the Rapture. You will

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[15] Ibid (1978), 3:809.
[16] Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), 1108-1109.
[17] Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015), 484.

notice that verse 37 of Luke accords with Revelation 19:17, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, 'Come, assemble for the great supper of God,'" and 19:21b, "and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13:24-30 also illustrates the reality that those taken are taken in death. It reads:

> He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

In his commentary, *Thru the Bible*, J. Vernon McGee says in regard to this passage: "Satan is the enemy, and he sows tares among the wheat. The tares are false doctrine. As wheat and tares first begin to grow, it is difficult to distinguish between them. Frankly, a lot of cults and 'isms' also sound good at first. You cannot tell them from the real thing until about the twelfth or thirteenth lesson. Those are the lessons in which they introduce their false doctrine. Someone once said to me, 'Dr. McGee, you should not criticize so-and-so. I listened to him, and he preached the gospel.' Well, he does preach the gospel every now and then. But it is the other things he says that are in error. You see, he sows tares among the wheat."[18] Brothers and sisters, I want you to notice the interpretation that *Jesus* gives for His *own* parable:

> And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast

[18] J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible*, 5 vols. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 4:75.

> them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

Brothers and sisters, it is *so* important that we let the Bible speak for itself without any added imagination from us. If you do not pay close attention to what the Bible says, you are more than likely to veer off into many wild and speculative fantasies that cannot be substantiated in or by Scripture. I have no doubt that Mr. McGee was a very godly man, and I respect him dearly. However, he was wrong in his interpretation. Jesus interpreted the "tares" as being the "sons of the evil one"—*not* false doctrine. It was *His* parable, so I am sure He knows the illustration He is painting for His listeners. He also interpreted the wheat as being the "children of the kingdom."

Concerning verse 38, Matthew Poole has said, "By *the good seed* he meant *the children of the kingdom*; such as had a true change wrought in their hearts, were truly regenerated and converted. By *the tares* he meant *the children of the wicked one*, that is, of the devil; such as did the works of the devil, John viii. 44."[19] Concerning this same verse, William Hendriksen has said, "*the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom*, meaning that the sons of the kingdom, those who gladly own Jesus as their Lord and King, are those in whom the good seed of the gospel bears fruit."[20] Jesus said "the good seed, these *are* (*eisi*, εἰσιν – present indicative) the children of the kingdom," (Literal translation, emphasis supplied.)—*not* "they will be."

Brothers and sisters, we are in that kingdom *now*. It has been inaugurated, but it has not yet been fully consummated. Dispensationalists will argue that we cannot be in the kingdom because it was supposedly postponed. We will deal with this assertion in chapter 5, but for now I want you to notice one more thing in Jesus' *own* interpretation of His parable. In verse 41 Jesus says, "…they will gather *out of* his kingdom…" (emphasis supplied). If the kingdom is not inaugurated *now*, how can anything wicked be taken out of it at the end of this present evil age? Remember, Jesus is telling us "the kingdom *is like*…" This is known as a simile. A simile is a figure of speech in which an explicit comparison is made between two essentially unlike things, usually using *like, as* or *than*. Jesus is giving us illustrations of what the kingdom is like, and what He can liken it to for us to understand it. You *cannot* say that this is speaking about any time after Jesus' return because once He has judged the world, there will be *no more* sin remaining in it. It will have all been purged out. Righteousness shall reign.

Listen to what Matthew Henry has to say: "The tares will then be

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[19] Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, undated), 3:64.

[20] Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, 1:571.

gathered out: *The reapers* (whose primary work it is to gather in the corn) shall be charged first to *gather out the tares*. Note, Though good and bad are together in this world, undistinguished, yet at the great day they shall be parted; no tares shall then be among the wheat; no sinners among the saints: then you shall plainly discern *between the righteous and the wicked*, which here sometimes it is hard to do, Mal. 3:18; 4:1."[21] Matthew Henry is correct. Let us look at an example of what he is speaking about in regard to the great day and the parting of the wheat and the tares. It is found in Matthew 25:31-46:

> "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' … Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

It should be noted that in an attempt to contradict what Scripture says in regard to those who are taken as being taken in death, some have cited the parable of the net, where the good fish are sorted into containers (Matt. 13:48). However, these individuals have failed to read verse 49. The passage reads:

> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

There can be no doubt about what Jesus is teaching us. But this brings us to another issue. Concerning the phrase "the end of the age," Dispensationalists teach that this refers to the end of the Mosaic Law. Does the above passage sound like it took place at the end of the Mosaic Law? Re-read Jesus' interpretation of His parable of the weeds in Matthew 13:37-43 and you tell me if that sounds like the end of the Mosaic Law. Or, how about

[21] Mathew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, 6 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 5:153-154.

this verse: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). Moments before His ascension into heaven, we are to believe, according to Dispensationalists, that Jesus said He will be with us until the end of the Mosaic Law? So… He will not be with us *after* the Mosaic Law? For individuals who claim to interpret the Scriptures *literally*, this sure is an awful mangling of the phrase's true meaning.

Now, when we opened up this section, we said that those individuals who quote Matthew 24:40-41 in support of the so-called Rapture have failed to keep it in its immediate context. Let us examine the full context of these verses and see what Jesus is telling us.

> "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will."

Do you see that? Jesus said that "the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah" (v.37). During Noah's days, the flood came in like a storm (no pun intended) and destroyed everyone who was not found in the ark. There was *nobody left behind* except for the eight righteous upon the ark. At the coming of the Son of Man there will be *nobody left behind* except for the righteous that will inherit the kingdom. *This* is a *literal* interpretation of what the text *says*. "The very suddenness of the coming points up the necessity to guard against unpreparedness and carelessness. During the days of Noah – that is, when this 'preacher of righteousness' was building the ark (Gen. 5:32-7:5) and warning the people (II Peter 2:5) – they refused to take to heart what he was doing and saying. They were unconcerned. They continued to live 'as always,' eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage."[22]

Notice that when speaking about the end times, Jesus, when relating what the coming of the Son of Man will be like, uses the days of Noah as an

[22] Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, 1:860-870.

example (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27) and the days of Lot as an example (Luke 17:28-30). He *never* uses Enoch (Gen. 5:24) or Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) as examples. If the Rapture were true, one would think this would be the case.

The Rapture in the Gospel of John?

Dispensationalists claim that John 14:2-3 is the first mention of the Rapture. John MacArthur says, "This is one of the passages that refers to the rapture of the saints at the end of the age when Christ returns."[23] But is this so? It reads: "In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

I am sorry, but there is absolutely *nothing* in this verse that even *remotely* hints at a secret Rapture. There is merely a promise from Jesus to the Christian believer that He will return to claim His own. "He said 'I go to prepare a place for you,' and this in connection with the statement that in His Father's house, or universe, there are many abodes (John 14:1-3). Evidently not one of those abodes is in His estimation suitable for His Bride. Thus it comes about that He is preparing an abode which will be even more glorious than all within God's creation at present. He is now thus engaged."[24]

Matthew Poole writes, "The particle *if* in this place denoteth no uncertainty of the thing whereof he had before assured them; but in this place hath either the force of although, or after that: When, or after that, I have died, ascended, and by all these acts, as also by my intercession, shall have made places in heaven fully ready for you, I will in the last day return again, as Judge of the quick and the dead, and take you up into heaven, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17; that you may be made partakers of my glory, John xvii. 22."[25]

God said, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." (Isa. 65:17). Peter said, "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13). John said, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away" (Rev. 21:1). Could this be the place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us? I believe that it is.

If Jesus did not go to *prepare* a place for us, by means of his humiliation and exaltation, then there would be *no* place for us. Note what Mr.

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[23] John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 1571.

[24] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1976), 5:277-278.

[25] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3:353.

Hendriksen has said: "The coming again of which Jesus speaks in this verse is the counterpart of the going away. Cf. Acts 1:9-11. That fact explains its character. In all probability, therefore, it refers to the second coming, and its purpose is to enable Christ to receive the disciples into his loving presence, to abide with him forever."[26] In verse 4, Jesus says, "You know the way to where I am going." When Thomas says that they do not know where He is going, then Jesus declares to them, "*I* am *the* way" (emphasis supplied).

The use of verses 2-3 in an attempt to support the doctrine of the Rapture demonstrates powerfully the fact that Dispensational Christians exude the classic example of hermeneutical "reaching." That is, seeing in the passage what one already desires to find there. Dispensationalists impose the Rapture upon this text. Lewis Sperry Chafer incorrectly stated, "Earlier in this work the student has been reminded of the wide difference between two great events which, though in no way related, are each in their turn rightly styled a coming of Christ. The first in the chronological order is the signless, timeless, and prophetically unrelated coming of Christ into the air to gather the Church, His Body and Bride, to Himself; and that event, which might occur at any moment, marks the termination of the Church's pilgrim sojourn on the earth. … This leads to the second coming of Christ per se, which is His glorious appearing."[27] In other words, "two great events, though in no way related, are each in their turn rightly styled a coming of Christ" is an admittance toward a second and third coming of Christ. But then he enters a state of denial and calls the third coming the second coming. Confusing, I know.

Because Dispensationalists are unwilling to admit the truth of what they believe and teach—that they have Jesus coming back for a second *and* third coming (in a similar manner to which the Mormons have had Him return a couple of times already), they have devised this scheme wherein they explain it away. They say, "Oh, well, He only comes into the air. He does not plant His feet on the earth, therefore it is not really a coming even though it is a coming." *How preposterous!* I guess the next time I pull into your laneway to visit you, and then leave without coming into your home; I was never really at your house. Brothers and sisters, to read the Rapture into this verse is eisegesis (reading something into the text that is not there), and *very* poor hermeneutics (the art and science of studying the Bible).

If we examine what Jesus had to say, it eliminates any concept about believers being "raptured." In John 17:15, Jesus prayed, "I *do not* ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to *keep* them from the evil one" (emphasis supplied). The word translated "keep" is the Greek *tereo* (τηρήσω), which literally means "to guard, to preserve." You will see this word again later

[26] Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary* (1953), 4:265.
[27] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 5:164.

when we examine *The Rapture in Revelation*. For now, please note carefully the exact words that Jesus is saying in this verse and meditate on them.

To show the purpose of verses 1-3, I want to quote from Matthew Henry: "Here is a particular direction to act faith upon the promise of eternal life, v. 2, 3. He had directed them to trust to God, and to trust in him; but what must they trust God and Christ for? Trust them for a happiness to come when this body and this world shall be no more, and for a happiness to last as long as the immortal soul and the eternal world shall last. Now this is proposed as a sovereign cordial under all the troubles of this present time, to which there is that in the happiness of heaven which is admirably adapted and accommodated. The saints have encouraged themselves with this in their greatest extremities, *That heaven would make amends for all*."[28]

The Rapture in 1 Corinthians 15?

Another verse used by Dispensationalists is 1 Corinthians 15:52. Let us look carefully at what this verse says: "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." Paul N. Benware says, "Paul explains that all Christians will receive their resurrection bodies at the rapture."[29] Where does he say this? The Dispensationalists seem to be confused. Let us try and keep this verse in its immediate and surrounding context, shall we, and interpret it correctly by what they *say—not* by what they *do not* say.

Now, if we read this verse in its context, the evidence is clear that this passage is speaking in regard to the second coming of Christ Jesus:

> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, *after that* those who are Christ's *at His coming, then* comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, *when* He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He *must* reign *until* He has put all His enemies under His feet. *The last enemy that will be abolished is death*. … Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But *when* this perishable will have put

[28] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, 5:894.
[29] Paul N. Benware, *Survey of the New Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 168.

> on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "*Death is swallowed up in victory*."
>
> (1 Cor. 15:22-26, 50-54, emphasis supplied.)

Brothers and sisters, notice that it specifically states that believers will be resurrected "at His coming" and that "*then* comes the end" (emphasis supplied). This is *not* the Rapture. This is Jesus' second coming. When the resurrection takes place, death will be defeated. This all takes place at the "end of the age," on the "last day," which is "the day of the Lord." Why make the text say something that it does not? If this does not convince you, please look at Matthew 25:31-46. Who is He separating here? Sheep from goats. Who do you suppose the sheep are? "The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11), "I lay down My life for the sheep" (10:15), "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (10:27-28). How much clearer do we need it to be?

Matthew Poole writes of verse 51, "There will be many saints alive in the world at the day when Christ shall come to judge the world, they will have natural bodies, such as they were born with, and grew up with in the world until that time. Saith the apostle, I now tell you a secret thing; for so the term *mystery* signifieth, Rom. xi. 25; xvi. 25, and in many other texts. *We shall not all sleep* any long sleep: some think all shall die, but some for a very short time, and then they shall revive. *But we shall all be changed*, either dying for time, or by some other work of God, their natural, corruptible bodies shall be turned into spiritual bodies, not capable of corruption."[30] This is true, as many passages of Scripture suggest. As soon as Jesus returns at His second coming to judge the world, the dead will be raised incorruptible and the rest of us will be changed into our glorious bodies.

Please note the preceding verse, which Dispensationalists deliberately leave out when they quote this passage: "Now I say this, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (v.50, emphasis supplied). Yet this is precisely what Pre-Millennialists have occurring during the Millennial Kingdom. Miraculously, they have men in corrupted mortal bodies of flesh and blood entering into the kingdom with the saints in their glorified bodies, somehow bypassing the judgment. We will deal with the implications of this in chapter 5. Regarding the fact that flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom, Jesus said, "Unless one is born again, he *cannot see* the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, emphasis supplied) and "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he *cannot enter* the

[30] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3:598.

kingdom of God" (John 3:5, emphasis supplied).

Simon J. Kistemaker writes, "The writers of the New Testament in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation write the expression *look* repeatedly as an idiom of Semitic speech. But surprisingly, in his epistles Paul only occasionally uses the word; indeed, it appears once in this epistle. He answers an anticipated question: How will the believer be changed to inherit God's kingdom? Thus he tells his reader a mystery, which is a revelation from God through Paul about the future transformation of the believers. In a similar context about the end times, Paul alludes to this revelation as a word of the Lord (I Thess. 4:15).

"'In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.' The Greek term Paul uses for 'moment' is *atomos*, from which we have the derivative *atom*. The word refers to something so small that it cannot be divided any more. Here *atomos* applies to time. The phrase *in the twinkling of an eye* is appositional; it represents a momentary wink of the eyelid. (Our equivalent is "in a split second," which commonly signifies the shortest possible moment.) In such a brief moment the miracle of transformation will occur both for those who rise from the dead and for those who are alive."[31]

On verse 53, Matthew Henry writes, "He assigns the reason of this change (v. 53): *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality*. How otherwise could the man be a fit inhabitant of the incorruptible regions, or be fitted to possess the eternal inheritance? How can that which is corruptible and mortal enjoy what it incorruptible, permanent, and immortal? This corruptible body must be made incorruptible, this mortal body must be changed into immortal, that the man may be capable of enjoying the happiness designed for him. Note, It is this corruptible that must put on incorruption; the demolished fabric that must be reared again. What is sown must be quickened. Saints will come in their own bodies (v. 38), not in other bodies.

"He lets us know what will follow upon this change of the living and dead in Christ: *Then shall be brought to pass that saying, Death is swallowed up in victory*; or, *He will swallow up death in victory*. Isa. 25:8. *For mortality shall be then swallowed up of life* (2 Cor. 5:4), and death perfectly subdued and conquered, and saints for ever delivered from its power. Such a conquest shall be obtained over it that it shall for ever disappear in those regions to which our Lord will bear his risen saints. And therefore will the saints hereupon sing their *epinikion*, their song of triumph. Then, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, will death be swallowed up, for ever swallowed up, *eis nikos*. Christ hinders it from swallowing his saints when they die; but, when they rise again, death shall, as to them, be swallowed for

[31] Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary* (1993), 7:581-582.

ever. And upon this destruction of death will they break out into a song of triumph."[32]

"The fact our new bodies will be 'imperishable' means that they will not wear out or grow old or ever be subject to any kind of sickness or disease. They will be completely healthy and strong forever. Moreover, since the gradual process of aging is part of the process by which our bodies now are subject to 'corruption,' it is appropriate to think that our resurrection bodies will have no sign of aging, but will have the characteristics of youthful but mature manhood or womanhood forever. There will be no evidence of disease or injury, for all will be made perfect. Our resurrection bodies will show the fulfillment of God's perfect wisdom in creating us as human beings who are the pinnacle of his creation and the appropriate bearers of his likeness and image. In these resurrection bodies we will clearly see humanity as God intended it to be."[33] Amen!

"Paul draws a comparison between the body we are to have and our present body:

1. The present body is perishable, subject to disease and death; the resurrection body is incorruptible, immune to disease and decay.
2. The present body is sown in dishonor; the resurrection body will be glorious.
3. The present body is weak; the resurrection body is powerful.
4. The present body is physical (ψυχικόν – *psuchikon*); the resurrection body will be spiritual."[34]

As you can see, brothers and sisters, Dispensationalists must force 1 Corinthians 15:52 to support the Rapture because, otherwise, if they do not, it informs us that once we are "raptured" we will not be changed for another seven years. But the text is clear: "at the *last* trumpet" (emphasis supplied) – *eschatos* (ἐσχάτῃ) "farthest, final, last, uttermost." It is illogical to state this is the Rapture, and then seven years later there occurs yet *another* trumpet when our Lord comes in the clouds (Matt. 24:31). Mr. Kistemaker notes, "Paul indicates that the last trumpet will sound to announce the occurrence of the resurrection. This trumpet blast is the final one in the history of redemption."[35]

The Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4?

The primary passage used as a proof text to promote the Rapture is found

[32] Henry, *Matthew Henry's* Commentary, 6:480.
[33] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 831.
[34] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 1012.
[35] Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, 7:582.

in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, specifically verses 16 and 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. 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." Paul Benware says, "When Paul was in Thessalonica, he had taught them that one day Jesus would return and suddenly take all believers to heaven. (This event is commonly called the 'rapture') He apparently taught them that the rapture could occur at any moment with no events necessarily preceding it."[36]

What Mr. Benware is doing is conjecture—a statement, opinion, or conclusion based on inconclusive or incomplete evidence and guesswork. He is not faithfully representing the text of the Bible and what it reveals. Dispensationalists have a habit of impressing their subjective opinion upon the Bible. Paul had taught them no such thing as what Mr. Benware has just suggested. It is believed that Paul was taught of the Lord Jesus Himself for three years (Gal. 1:12, 18). Many Dispensationalists try to pit Jesus and Paul against each other, several claiming that Jesus taught one gospel and Paul another; that they had different theologies. Any careful student of the Bible will see that Paul's teachings reflect the teachings of Jesus harmoniously. Paul was not given any "new revelation" that Jesus had not already taught. Remember, Jesus and Paul used the same Scriptures—those of the Old Testament. What Dispensationalism teaches is contrary to what Christ Jesus revealed.

"The New Testament nowhere clearly says that the church will be taken out of the world before the tribulation. If this significant event were to happen, we might at least expect that explicit teaching to that effect would be found in the New Testament. Certainly Jesus tells us that he will come again and take us to be with himself (John 14:3), and Paul tells us that we shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:17), and that we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye and receive resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:51-52), but each of these passages has been understood by believers throughout history as speaking not of a *secret* rapture of the church before the tribulation, but of a very visible *public* rapture (or "taking up") of the church to be with Christ just a few moments prior to his coming to earth *with them* to reign during the millennial kingdom (or, on the amillennial view, during the eternal state)."[37]

Dispensationalists try to mangle 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 into some sort of "secret" coming and taking away of the saints, leaving the rest of the

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[36] Benware, *Survey of the New Testament*, 168.
[37] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1134.

world in a chaotic mess with cars crashing into each other and planes falling out of the sky creating a phenomenal death toll. My Bible says that God is not the author of confusion. Further, as we already looked at, those taken are taken in death. Jesus' own interpretation of His parable of the weeds informs us that this will happen at the end of this age with His second coming.

"In order to make their case for pretribulationism, dispensationalists must and do separate Paul's 'rapture pericope' (1 Thess. 4:13-18) from the immediately following pericope dealing with the Christian's behavior as 'sons of light' in view of the approaching 'Day of the Lord' (1 Thess. 5:1-11). The events of the former pericope, according to dispensationalists, occur seven years before the Day of the Lord, which comes later as a thief in the night. But such a chronological division between the pericopes finds no support in the text. The concern which prompted Paul's 'rapture pericope' (1 Thess. 4:13-18) in the first place was the issue of the state of the Christian dead, a concern troubling the Thessalonian believers. He begins his pericope by stating: 'We do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep [τῶν κοιμωμένων, *tōn koimōnmenōn*]' (4:13). Then he treats the Lord's 'appearing' (4:15; τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρìου, *tēn parousian tou kyriou*), a term descriptive of Christ's second coming (2 Thess. 2:8), stating that Christians will be alive and remain on earth 'until' (εἰς, *eis*) his 'appearing,' and assures them that Christ will raise the Christian dead at that time and that they will accompany the living (glorified) Christians into his presence. He concludes this section by urging his readers to 'encourage each other with these words' (4:18). Then with no discernible shift in subject matter, he immediately reminds his readers that 'the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night' (5:2) and urges them until that day to live alert and self-controlled lives as 'children of light.' He then returns to his original concern and states that Christ 'died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep [καθεύδωμεν, *katheudōmen*], we may live together with him' (5:10). He then repeats his earlier admonition that his readers should 'encourage one another and build each other up' (5:11). The unity of this entire section (4:13-5:11) is transparent. Because of the several ideas that parallel each other in these two pericopes, there is no scriptural warrant to rend them apart and make them refer to two separate chronological events.

"Finally, from Paul's declaration that 'relief' for the church from its troubles and persecutions will come not seven years before but '*when* the Lord Jesus is revealed [ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει, *en tē apokalypsei*] from heaven with his holy angels with blazing fire' (2 Thess. 1:7, emphasis supplied), which 'revelation' he describes only verses later as the 'appearing [ἐπιφανεία, *epiphaneia*] of his coming [παρουσίας, *parousias*]' (2 Thess. 2:8), it becomes quite clear that Christ's coming and the ensuing rapture spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 are neither separate events nor is the

rapture a 'secret, hidden event but a [very visible] breaking into history of the glory of God.' The Lord's 'loud command,' the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet-blast of God – all announcing Christ's coming – make this one of the 'loudest' pericopes in the Bible! I say again, Christ's coming and our rapture to him are not separate events nor is the rapture a secret event. It is anything but secret!" [38]

Please note that Mr. Reymond's use of the word "rapture" and the Dispensationalist's use of the word "rapture" are two completely different concepts. Mr. Reymond applies the term to the phrase "caught up," signifying nothing more than when Christ takes us to be with Him forevermore. If a believer chooses to do that with the word, that is fine, but with all the negative connotations and all the fictionalization that has been attached to it, I would prefer to avoid the word altogether so as not to confuse people into thinking I support the Dispensational nonsense behind it. As soon as we start talking "Rapture," their minds immediately go to the Dispensational fairytale.

Brothers and sisters, I would like you to notice the parallels here, of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, to other portions of Scripture that are undoubtedly speaking of Christ's second coming:

Clouds	Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Acts 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7; 14:14
Trumpet	Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 11:15
Angels	Matt. 13:39, 41, 49; 16:27; 24:31; Mark 8:28; 13:27; Luke 9:26; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7
Loud Noise	Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Pet. 3:10
Thief	Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15
Day of the Lord	Isa. 1:12; Amos 5:18; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3: 10-13
Resurrection	Job 14:12, 14; 19:25-27; Isa. 25:8; Hosea 13:14; Matt. 24:31; John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 1 Cor. 15:51-52, 54-55; 1 Thess. 4:16

[39]

Dispensationalism tends to confuse Jesus' second coming with their "Rapture." It is Jesus' second coming that has no signs necessarily preceding it, as supported by Scripture (Matt. 24:36-51; 25:1-13; Luke 12:35-40; 17:26-

[38] Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1023-1024.
[39] John C. Egerdahl, *The Bible Versus Dispensational Eschatology* (Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2009), 166.

30; 1 Thess. 5:2-4; 2 Pet. 3:8-10; Rev. 16:15). The Scriptures declare that Jesus will return personally (John 14:3; 21:20-23; Acts 1:11; 3:19-21; 1 Cor. 15:23-26; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; Heb. 9:27-28; James 5:7-8; 2 Pet. 3:3-4; 1 John 2:28; 3:2-3), publicly, bodily and visibly (Matt. 24:30-31; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 14-15; Rev. 1:7), unexpectedly (Matt. 24:27, 36-51; 25:1-13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 17:24, 26-30; 2 Pet. 3:8-10), suddenly (Matt. 24:23-28; Luke 17:22-24; 21:34-36; Acts 1:11), quickly (Matt. 24:27; Heb. 10:37; Rev. 22:7, 12, 20) with His angels (Matt. 16:27; 2 Thess. 1:5-10), in the glory of His Father (Matt. 16:27; 19:28; 25:31-46; Luke 21:27; Titus 2:13), and triumphantly (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27).

Dispensationalists claim that it is absurd to think that, at the end of this present age, we will meet the Lord in the air and then immediately return with Him. I submit to you Genesis 29:13, where Laban "ran to meet" Jacob and then "brought him to his house"; Matthew 25:1-13, where the wise virgins went out "to meet the bridegroom" and then accompanied him back to the wedding banquet; and Acts 28:15, where the Roman Christians came "to meet [Paul and his companions]" as they approached Rome and then returned with them. It is absurd to a Dispensationalist because they do not pay attention to custom and culture. Even in our own day and age, although not as prominent any more, when someone came to visit our home, we would go outside (even to their car) and welcome them, and then accompany them back inside our house. That is precisely what will take place at Jesus' bodily, visible, public return. It will be a glorious event! We will be caught up in the air to greet and welcome Him, and then we will accompany Him back.

To show you that I am not out of my mind by suggesting this: "When Paul says that 'we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air' (1 Thess. 4:17), he uses the Greek word *apantēsis*, for "meet," which is used in Greek literature outside the Bible to speak of citizens going out of a city to meet an arriving magistrate, then to return to the city with him."[40] So, brothers and sisters, which view is *truly* consistent with the truths of Scripture?

The Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 5?

In my Theology Professor's lecture notes, he stated that 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 "summarizes the Rapture." Let us take a look at what this passage has to say:

> Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the

[40] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1134. Footnote 42.

> day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.

This passage is speaking of "the day of the Lord." As we learned in chapter 2, "the day of the Lord" has *nothing* to do with the so-called Rapture. They were not worried that they had missed the Rapture, as we are often told. Dispensationalists tend to isolate specific verses from this passage, such as verse 9, in order to try and support their concept of the Rapture. But look at what Paul tells them: "For you yourselves *know full well* that the day of the Lord *will come just like a thief in the night*. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then *destruction will come upon them suddenly* like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. *But you*, brethren, are not in darkness, *that the day should overtake you like a thief*" (emphasis supplied).

What did Jesus teach us in Matthew 24:36-51? "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. … Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will."

I do not know about you, brothers and sisters, but this is crystal clear to me.

1. "They are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly."
2. "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of

Man be."

Perhaps you are thinking, "Yes, I know this is speaking of His second coming, but we will already be gone because verse 9 says it is not appointed for us." Okay then, look at this: "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief" (v.4). If they are already gone, there is no sense in even mentioning them being caught off guard. But, as Jesus said, we are to be on our guard, being ready, staying awake, and keeping vigil (Matt. 24:42, 44; Mark 13: 33, 35, 37; Luke 21:36) because we "do not know which day [our] Lord is coming." Even Paul instructs them to "be alert and sober" (v.6). As Louis Berkhof puts it, "The Bible intimates that the measure of surprise at the second coming of Christ will be in an inverse ratio to the measure of their watchfulness."[41]

What about verse 9? I am glad you asked. Scripture repeatedly teaches us that the Day of the Lord will consist of *both* blessings (Isa. 4:2-6; 30:26; Hos. 2:18-23; Joel 3:9-21; Amos 9:11-15; Mic. 4:6-8; Zeph. 2:7; Zech. 14:6-9) and curses (Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18-20; Zech. 1:14-15). That this is so can be seen from Matthew 25:31-46. We do not need to invent a secret "Rapture" in order to face the facts and deal with the truths that Scripture presents us. It is from a wrong reading of Scripture that Dispensationalists come up with the idea that God's wrath is going to be poured out upon everyone. But what does Scripture say? Revelation 16:2 declares that these will come "…upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image." Just as Israel was not harmed when the plagues affected Egypt, so Christians will not be harmed when the wrath affects the world because "God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). But this is speaking of His second coming, where those who have stored up wrath against themselves will finally receive it. We shall not. Why make it more difficult than it needs to be?

Paul Benware insists, "Paul emphatically assures believers that they will not experience the 'day of the Lord.'"[42] John MacArthur writes, "Believers have no part in the day of the Lord, because they have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13)."[43] Then we have a severe problem on our hands, if that is the case. Scripture declares that the resurrection occurs on the day of the Lord and that we are to be transformed and receive our blessings and rewards. If we do not participate in the day of the Lord, how is any of that to take place? Contrary to what the Dispensationalists want to tell you, brothers and sisters, we *will* participate on that great day. Christ Jesus our Lord shall stand before us and separate us,

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[41] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939), 706.
[42] Benware, *Survey of the New Testament*, 168.
[43] MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 1801.

separating the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the bad fish, the good soil from the bad soils, the wise virgins from the foolish virgins, and He will say to us, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). The day of the Lord has *nothing* to do with the "Tribulation," as Mr. Benware tries to intimate. Lastly, our being transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light has to do with our salvation—nothing to do with the concept of the Rapture, as Mr. MacArthur erroneously implies. We are no longer in darkness, but in the light. That day shall not overtake us because we know of its coming and are warned repeatedly to watch for it (v.6; cf. Matt. 24:42, 44; Mark 13: 33, 35, 37; Luke 21:36).

Dispensationalists claim that "The Day of the Lord may be defined as an extended period of time beginning with the Rapture of the church (as a thief in the night) and continuing until the Great White Throne Judgment after Christ's millennial reign."[44] Since the Bible defines the day of the Lord as coming like "a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10), it is rather impossible to refer to it as an extended period of time—*especially* 1,007 years! We have covered much evidence in this book that proves once and for all that the day of the Lord is the "last day;" the day when Christ Jesus returns, the dead are resurrected, death is defeated, the nations are judged, the heavens and Earth destroyed, and we, Beloved, enter the kingdom "prepared for [us] from the foundation of the world."

Some Dispensationalists will claim that the phrase "a thief in the night" refers to the Rapture. In truth, they must, and have, create *two* "thief in the night" events in order to hold onto their system of belief. One for the Rapture, and one for the Second Coming. But Peter makes it quite clear *when* this period is and *what* takes place with it: "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" (2 Pet. 3:10). If the coming as "a thief in the night" refers to the Rapture, guess what? When the Rapture takes place, the heavens and the Earth are going to be burned up. So what happens to all of their theories after this event? And these people boast "a consistent, literal, and normal system of hermeneutics"?

The Rapture in 2 Thessalonians?

Prior to my having attended Bible College at New Brunswick Bible Institute, I had written to the Theology Professor there in regard to the Rapture. In his letter back to me he wrote, "It may be helpful to read 2 Thess.

[44] Doherty, *Introduction to Eschatology*, 10.

2 and to note the chronological order of events. Carefully explore v.3 and the Greek word which is translated 'a falling away.' The word literally means, 'the departure.' All the English translations prior to 1611 translated it as 'the departure.'" He then referenced a book by Wayne House titled *When the Trumpet Sounds*, which I assume is where he received this information.

First of all, it would be helpful if he remembered that the English is a *translation*—so it would be wise if he did not put all his eggs in the basket of assumption based on the English word prior to 1611, and his false understanding of that word, its meaning and application.

Second of all, *none* of the English translations prior to 1611 translate it as "the departure," and *all* of them certainly *do not* translate it as "a departing" (what I am sure he meant to refer to). John Wyclif (1380) translates it as "dissension" while the Douay-Rheims (1582) translates it as "a revolt." William Tyndale (1534) was the first to use "a departing" (see also Cranmer 1539 and Geneva 1560, 1599), which clearly refers to "a departing from the faith" in the same way that "a falling away" clearly refers to "a falling away from the faith," as supported by Scripture (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-3, 4:3-4).

Third of all, the Greek word *literally* means "apostasy." One needs only take a good look at the word itself and it is clear – *apostasia* (ἀποστασία). Examine Strong's, Vine's, Zodhiates', or Kittel's work. As much as I respect him, truly, this is poor scholarship on his behalf, especially considering he has apparently studied Greek. I would be embarrassed for this conclusion drawn from an assumption. He should know better.

Once again, Robert Reymond deals exceptionally well with this section. "From Paul's declaration that 'relief' for the church from its troubles and persecutions will come not seven years before but '*when* the Lord Jesus is revealed [ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει, *en tē apokalypsei*] from heaven with his holy angels with blazing fire' (2 Thess. 1:7, emphasis supplied), which 'revelation' he describes only verses later as the 'appearing [ἐπιφανεία, *epiphaneia*] of his coming [παρουσίας, *parousias*]' (2 Thess. 2:8), it becomes quite clear that Christ's coming and the ensuing rapture spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 are neither separate events nor is the rapture a 'secret, hidden event but a [very visible] breaking into history of the glory of God.'"[45]

Paul states clearly in verse 2 that he is speaking to them about "the day of the Lord," and then he continues by saying, "[*That day*] [the day of the Lord, the same one as talked about in the Old Testament] will not come unless the apostasy (*apostasia*, ἀποστασία) comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (emphasis supplied). The Old Testament talks frequently about "the day of the Lord." "The day of the Lord" has not changed in the New Testament. It is the *same* period. It is *one* event! *The Second Advent!*

[45] Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 1024.

The Rapture in Revelation?

Another verse that Dispensationalists attempt to use in support of the Rapture is Revelation 3:10. "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth." As we pointed out when we were discussing *The Rapture in the Gospel of John*, the word translated "keep" is the Greek *tereo* (τηρήσω), which, again, literally means "to guard, to preserve."

Not only does the word *tereo* appear twice in Revelation 3:10, but it also appears in John 17:6, 11-12, and 15. In John 17:15 we noted that Jesus prayed, "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." If the word meant "to take away, to gather, to remove" as the Dispensationalists tell us, we have a severe problem on our hands. In other words, according to the Dispensationalist's interpretation, Jesus said, "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you take them out of the world." After all, they tell us that this word teaches the Rapture in Revelation 3:10. John MacArthur insists "this phrase, 'keep…from' supports the pretribulational rapture of the church."[46] I am sorry, but one would have to stretch and twist this verse, and particularly this word, to great extremes in order for it to mean "to take away, to gather, to remove." In fact, the exact same word is used only mere words earlier: "Because you have *tereo* the word…" How should we interpret *it* then?

Furthermore, the phrase "keep…from" that appears in Revelation 3:10 also appears in John 17:15. If *tereo* means what Dispensationalists try to tell us it means, how do we explain its usage in these verses: "If you keep (*tereo*) My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept (*tereo*) My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." (John 15:10); "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept (*tereo*) My word, they will keep (*tereo*) yours also." (John 15:20)?

Mr. MacArthur also insists that this is "an event still future that for a short time severely tests the whole world."[47] Although I greatly respect Mr. MacArthur, being a great man of God, he is mistaken once again because this passage was spoken to a church in history, which no longer exists, which, if we read our history, we would know has already come to pass. "This promise was literally and verbatim fulfilled. Philadelphia was the only church in the seven which escaped unscathed from the persecutions of Trajan; and the reason which philosophers assigned and historians have stated is, that

[46] MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 1946.
[47] Ibid.

Philadelphia was subject to earthquakes; and the Roman emperor, with all his sanguinary cruelty, was afraid to go there himself, or to trust his generals and his armies in a place so dangerous. No doubt this was the secondary cause, which many modern philosophers worship; but the secret of Philadelphia's safety was the first great and glorious reason that Christians trust in – that Jesus had recorded it as his truth. '*I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, that shall come upon all the world*.'"[48]

"*I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world*; for this faithfulness God promises to keep the ministers of this church from those persecutions which raged elsewhere, and were further, in Trajan's time, to come upon all Christians living under the Roman Empire. *To try them that dwell upon the earth*; to try those Christians that lived within that empire, how well they would adhere to Christ, and the profession of the gospel. This I take to be a more proper sense, than theirs who would interpret this *hour of temptation* of the day of judgment, which is never so called."[49] The historical evidence is overwhelmingly supportive of precisely what the passage says.

There is one key verse that demonstrates most powerfully the Dispensationalist's use of hermeneutical "reaching"–Revelation 4:1. The Dispensationalist latches onto the phrase "Come up here" and says, "See! That is the rapture!" How foolish! That would be no different than latching onto the words "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life" and saying, "See! Christ was a vampire! If you drink His blood you will have everlasting life." It is the same silly nonsense. Come on, my Dispensationalist friend, you can do better than that.

In that letter that my Theology Professor wrote in response to me, he also stated that "The church is no where mentioned again in Revelation until ch.19 when Jesus returns at His Revelation as King, with all His holy ones to begin His Millennial Kingdom." I am sorry, but the church is *nowhere* mentioned in this chapter. He is *assuming* that the "armies of heaven" (v.14) include the saints, and that if it does, they already have their glorified bodies rather than the souls of dead saints themselves coming to be united with their bodies from the grave. Elsewhere in Scripture Jesus says He could command legions of angels to come to his aid (Matt. 26:53). Matthew 25:31 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7 inform us that Jesus will return *with* His angels.

The fact is, *nowhere* in Revelation is the "church" mentioned. The word "church" appears seven times through chapters 2 and 3, each time in regard to the *specific* church that John was told to write to (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).

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[48] John Cumming, *Apocalyptic Sketches* (London, ENG: Arthur Hall, Virtue and Company, 1854), 436-437.

[49] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3:958.

The word "churches" appears thirteen times; seven of which are in the repetitive warning "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22), four of which mention specifically the "seven churches" (1:4, 11, 20 – twice), and the last two of which are plural with no specifics (2:23; 22:16). The term "bride" is used four times (18:23; 21:2, 9; 22:17), two of which are in conjunction with the fact the New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ, the Church (21:2, 9).

The Rapture in History

Until Dispensationalists hijacked the word and began applying it incorrectly to their false doctrine, the word *rapture* meant "ecstatic delight, mental transport; great pleasure or enthusiasm or the expression of it" (Canadian Oxford Dictionary), "a state or experience of being carried away by overwhelming emotion; a mystical experience in which the spirit is exalted to a knowledge of divine things; an expression or manifestation of ecstasy or passion" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). If you look in any Thesaurus, the words associated with the word *rapture* are: ecstasy, bliss, exaltation, euphoria, elation, joy, enchantment, delight, happiness, pleasure. Nothing pertaining to a secret gathering. In fact, even in Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language, the word *rapture* did not carry the positive twist Dispensationalists have given it: "a seizing by violence," which it admits is little used. But the other definitions are as follows: "transport; ecstasy; violence of a pleasing passion; extreme joy or pleasure; rapidity with violence; enthusiasm; uncommon heat of imagination." Based on the surrounding definitions, and on other Dictionaries, I am presuming that by "transport" they are referring to the previously mentioned "mental transport," which fits with an extreme feeling of ecstasy, passion, pleasure, joy, etc. The word *rapture* has always referred to an overwhelming feeling of ecstatic joy—*not* to some secret catching away to be with the Lord. And *if* it referred to some catching away, the catching away would be the destruction of the lost. "A seizing by violence" fits with what we looked at in the Synoptic Gospels regarding those who are taken.

The Rapture is a new doctrine that had its birth in the spring of 1830. "It is a historical fact that Darby's eschatology began with the utterance of [Margaret Macdonald]. This, Tregelles said at the time, was from a false spirit."[50] That same year, in the September issue of *The Morning Watch*, an Irvingite journal, the author wrote that the Philadelphia church would be raptured before a "period of great tribulation," while the Laodicea church

[50] Egerdahl, *The Bible Versus Dispensational Eschatology*, 256. [Original quote reads 'Barbara McDonald' instead of 'Margaret Macdonald'.]

would be left behind. Months earlier in their June issue, the author had written that the Philadelphia church would remain on Earth until the final post-tribulational advent. Between these issues, the writers of *The Morning Watch* had visited Margaret, who explained her "revelation," which they quoted without giving her due credit. In an article published in December by John Darby, he was still defending the post-tribulational view. In fact, Darby's writings do not reflect anything pre-tribulational until 1839! Dispensationalists employ selective citing, truncated quotations of text, and creative editing in order to try and prove the Rapture was taught prior to 1830. If you want to know the detailed historical facts, I suggest picking up *The Great Rapture Hoax*, *The Rapture Plot*, and *The Incredible Cover Up* by Dave MacPherson, a historian with no equal regarding his journalistic detective skills.

Charles Hodge (1797-1878), in his *Systematic Theology*, never mentions a single thing about a secret "Rapture." He mentions the millennium (although he believes in 1000 years of righteousness and peace prior to Christ's coming), but there is not a single mention of the word "Rapture" in his entire Systematic Theology. He says, "When Christ comes again it will be to be admired in all them that believe. Those who are then alive will be changed, in the twinkling of an eye; their corruptible shall put on incorruption, and their mortal shall put on immortality."[51] It is clear he believed that when Christ returned to Earth in the same manner that He left (Acts 1:10-11), believers would be changed. He addresses all sorts of different doctrines in his 3 volumes, but never once mentions the secret "Rapture."

Likewise, if you reference the works of John Owen (1616-1683), Matthew Poole (1624-1679), Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), or a host of any other Christian works prior to the 1800's, including those works of the early church fathers, you will find no such thing as the Rapture. Spurgeon lived well after the inception of the Rapture, yet he never taught any such thing in any of his 3600 sermons, which shows that such a teaching had never reached either his ears or his eyes. Spurgeon amassed a large catalogue of books and read profusely each day. Why would he not have addressed it in one form or another as he had other doctrines? It is also of special note that *neither* Wayne Grudem (*Systematic Theology*) nor Millard Erickson (*Christian Theology*) nor Robert L. Reymond (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*) believes in this so-called "Pre-tribulational Pre-millennial Rapture."

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[51] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 3:858.

Conclusion

We have just examined several of the proof texts quoted by Dispensationalists to be in support of their doctrine of the Rapture. As you have seen with your own eyes, there is no foundation or substantiation to their claims. They are all random, isolated and disconnected verses or passages that have nothing to do with their doctrine. It is an imaginary concept that has been inserted into the Bible wherever they have found a place that seems to hold it best. Dispensationalists have the Rapture backwards. According to Jesus, you *want* to be left behind: "For the coming of the Son of Man will be *just like* the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until *the flood came and took them all away*; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be *taken*, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be *taken*, and one will be left" (Matt. 24:37-41, emphasis supplied).

You have witnessed for yourselves how Dispensationalists are guilty of hermeneutical "reaching:" seeing in a verse or passage what they already desire to find there, whether it is truly there or not. Ezekiel 14:4 gave a warning in this regard:

> Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols Any one of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him as he comes with the multitude of his idols.

In other words, if you approach God's Word with idols or pre-conceived ideas in your heart, He is going to *allow* you to see what you desire to see there simply because that is what you *want* to see. Let us allow the Bible to say what it has to say, and use history to substantiate what it has told us—not some false prophet declaring things to occur in the future.

Chapter 4
Dealing with Daniel

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

In the second chapter of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. Unlike Pharaoh, who told Joseph what his dream was so that he might interpret it, Nebuchadnezzar wants someone to both tell him what his dream was *and* to interpret it. It was not simply good enough for someone to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he wanted someone to *tell* him what he dreamed. Even his own servants said to him, "Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation" (v.4, 8). It seems that he was being cautious and verifying that this individual was *truly* a wise man, because he said, "Tell me the dream, and I will know that you can show me its interpretation" (v.9). To us it seems rather arrogant to ask someone else to tell you what you dreamed when they have no connection to your subconsciousness. Nevertheless, this is what Nebuchadnezzar did. First, in verses 31-35, Daniel tells him what he had dreamed:

> "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the

whole earth."

Then, in verses 37-45, Daniel interprets his dream:

> "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy."

David Doherty says, "A careful study of the conjunction 'and' which begins 2:42 reveals that it is an unusual conjunction conveying a time gap. The inspired text thus reveals that there would be a time gap between the original Roman Empire and the restored Roman Empire."[52] I am sorry, but this is false conjecture. Mr. Doherty would have you believe that between verses 41 and 42, both of which are Daniel's interpretation of the feet and toes of the legs, there exists a gap. It is truly amazing the number of gaps that Dispensationalists will insert into the Scriptures, and without warrant or justification. The careful student of the Word will see that this is an impossibility by noticing the context. Verse 42 is a continued description that Daniel started giving in verse 41 and continues through verse 43.

> "And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness

[52] Doherty, *Introduction to Eschatology*, 19.

> of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery."

Daniel informs us that there will be four secular empires that will rule the known world. Nebuchadnezzar is the first, as Daniel has told us (vv.37-38). Daniel is specific to tell us "another kingdom," a "third kingdom" and "a fourth kingdom." He *never* speaks of a fifth or revived kingdom in the future, the way that false prophets speculate. Daniel then says that "a stone was cut out without human hands, and it struck the statue on its feet" and that *all* the elements were destroyed (v.35). Brothers and sisters, where is the Babylonian Empire today? Where is the Media-Persian Empire today? Where is the Grecian Empire today? Where is the Roman Empire today? They are *all* gone.

Daniel tells us explicitly that the iron and the clay are a "divided kingdom" (vv.41-43). It is the Roman Empire, which is evident by the iron. Legs and feet are unified. The image shows that the fourth empire starts out strong and then becomes weakened, which is substantiated by history. Rome had become far too great and vast for its own good that the government was no longer able to effectively control it. With encroaching and increasingly brazen attacks by the Germanic tribes of the west, Rome needed complete and swift control, which it lacked. Although Rome possessed a brilliant war machine, they halved their military abilities with the division of the Empire into East and West. The instability of the weakening Roman Empire, and the lack of great leaders, resulted in a loss of morale. Soldiers were no longer fighting for the glory of Rome, but merely for wages, and the wages were not nearly enough to die for. As soon as the Roman Empire split into East and West empires, it could no longer hold together. Historians have hinted that the mixing of different people during waves of conquest may have forced the Romans to commit "racial suicide." Is this not what Daniel says? "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery." (vv.42-43).

"*The kingdom shall be divided*; partly strong and partly weak. The Roman kingdom was divided, partly, because tyranny followed aristocracy, and the government made up of both; partly, in their civil wars, when two competitors strove each for dominion, the common people against the senate, Sylla against Marius, Caesar against Pompey; also, partly, when conquered provinces and kingdoms cast off the Roman yoke, and set up kings of their own, and so the

empire was divided into ten kingdoms or toes. The vision attributes two legs to the image, and to the fourth monarchy, because the Romans had sometimes duumvirs, two consuls, two emperors, one in the east, the other in the west."[53]

Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of the apostle John, wrote around 175-185 A.D., "In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules [the earth] shall be partitioned. He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel, telling us that thus it had been said to him: And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. It is manifest, therefore, that of these [potentates], he who is to come shall slay three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them."[54] In the second century, before it had ever taken place, even Irenaeus knew that the current empire must be partitioned, which permanently occurred in 395 A.D.

Tim LaHaye says, "While we do not know the exact events that will lead us to the one-world government predicted in the Bible, we do know that in the last days, there will be a world government led by ten kings or heads of regions (Daniel 2:40-43; 7:23-24)."[55] Brothers and sisters, the biblical text says no such thing, nor does it even hint at such a thing. *Nothing* in this text can be construed as speaking of a "one-world government." This is adding to the Word of God. It is speculative opinion that arises from a *literalistic* interpretation of the Scriptures—*not* a *literal* interpretation of the Scriptures, as they claim. We have just looked at the context of verses 40-43 and there is no gap here whatsoever, let alone anything that states there will be a "one-world government." When we get to the next section of this chapter, we will again pick up this quote in regard to what Mr. LaHaye is attempting to say here, and we will look at the *literal* reading and interpretation of the text.

Daniel goes on to tell us that "in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people" (v. 44). Which kings? Well, since the kings from the previous kingdoms are obviously no longer around, I suspect he is referring to the kings that will be revealed to him in a later vision—the kings of the fourth empire. Apparently I am not alone in my

[53] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 2:817.
[54] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.26.1.
[55] LaHaye, *Charting the End Times*, 120.

suspicions, for Mr. Poole writes, "*In the days of these kings*, i.e. while the iron kingdom stood (for Christ was born in the reign of Augustus Caesar, Luke ii. 1,) *shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom*. Now see the difference of Christ's kingdom from all other kingdoms in the world. 1. In the rise of it, it was not by earthly succession, or arms, or policy. 2. It is spiritual and heavenly in the laws and administration of it. 3. Jesus Christ was not a mere man, but God-man, he is the King, the Son of God. 4. It is stronger than all others, because it breaks them in pieces. 5. It is not bounded by any limits as worldly empires are, but truly universal. 6. It shall be for ever, and never destroyed and given to others, as the rest were."[56]

During those days God is going to set up His *own* kingdom, which will *never* be destroyed nor be left to another people. Since the destruction of Rome, there has *never* been another empire to rule over the entire known world. There never will be either. "Efforts have often been made to re-unite the parts into one great empire, as by Charlemagne and Napoleon, but in vain."[57] Jesus set up His kingdom when He came and, just like Daniel said, it "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (v.35). Christianity reaches to every end of the Earth, and despite those who continually persecute and martyr Christians, the kingdom has not and will not be destroyed. Soon it will consummate at the second coming of Christ Jesus our Lord in fullness at the end of this present evil age. Napoleon Bonaparte said, "I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him." Even Napoleon recognized the reality of Christ's kingdom in this world. Our Dispensationalist friends want to tell us that this is not the case, that we are not living in the kingdom, and that Jesus is not reigning at this present time. We shall see.

Daniel's First Vision

In the seventh chapter of Daniel, we are presented with his first vision. In this vision he is shown four great beasts. Let us look at this vision:

> Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. The first was

[56] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 2:817.

[57] Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, A *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 2: 392.

> like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts."

The angel Gabriel, when interpreting the dream to Daniel, informs him that these beasts are four kings (v.17). From history, we know that Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Empire is the head of gold, and the lion with wings of an eagle. The Media-Persian Empire is the chest and arms of silver, the bear raised on its side with three ribs in its mouth, and the ram with one horn longer than the other. Alexander the Great's Grecian Empire is the thighs of bronze, the leopard with four wings and four heads, and the male goat with a horn between its eyes. The Roman Empire is the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay, and the dreadful and terrifying beast. There is no disputing these facts.

Notice the ten horns here? The angel interprets them to Daniel as 10 kings (v.24). This is what I hinted at when, in the last section, I suggested that perhaps "in the days of those kings" refers to kings revealed in a later vision. Regarding these kings there is no complete agreement. Interpretation seems to vary as to whether they are successive kings or something else. But what can we learn from history about the details of these kings? Further, take note of this "little horn" mentioned here. In chapter 7 we shall look at this "little horn" and the three horns plucked up and determine from history who they are. The context *does not* allow for a gap. Our Dispensationalist friends like to claim that this "little horn" is the "future Antichrist." As Henrietta Mears writes, "The 'little horn' coming up among the ten is the Antichrist yet to come."[58] "Charles Ryrie concurs: "This man is the 'little horn' (Dan. 7:8, 24-25) who heads the coalition of Western nations in the Tribulation days."[59] *No*,

[58] Henrietta C. Mears, *What the Bible Is All About* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1998), 284.
[59] Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 541.

it is not! Here again is speculation by the Dispensationalists, stating things without any evidence. In order to do so you need to be a prophet. Where is the verse that says this man "heads the coalition of Western nations in the Tribulation days"? Where is there a verse that says *anything* about Western nations? Unless you are a master Scripture contortionist, like Hal Lindsey who claims the locusts of Revelation 9:3 and 7 are modern-day Bell UH-1 Huey helicopters, there is not a single verse in Scripture that speaks of a "coalition of Western nations."

Regarding verses 9 through 12, Dispensationalists say, "The scene shifts to heaven, and the throne of God is revealed. This is the same scene described in chapters 4 and 5 of the Book of Revelation. It is the preparation for the judgment of the Great Tribulation and the second coming of Christ to the earth."[60] Uh, *no!* Yes, the scene shifts to heaven, but, no, it has nothing to do with the "Great Tribulation" and Jesus' second coming. It is the scene in heaven to the scene on Earth. Regarding verse 11, they say, "This period equates the Great Tribulation Period."[61] For individuals who claim to interpret the Bible *literally*, they sure tend to forget how to do so frequently. What does the text *say*? "I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire" (v.11). When Rome was destroyed, what happened to it? It was burned with fire. *Ravaged* with fire would be a more appropriate term. Seems to be a rather *literal* interpretation to me.

If we examine verses 13 and 14, we see the description of Christ Jesus' ascension and crowning ceremony. You cannot be a king without a kingdom, and verse 14 clearly states, "To Him was given dominion, glory *and a kingdom*" (emphasis supplied). Note carefully the language used: "Behold, *with* the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man *was coming*, and He came *up to* the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him" (v.13, emphasis supplied). Something sounds awfully familiar here. What could it be? Oh, yeah! "And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). The cloud brought Him *to* the Ancient of Days, where He sat at His right hand. "They brought him near before him: this relates to his ascension, Acts i. 9-11, at which time, though King before, Matt. ii. 2, yet now, and not before, he seems to receive his royal investiture for the protection of his church and the curbing of their enemies, which he says he had before, Matt. xxviii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 25; chap. ii. 44."[62]

Is Christ seated at the right hand of God? Paul answers in the affirmative: "when [God] raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in

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[60] McGee, *Thru the Bible*, 3:572.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 2:832.

the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:20); "keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). The author of Hebrews, whom we believe to be Paul, said, "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (12:2). Numerous times throughout the book of Revelation John admits that Jesus is on the throne.

Some might argue and say that there is a gap between verses 13 and 14, claiming verse 14 will happen before the Millennial Kingdom. But what did Peter say? "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet'" (Acts 2:34). This is a direct quote from Psalm 110:1. Okay, but what about God making his enemies his footstool? Where does that come in? I am glad you asked, my friend. 1 Corinthians 15:25-27 says, "For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet." Paul quotes this from Psalm 8:6. Paul employs Psalm 110:1 and 8:6 together in Ephesians 1:20-22 and Hebrews 2:5-8. Contrary to what Dispensationalists will tell you, Jesus is reigning *now*. We will address this fact further in chapter 5.

Dispensationalists say that Jesus' reign will last for 1000 years, and then they quote Revelation 20:1-6. J. Vernon McGee says, "'An everlasting dominion' seems to contradict the idea of a millennial kingdom of one thousand years. However, at the end of the thousand years, which is a test period with Christ ruling, there will be a brief moment of rebellion against Him when Satan is released for a brief season, and then the kingdom will go right on into eternity."[63] A "*test* period"? Where in Scripture does it even say such a thing, let alone hint at it? Who do you think we are dealing with here, my Dispensationalist friend? This is the God of the universe; from, through, and to Whom all things exist. And He needs *a test period!?*

Brothers and sisters, I am sorry, but Daniel 7:14 says that "His dominion is an everlasting dominion." Hebrews 1:8 (cf. Ps. 45:6-7) says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Mr. McGee's initial intuition was correct about a contradiction, but he suppressed it in favour of his pre-suppositional beliefs. It is the Millennial Kingdom that contradicts what is said here, and elsewhere in Scripture. Dispensationalists struggle from the same issue I first faced: assuming that Scripture is presenting contradictions to their beliefs. Scripture is *perfect*! It is their beliefs that contain the flaws and contradictions, and until they realize this, they are going to continue making statements like Mr. McGee has just made. Jesus' kingdom will *not* be for 1000 years, and he

[63] McGee, *Thru the Bible*, 3:573.

certainly *is not* given a "test period." "He comes 'to the Ancient of days' to be invested with the kingdom. Cf. Ps. cx. 2, 'The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength (Messiah) out of Zion.' This investiture was at His ascension 'with the clouds of heaven' (Acts i. 9; ii. 33, 34; Ps. ii. 6-9; Matt. xxviii. 18, 'Jesus (after His resurrection, and before His ascension) spake, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth'); which is a pledge of His return 'in like manner' 'in the clouds' (Acts i. 11; Matt. xxvi. 64), and 'with clouds' (Rev. i. 9). The kingdom then was given to Him in title and invisible exercise; at His second coming it shall be in visible administration. He will vindicate it from the misrule of those who received it to hold for and under God, but who ignored His supremacy. The Father will assert His right by the Son, the heir, who will hold it for Him (Ezek. xxi. 27; Heb. i. 2; Rev. xix. 13-16)."[64]

Now, we said in the last section that we would again pick up Mr. LaHaye's quote. He quoted Daniel 7:23-24 as teaching a one-world government ruled by heads of regions in the future. Brothers and sisters, tell me, what does this text say? "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth… As for the ten horns, *out of this kingdom* ten kings will arise…" (vv.23-24, emphasis supplied). Out of which kingdom? The *fourth* kingdom—the Roman Empire. Let us not go beyond what the Word of God says. To say *anything* different than what the text itself says, we must be prophets. Since the text says nothing beyond what we have just witnessed, to add to it is to make a prophetic prediction that the Bible itself does not make.

Daniel's Second Vision

In the eighth chapter of Daniel, we are presented with his second vision. In this vision he is shown a ram and a male goat. Let us look at this vision:

> And I looked in the vision, and it came about while I was looking, that I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision, and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal. Then I lifted my gaze and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last. I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him, nor was there anyone to rescue from his power; but he did as he pleased and magnified himself. While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. And he came up to the ram that had

[64] Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, A *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*, 2:421.

> the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. And I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power. Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. And it grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?" And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored."

The angel Gabriel, when interpreting the vision to Daniel, clearly identifies the "ram" as the kings of Media and Persia, and the "male goat" as the king of Greece, which we know to be Alexander the Great. The great horn between the male goat's eyes is the first king (v. 21), which when broken has four others rise in its place. These are the generals of Alexander's army who took over the kingdom after his death. They were Antipater, who received Greece; Antigonus, who received Asia; Ptolemy, who received Egypt; and Seleucus, who received Babylon and Syria.

You will notice, by the context, that we are being told about the Grecian Empire. From these four horns will come a "little horn." Here is an example of the Dispensationalists being guilty of committing "collapsing context." They claim that this "little horn" is the "future Antichrist," many of them claiming that this is the same little horn as that of the previous chapter. Yet again, brothers and sisters, we need to pay attention to the *context*! We have not even gotten to the Roman Empire and we are being informed here of *a* "little horn." Later, at the presence of the Roman Empire, we are told about *another* "little horn." The one, which we are looking at now, arises from the four and is in the context of dealing with Alexander's kingdom. The other comes from the ten and is in the context of dealing with the Roman Empire. As we are witnessing here, Daniel mentions "little horn" *twice* in his book.

Any careful student of Daniel can easily see the differences. They are two—not one.

Historians and Bible scholars alike attest to the fact that the little horn mentioned here is none other than Antiochus Epiphanes (the Illustrious), whom the people called Epimanes (the Madman). Concerning Antiochus Epiphanes, David Doherty says, "He was not a legitimate ruler, but gained the position by flattery and bribery, something which the Antichrist will do in the future."[65] The first part of that statement is true, while the last part, true to Dispensationalism, is pure conjecture. He also claims that, "In the person of Antiochus Epiphanes there is a near and far prophetic reference. He fulfills the near reference, and the Antichrist will fulfill the far reference."[66] Where? Where in the text does it say *anything* about a near and far prophetic reference? *It does not*. It is assumption imposed on the text through Dispensational fictionalization.

Dispensationalists will claim that much of the prophecy here is in relation to their "Antichrist," but what does history reveal to us? "Boys even know this by reading the accredited history of those times. As Christ here alluded to the tyranny of Antiochus, we must observe how his words accord with the facts. Christ numbers 2300 days for the pollution of the sanctuary, and this period comprehends six years and about four months. … But however that was, these days, as I have said, fill up six years and three months and a half. Now, if we compare the testimony of history, and especially the book of Maccabees, with this prophecy, we shall find that miserable race oppressed for six years under the tyranny of Antiochus. The idol of Olympian Jove did not remain in the temple for six continuous years, but the commencement of the pollution occurred at the first attack, as if he would insult the very face of God. No wonder then if Daniel understood this vision of six years and about a third, because Antiochus then insulted the worship of God and the Law; and when he poured forth innocent blood promiscuously, no one dared openly to resist him. As, therefore, religion was then laid prostrate on the ground, until the cleansing of the temple, we see how very clearly the prophecy and the history agree, as far as this narrative is concerned. Again, it is clear the purifying of the temple could not have been at the end of the sixth current year, but in the month כסלו, *keslu*, answering to October or November, as learned men prudently decide, it was profaned. … In the month Keslu the temple was polluted; in the month אדר, *Ader*, about three months afterwards, near its close, the Maccabees purged it. (1 Macc. iv. 36.) Thus the history confirms in every way what Daniel had predicted many ages previously – nay, nearly three hundred years before it came to pass. For this occurred a hundred

[65] Doherty, *Introduction to Eschatology*, 22.
[66] Ibid.

and fifty years after the death of Alexander."[67]

Brothers and sisters, we are not to go beyond what the Word of God tells us. If there is a future Antichrist that will possess some of the same traits as the two little horns found in Daniel's text, that is something that the Bible *does not* tell us about. To claim it on speculation as truth is to make of yourself a false prophet. The term "antichrist" appears only five times in Scripture, and all five times are in John's epistles (1 John 2:18 [twice], 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7). Not once is there mention of anyone called "The Antichrist." In John's time, he said there were *many* antichrists (1 John 2:18); he said that those who deny the Father and the Son are antichrists (2:22); he said that every spirit that does not confess Jesus is antichrist (4:3); and he said that those who do not confess the coming of Jesus in the flesh are antichrist (2 John 1:7). No other New Testament author uses this term. Not even the apostle Paul.

Daniel spoke of "the abomination of desolation" twice; once in chapter 11 verse 31, and once in chapter 12 verse 11. Whether or not these are one and the same is doubtful, but it could very well be. Regardless, we know that Antiochus Epiphanes was the fulfillment of one of them (clearly the chapter 11 prophecy), if not *a* fulfillment of them. Jesus also speaks of "the abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14), which He attributes to the not-too-distant future, which happened in 70 A.D. Compare Matthew 24:15-22 to its parallel in Luke 21:20-24. If there is yet another one, or another fulfillment, the Bible *does not* tell us. Let us not force the Bible to say things that it does not say and which we have no way of knowing unless we are prophets.

What Comes After 69?

Chapter 9 begins with Daniel realizing that Jeremiah's prophecy about the 70 years of Babylonian captivity (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10), called "the time of Jacob's distress" (Jer. 30:1-7), was coming to an end (v.2). So Daniel prays to God on behalf of his people for deliverance. During their captivity, the land enjoyed its Sabbaths (Lev. 26:34). Now they would be in the land for seven times as long as they were in captivity. In verses 24-27, God gives Daniel the time period as to the coming of David's seed, the Messiah. Here is that vision:

> "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and

[67] John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, 22 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 13:109-110.

> discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

In English, the word "weeks" is a poor translation. In the Hebrew it is שָׁבוּעַ שִׁבְעִים—seventy sevens. In translating verse 24's "seventy sevens," we come up with 490 years—a year for a day (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6). Daniel is told that 490 years are decreed upon his people and the holy city to accomplish everything that is mentioned in verse 24. *Every one* of those items has been fulfilled in the person and work of Christ Jesus. Ergo, the 70 weeks are finished. "The great affairs that are yet to come concerning the people of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem, will lie within the compass of these years."[68] Dispensationalists will argue the fact, but I will prove it to you.

Dispensationalists say that the 483 years expired when Jesus died on the cross. John MacArthur believes "This was fulfilled at the triumphal entry."[69] If this is so, we have a severe problem on our hands because the text *literally* says that "…*from* the going out of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, *to* Messiah the Prince, *shall be* 7 weeks *and* 62 weeks" (emphasis supplied). That is 69 weeks, which is 483 years. Many people believe that this is the birth of Christ. Maybe they are right. But I do not think so, and I will show you why. If this refers to the birth of Christ, it obviously, and logically, cannot refer to the triumphal entry or the death of Christ. Someone is not reading their Bible *literally*—again.

Based on the text, the 483 years *cannot* possibly refer to the death of Christ, or the triumphal entry, so we can scrap those concepts in the garbage. If the 483 years bring us to the birth of Christ, where do the next 30 years of Jesus' life fall under before His public ministry? Now, the Dispensationalist might say, had he not already said that the 483 years bring us to the death of Christ, that the next 30 years, plus Jesus' public ministry, fall into their "parenthetical gap" that they have created.

The word translated "Messiah" can also be translated as "anointed,"

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[68] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, 4:857.
[69] MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 1213.

referring to a consecrated person. The idea that 483 years brings us to the birth of Christ presents a real problem for me. Not only is there no accounting for the first 30 years of Jesus' life, but He also was not revealed to the world as Messiah until John the Baptist said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This was when He was acknowledged as the Messiah. Now, being that the word could be translated as "anointed," could it be possible that this is speaking of Jesus' baptism by John? He was anointed by the Holy Spirit at this time. I believe that this is the case. I will show you yet still why I believe this to be so.

We are told by Dispensationalists that there exists a gap in Daniel's 70 weeks, but is this true? Mr. Ryrie writes, "There is an interval of undetermined length between the first sixty-nine weeks of seven years each and the last or seventieth week of seven years."[70] Henrietta Mears agrees, "Scripture divides these seventy sevens into three divisions with a parenthetic time lapse for the present 'Gentile rule.'"[71] *Really!?* Where? Where in the text does it say there is a "parenthetic gap" or an "undetermined length" of time in the 490 years? *It does not!* Dispensationalists must add it. If Scripture can be understood of by even a child, then it should be easy enough to discern what is taught and what is not merely by reading the passage as it stands.

In verse 26, the phrase translated "be cut off" is the Hebrew word *karath* (כָּרַת), which means "to cut off, cut down; to make (a covenant, agreement); to be cut off, broken off; to be cut off, be destroyed; 'to cut a covenant' is 'make a covenant,' a figure of the act of ceremonially cutting an animal into two parts, with an implication of serious consequences for not fulfilling the covenant."[72] The implication is that of cutting flesh and passing between the pieces. Sound familiar? It should! Read Genesis 15. We read in verse 18, "On that day the LORD made (*karath*) a covenant with Abram…"

For your consideration, here are the first 17 occurrences (of 280) of the use of the word *karath* in the Bible:

Gen. 9:11 – "…all flesh shall never again be *karath* by the water of the flood…"
Gen. 15:18 – "On that day the LORD *karath* a covenant…"
Gen. 17:14 – "…that person shall be *karath* from his people…"
Gen. 21:27 – "…and the two of them *karath* a covenant."
Gen. 21:32 – "So they *karath* a covenant at Beersheba…"
Gen. 26:28 – "…and let us *karath* a covenant with you."
Gen. 31:44 – "So now come, let us *karath* a covenant, you and I…"
Gen. 41:36 – "…so that the land may not *karath* during the famine."

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[70] Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 541.
[71] Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 288.
[72] James Strong, *Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 1517-1518.

Ex. 4:25 – "Then Zipporah took a flint and *karath* her son's foreskin…"
Ex. 8:9 – "… that the frogs be *karath* from you and your houses…"
Ex. 12:15 – "…that person shall be *karath* from Israel."
Ex. 12:19 – "…that person shall be *karath* from the congregation of Israel…"
Ex. 23:32 – "You shall *karath* no covenant with them or with their gods."
Ex. 24:8 – "…Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has *karath* with you in accordance with all these words."
Ex. 30:33 – "…shall be *karath* from his people."
Ex. 30: 38 – "…shall be *karath* from his people."
Ex. 31:14 – "…that person shall be *karath* from among his people."

As we noted, verse 24 informs us there will be 70 weeks (490 years). Verse 25 gives us 7 weeks (49 years) and 62 weeks (434 years), which is a total of 69 weeks (483 years). In verse 26, it states, "Then *after* the sixty-two weeks…" (emphasis supplied; those 62 weeks that followed the 7 weeks). After 69 comes what, brothers and sisters? *70!* In the 70th week the Messiah, or Anointed One, would be "cut off but not for Himself" (Literal translation). Matthew Poole writes regarding *karath*, "It is used for cutting off by capital punishment, Exod. xii. 15; xxx. 33, 38; whether this be by the signal hand of God, or by the magistrate, for some heinous offence, Lev. xviii. 29; xx. 17; Psal. xxxvii. 34."[73]

In verse 27, it states that in the midst of the week He will cause sacrifice and offerings to cease, which happened the moment Christ was crucified and the 4-inch-thick veil (according to Rabbinic tradition) was torn in two. The high priest could no longer go in and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat. While some Jews apparently still kept trying to offer sacrifices, it was to no avail. Acceptable sacrifices and offerings were no longer valid. They were done. So if Jesus causes the sacrifices and offerings to cease in the midst of the 70th week when He is crucified, three and a half years earlier brings us to the start of His ministry when He was baptized by John the Baptist, which would be the end of the 69th week and the beginning of the 70th week. Thus why I believe verse 25 is speaking of Jesus' baptism. All of what we have just looked at derived from a *simple* reading of the text.

Now, whether you believe Jesus' ministry was for three years or three and a half years makes little difference. It still brings you to the midst of the week. If you try and divide it *exactly*, and deny that three years could not possibly be the midst of the week, all you are doing is splitting hairs. Stop it!

Charles Ryrie writes, "When this last period of seven years begins, 'He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week' (v.27)."[74] Do you see what the Dispensationalist does here? He adds the word "make." In verse 27,

[73] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 2:839.
[74] Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 541.

there is *no* word used for the making of a covenant. The *literal* translation is "He shall *confirm* a covenant with the many for one week" (emphasis supplied). One would think the English word "confirm" was self-evident, or the fact it says "confirm *the* covenant" (KJV), but apparently not. The word translated "confirm" is the Hebrew word *gabar* (גָּבַר), which means "to confirm, to strengthen, to cause to prevail." So, in verse 27, a new covenant is not being made, but the text explicitly declares that He is strengthening or causing to prevail an already existing covenant. Which covenant would that be? The covenant of grace that Jeremiah and Isaiah spoke of (Jer. 31:31-34; Isa. 59:21), and Jesus Christ fulfilled. "*He*: this *he* is not Titus making truce with the Jews, which he did not, though he endeavoured to persuade them that he might spare them. I say then with Graser, Mede, and others, that this *he* is the Messiah, and the covenant he confirms is the new testament or covenant, called therefore the covenant of the people, Isa. xlii. 6; xlix. 9; and the Angel of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1; and the Surety of the covenant, Heb. vii. 22; and the ancient rabbins called the Messias אישניגים a *middle man*, or middle man between two. *Quest*. How did Christ confirm the covenant? *Answ*. 1. By testimony, (1.) Of angels, Luke ii. 10; Matt. xxviii.; (2.) John Baptist; (3.) Of the wise men; (4.) By the saints then living, Luke i. 2; (5.) Moses and Elias, Matt. xvii. 3; (6.) Pharisees, as Nicodemus, John iii. 2; (7.) The devils that confessed him. 2. By his preaching. 3. By signs and wonders. 4. By his holy life. 5. By his resurrection and ascension. 6. By his death and blood shed. *Shall confirm the covenant*; הגביר he shall *corroborate* it, as if it began before his coming to fail and be invalid."[75]

Mr. MacArthur states, "The leader in this covenant is the 'little horn' of 7:7-8, 20-21, 24-26, and the evil leader of NT prophecy."[76] Jesus Christ is an "evil leader"? Shame on you, Mr. MacArthur! Church history agrees that the first half of verse 27 is Jesus, which the Dispensationalists have swapped for their Antichrist. Mr. Ryrie claims this is the Antichrist because "nothing in the record of Christ's life in any way connects Him with the making (and later breaking) of a seven-year covenant with the Jewish people."[77] This is subjective opinion, my friends. First, where does he get this concept of "breaking" a covenant? It is nowhere to be found in Scripture. It is an imaginary concept derived from a wrongly distorted reading of Scripture. Second, Mr. Ryrie is confused and thinks Daniel 9:24-27 is ultimately about Israel, rather than about Jesus, of Whom it *is* about. (Actually, Dispensationalists think the entire Bible is about Israel, rather than about Christ.) Third, apparently Mr. Ryrie has never read Jeremiah 31:31-34; Isaiah

[75] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 2:839.
[76] MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 1213.
[77] Ibid.

59:21; or the book of Hebrews. There is *much* in the life of Christ that connects Him to the "making" of a covenant: only it is not "making," it is confirming; and it is not merely with the Jewish people, it is with *His people*—Jew and Gentile alike. The Christian is under and partaker of the New Covenant, which is through Jesus' blood.

To show you that Dispensationalists are wrong by interpreting the text to be "making" a covenant, I have compiled all the verses from Scripture that use the same word. For your consideration, you tell me if the verse means what they try to force it to mean:

Gen. 7:18 – "And the water *gabar*…"
Gen. 7:19 – "And the water *gabar*…"
Gen. 7:20 – "The water *gabar* fifteen cubits higher…"
Gen. 7:24 – "And the water *gabar*…"
Ex. 17:11 – "So it came about when Moses held his hand up, Israel *gabar*…"
1 Sam. 2:9 – "… For not by might shall a man *gabar*."
2 Sam. 1:23 – "… They were *gabar* than lions."
2 Sam. 11:23 – "The men *gabar* against us…"
1 Chr. 5:2 – "Though Judah *gabar* over his brothers…"
Job 15:25 – "…and *gabar* himself against the Almighty."
Job 21:7 – "Why do the wicked…*gabar* very powerful?"
Job 36:9 – "…and their transgressions, that they have *gabar* themselves."
Ps. 12:4 – "…With our tongue we will *gabar*…"
Ps. 65:3 – "Iniquities *gabar* against me…"
Ps. 103:11 – "…So *gabar* is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him."
Ps. 117:2 – "For His lovingkindness is *gabar* toward us…"
Ecc. 10:10 – "…then he must *gabar* more strength…"
Is. 42:13 – "…He will *gabar* against His enemies."
Jer. 9:3 – "Lies and not truth *gabar* in the land…"
Lam. 1:16 – "…My children are desolate because the enemy has *gabar*."
Zech. 10:6 – "And I shall *gabar* the house of Judah…"
Zech. 10:12 – "And I shall *gabar* them in the LORD…"

That should be sufficient enough evidence to prove without a doubt that the making of a covenant is not in view in Daniel 9:27, nor can it be. It is the strengthening and prevailing of the New Covenant. As Hebrews tells us, a testament or will cannot be put into effect until the death of the testator (Heb. 9:16-17). With Jesus' death, He made the first one (the Old Covenant) obsolete (Heb. 8:13) and abolished it in order to establish the second (Heb. 10:9). The New Covenant was inaugurated with and by Jesus' blood (Heb. 9:18-22). We are under it now. Do not believe the Dispensationalist who tells you that the New Covenant is for Israel only. That is a bold-faced lie in the light of Scripture and the Christian reality.

What about the last three and a half years? Good question! After Jesus'

resurrection, His disciples preached the gospel for the next three and a half years mostly to Jews (see Acts 1-6). The 490 years officially came to an end with the Jewish leaders' final rejection of the gospel of the Messiah by their stoning of Stephen in 37 A.D. After Stephen was martyred, the door was flung open to make way for the Gentile inclusion, just as the prophets had predicted beforehand. In Acts 10, Peter was given a vision by God revealing that it was now time to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (vv.1-28).

The "Great" Tribulation

Because the concept of a 7-year "Great Tribulation" is derived from a wrongly dividing of God's Word within the book of Daniel, it is only appropriate that we address the issue here in our chapter on Daniel. As you can see from the evidence in the last section, there is *no* gap in Daniel's 70 Weeks. All of them are accounted for, which means that there is *no* such thing as the 7 years of peril called "The Great Tribulation." The term occurs thrice in the New Testament and not one of those times is it a proper name. Not one of those times is it preceded by "the." It is a description. Matthew 24:21 says, "For there will be *great affliction / tribulation*" (Literal translation, emphasis supplied); Revelation 2:22 says, "…those committing adultery with her into *great affiction / tribulation*" (Literal translation, emphasis supplied); Revelation 7:14 says, "These are those coming out of *great affliction / tribulation*" (Literal translation, emphasis supplied). It is Dispensationalists who capitalize the description, thereby turning it into a proper name. Scripture does no such thing, and we should not either.

In speaking of the fact that "great tribulation" is mentioned thrice in the New Testament, what the believer is probably unaware of is that these are three *different* "great tribulations" that are in no way related to each other. With that said, let us look at each of them in turn.

> "Therefore when you see the Abomination of Desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; for then there will be a *great tribulation*, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short."
>
> (Matthew 24:15-22, emphasis supplied)

This is without a doubt the most famous of the three passages regarding "great tribulation." What you are probably unaware of is the *truth* concerning this passage. In order to get this right, we need to back up to the beginning of the chapter. In verse 1, the disciples point out the magnificent buildings of the temple. Mark 13:1 records them saying, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" Luke 21:5 says they were speaking of how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts. To this, Jesus declared to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down." The disciples then asked Him, "When will these things be?" Jesus then proceeds to answer their question. Luke 21:20-22 records, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled." Forty years later, in 70 A.D., these words came to life with vivid accuracy.

Brothers and sisters, you cannot read Matthew 24 without reading the parallel passages in Mark 13 and Luke 17 and 21 in order to harmonize them correctly. If you try to isolate Matthew 24 from the rest of Scripture bearing on the subject, you are going to end up with deviously erroneous theology. Remember what we learned in the beginning of chapter 3? Within the synoptic gospels, the parallel passages will often contain more or less detail of the same account. In order to do the subject justice, we must consider it all together. When we include Luke's account of the event, we are provided with greater detail that helps us to interpret Jesus' explanation more accurately. The armies that would surround Jerusalem were there to bring her desolation. History bears record that this occurred in 70 A.D. under Titus (the prince of Dan. 9:26). For those who hold doubt in their heart because of what they have been raised with or taught, I will let history convince you.

In 66 A.D., under the rule of Nero, extreme violence erupted between the Romans and the Jews. So Nero dispatched Vespasian to conduct all-out war against the Jewish nation. Nero died in 68 A.D., and in 69 A.D. Vespasian was proclaimed emperor in his place. During Vespasian's conquest, he had conquered all of Galilee and Judea, with exception of the capital. When he was proclaimed emperor, Vespasian went to Alexandria and left Titus in charge to end the Jewish rebellion and conquer Jerusalem. Prior to Titus and his armies arriving, multitudes of Jews had entered Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. The irony here is that, because the Jews crucified Jesus during the Passover, God would take vengeance on the Jews during the Passover. While Titus laid siege to them from without, three rival factions fought amongst themselves within. Josephus records that two of these factions fought each

other and "set on fire those houses that were full of corn, and all other provisions. ... destroying what the city had laid up against the siege ... almost all the corn was burnt, which would have been sufficient for a siege of many years (5.1.4).

"And now, as the city was engaged in a war on all sides, from these treacherous crowds of wicked men [the three factions within], the people of the city, between them, were like a great body torn in pieces. The aged men and the women were in such distress by their internal calamities, that they wished for the Romans, and earnestly hoped for an external war, in order to their delivery from their domestic miseries (5.1.5).

"Now, while these factions fought one against another, the people were their prey on both sides ... Simon held the upper city, and the great wall as far as Cedron... But John held the temple... and fought it out, and did everything that the besiegers could desire them to do; for they never suffered any thing that was worse from the Romans than they made each other suffer... those that took [Jerusalem] did it a greater kindness; for I venture to affirm, that the sedition destroyed the city, and the Romans destroyed the sedition (5.6.1).

"But the famine was too hard for all other passions... insomuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths... but the seditious every where came upon them immediately, and snatched away from them what they had gotten from others; for when they saw any house shut up, this was to them a signal that the people within had gotten some food; whereupon they broke open the doors, and ran in, and took pieces of what they were eating almost up out of their very throats, and this by force: the old men, who held their food fast, were beaten (5.10.3).

"I shall, therefore, speak my mind here at once briefly:—That neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world (5.10.5)."[78]

The Romans caught 500 or more Jews a day trying to escape and crucified them before the walls of the city. They crucified *500 a day!* The region outside the walls had become overflowing with crosses, so much so that "their multitude was so great that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies (5.11.1).

"The upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine; and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged (5.12.3).

"There was found among the Syrian deserters a certain person who was caught gathering pieces of gold out of the excrements of the Jews' bellies; for

[78] Flavius Josephus, *War of the Jews*, 5.1.1—5.10.5, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/josephus/works/files/works.html>.

the deserters used to swallow such pieces of gold... So the multitude of the Arabians, with the Syrians, cut up those that came as supplicants, and searched their bellies (5.13.4).

"No fewer than six hundred thousand were thrown out at the gates... when they were no longer able to carry out the dead bodies of the poor, they laid their corpses on heaps in very large houses, and shut them up therein… some persons were driven to that terrible distress as to search the common sewers and old dunghills of cattle, and to eat the dung which they got there (5.13.7).

"I am going to relate a matter of fact, the like to which no history relates, either among the Greeks or Barbarians! It is horrible to speak of it, and incredible when heard. ... There was a certain woman that dwelt beyond Jordan—her name was Mary; her father was Eleazar... and it was now become impossible for her any way to find any more food... she slew her son; and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him [see Deut. 28:52-57], and kept the other half by her concealed. Upon this the seditious came in presently, and smelling the horrid scent of this food, they threatened her that they would cut her throat immediately if she did not show them what food she had gotten ready. She replied that she had saved a very fine portion of it for them; and withal uncovered what was left of her son. Hereupon they were seized with a horror... and those already dead were esteemed happy, because they had not lived long enough either to hear or to see such miseries (6.3.3-4).

"As for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines [see Deut. 28:68; Luke 21:24]. Titus also sent a great number into the provinces, as a present to them, that they might be destroyed upon their theatres, by the sword and by the wild beasts; but those that were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves. ... Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand [1,100,000], the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army... Accordingly, the multitude of those that therein perished exceed all the destructions that either men or God ever brought upon the world... And now the Romans set fire to the extreme parts of the city, and burnt them down, and entirely demolished its walls (6.9.2-4)."[79]

Are you convinced yet, brothers and sisters? The evidence has spoken. The great tribulation spoken of by Jesus has already taken place. It is an accomplished historical fact—*not* something in the future. It took place in 70 A.D. For anyone who is skeptical, go read Josephus' *The War of the Jews* and

[79] Ibid, 5.11.1—6.9.4.

compare what is written to what Jesus said in Scripture (Matt. 24:2, 21-22; Mark 13:19-20; Luke 19:43-44; 21:20-24; cf Dan. 12:1). Josephus lived during those times and accounts the calamities that came upon the city of Jerusalem and the Jews. Jesus said, "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short" (Matt. 24:21-22). When the Romans invaded, they killed thousands of Jews. Many of the survivors committed suicide. If those days had not been cut short, *every* Jew would have died. The Holocaust was *nothing* compared to what took place in 70 A.D. True to Jesus' words, those days were great tribulation such as *never was* and *never would be* again. To deny these facts is to deny the Word of God and to deny the inspiration of the Scriptures in favour of man-made myths and fairytales. Please notice carefully that the passage says *nothing* about a world war, but only about the destruction of a sole city—Jerusalem. This "great tribulation" had to do with the Jews because of their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah. Jesus called these days the "days of vengeance" (Luke 21:22), and said it was "in order that *all things* which are *written* may *be fulfilled*" (emphasis supplied). In Daniel chapter 9 verses 26 to 27 we read, "and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined" (v.26), "and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (v.27). So that ends our look at the first "great tribulation."

> After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." … And one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and from where have they come?" And I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the *great tribulation*, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
>
> (Revelation 7:9-10, 13-14, emphasis supplied)

The NASB adds "the" before "great tribulation," which is unwarranted by a literal rendering of the text: "These are those coming out of great affliction / tribulation." In this passage, you will notice that it is not dealing with the unbelieving Jews, but with believers "from every nation and all tribes and

peoples and tongues" (7:9). Dispensationalists attempt to unite this passage and Matthew 24, but the two are contradictory rather than complimentary. In Matthew 24, unbelieving Jews who did not heed Jesus' words suffered tribulation. In this passage, those who believed in Jesus Christ and had their sins cleansed in the blood of the Lamb suffer tribulation.

The question must be asked, "Which tribulation?" Dispensationalists will tell you that this is the "Great Tribulation" of Matthew 24, but this is unwarranted and without support. In order to answer our question, we need to work backwards. Since chapter 7 contains nothing in regard to tribulation, we need to go back to chapter 6 and see if we cannot find anything that indicates tribulation. Concerning the sixth seal, we can see that there is definitely some sort of tribulation taking place, but there is no indication of repentance and faith in regard to salvation. Concerning the fifth seal, we read of "those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained" (6:9), which cannot be denied as evidence in regard to tribulation. In 6:11 we are told "there was given to each of them a white robe," which accords to what we read in 7:13-14: "These who are clothed in the white robes… are the ones who come out of the *great tribulation*, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The classical historic interpretation saw the fulfillment of the fifth seal in the persecution of the early church by the Roman Empire, which concluded with Diocletian's attempt to blot out Christianity between 303 and 311 A.D. Philip Schaff writes, "All former persecutions of the faith were forgotten in the horror with which men looked back upon the last and greatest [Diocletian's] ... Christian churches were to be destroyed; all copies of the Bible were to be burned; all Christians were to be deprived of public office and civil rights; and at last all, without exception, were to sacrifice to the gods upon pain of death. ... All the pains, which iron and steel, fire and sword, rack and cross, wild beasts and beastly men could inflict, were employed."[80] However, I see this not only as a fulfillment of the persecution and tribulation the early church received, but also that which the church in general receives during this current age until the return of our blessed Saviour. If we examine the rest of the world around us, persecution and tribulation are occurring almost as severely as back then.

These passages teach a clearly different picture of "great tribulation" from that of Matthew 24; one that is focused on the persecution of the saints rather than the destruction of Jerusalem. Whether or not you accept this as a fulfillment of this passage, the fact remains that it is contrasted against the

[80] Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1884), 2:64-68.

"great tribulation" of Matthew 24. The two are completely unrelated, other than the fact they share the same terminology. Uniting them together as one in order to try and teach a doctrine is committing "collapsing context." Context must always be our guide, brothers and sisters. Pay careful attention to what Scripture wants to reveal to you in its details.

> "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into *great tribulation*, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them--I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, To him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received [authority] from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"
>
> (Revelation 2:18-29, emphasis supplied)

In this third passage that speaks of "great tribulation," you will notice that it is spoken as a warning of punishment against those who follow the woman symbolically referred to as "Jezebel" if they will not repent. We are not told whether they repented or not, and there appears to be no historical record as to whether this "great tribulation" took place or not. If it took place, it most likely occurred in the late first century or early second century, just as the fulfillment of Revelation 3:7-13 did under the rule of Trajan. It is clear by the context that it is not associated with either that "great tribulation" of Matthew 24 or that "great tribulation" of Revelation 7.

Apart from all of this, in John 16:33, Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." In Acts 14:22, Paul said, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." In 1 Thessalonians 1:6, he tells them they had "received the word in much tribulation," and in 1 Thessalonians 3:3-7 that they would suffer tribulation

for the faith. In 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5, he writes to encourage them in the "persecutions and [tribulations]" they were suffering for the kingdom. There are several other passages that speak of the tribulation that believers should endure for the sake of Christ. There is no shortage of these persecutions and tribulations for believers; they were occurring back then and they continue to occur today. In North America, we are largely ignorant[81] of these persecutions which are happening the world round, but ours is coming. Jesus promised us that "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Jacob's Trouble

We mentioned the fact that "the time of Jacob's distress" (Jer. 30:7) refers to the 70 years of Babylonian captivity. Dispensationalists claim Jacob's Trouble is the 7-year Great Tribulation. Note the vast difference here: 7 years versus 70 years. So, brothers and sisters, let us look at the evidence provided by Scripture. "'And this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon *seventy years*. Then it will be when *seventy years* are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation'" (Jer. 25:11-12, emphasis supplied). Which land is Jeremiah referring to here? That is right; Israel. "For thus says the LORD, 'When *seventy years* have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place'" (Jer. 29:10, emphasis supplied). Which place will they be brought back to? That is right; Israel.

"For he has sent to us in Babylon, saying, '*The exile will be long*; build houses and live in them and plant gardens and eat their produce'" (Jer. 29:28, emphasis supplied). What is the setting of this verse? For those who are honest and do not feel a compelling need to twist the words of Scripture, the setting here has to do with the Babylonian captivity. "*Send to all the exiles*, saying, 'Thus says the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite, "Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, although I did not send him, and he has made you trust in a lie"'" (Jer. 29:31, emphasis supplied). With this verse, there is no denying that it, as well as verse 28, refers to the Babylonian

[81] Ignorance does not in any way, shape, or form denote or connote stupidity. The literalness of a word is its denotation; the broader associations we have with a word are its connotations. "A person can be ignorant (not knowing some fact or idea) without being stupid (incapable of learning because of a basic mental deficiency). And those who say, 'That's an ignorant idea' when they mean 'stupid idea' are expressing their own ignorance." (Paul Brians, *Common Errors in English Usage* (Wilsonville, OR: William James & Co., 2009), 118.

captivity. Are we to believe that between this verse and the first seven verses of chapter 30 there exists a substantial gap in time? I do not think so.

> The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying," Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book. For, *behold, days are coming*,' declares the LORD, '*when I will restore the [captivity]* of My people Israel and Judah.' The LORD says, 'I will also *bring them back to the land* that I gave to their forefathers, and they shall possess it.'" Now these are the words which the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah, "For thus says the LORD, 'I have heard a sound of terror, of dread, and there is no peace. Ask now, and see, if a male can give birth. Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth? And why have all faces turned pale? Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it. And it shall come about on that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that *I will break his yoke from off their neck*, and will tear off their bonds; and strangers shall no longer make them their slaves. But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them'"
>
> (Jeremiah 30:1-9, emphasis supplied.)

The word "behold" means "to pay attention." My Dispensationalist friend, you would do well to do precisely that. Notice very carefully that verse 3 says He will restore the captivity of His people and bring them back to the land. They are in captivity. The setting has not changed. Notice verse 8. Whose yoke shall He break from off their necks? Nebuchadnezzar's: "'And it will be, that the nation or the kingdom which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and which will not *put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon*, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence,' declares the LORD, 'until I have destroyed it by his hand'" (Jer. 27:8, emphasis supplied). Notice also what verse 10 of chapter 30 says, "'And fear not, O Jacob My servant,' declares the LORD, 'And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For *behold, I will save you from afar, And your offspring from the land of their captivity*. And Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, And no one shall make him afraid'" (emphasis supplied). The time of Jacob's Trouble is the 70 years of Babylonian captivity—*not* this imaginary 7-year "Great Tribulation" the Dispensationalists have dreamed up. "The time of Jacob's Trouble" is not something in the future; it is something already fulfilled. It was speaking *of* the Babylonian captivity.

The Contents of Daniel 11

In Daniel 11, we have a massive unloading of history. Verses 1 and 2

speak of the Media-Persian Empire and the Grecian Empire. Verse 3 is speaking of Alexander the Great, who conquered the known world in 13 years. Verse 4 deals with his death and how his kingdom was divided among his 4 generals. Verses 5-45 deal with his kingdom when it eventually became the Seleucid Empire of the North, and the Ptolemaic Empire of the South. Exactly as the Bible depicts, history substantiates the battles between them. Here is how many commentators lay out the next several verses:

- Verse 5, the king of the South is Ptolemy Philadelphus.
- Verse 6, the king of the North is Antiochus Theos.
- Verse 7 is Ptolemy Euegetes.
- Verse 8, the king of the North is Seleucus Callinicus.
- Verse 11, the king of the south is Ptolemy Philopater, and the king of the North is Antiochus "the Great" Magnus.
- Verse 18, the commander is Scipio.
- Verse 20 is Seleucus Philopater.
- Then, from verses 21 through 45, we have Antiochus Epiphanes. The honest individual will realize that this text flows without interruption. There is *no* gap to be had.

Dispensationalists, on the other hand, when reading chapter 11, as soon as they get to verses 36-45, suddenly leap away from the immediate context and claim, "Oh! That's the future Antichrist!" They do so with absolutely *no* warrant whatsoever. They jettison a "normal system of hermeneutics" and begin inserting speculation. "This section is the far fulfillment of God's prophetic plan. It summarizes details of Daniel's seventieth week that are found nowhere else in Scripture."[82] I greatly respect Mr. MacArthur, but he is sorely *wrong*. He must impose upon the text through subjective opinion his concept of a "far fulfillment." It is Antiochus Epiphanes throughout. Daniel 11 is an expounding of the actions of the Northern and Southern kingdoms and of chapter 8's "little horn," Antiochus Epiphanes. Even if you do not accept that fact, you cannot escape or ignore the fact that the context of the chapter is dealing with the Grecian Empire. Therefore, you cannot claim it is the same "little horn" as that of Daniel 7, which follows the *Roman* Empire.

Brothers and sisters, after acknowledging that the two kingdoms—Southern and Northern—from verses 5 through 35 are the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires respectively, Dispensationalists suddenly want you to believe that the further references to the Southern and Northern kingdoms (beyond verse 36) are now *Russia* and *Egypt*! They start off interpreting with sound, literal, historical interpretation, but then suddenly jump into allegorical speculation of the future. The Dispensationalist system of hermeneutics bounces all over the place with no clear sign of intelligible coherence. The

[82] MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 1217.

Dispensationalist's fictionalization of "Russia" has *nothing* to do with this text! Any honest student of the Word will have to admit this.

Beloved, in approximately 721 B.C. the Bible predicted with pin-point accuracy that Cyrus, the king of Persia, would conquer Babylon (Isa. 44:28; 45:1), which happened in 539 B.C. In approximately 555 B.C., Daniel is told with pin-point accuracy that one of those future kingdoms would be the Grecian kingdom. Where and what was Greece at the time of Babylon? If the Bible can predict *these* names with such accuracy hundreds of years before it ever becomes a reality, do we not think that it could predict the names of such nations as Russia, if that is indeed who and what it meant? It could and would indeed. The fact it does not mention such names and that Dispensationalists must allegorize, sensationalize and fictionalize the text *literalistically* reveals the falsehoods of their system of belief. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4).

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, not only is the Rapture nowhere to be found in the Scriptures, as we proved in the last chapter, but neither is the 7-year period called The Great Tribulation. These concepts have been added by Scripture twisters in an attempt to make the Bible more "relevant" and "exciting." Both the Rapture and The Great Tribulation are being used across North America as scare tactics, often by ill-informed but well-meaning pastors. We have also observed the fact that the Bible speaks about *three* "great tribulations,"—as opposed to one near the end of our future—which are completely unrelated to each other.

The title of one of John Walvoord's books is indeed correct; Daniel *is* key to prophetic revelation, because when read and interpreted correctly the Dispensational house of cards built on sand comes crashing down to reveal the truth. There are *no* gaps anywhere in Daniel's text, and there is *no* allusion to a future Antichrist in them either; at least not that we are able to predict—unless now we are prophets.

If you will, Daniel 2 provides the big picture of what is to transpire. It is a panoramic view that looks at the immediate future and separates it into five kingdoms. The first, we are told, is Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. The last is God's. With Daniel 7, the focus changes slightly. First, we are looking only at the first four kingdoms. Then, we zoom in to look inside the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire, at the ten kings and an eleventh king that rises up afterward, called a "little horn." In Daniel 8, the focus shifts once more and this time we are looking at the middle two kingdoms of the four. It then zooms in to look specifically at Alexander the Great, his four generals, and another "little horn" that will arise, which is Antiochus Epiphanes. In Daniel

11, the focus changes one last time and we are focused solely on the third empire, the Grecian Empire. We are given a brief look at Alexander, the dividing of his kingdom to his four generals, and some of the kings of the North and South kingdoms in their battles. The extreme focus of this chapter is on Antiochus Epiphanes. Lastly, in chapter 12, it gives us a brief hint at the great tribulation that Jesus would later warn his disciples about, which was to come upon Israel from the fourth empire, the Roman Empire, in 70 A.D.

Chapter 5
The Truth About the Kingdom

Different, or the Same?

According to Dispensationalists, the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" are two different kingdoms. "Two specific realms are in view as the doctrine of kingdom receives consideration: 1. The Kingdom of God, which includes all intelligences in heaven or on earth who are willingly subject to God. 2. The Kingdom of Heaven, which embraces any sort of empire that God may have on earth at a given time."[83] In other words, according to Mr. Chafer, the *kingdom of God* is spiritual while the *kingdom of heaven* is physical. "A distinction should be made between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. It is to be observed that Matthew employed the terminology *kingdom of heaven* and that Mark and Luke, when presenting much of the same teaching, use the phraseology *kingdom of God*."[84] No argument regarding the terminology use. "While the terms themselves are very similar, their usage seems to indicate that the kingdom of heaven is a wider term than the kingdom of God, including the sphere of profession—as in the parable of the wheat and the tares, where the kingdom of heaven apparently includes the tares, and in the parable of the dragnet, where the kingdom of heaven seems to include the good and the bad fish (cf. Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50)."[85] "*Apparently*" includes? "*Seems*" to include? I am sorry, but the biblical text makes it absolutely clear that they *do* include them. That is the mystery of the kingdom; that it includes both good and evil until

[83] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 7:223.
[84] Ibid, 7:224.
[85] Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*, 351.

the end of this present age. At least in this regard, Mr. Chafer gets it right: "The kingdom in the present age has its major features declared to be 'mysteries.'"[86]

The term "kingdom of heaven" is found *only* in Matthew 33 times, but Matthew *also* uses the term "kingdom of God" 5 times. Interestingly enough, Matthew uses *both* terms back-to-back in chapter 19, which utterly destroys Mr. Chafer's theory. Matthew writes, "And Jesus said to His disciples, 'Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the *kingdom of heaven* (βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν). And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the *kingdom of God* (βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ)" (vv.23-24, emphasis supplied). Mark's recollection of this event strictly uses "kingdom of God"—thrice. Dispensationalists claim that the kingdom of heaven is Jewish in nature, and that it is an earthly kingdom that Jews enter through righteousness. Brothers and sisters, note the context of Matthew 19. The rich young man asked Jesus "What good thing shall I do that I may obtain *eternal life*?" (emphasis supplied). If this kingdom was entered upon by righteousness, then this young man should have no issue entering it because he says of the commandments, "All these things I have kept." Further, if the kingdom of heaven is ethnical to Jews only, as Dispensationalists want us to believe, what would honestly be keeping this young man from entering it?

Henry C. Thiessen writes, "'The kingdom of heaven' seems to refer to the millennial kingdom yet to come, or to the mixed condition of Christendom today."[87] The latter is correct, the former is incorrect. Consider the rich young man we just looked at. If the kingdom of heaven refers to the millennial kingdom, then, *yeah*, obviously it is going to be *impossible* for him to enter… because he would be *dead*. But again, brothers and sisters, I would have you note the context of chapter 19. After stating His back-to-back statements using both "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God," the disciples asked, "Then *who* can be *saved*?" (v.25, emphasis supplied). The disciples understood *precisely* what Jesus was getting at. The context of this passage is as clear as day. It is dealing with salvation. This passage alone shatters the concept that the two terms are separate and individually unique kingdoms. Jesus used the terms back-to-back to show us that they are one and the same—interchangeable.

Mr. Thiessen continues, "The term 'kingdom of God' seems to refer only to the saved, but it may mean those in the millennial kingdom or those in any

[86] Ibid, 352.

[87] Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1949), 406.

other age."[88] It is nice to see just how convinced Mr. Thiessen is of his own beliefs. He cannot make up his mind whether the first term refers to those in the millennial kingdom, or the second term does. But he is at least willing to admit that "sometimes it is equivalent to the 'kingdom of heaven.'" That is a start in the right direction.

Every once in a while you will find a Dispensationalist who, somewhere in their beliefs, speaks something that is consistent with what the Bible teaches, thereby being truth, even though the rest of Dispensationalism disagrees. Henrietta Mears does just that when she writes, "The kingdom of heaven is also called the 'kingdom of God.' It means God's rule in the lives of His chosen people and His creation. In the Old Testament, the people in God's kingdom were the Israelites. In the New Testament and now, the people in God's kingdom are those who believe in and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus comes again, then God's kingdom will become visible to all people."[89] This is something we will bring up again in chapter 8, because there is truth in that statement that Dispensationalists want to deny in spite of clear passages of Scripture that state otherwise.

As I mentioned earlier, most Dispensationalists claim that the "kingdom of heaven" is Jewish in nature, while the "kingdom of God" is all-encompassing (including the angels). That is rather difficult to believe considering the fact that there are parallel passages within the Gospels that state the exact same truths and yet use either term. Case in point: Matthew 13:31-33 ("kingdom of heaven") compared with Mark 4:30-32 ("kingdom of God") in regard to the parable of the mustard seed. Certain Dispensationalists will tell you that both these kingdoms share similar truths, but that Jesus spoke in regard to each individually. Where does it say this anywhere in Scripture? Jesus did not speak words using "kingdom of heaven," referring to one reality, and then speak the exact same words later on using "kingdom of God," referring to some other reality. No, contrary to Dispensationalism, the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are one and the same. The reality is that, because Matthew was writing primarily for Jewish readers, and Jews avoided the use of the divine name, the word *heaven* was used as a synonym for God.

Matthew used the terms interchangeably, as the next five verses will illustrate. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus told the Jews "But seek ye first the kingdom of God..." (KJV). Why would He not tell them to seek the kingdom of heaven, if the two are different as Dispensationalists tell us? In Matthew 12:28, Jesus said to the Jews, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." We will look at this verse later in this

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[88] Ibid.

[89] Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 698-699.

chapter. In Matthew 19:24, as we have already looked at, after the rich young Jewish man left, Jesus told His Jewish disciples that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." As we pointed out, in the verse just prior, in the same context, he uses "kingdom of heaven." In Matthew 21:31, Jesus told the Pharisees that the tax collectors and harlots would enter the kingdom of God before they would. Finally, in Matthew 21:43, Jesus declared to the Jews, "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it." We will address this verse later in this chapter, too.

"The word βασιλείαν is used in Scripture in three senses. (1.) For royal authority or dominion; such dominion as it is the prerogative of a king to exercise. (2.) For those who are subject to that authority. Among men any community, or commonwealth, or territory subject to a king, constitutes his kingdom. And in the New Testament, those who acknowledge Christ as their king constitute his kingdom. (3.) The word is used metonymically for the effects of the exercise of royal authority. It is to be understood in the first of these senses in all those cases in which a kingdom or dominion is said to be given to Christ; or when we pray, Thy kingdom come, or when it is said, Of his kingdom there is no end. It is used in the second sense when men are said to enter into the kingdom of Christ, or to be cast out of it, or when the character of those is described who are to constitute that kingdom. And it is used in the third sense when men are said to inherit, to see (or enjoy), to seek, and to value more than hid treasure the kingdom of God. Hence also the kingdom of God is said to consist in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Such are the effects of the reign of Christ.

"This kingdom is called the kingdom of Christ, or of the Son of God, because administered by Him. The royal authority is vested in Him. It is called the kingdom of God, because Christ is God, and because it is the kingdom which God was to establish on earth in distinction from the kingdoms of men. It is called the kingdom of heaven, because its king dwells in heaven, because it is spiritual and heavenly, and because it is to be consummated in heaven."[90]

For your consideration and study, the passages pertaining to both phrases:

Kingdom of Heaven	**Kingdom of God**
Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:3, 10, 19-20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11-12; 13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44-45, 47, 52; 16:19; 18:1, 3-4, 23; 19:12, 14, 23; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1, 14	Matt. 6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43 Mark 1:14-15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14-15, 23-25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43 Luke 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 8:1, 10; 9:2, 11, 27, 60, 62; 10:9, 11;

[90] Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:599.

	11:20; 12:31; 13:18, 20, 28-29; 14:15; 16:16; 17:20-21; 18:16-17, 24-25, 29; 19:11; 21:31; 22:16, 18; 23:51 John 3:3, 5 Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31 Rom. 14:17 1 Cor. 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:50 Gal. 5:21 Col. 4:11 2 Thess. 1:5

Matthew 18:3 says, "Unless you are converted…you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." If the kingdom of heaven is for the Jews only, being Jewish in nature and awaiting its consummation in the Millennial Kingdom, what do they have to convert to in order to enter the kingdom of heaven? This verse makes the Dispensational understanding to be quite absurd. Brothers and sisters, if you place this verse side-by-side with John 3 and Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus, it suddenly makes a world of sense. This verse is speaking in regard to salvation also.

Postponed or Present?

According to Dispensationalists, the Millennial Kingdom does not occur until *after* the secret Rapture and *after* The Great Tribulation. They claim that Jesus offered the kingdom to the Jews, but because they rejected Him He postponed it until a later time. But is this biblical? "Lewis Sperry Chafer says that the "setting up of Messiah's kingdom, though first faithfully offered to Israel, was deferred and now awaits the return of Messiah for its realization."[91] John F. Walvoord concurs: "It was in His offer to Israel as their King that He was rejected."[92] Charles Ryrie explains, "Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus' Davidic kingship was proffered to Israel (Matt. 2:2; 27:11; John 12:13), but He was rejected… Because the King was rejected, the messianic, Davidic kingdom was (from a human viewpoint) postponed."[93] J. Dwight Pentecost wrote, "By stone and by storm, Satan carried on his relentless warfare in order to prevent Christ from coming to His appointed throne in the kingdom He had come to establish… Jesus was officially presenting Himself as the covenanted Davidic king and was offering the

[91] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 5:347.
[92] John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1969), 282.
[93] Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 259.

covenanted kingdom to the covenanted people."[94],[95]

Certain Dispensationalists have even gone so far as to state that had the Jews not rejected their Messiah, the kingdom would have been established at that point and that there would have been no need for the cross. This is heresy! Hebrews tells us that "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22).

Dispensationalists believe that Jesus offered the kingdom to the Jews at His first coming, but that they rejected it. Where is this found in Scripture? What verse or passage clearly teaches that Jesus offered the kingdom to them, that they rejected it, and so He decided to postpone it until a later time when they would receive it? Give me a verse, a passage. There is not a single one! Oh, I know, they will turn to Mark 15:12-13 and Luke 19:14 for their proof text, but they have to stretch them like a rubber band to try and get them to say what they desire them to say. On the other hand, however, there is a verse that states quite the opposite to what Dispensationalists want us to believe: "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone" (John 6:15). In fact, look at what they do in John 12:12-15:

> On the next day the great multitude who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and began to cry out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." And Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.

This passage proclaims Jesus to be King, contrary to what the Dispensationalists want us to believe. Moreover, it is the Jews who are doing this, welcoming Him and acknowledging Him as King. In fact, the Jews thought that the hour of deliverance was at hand. Little did they know that a week later He would be crucified. This is all in the face of what Dispensationalists teach and believe. Compare John 12:12-19 to the parallel passages found in Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-10, and Luke 19:29-38. "In the great commission Jesus said, '*All* authority has been given to Me in heaven *and* on earth' (Matt. 28:18). Paul and Silas caused an uproar because they taught that Jesus is king *now* (Acts 17:7). Elsewhere Paul even writes that Christians have been transferred into Christ's kingdom (Col. 1:13). How can Christians presently be in the 'kingdom of His beloved Son' if His Son is

[94] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990), 203-204.

[95] Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?*, 110.

not now reigning as king?"[96]

Now, if the kingdom was postponed, how is it that Jesus gives the keys of the kingdom to Peter in Matthew 16:19? "*And I will give unto thee*; not unto thee exclusively, that is, to thee and no others; for as we no where read of any such power used by Peter, so our Saviour's first question, Whom think you that I am? Letteth us know that his speech, though directed to Peter only, (who in the name of the rest first answered,) concerned the rest of the apostles as well as Peter. Besides, as we know that the other apostles had as well as he the key of knowledge and doctrine, and by their preaching opened the kingdom of heaven to men; so the key of discipline also was committed to the rest as well as unto him."[97]

John the Baptist preached "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). When Jesus sent out the twelve disciples, they preached "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 10:7). Christ Jesus preached "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17) and "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). What time is Jesus referring to? Well, Daniel predicted that there would be four kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Then he writes, "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom" (Daniel 2:44). In the days of which kings? The kings of the Roman Empire. Jesus said, "The time *is fulfilled, and* the kingdom of God *is at hand*" (emphasis supplied). Daniel prophesied that "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom," and Jesus declared, "the kingdom of God is at hand." Brothers and sisters, Dispensationalists are *wrong*! God's kingdom was set up during the first century. It is here now and we belong to it.

That should be enough evidence to prove that the "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God" are one and the same. Both terms are used to announce the kingdom, just as both terms are used in the parable of the mustard seed and in regard to the rich young man. Compare that phrase "at hand" to its usage in the rest of the New Testament: Matt. 26:18, 45; Mark 14:42; Luke 21:30-31; John 2:13; 7:2; 11:55; 19:42; 2 Tim. 4:6. There is no denying as to what it means. The phrase "is fulfilled" is present tense, as is the phrase "at hand" – *eggizo* (ἤγγικεν), "to make near." "When the Gospels opened with the glorious declaration that the kingdom of God was at hand, this meant that God had come to his people to bring them salvation. This was the way the Gospel writers portrayed Jesus' messianic mission from the outset."[98]

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[96] Ibid, 111.
[97] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3:76-77.
[98] Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 106.

Jesus told Nicodemus that "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3) and "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Compare this with Matthew 18:3. Jesus declared to the Pharisees, "*If* I cast out devils by the Holy Spirit, then the kingdom of God *is come unto you*" (Matthew 12:28, emphasis supplied). Jesus indeed was casting out devils by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the kingdom of God had come and was already present. When the Pharisees asked regarding the kingdom (and what kingdom do you suppose they were asking about?), Jesus declared to them "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed...for behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:20-21). That word "behold" means "to pay attention." Our Dispensationalist friends would do well to do precisely that.

"*The kingdom of God* (saith He) *cometh not* μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, *with observation*. The word signifies a scrupulous and superstitious observation. Thus the verb from whence it cometh signifieth, Gal. iv. 10. The verb also signifies a captious observation, Mark iii. 2; Luke vi. 7; xiv. 1; xx. 20; Acts ix. 24. But that sense cannot agree to the noun used in this place. The generality of the best interpreters agree the sense here to be, with external pomp and splendour; and therefore Beza expounds the noun here by a periphrasis, *ita ut observari poterit*, in such a manner as it can be observed. As if he had said, Men have taken up a false notion of my kingdom, as if it were to be a secular kingdom to be set up in the world, with a great deal of noise, and pomp, and splendour, so as men may observe it and gaze upon its coming. But that which I call my kingdom is not of this nature. Our Lord expounded it in the next verse: *The kingdom of God is within you*; it is of a spiritual nature, not obvious to human senses, but exercised over the hearts of my people."[99]

"As to the nature of this kingdom, our Lord Himself teaches us that it is not of this world. It is not analogous to the kingdoms which exist among men. It is not a kingdom of earthly splendour, wealth, or power. It does not concern the civil or political affairs of men, except in their moral relations. Its rewards and enjoyments are not the good things of this world. It is said to consist in 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' (Rom. xiv. 17.) Christ told his hearers, 'The kingdom of God is within you.' The condition of admission into that kingdom is regeneration (John iii. 5), conversion (Matt. xviii. 3), holiness of heart and life, for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, nor thieves, nor drunkards, no revilers, nor extortioners (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 21; Eph. v. 5)."[100] Why, then, do Dispensationalists insist on an observable kingdom when Jesus Himself declared it was not coming with observation and that it was not of this world? Was Jesus wrong?

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[99] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3:254.
[100] Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:857.

Or is Dispensationalism wrong?

To Pontius Pilate Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). "My kingdom is not of this world; that is, I cannot deny but that I am the King of the Jews, but not in the sense they take it, not such a king as they look for in their Messiah; my kingdom is spiritual, over the hearts and minds of men, not earthly and worldly."[101] Once again I would like to quote Napolean Bonaparte: "I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him." This quote shows the reign of Jesus Christ over the hearts and minds of men.

Lewis Sperry Chafer argues, "Matthew 8:12; 24:50-51; 25:28-30 declare that 'the children of the kingdom' may be cast out. This retribution cannot be applied to the kingdom of God and its members (John 3:18)."[102] Really? In Matthew 21:43, Jesus declared to the Jews, "*The kingdom of God* shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (emphasis supplied). Are not being cast out of it and having it taken away the same concept? If it can be taken away from them, then that implies that it was already in or within their possession. You cannot take what is not possessed. In conjunction with Matthew 21:43, 1 Peter 2:9 calls Christians "a holy nation," and according to Scripture *we* bear the fruits of this kingdom. Moreover, Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the *kingdom of heaven*; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21, emphasis supplied). There is no way a Dispensationalist can twist this verse to apply to an ethnically Jewish physical kingdom. It is crystal clear as to the kingdom Jesus is speaking about here.

From Jesus' parables regarding the kingdom, it is also evident that the kingdom is *now* in this present age. Christians belong to it already. One only needs look at Jesus' own interpretation of His parables to understand these truths. "The harvest is the end of the age." What age? This present age, that ends with the second coming of Jesus Christ. "The reapers are angels." The angels gather the wicked and they are judged and cast into hell (Matthew 13:36-43, 47-50; 24:40-41; 25:41-46; Luke 17:34-37, et al.).

"Jesus did not come in order to offer the Jewish nation an earthly political kingdom. He came to die (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 13:3). Nor did the Jews reject an offer of an earthly political kingdom. That was exactly what they wanted. When they tried to make Him King by force, He wouldn't let

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[101] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3:375.
[102] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 7:224.

them (John 6:15). Before the foundation of the world, God's plan and purpose was that Jesus Christ would suffer and die on a Roman cross for the sins of His people. That was the purpose of His first advent, and He perfectly accomplished what He came to do."[103]

Is Jesus Reigning as King Now?

Dispensationalists are divided as to whether or not Jesus is currently reigning in this present age. The consensus would seem to indicate that it largely opposes this reality. However, as we are about to see, they are yet again wrong. Scripture repeatedly acknowledges Christ Jesus as King, from His birth to His crucifixion to His ascension and seating at God's right hand. To deny this is to deny the truths of Scripture. If you deny Him as presently being King, you are also denying Him as presently being King in your life. If He is not King in your life, then you have some real issues. A king has slaves. Scripture calls us slaves of God. We are either slaves of sin or slaves of God. There is no middle ground. If you are offended at being called a slave, then you have greater issues in your heart that you need to deal with.

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever" (Dan. 2:44). The Jews were, and Dispensationalists are, looking for an earthly kingdom that fits this passage. The problem is they think it must be a physical kingdom in order to be interpreted "literally." But that argument is weak. A spiritual fulfillment is still a *literal* interpretation. Notice that this passage does not say *anything* about the condition of that kingdom, whether physical or spiritual. It simply says that God will set up His kingdom. To claim that it *must* be physical goes against everything Christ Jesus said. "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed...for behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:20-21).

"I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14). This scene is clearly set in heaven, which reveals to us that a kingdom *was* given to Jesus Christ. What was the condition of this kingdom? Obviously it is spiritual. If you have a kingdom, then you must have a king. I think it is safe to establish the fact that the kingdom is a present reality, as we have been witnessing thus

[103] Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?*, 110-111.

far in this chapter, although most Dispensationalists will argue it. So, is Jesus reigning as King right now?

As we looked at earlier in this chapter, Jesus said that "*All* authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). What kind of a person has that kind of authority? A king. We also learned that the people had become upset because Paul and Silas taught that there was another king beside Caesar—even Christ Jesus (Acts 17:7). Paul affirmed the fact that we are transferred into His kingdom, something that could not be a reality if He did not possess a kingdom and if He was not presently King. From His birth (Matt. 2:2) to His crucifixion (Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19, 21), Jesus was acknowledged as being King. He came to be a king and He received His kingship. Dispensationalists can argue with Scripture all they want, but the truth will still stand.

"After carefully retracing Jesus' genealogy, the introduction to Matthew's Gospel quotes or alludes to many OT passages. His purpose is to demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth truly was Israel's promised Davidic King, the Messiah (Mt 1:1-2:6).

"In the Gospels, 'king' is most often used of Jesus in the context of his trial and crucifixion. The very words 'King of the Jews' were inscribed on the plaque attached to his cross (Mt 27:37; Mk 15:26; Lk 23:38; Jn 19:19,21).

"It was when Christ's enemies brought him to Pilate that they charged him with claiming to be 'the Christ' and added, for clarity, 'a king' (Lk 23:2; cf. Jn 19:12). Pilate's questioning focused on this issue; he asked Jesus, 'Are you king of the Jews?' (Mt. 27:1; Mk 15:2; Lk 23:2; Jn 18:33). The charge and the question are significant in historical context. The Jews charged that Jesus saw himself as a king, one with supreme civil authority. Even though Jesus' explanation that his kingdom 'is not of this world' (Jn 18:36) was not understood by Pilate, the Roman governor tried to free him (Jn 18:38-19:16). Ultimately it was the political danger to himself that pressured Pilate to let Jesus be crucified. The danger to the Roman was real. The shout of the people was a threat: 'If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar' (Jn 19:12)."[104]

A kingdom is a realm in which a king acts to carry out his will, exerting control and authority over his subjects. The *kingdom of God* then, also called the *kingdom of heaven*, is that realm wherein God, Christ Jesus, acts to carry out His will by exerting control and authority over His subjects. Jesus' kingdom consists of those who love Him and those who rebel against Him. Eventually, the King will tire of their rebellion and He will come and deal swiftly and severely with them, removing them from His kingdom and casting

[104] Lawrence O. Richards, *Encyclopedia of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 377.

them into eternal torment. His kingdom will then consist only of His people, those loyal to Him, whom He shall glorify and reward. He does whatever pleases Him according to the counsel of His will. His judgment is righteous and just. May our Lord and King reign forever and ever, Amen!

Problems with the Dispensational Kingdom

Many Dispensationalists state that the kingdom of heaven will be set up during the Millennial Kingdom. "Not until the millennium will the kingdom of heaven come to realization."[105] Concerning this period Henrietta Mears writes, "It will be a glorious time to live. No wars, no weeds, no wild animals, no taxes, no heartache of death!"[106] No heartache of death? That does not sound at all like Dispensationalism in the least, considering they teach something quite contrary. Chuck Missler writes, "There is still death and sin."[107] Tim LaHaye states, "The Millennium will be a time in which the Adamic curse will be rolled back, except for death, and in which people will live for 1000 years."[108]

While that is what Dispensationalism teaches, it is *not* what the Bible teaches. There are several severe problems with this erroneous interpretation. For starters, at some secret Rapture, they have only certain believers being resurrected and "raptured." John 6:39-40, 44-45, 54 and 1 Corinthians 15:22-23 state rather clearly that believers will be resurrected "on the last day" at Christ's coming, a fact we looked at in chapters 2 and 3. The Bible teaches us that when Christ Jesus returns at His second coming, death shall be defeated (1 Cor. 15:23-26, 50-55) because we shall receive our glorious resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:23, 43-53; Phil. 3:20-21; Col 4:3). Since we will be transformed at His coming and death will be defeated, how is it possible that death is still reigning? If believers are resurrected at some secret "Rapture," why is it that Dispensationalists still have people dying during "The Great Tribulation" and in the "Millennial Kingdom"? Brothers and sisters, Dispensationalists are sorely confused and in error. With the resurrection, death has already been defeated because Christ Jesus turns time back on it. So it is illogical for people to be dying after the fact.

Paul tells us clearly in 1 Corinthians 15 that when Jesus Christ returns at His second coming, the resurrection will take place and death will be defeated (vv. 22-26). 1 Corinthians 15:54 is a quote directly from Isaiah 25:8, which states, "He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe

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[105] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 7:224.
[106] Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 666.
[107] Chuck Missler, *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 303.
[108] LaHaye, *Charting the End Times*, 70.

tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken." 1 Corinthians 15:55 is a direct quote from Hosea 13:14, which states, "Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion will be hidden from My sight."

"The Scriptures teach that when Christ shall come again, He will gather His people into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Concerning that kingdom it is taught,--

1. That it shall consist only of the redeemed. None but the regenerate or converted can enter that kingdom. The tares are to be separated from the wheat. The evil, we are told (Gal. v. 21), "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Nothing that defiles or is untrue can enter there.
2. Those counted worthy of that kingdom shall not only be elevated to the perfection of their nature, but shall also be exalted to great dignity, power, and glory. They shall be kings and priests unto God. They are to sit on thrones. They are to judge angels. They are to reign with Christ, sharing his dominion and glory.
3. This kingdom is to be everlasting.
4. The bodies of the saints, now natural, must be rendered spiritual. This mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption; for "flesh and blood (the body as now organized) cannot inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. xv. 50.)
5. The seat of this kingdom is not clearly revealed. Some suppose that it is to be on this earth regenerated and fitted for this new order of things. Others understand the Scriptures to teach that heaven as indicating an entirely different locality, is to be the final home of the redeemed."[109]

Charles Ryrie argues, "If there were only resurrected saints in the kingdom, then there would be no death, no increase in population, and no differences in the ages of millennial citizens (all of which are indicated as characterizing the kingdom—Isa. 65:20; Zech. 8:5; Rev. 20:12). Since resurrected people do not propagate, there would be no way to populate the kingdom unless some unresurrected people enter the Millennium."[110] Beloved, here we have an excellent example of the erroneous interpretations of Dispensationalists. First, Revelation 20:12 provides absolutely *no* support to what Mr. Ryrie is attempting to say here. The verse is in regard to the judgment of Christ at His second coming: "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 from

[109] Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:608.
[110] Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 569.

the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." Second, notice how Mr. Ryrie attempts to use Isaiah 65:20 as support for the Millennial Kingdom. Brothers and sisters, look in most any Bible and you will find the heading above verses 17-25 says, "New Heavens and a New Earth." That is *not* the Millennial Kingdom. Third, look at what Zechariah says in chapter 7: "Then it came about in the fourth year of King Darius…" What did Daniel 9:1 say? "In the first year of Darius…" Zechariah is writing three years later. Notice the context of chapter 10. It is the restoration for Judah and Israel, when they shall come out of captivity. Zechariah 8:5 is a prediction of their return—*not* anything to do with a "Millennial Kingdom." Yet again, Dispensationalists show their inability to keep things in their proper and immediate context.

This Age and the Age to Come

If we examine our Bibles closely, we will notice that Jesus and the Apostles contrasted two ages: "this age" and "the age to come." The Line of Demarcation is Matthew. 13:39, 40 and 49.

This Age	The Age to Come
Matt. 12:32; 24:3; 28:20	Matt. 12:32; 13:40
Mark 10:30	Mark 10:30
Luke 18:30; 20:34	Luke 20:35
Rom. 12:2	1 Cor. 6:9-12; 15:50
1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6-8	Gal. 5:21
2 Cor. 4:4	Eph. 1:21; 5:5
Gal. 1:4	1 Thess. 2:12
Eph. 1:20-21; 2:2	2 Thess. 1:5
1 Tim. 6:17	1 Tim. 6:19
Tit. 2:12	2 Tim. 4:18

[111]

"**This present evil age.** Descriptions of "this" age focus on characteristics of the human societies within which Christians are called to live. "This age" is not only the undetermined period of time between Christ's first and second comings; it is also the spiritual and psychological state of a humanity that ignores all that God has done in Christ to redeem mankind.

"As a spiritual and psychological state, this age is evil (Gal 1:4). Its wise men and its philosophers are blind to God and ignorant of him, for they scornfully reject the crucified Christ (1 Co 1:20-25). The principles by which this age operates are "foolishness in God's sight" (1 Co 3:19), for lost

[111] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 66.

humanity is blinded by illusions that are sponsored by Satan, the unacknowledged "god of this age" (2 Co 4:4).

"The Bible's exciting news about this present age is that God has invaded it and mankind's dark territory (Eph 6:12). Jesus has acted to rescue us (Gal 1:4), not by removing us from the world but by calling us to share in a divine transformation. Believers actually taste "the powers of the coming age" (Heb 6:5), for God is at work now to transform us into Jesus' likeness (2 Co. 3:18), and he will do so fully at the resurrection (1 Jn 3:2-3). Our calling is to "live godly lives in this present age" (Tit 2:12), refusing to be "conformed to this world" (*aiōn*, Ro 12:2). Instead of conforming, we are to open our lives to God, permitting him to reshape our attitudes and perspective.

"**The end of this age.** The Bible consistently announces that history is on the move—toward a planned culmination. The present age, marred by Satan's evil influence and by the dark passions and twisted values of a lost humanity, will come to an end. God himself will break into history again. He will gather all mankind together for final judgment (Mt 13:40-43; 25:31-46; Mk 13).

"For now, the present age with its evil characteristics coexists with a unique expression of God's kingdom, seen in the living church. But when history reaches its end, God's decisive intervention will forever separate light from darkness, good from evil, true from false.

"**The age to come.** God is unquestionably the "King of the Ages" (*tō basilei tōn aiōnōn*, [1 Ti 1:17]); he not only created the physical universe but also guides the course of history (Heb 1:2; 111:3). Although key elements of God's plan and purpose remained hidden from the ancients (Ro 16:25; Eph 3:9; Col 1:26), God has remained in control. In a real sense, this present age is the "end of the ages," for in it the full meaning of human existence and the answer to man's struggle with sin and death have been revealed. Jesus has come and unveiled God's plan in his sacrifice to take away sin (Heb 9:26-28). From our present perspective we can see the full scope of God's plan to redeem and purify humanity. We look ahead with confidence to our resurrection to an endless life in God's new and purified universe to come.

"Whenever we feel dismayed or discouraged about current events or about our present trials, we can find comfort by remembering that God is in control. He works out his purposes in history and in our lives. Today we are aliens, living in a society of the lost. But even in this present age, we have access through Jesus to the blessings of the age to come."[112]

Scripture says that in "*this age*" people marry, give in marriage, have children, sin, and die; but in "*the age to come*" people will not marry, nor give in marriage, nor have children, nor sin, nor die. Contrary to Scripture, Pre-millennialism teaches that during the Millennial Kingdom people will be

[112] Richards, *Encyclopedia of Bible Words*, 28-29.

marrying, giving in marriage, having children, sinning, dying, and eventually rebelling against the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:50 states perfectly clear that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." But that is *exactly* what Pre-millennialists have taking place. They have people in non-glorified physical flesh and blood bodies entering into the Millennial Kingdom, somehow bypassing the Lord's judgment. Not only that, but 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, and Ephesians 5:2-5 state rather clearly that evil doers "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Moreover, in John 3, Jesus told Nicodemus that unless you are born again, you cannot see / enter the kingdom of God.

As I have continued to impress upon you throughout the contents of this entire book, brothers and sisters, it is so *very* important that we examine *everything* we are told and compare it with Scripture. It does not matter how godly an individual they are, test their words against Scripture. The Bereans were noble because they did not hesitate to check whether what Paul, one of the godliest Christians ever, was telling them was true or not. What does that say about us and how we should be checking what we are told? I do not exclude anyone from this, including myself. As you read what I say, make sure you are testing it against Scripture to prove it.

The Marriage Supper

I felt it would be appropriate to discuss this event in this chapter because it occurs at the end of this present age that we are in. Dispensationalists teach that the marriage supper is going to take place in heaven between the "Rapture" and the Second Coming. But is this what Scripture teaches us? No, it is not! Look with me to Matthew 25:1-13:

> "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to *the wedding feast*; and the door was shut. And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour."

(Emphasis supplied)

Brothers and sisters, notice that this is another parable in regard to what the kingdom is like. When I was younger, I was informed that the virgins were all "Christians"—that there were wise Christians and foolish Christians. But that is *not* what this passage is teaching us. This passage, like those of Matthew 13, is teaching us about false converts (the foolish virgins) and genuine converts (the wise virgins). The idea that these are all "Christian" does not bode well for the Dispensationalist, since they claim all Christians will be "Raptured." If these are all "Christians," why is it that our Lord says to the foolish, "I do not know you"? Do you know what this reminds me of? Matthew 7:21-23. Again, this pictures this present age until the second coming. This passage teaches us that the marriage supper will take place on Earth. If you do not believe me, look with me to Revelation 19:6-21:

> And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for *the marriage of the Lamb* has come and His bride has made herself ready." And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to *the marriage supper of the Lamb*.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for *the great supper of God*; in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." And I saw the beast and the

> kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.
>
> (Emphasis supplied)

Dispensationalists would argue that because a voice issues forth from the throne, and a couple verses later it speaks of Jesus descending from heaven, it necessitates that we interpret this as taking place in heaven. But that would ignore the passage from Matthew 25:1-13 entirely, not to mention the full context of our passage here. Verses 7, 9, and 17 are all speaking in regard to the marriage supper. It takes place here on Earth. I do not know what sort of "supper" the Dispensationalists have in mind, but it is not the sort of supper here depicted. Examine verses 17 and 18. Regardless what image may come to your mind at the mention of the "marriage supper," this event is not the climax of human history, nor is it the event we should be looking unto with hope. Our hope is placed in the return of our Lord and Saviour, when He shall make all things new and usher us into His glorious presence in the kingdom He has prepared for us.

Conclusion

The terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" are one and the same, synonymous and interchangeable. They refer to the mysteries of the kingdom as it appears on this Earth now, having wheat and tares growing along side each other until the Lord Christ Jesus shall come and separate them. They also refer to the reign of Christ Jesus in the hearts and minds of His people, which consist of both Jew and Gentile, which make up one body, His Bride, the church.

The kingdom has not been postponed, but is a present spiritual reality, for our Lord denied that His kingdom was of this world and that it should come with observable signs. Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream *never* says anything about God's kingdom being secular; it only says that God will set up His kingdom and it will never be destroyed, which is *exactly* what He did with His first advent. A physical kingdom can be destroyed; a spiritual kingdom cannot. So once again, brothers and sisters, our Dispensationalist friends are wrong in their understanding and interpretation of Scripture.

Jesus will return at the end of this present evil age to resurrect the dead and judge the entire world. You must be converted, born again from above, in

order to see and/or enter the kingdom of God because flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God. People fitting the descriptions of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, and Ephesians 5:2-5 will not inherit the kingdom of God because they have already been judged and cast into hell for their wickedness and rebellion. The only people that shall be found in the kingdom of God will be the righteous, redeemed, blood-bought saints of the Lord Christ Jesus.

Chapter 6
The Millennial Misconception

Historical Evidences

"There is no trace of a Millennium in: Clement of Rome (died in 101), in Ignatius of Antioch (died in 115), in Polycarp of Smyrna (died in 155). Iranaeus says that Polycarp taught the things which 'he had learned from the Apostles and which the church handed down.'"[113]

"Irenaeus, who was born circa A.D. 120 and who was acquainted with Polycarp, the disciple of John, states that while John was at Ephesus, he entered a bath to wash, but when he found Cerinthus was there he refused to bathe there, left the building, and exhorted those with him to do the same, saying, 'Let us flee lest the bath fall in, as long as Cerinthus, the enemy of truth is within' (Ibid., bk. V, chp. 24). Riggle states, 'Let this be a rebuke to modern millennial advocates. They claim their doctrine is well founded in the revelation of John. But John called the founder of their theory, "that enemy of truth"' (Riggle 1899, p. 26)."[114]

In the following fifteen creeds and confessions of the church, there is *no* teaching on the millennium:

1. The Apostles' Creed (second century).
2. The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed (A.D. 381).
3. The Athanasian Creed (fourth century).
4. The English (Episcopalian) Confession of Edward VI, (A.D. 1553). Article XLI states, "Those who endeavour to recall the fable of the

[113] Karl R. Hagenbach, *A Textbook of the History of Doctrine* (New York, NY: Sheldon & Co., 1861), 1:52.
[114] Egerdahl, *The Bible Versus Dispensational Eschatology*, 250.

Millenarians, oppose the sacred Scriptures and precipitate themselves into Jewish insanities."

5. The Belgic (Dutch Reformed) Confession (A.D. 1561).
6. The Anabaptist Confession (A.D. 1600).
7. The First Dutch Mennonite Confession (A.D. 1627).
8. The Second Dutch Mennonite Confession (A.D. 1630).
9. The Memorable Mennonite Confession (A.D. 1632).
10. The Augsburg (Lutheran) Confession (A.D. 1530).
11. The Westminster (Presbyterian) Confession (A.D. 1647).
12. The Westminster (Presbyterian) Larger Catechism (A.D. 1647).
13. The Westminster (Presbyterian) Shorter Catechism (A.D. 1647).
14. The New Hampshire Baptist Confession (A.D. 1833).
15. The Free Will Baptist (A.D. 1834 and 1868).[115]

If this teaching contained a hint of truth, you would think that it would have been mentioned in several of the church confessionals and creeds. But we find the opposite to be true. If 1800 years of Christianity rejected the concept of, and never taught or believed in, a literal 1000-year millennial kingdom, who do you suppose is right? I will not only put my money on the historical evidence, but on the biblical evidence we are about to embark upon.

Revelation 20: Literal or Symbolic?

In Psalm 50:10 we are told that God owns the cattle on 1000 hills. Is this literal or symbolic? Does He not own the cattle on the 1001st hill? In Deuteronomy 7:9 we are told that God extends mercy to 1000 generations. Is this literal or symbolic? Does He not extend mercy to the 1001st generation? So what does "1000" represent in these passages? What does "1000" represent in Revelation 20:1-6?

> "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they

[115] Ira D. Landis, *The Faith of Our Fathers on Eschatology* (Lititz, PA: published by the author, 1946), 4-29.

> came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years." (Rev. 20:1-6).

Regarding this passage, Henrietta Mears writes, "This is the time when Christ, the Prince of Peace, will establish His kingdom upon the earth for a thousand years. The devil is to be bound for a thousand years (20:3); the saints Christ brings with Him will reign with Him for a thousand years (20:4,6); the wicked dead will not rise until the end of the thousand years (20:5)."[116] She says, "There will be a thousand years of peace and joy upon the earth, when 'the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea' (Habakkuk 2:14)."[117] But is this true? Is this what the passage is describing for us?

In Jude, Michael the archangel would not dare bring an accusation against Satan. Obviously Satan was created as a more powerful being than Michael was. Therefore, you need someone with more authority and more power in order to deal with Satan. Michael concurred this by saying, "The Lord rebuke you." If we look elsewhere in Scripture, we find that it is the Lord Jesus who has keys in his possession (Rev. 1:18; 3:7). This "angel" is either none other than the Lord Jesus Himself or, which is more likely, an angel to whom He has given the key to. Now, is the "key" in his hand a literal key or a symbolic key? When Jesus handed the keys to the kingdom over to Peter in Matthew 16:19, were they literal keys or symbolic keys? What did they look like? How did Peter use them? When Jesus spoke of a "key of knowledge" in Luke 11:52, was this a literal key or a symbolic key? Would Matthew 23:13 provide an answer? Is the "bottomless pit" literal or symbolic? If it is literal, we would need a pit that goes from here straight through to China. Is the "great chain" literal or symbolic? In Mark 5:1-20, the demon-possessed man could not even be bound by literal chains. Since angels do not have physical bodies, what good would a literal chain do? 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 inform us of demons that have been put in everlasting chains. Once again, since demons do not have physical bodies, can these be literal chains? "Dragon" is clearly symbolic because the text goes on to tell us who it is.

So, since everything we have just looked at is obviously symbolic, it stands to reason that the "1000 years" is *also* symbolic. There is no reason or justification for interpreting it as a literal 1000 years. To do so would do violence to the text. If everything before and after is symbolic, we cannot pick

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[116] Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 666.
[117] Ibid.

one aspect of the text and decide to translate it as being literal. That is poor hermeneutics. We must be consistent. The 1000 years is symbolic for a long period of time. Period. It is a hyberbole—a rhetorical figure of speech in which statements are exaggerated. The question remains, *when* does this period of time take place?

Anthony Hoekema points out that "There is no indication in these verses that John is describing an earthly millennial reign. The scene…is set in heaven. Nothing is said in verses 4-6 about the earth, about Palestine as the center of this reign, or about the Jews. Nothing is said here about believers who are still on earth during this millennial reign – the vision deals exclusively with believers who have died. This millennial reign is not something to be looked for in the future; it is going on now, and will be until Christ returns."[118] To show further evidence of this, let us look at what this passage *does not say anything* about:

1. Christ's second coming
2. A bodily resurrection
3. Live people on earth
4. Thrones on earth
5. Reigning on earth
6. A literal throne of David
7. Christ reigning on earth
8. The city of Jerusalem
9. Israel or Palestine
10. Christ on the earth
11. A Jewish kingdom
12. Righteousness on earth
13. Peace and prosperity
14. Re-gathered Israel
15. A temple in Palestine
16. Restored sacrifices
17. The Jews being saved
18. A converted world
19. A fertile Palestine
20. One thousand years of peace on earth [119]

We would be fools to approach the book of Revelation as if it were written in chronological order. Dispensationalists assume that because something appears in an earlier chapter of the book, that it necessitates that

[118] Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 235.
[119] Egerdahl, *The Bible Versus Dispensational Eschatology*, 234.

the historical fulfillment of that vision must also occur in history prior to that which is revealed in later chapters of the book. However, any careful student of John's revelation from Christ Jesus will realize that the book is a series of consecutive visions that each depicts the course of this present age from different perspectives, like cameras capturing the same event from different angles. Several scholars refer to this as "Recapitulation."

"As William Hendriksen points out, 'A careful study of chapter 20 will reveal that this chapter describes a period which is synchronous with that of chapter 12.' This can be clearly demonstrated by simply comparing Revelation 12:7-11 and Revelation 20:1-6. The obvious parallelism between chapters 12 and 20 of Revelation is important for a number of reasons. For one thing, this means that Revelation 12 and 20 are both speaking about the present period of time. Although they are not identical, 'they depict the same events and mutually interpret one another.' If true, this is a serious blow to all forms of premillennialism, which place the events of Revelation 20 chronologically after the return of Jesus Christ described in Revelation 19. If John was giving a series of visions, depicting the present age from different theological vantage points, and if Revelation 12 and 20 describe the same events from different perspectives, then the thousand years of Revelation 20 is a description of a present millennial age rather than a future earthly millennium."[120]

Revelation 12:7-11	**Revelation 20:1-6**
(1) heavenly scene (v. 7)	(1) heavenly scene (v. 1)
(2) angelic battle against Satan and his host (vv. 7-8)	(2) presupposed angelic battle with Satan (v. 2)
(3) Satan cast to earth (v. 9)	(3) Satan cast into the abyss (v. 3)
(4) the angels' evil opponent called "the great dragon, …that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray" (v. 9)	(4) the angels' evil opponent called "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan," restrained from "deceiving the nations anymore" (vv. 2-3), to be released later "to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth" (vv. 3, 7-8)
(5) Satan "is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (v. 12)	(5) Satan to be "set free for a short time" after his imprisonment (v. 3)
(6) Satan's fall, resulting in the kingdom of Christ and his saints (v. 10)	(6) Satan's fall, resulting in the kingdom of Christ and his saints (v. 4)

[120] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 201.

(7) the saints' kingship, based not only on the fall of Satan and Christ's victory but also on the saints' faithfulness even to death in holding to "the word of their testimony" (v. 11)	(7) the saints' kingship, based not only on the fall of Satan but also on their faithfulness even to death because of their "testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God" (v. 4)

[121]

Millennial Proof Texts

Pre-millennialists argue that certain passages "seem" to indicate or predict a millennial kingdom. One such passage that they argue with is Isaiah 11:6-9, which reads:

> And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the kid, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze; Their young will lie down together; And the lion will eat straw like the ox. And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

Brothers and sisters, is this not how we would have described the Garden of Eden? None of the animals were carnivorous at that time. So if the Garden of Eden was perfect and man had no fear of the wild beasts, would it not be wise to conclude that this passage speaks of the new Earth and the renewal of all things? I believe that this is the correct manner in which we should handle this passage.

Another passage in which they argue "seems" to indicate a future messianic rule over the entire Earth is found in Psalm 72:8-14. It reads:

> May he also rule from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. Let the nomads of the desert bow before him; And his enemies lick the dust. Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him. For he will deliver the needy when he cries for help, The afflicted also, and him who has no helper. He will have compassion on the poor and needy, And the lives of the needy he will save. He will rescue their life from oppression and violence; And their blood will be precious in his sight.

[121] Ibid, 202.

The NASB and the RSV understand these statements to be prayers—*not* predictions. This Psalm merely shows an *expectation* of a messianic ruler who would someday have dominion "to the ends of the earth." What did we learn from Daniel 2 and 7:13-14? Jesus *does* have dominion "to the ends of the earth." His kingdom extends to the four corners of the Earth. Remember, brothers and sisters, the Jews were looking for a *physical* kingdom, so their expectations are going to reveal as much in their inspired recordings of Scripture. However, as we have learned, their expectations missed the point entirely. Jesus Himself said "The kingdom of God *is not* coming with signs to be observed...for behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:20-21, emphasis supplied). He said "My kingdom *is not* of this world" (John 18:36, emphasis supplied).

Now, either Jesus had no clue what He was talking about, and needed Pre-millennialists to correct Him on His understanding of the kingdom, or else He knew *precisely* what He was talking about and revealed the *true* nature of His kingdom and its existence. I do not know about you, brothers and sisters, but when my Lord Jesus says, "*My* kingdom *is not* of *this* world," I believe Him. If He is not currently reigning, as Dispensationalists claim, and there really is a future millennial kingdom, then Jesus' statements here are entirely false. That would mean that, as the Jews had been expecting, and Pre-millennialists teach, the kingdom *will be* coming with signs to be observed and that the kingdom truly *is* of this world. You can believe what you want to believe, but I urge you, brothers and sisters, to believe Christ Jesus Who is *the Final Authority* on the interpretation of the Old Testament.

Another passage Pre-millennialists claim "seems" to indicate a future millennial kingdom is found in Zechariah 14:5-17. They claim that "Zechariah also prophesies a coming age in which there is great transformation in the earth, in which the Lord is King over all the earth, and in which there is still rebellion and sin, suffering, and death."[122] But this in defiance of what the rest of Scripture has to teach, and what the New Testament teaches. When Christ Jesus returns, He will judge the entire world. There *will not* be individuals who have not been judged and somehow make it into the kingdom, which *cannot* be inherited by flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50) or by evil doers (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5). Scripture teaches us that at the resurrection, death is defeated (1 Cor. 15:22-26; 50-55). So it is *absurd* to believe that after Jesus Christ has returned, resurrected the dead and judged the world, that there is going to be an earthly kingdom wherein rebellion, sin, and death *still* reign.

"14:3-21. God's Victory and Universal Reign. The grand consummation of prophetic dreams, the day of the Lord's Return, and the inauguration of his

[122] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1129.

Everlasting Kingdom. Some Biblical scholars think that verses 4-8 mean that Jesus, when He Returns, will literally make his throne on the Mount of Olives, that the mountain will literally be cleft, that waters literally will flow eastward and westward from Jerusalem, and that Jerusalem literally will be the center of pilgrimages from nations outlined in verses 10-21. Others take the language to be a figurative representation of the New Heavens and New Earth, under the imagery of a benign, prosperous, and all-powerful earthly kingdom, as Revelation 21 describes Heaven under the imagery of a magnificent earthly city."[123]

Sacrifices in the Millennium?

"A shock runs through my soul when I think of animal blood sacrifices replacing the blood of Christ and becoming a memorial for atonement of sin that is to last for a thousand years. Animal blood could never forgive sin in the first place; only cover it. How is it then that Christ's blood will be put into the background, when it took His blood to complete the redemption of sins under the first covenant (Rom. 3:24-25; Heb. 9:15)? Since the law and its animal sacrifices made nothing perfect (Heb. 7:19) and Old Covenant saints could not be made perfect without us (Heb. 11:40), how could there even be a thought of returning to imperfection? It would be a return to Judaism!"[124] And well it should. The first thing that comes to my mind when someone claims there will be a return to animal sacrifices is the words of Hebrews: "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because *this He did once for all when He offered up Himself*" (Heb. 7:26-27, emphasis supplied).

Tim LaHaye writes, "The fact that the Millennial Temple includes sacrifices has led many prophecy students to wonder about the purpose of such sacrifices. At least four other Old Testament prophets join Ezekiel in affirming there will be a sacrificial system in the Millennial Temple (Isaiah 56:7; 66:20-23; Jeremiah 33:18; Zechariah 14:16-21; Malachi 3:3-4), making it clear this matter is important enough to merit our attention."[125] Mr. LaHaye is *very* mistaken, and uses the word "fact" *very* loosely, because the *fact* is that that there will be *no* temple (as we will see in the next section) or sacrifice in the new order. Keeping in context, look with me to what Isaiah

[123] H. H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1959), 383.
[124] Egerdahl, *The Bible Versus Dispensational Eschatology*, 266.
[125] LaHaye, *Charting the End Times*, 94.

66:1-4 says:

> Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word. But he who kills an ox is like one who slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb is like the one who breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering is like one who offers swine's blood; He who burns incense is like the one who blesses an idol. As they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations, so I will choose their punishments, and I will bring on them what they dread. Because I called, but no one answered; I spoke, but they did not listen. And they did evil in My sight, and chose that in which I did not delight."

This is how God views sacrifices and offerings today and for all time because Jesus was the true sacrifice. Anything less is an abomination and sacrilege. Compare this with Revelation 21:22: "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple." Further, examine the final verse of Isaiah 66: "Then they shall go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind." This has *nothing* to do with a supposed Millennial Kingdom. Remember what we learned in the Synoptic Gospels in regard to those taken? That is what this verse is dealing with, when Jesus conquers all His enemies at His second coming and judges them as the rebellions they are. Look at Jesus' quotation of this verse in Mark 9:44, 46, and 48. The context is in regard to those who shall find themselves in hell for eternity.

None of the passages Mr. LaHaye quotes support his claims, although Zechariah 14 is *almost* convincing if you were to merely read it by itself. But, "As chapters 9, 10, 11 are called the 'burden' concerning Neighbor Nations (9:1), so chapters 12, 13, 14 are called the 'burden' concerning Israel (12:1). The two sections are quite similar. Both are an enlarging continuation of ideas in the visions of the first 8 chapters, the same ideas ever recurring in different dress."[126]

According to Dispensationalists, the last 9 chapters of Ezekiel belong to the Millennial Kingdom. They tell us that during the Millennial Kingdom temple sacrifices will be re-instituted. There is just one problem: Hebrews tells us that Jesus was the once-for-all sacrifice to end *all* sacrifices. The sacrifices before were imperfect shadows of the reality to come, and were

[126] Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook*, 382.

incapable of removing sin. So why would we return to the imperfect types and shadows of the past? They claim it is for a memorial. "Most dispensationalists have explained the sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48 through what is known as 'the memorial view.' According to this view the sacrifices offered during the earthly reign of Christ will be visible reminders of His work on the cross. Thus these sacrifices will not contradict the clear teaching of Hebrews, for they will not have any efficacy except to memorialize Christ's death."[127]

But is that what those chapters say—*literally*? Ezekiel 40:39; 42:13; 43:19, 21-22, 25; 44:27, 29; 45:17, 19, 22-23, 25; and 46:20 all speak of "*sin offering*" while Ezekiel 45:15 and 17 state emphatically "*to make atonement for*." What is a sin offering? What is the purpose for atonement? These are *not* memorials! As we noted from Isaiah 66:1-4 and Revelation 21:22, there will be *no* temple and *no* sacrifice in the kingdom of God.

"In a January 1979 article in Decision Magazine, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. wrote: 'We may therefore be confident that the sacrifices mentioned in Ezekiel 43 have nothing to do with atonement for sin. But rather, their function will be parallel to that of the Lord's Supper…But it should be noted that the Eucharist of bread and wine celebrated by the New Testament Church is intended only for this present dispensation…. But during the age of the millennial Kingdom, when our Lord Jesus Christ will come again to set up the rule of God over all the earth, what type of communion ordinance will replace our present Lord's Supper with its bread and wine? Apparently it will be in the form of blood sacrifices again…They were used in this Old Testament prophecy because they furnished the Hebrew believer with the closest available analogy to the future millennial offerings.'

"What is Gleason Archer, Jr. telling us? First, he is saying that the sacrifices in the millennium *will be parallel to that of the Lord's Supper*. In the dictionary, "parallel" means "to show something equal to." How sad that the Lord's blood would be equal to animal blood. Second, Archer is saying that the present Eucharist of bread and wine was '*intended only for this present dispensation*.' Where is this stated in Scripture? In fact, this is the exact opposite of what Jesus said in Matthew 26:29 when speaking of the Lord's Supper: 'But I say to you, I will not drink this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.' Jesus said it would be *the fruit of the vine*, not animal sacrifices, that would be the memorial. Animal sacrifices *will replace our present Lord's Supper*? This is sacrilege! Archer is also saying that there will be *future millennial offerings*. There is no mention in Ezekiel (or any other Old Testament book) of a millennium, period. It is assumed. Man's theology has been

[127] Jerry Hullinger, "The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 152 (July-September, 1995), 280.

superimposed upon the text."[128]

For individuals who claim to read and interpret the Bible *literally*, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. sure seems to deny their literal sense. As we noted above, the last nine chapters of Ezekiel specifically and *literally* inform us that these sacrifices are for "sin offering" and "to make atonement." For Mr. Archer to say they have "nothing to do with atonement for sin" is a bold-faced denial of the plain, *literal* sense of the passages. As I have said previously in this book, Dispensational teachers are inconsistent with their own hermeneutic; but they are more than consistent with their *literalistic* interpretation.

"That the unbelieving Jews should look for a rebuilt *temple*, a re-established *priesthood*, the restoration of their *bloody sacrifices*, and an Israelite *supremacy*—at once religious and civil—*over all nations of the earth*, when their Messiah comes, is not to be wondered at. With these views of Old Testament prophecy, their fathers rejected Jesus and put him to death, as he neither realized their expectations, nor professed to do so; but on the contrary, directed his whole teaching to the uprooting of the prevalent conceptions of Messiah's character, work, and kingdom, and to the establishing of views directly opposite. Unless they had been prepared to abandon their whole scheme of Old Testament interpretation, they could not consistently have acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah. But that any *Christians* should be found agreeing with the unbelieving Jews in their views of Old Testament prophecy – that there should be a school of Christian interpreters, who, while recognizing Jesus as the promised Messiah, and attached in all other respects to evangelical truth, should nevertheless contend vehemently of Jewish literalism, and as a necessary consequence, for Jewish altars, sacrifices, and supremacy – is passing strange…But characterized as they were by low views of the Person and Word of Christ, as well as of every thing else in religion, their existence was brief and outside the orthodox Church; nor have such Judaizing opinions ever been able to raise their head, save in a few isolated cases, till the present day. The most remarkable fact of all is, that those who held to premillennial theory in the second and third centuries, seem not to have believed in any literal, territorial restoration of the Jews at all – much less in their millennial supremacy over all nations, and the re-establishment of their religious peculiarities."[129]

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[128] Egerdahl, *The Bible Versus Dispensational Eschatology*, 267-268.

[129] David Brown, *Christ's Second Coming: Will It Be Premillennial?* (London, ENG: Hamilton and Co., 1882), 338-339.

Temple of the Living God

In *Sacrifices in the Millennium* we looked at a quote wherein Tim LaHaye called the Millennial Temple a "fact." Dispensationalists teach that there is going to be a re-built temple during The Great Tribulation and another during the Millennial Kingdom. We have already established that there is no such thing as a 7-year Great Tribulation, which, by association, eliminates the concept of a so-called Tribulation Temple. Not only that, but we have also established that this temple, which Dispensationalists claim is future, was actually in regard to the return of the exiles into Israel. Those passages of Scripture were indeed future at that time, but in our time they are fulfilled, as we witnessed. Further, in this section we have established that there is no such thing as a future 1000-year Millennial Kingdom, which, by association, eliminates the concept of a so-called Millennial Temple. Again, the passages Dispensationalists claim teach such a thing, as we have witnessed, teach quite the contrary and are already fulfilled.

In 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 Paul wrote, "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; and I will accept you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' says the Lord Almighty." In verses 16 and 17 Paul quotes several Old Testament passages wherein they state the same thing. Was Paul spiritualizing the Old Testament here? Dispensationalists claim that in 2 Thessalonians, the literal interpretation is speaking of the physical, national, Jewish temple. This is false! A careful study of Paul's use of the word "temple" will reveal this to us, as will the context.

1 Cor. 3:16-17 – "you are a temple"
1 Cor. 6:19 – "your body is a temple"
2 Cor. 6:16 – "we are the temple of the living God"
Eph. 2:21 – "together is growing into a holy temple"

2 Thessalonians 2:3 tells us that the "day of the Lord" shall not come until the great apostasy takes place. The man of sin comes out of the midst of the apostasy (v.7). What is an apostate? It is someone who claims to be a Christian and then jettisons the faith because they never were a genuine believer to begin with. The rocky soil, in other words. The man of sin is a professing Christian. He will sit in the church and profess himself to be God (v.4). Jesus, telling them to "destroy this temple," was not speaking of the physical temple, but of His body. Paul's usage of the word "temple" never

speaks of a physical temple, but of Christians—the church.

In Matthew 21:19, Jesus, referring to Israel, cursed the fig tree and said, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." Compare this to Isaiah 5:1-7. In Matthew 23:38, He said, "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate," and in Luke 13:35, "Behold, your house is left to you desolate," a reflection of Jeremiah 22:5: "'But if you will not obey these words, I swear by Myself,' declares the LORD, 'that this house will become a desolation.'" What did Jesus prophesy in Matthew 24:2? The destruction of the temple. This came to pass in 70 A.D. when Rome laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. There is *not* going to be another temple re-built. Ever. God will *never* inhabit a temple built by human hands *ever* again. *We* are His new temple! Contrary to Dispensationalism, this curse upon national Israel was *never* revoked. The Bible must be our sole authority—not the man-made myths and fables of men.

Grasping At Shadows

> **The Dog and the Shadow**
> A dog had stolen a piece of meat out of a butcher shop and was crossing a river on his way home when he saw his own shadow reflected in the water below. Thinking that it was another dog with another piece of meat, he became intent on capturing the other piece as well. Once he snapped at the treasure below, however, he dropped the prize that he was carrying and thus lost everything he had.
> *Grasp at the shadow and you will lose the substance.*[130]

> **The Ass's Shadow**
> One hot summer's day, a traveler hired an ass to carry him from Athens to Megara. At noon the sun's heat was so scorching that he dismounted and wanted to relax under the ass's shadow. But the driver of the ass claimed that he had equal rights to the spot and wanted to sit there, too.
> "What!" cried the traveler. "Didn't I hire the ass for the entire journey?"
> "Yes," answered the driver, "you hired the ass but not the ass's shadow."
> While they were arguing and fighting for the place, the ass took to his heels and ran away.
> *In quarreling about the shadow of things we often lose the substance.*[131]

These two of Aesop's fables serve to demonstrate the reality of the Dispensationalist's predicament. They are fighting over the shadows, trying to claim them for the future, and yet they blindly miss the substance of those

[130] Ed. Jack Zipes, *Aesop's Fables* (New York, NY: Signet Classics, 2004), 55.
[131] Ibid, 243.

shadows—Christ Jesus. They claim that sacrifices will be re-established in the millennial kingdom, even though the passage they derive this from does not *literally* support their position. Yet, the author of Hebrews made it clear that Jesus was the final sacrifice to end all sacrifices. There shall never be a return to sacrifices nor shall sacrifices ever be accepted again. Jesus is the only acceptable sacrifice before God, and if He is not our propitiation, then we are without hope and are doomed to spend an eternity in hell.

Which Millennial View Stands True?

Chuck Missler says, "Tragically, there is a lot of controversy about the Millennium, as this specific period is called. There are many different, yet defendable, views regarding many aspects of end-time prophecies, but this common divergence – denying a literal Millennium – is particularly dangerous in that it would appear to be an attack on the very character of God!"[132] Tragic indeed. What Mr. Missler is doing here is a fallacy known as "poisoning the well." He is attempting to insist that anyone who denies a literal millennium is attacking the character of God. Weak-willed individuals will be convinced of his argument and, because they do not want to be known as "attacking God's character," they will succumb as if he is speaking truth. John Walvoord pulled the same stunt a couple times in his book *The Rapture Question*, using fallacious arguments to convince the reader that if they believed differently than he did, then they were guilty of what he accused them and called them.

As we have seen throughout this entire chapter, the many different views on the 1000 years are *not* all "defendable." People may *attempt* to defend them, but what the biblical account testifies to will prove them indefensible. As you have just witnessed earlier in this section, the contesting for a "literal millennium" in Revelation 20 is no contest at all, which reveals that the belief of a literal 1000 years is *not* "defendable." The surrounding context lets you know how you are to interpret the 1000 years. But Dispensationalists do not pay any attention to the context, as we have been witnessing throughout this entire book thus far.

Post-Millennialism:

This view is the quickest and easiest for us to dismantle. There are two different groups of post-millenarians. The first group believes that the 1000 years are literal and yet future, and that there will be 1000 years of peace and righteousness prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ. The second group believes it is symbolic for a long period of time, which will gradually get

[132] Missler, *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours*, 302.

better and better before the second coming of Jesus Christ. However, there is nothing in Scripture that depicts or hints at the world getting better before the return of Christ. In fact, there is much evidence to the contrary. Jesus asks the question, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Scripture informs us that men will grow more and more wicked (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-3, 4:3-4). Paul tells us that the day of the Lord will not come until the apostasy takes place (2 Thess. 2:3). So this view is a fail.

Pre-Millennialism:

Historic pre-millennialism and pre-tribulational pre-millennialism both fall together. First, you need to establish whether the only text that speaks of 1000 years is supposed to be literal or symbolic. Second, if there is a literal 1000-year Millennial Kingdom, we have certain passages that we need to deal with. When Jesus Christ returns, He is going to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31), dividing the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:31-46), and casting the wicked into hell. There will be nobody that bypasses this judgment, except for the Lord's elect who will inherit the kingdom. Flesh and blood cannot enter or inherit this kingdom (1 Cor. 15:50). The wicked cannot and will not enter or inherit this kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-20; Eph. 5:3-6).

Only God's children will inherit and enter this kingdom, which means there is only righteousness in this kingdom, as the Scriptures teach. Because there is nobody except the righteous in this kingdom, the concept of there being a rebellion against Christ at the end of it is extremely problematic. You end up with a second fall of man—glorified man—into sin: the righteous, redeemed, blood-bought saints of the Lord Jesus rebelling against their redeeming Lord and Saviour. This implies that His blood was not sufficient enough to cleanse us from our wickedness, even with our glorification, and implies that God is not powerful enough to keep us. This is heresy! So this view is a fail.

Amillennialism:

This view is the most consistent with what the Scriptures reveal, as we have been witnessing throughout this chapter. It is also the view that has been predominantly held by the church throughout her history, seconded only by historic pre-millennialism, although "Amillennialism was not recognized as a distinct position until around the turn of the twentieth century. Until then, amillenarians called themselves postmillennial because they believed Christ would come back after the millennial age, but they were different from traditional postmillenarians in that they did not believe in an earthly

millennial age yet to dawn."[133]

Apart from Revelation 20, there is not a single passage in Scripture that describes a 1000-year kingdom here on Earth. When we looked at the language of Revelation 20, we noted that everything in that passage was symbolic. We cannot translate the first bit symbolically and the last bit symbolically but choose to translate the 1000 years as literal. It does not work that way. Since Scripture does not support a literal 1000-year kingdom, this view would be the correct one.

Lewis Sperry Chafer argues, "This view interprets many passages in the Old and New Testaments that refer to the millennial kingdom as being fulfilled in a nonliteral way."[134] No, Amillennialism interprets them in a very *literal* way, a way the Dispensationalist is incapable of doing in their *literalistic* approach because they deny the *literal* fulfillment in place of their fictionalization. To recapitulate, it is taught by Dispensationalists that Ezekiel 40-48 refer to the Millennial Kingdom and the Millennial Temple; but the *literal* and *correct* interpretation is that these chapters spoke in regard to the times and temple that would come *after* their Babylonian captivity.

Conclusion

"Millennialism—from *chiliasm*, the Greek for one thousand—has become a doctrine stating that Christ will set up a literal kingdom and reign on earth in Jerusalem with the Jews as His chosen people for a thousand years under the economy of the Mosaic law. Ultimately, this makes salvation by race and not by grace."[135] You have witnessed throughout the entirety of this book to the fact that there is *one* resurrection and *one* judgment, which take place at the *second coming* of Jesus Christ, which is "*the end of the age*," the "*last day*," the "*day of the Lord*." There is *no* "secret Rapture," *no* 7-year "Great Tribulation," and *no* "Millennial Kingdom." These concepts are derived from a wrongly dividing of the Word.

Most builders start with a blueprint and then, from the blueprint, construct the project according to the blueprint. Dispensationalists, however, have merely glanced at the blueprint and said, "I know how to build that. I do not need the blueprint," and proceeded to construct the project. When finished, they look at their project and the blueprint and see that they do not look the same. But instead of admitting that the project contains errors, they try to re-work the blueprint to fit their constructed project. I am sorry, but if you would

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[133] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 31.
[134] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), 352.
[135] Egerdahl, *The Bible Versus Dispensational Eschatology*, 248.

just *read* the text as it is *written*, my Dispensationalist friend, you would not find yourself with scores of passages in which you do not know where to put them and so have to resort to stuffing them into your imaginary "Millennium."

George Peters, who has written one of the most exhaustive pre-millennial works on the kingdom of God, in his three-volume set *The Theocratic Kingdom*, errs in his work because he approaches it blindly through tunnel vision. He approaches his study from the position like that of the Jews, who interpreted the kingdom passages literally and were looking for a literal, physical kingdom. However, as we have pointed out at least twice throughout this book, the Jews' interpretation and anticipation was *wrong*. When Jesus came, He came *to die—not* to set up the kingdom with which the Jews were looking, as Dispensationalists try to tell us (although He *did* set up His kingdom, of which we currently belong). In Luke 17:20, the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom was coming. What *kingdom* were they asking about? *Correct!* The kingdom *they* had been anticipating. And what was Jesus' response? "The kingdom of God *is not* coming with signs to be observed...for behold, the kingdom of God *is in your midst*" (vv.20-21, emphasis supplied). Do you understand now why pre-millennialism is in error?

Chapter 7
The Man of Sin

The Antichrist

The term "antichrist" appears only *four* times in Scripture, and all four times are in John's epistles (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7). Not once is there mention of anyone called "The Antichrist." In John's time, he said there were *many* antichrists (1 John 2:18); he said that those who deny the Father and the Son are antichrists (2:22); he said that every spirit that does not confess Jesus is antichrist (4:3); and he said that those who do not confess the coming of Jesus in the flesh are antichrist (2 John 1:7). No other New Testament author uses this term. Not even the apostle Paul. Biblically, there is *no* man called "The Antichrist." Could the "man of lawlessness" *be* antichrist? You can bet your life on it! Anything that is against God or against Christ Jesus is antichrist. Anything that denies His eternality, His deity, His humanity, His redemption, His lordship, or anything else summed up by John's applications, is antichrist. The spirit of antichrist is within each of us and all around us. If we do not have the Spirit of God, we have the spirit of antichrist. If we are not living and walking by the Spirit of God, we are living and walking by the spirit of antichrist. The spirit of antichrist is in the occult and in the cults, but it also visits the Christian churches every Sunday.

The Restraining Force

Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2:5-6, "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 may be revealed." Paul's readers

knew *precisely* what he was talking about. However, *we* are left without a clue because the Spirit did not inspire Paul to write it down for us. In order for us to figure it out, we need to look to early Christian history and work forward—not backward from our time as Dispensationalists do. What did the early Christians teach in regard to this? They *knew* what was restraining. They *knew* what to look for. So we need to follow them. What did the early Christians of the second, third, and fourth centuries write in regard to this? Let us observe with the following brief excerpts.

Irenaeus (130-202 A.D.): Irenaeus was born about 30 years after the apostle John died. In his extensive work, *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus devoted several chapters to Daniel 7, Revelation 13, and 2 Thessalonians 2. Typical of believers in all ages, he understood that the three prophecies are related. He wrote, "Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another littler horn shall arise in the midst of them."[136] He continues, "In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules shall be partitioned."[137] That empire was the Roman Empire.

Before it ever happened permanently in 395 A.D., Irenaeus knew that the then Empire, Rome, must be divided according to Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He also knew that the Roman Empire was the restrainer.

Tertullian (145-220 A.D.): A few years later, blending the "man of sin" prophecy with the prophecies of the ten-horned beast, Tertullian wrote the following concerning 2 Thessalonians 2: "Again, in the second epistle [Paul] addresses them with even greater earnestness: 'For that day shall not come, unless indeed there first come a falling away,' he means indeed of this present empire, 'and that man of sin be revealed,' that is to say, Antichrist, 'the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God…And now ye know what detaineth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; and he who now hinders must hinder until he be taken out of the way.' What obstacle is there but the Roman state, the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist upon (its own ruins)?"[138]

Hippolytus (170-236 A.D.): Hippolytus, discussing Daniel 2 and 7,

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[136] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.25.3, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html >.
[137] Ibid, 5.26.1.
[138] Tertullian, *Of the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chapter 24, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html>.

wrote, "The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander's time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are yet to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst."[139]

Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386 A.D.): Cyril, quoting 2 Thessalonians 2, said, "Thus wrote Paul, and now is the 'falling away'…now the Church is filled with heretics in disguise. For men have fallen away from the truth, and 'have itching ears'… This therefore is 'the falling away,' and the enemy is soon to be looked for…"[140] He continues, "but this aforesaid Antichrist is to come when the times of the Roman empire shall have been fulfilled, and the end of the world is now drawing near. There shall rise up together ten kings of the Romans, reigning in different parts perhaps, but all about the same time; and after these an eleventh, the Antichrist, who by his magical craft shall seize upon the Roman power…"[141] He continues yet further, "'So that he seateth himself in the temple of God.' What temple then? He means, the Temple of the Jews which has been destroyed. For God forbid that it should be the one in which we are!"[142]

Although Cyril preferred to think that the "temple of God" meant the temple of the Jews, nevertheless the way he expresses himself demonstrates that he understood precisely what the "temple of God" referred to—the church. He recoiled from this idea—the "man of sin" sitting in the church—but nevertheless understood it. Regrettably, many today miss this important point and turn to futuristic fictionalized fables.

Jerome (340-420 A.D.): The following two letters were written by Jerome at a time when the Roman Empire was already in deep trouble from the barbarians. In 396 A.D., Jerome wrote: "I shudder when I think of the catastrophes of our time… The Roman world is falling: yet we hold up our heads instead of bowing them…"[143] He continues, "Rome's army, once victor and Lord of the world, now trembles with terror at the sight of the foe."[144]

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[139] Hippolytus, *A Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, paragraph 28, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html >.
[140] Cyril of Jerusalem, Lecture 15, paragraph 9, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html >.
[141] Ibid, paragraph 12.
[142] Ibid, paragraph 15.
[143] Jerome, *Letter #60 to Heliodorus*, paragraph 16, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html >.
[144] Ibid, paragraph. 17.

In 409 A.D., he wrote: "But what am I doing? Whilst I talk about the cargo, the vessel itself founders. He that [restrains] is taken out of the way, and yet we do not realize that Antichrist is near. Yes, Antichrist is near whom the Lord Jesus Christ 'shall consume with the spirit of his mouth'…"[145] He continues, "For thirty years the barbarians burst the barrier of the Danube and fought in the heart of the Roman Empire… Rome has to fight within her own borders not for glory but for bare life."[146]

Augustine (345-430 A.D.): In Augustine's famous *City of God*, he wrote, "I can on no account omit what the Apostle Paul says, in writing to the Thessalonians, 'We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' etc. … No one can doubt that he wrote this of Antichrist and of the day of judgment, which he here calls the day of the Lord, nor that he declared that this day should not come unless he first came who is called the apostate… Then as for the words, 'And now ye know what withholdeth,' i.e., ye know what hindrance or cause of delay there is, 'that he might be revealed in his own time;' they show that he was unwilling to make an explicit statement, because he said that they knew… I frankly confess I do not know what he means. I will nevertheless mention such conjectures as I have heard or read. … Some think that the Apostle Paul referred to the Roman empire, and that he was unwilling to use language more explicit, lest he should incur the calumnious charge of wishing ill to the empire which it was hoped would be eternal… But others think that the words, 'Ye know what withholdeth,' and 'The mystery of iniquity worketh,' refer only to the wicked and the hypocrites who are in the Church, until they reach a number so great as to furnish Antichrist with a great people, and that this is the mystery of iniquity."[147]

Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.): Chrysostom had written multitudes of homilies based on Scripture texts in the latter of the fourth century. In the only homily he had on 2 Thessalonians 2:6-9, he writes, "What then is it that withholdeth, that is, hindereth him from being revealed? Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but other the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken so obscurely, but plainly… But because he said this of the Roman empire, he naturally glanced at it, and speaks covertly and darkly. For he did not wish to bring upon himself superfluous enmities, and useless dangers…"[148] He continues, "'Only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the

[145] Jerome, Letter #123 to Ageruchia, paragraph 16, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html >.
[146] Ibid, paragraph 17.
[147] Augustine, *City of God*, 20.19.1-3, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html >.
[148] Chrysostom, *Homily on 2 Thessalonians 2:6-9*, paragraph 1, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html >.

way,' that is, when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come. And naturally. For as long as the fear of this empire lasts, no one will willingly exit himself, but when that is dissolved, he will attack the anarchy, and endeavor to seize upon the government both of man and of God."[149]

Calculating His Name

In Revelation 13:18, it says, "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six." In the second century, Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of the apostle John, calculated three possibilities, but never committed to any of them. Remember, John wrote for his contemporaries. He *did not* write over their heads, leaving them with a book that was utterly useless, which only applied for us today. Only two of Irenaeus' calculations carry any weight, and so it is those that we shall look at.

The only languages at that time (and perhaps still) whose letters were also numbers were Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The language at the time was Greek. The book of Revelation was written in Greek. Jesus is called the *alpha* and *omega*, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Therefore, we are to calculate his number using Greek—nothing else! God has *no* interest in the mystical art of gematria. The only number in Scripture we are told to figure out its meaning for is 666. Individuals throughout history have calculated Nero's name to 666 using Hebrew, but this presents a problem since it is not using the language that the command was written with. Concerning this calculation, Philip Schaff has said, "It seems incredible that such an easy solution of the problem should have remained unknown for eighteen centuries and been reserved for the wits of half a dozen rival rationalists in Germany."[150] *Many* names in the ancient languages can be found with the numerical value of 666. A name with this value is only part of the solution to the problem, for whatever name is found *must* fit into all the other circumstances predicted in Daniel 7, 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation13 and 17.

The first name calculated in Greek by Irenaeus to be 666 is Titus (Τειταν), who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This is the numerical value of Titus' name in Greek: T = 300 + ε = 5 + ι = 10 + τ = 300 + α = 1 + ν = 50 = total 666. There are those individuals who say that the internal evidence of the book of Revelation supports an early date of writing, around 68 A.D., which would make Titus a perfect fulfillment of the prophecy. I would like to be

[149] Ibid, paragraph 2.
[150] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 1:847.

persuaded by this evidence, but there is one problem with it that keeps me from accepting it. In Revelation 1:9, John says he was on the island of Patmos when he received the vision. According to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, John was exiled there during the reign of Domitian. According to history, Domitian's reign was from 81-96 A.D. John gives us the reason for his exile: "because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1:9). Not only that, but Irenaeus vies for the date of about 95-96 A.D. for its writing. So an early date of writing is not supported by the internal and external evidence. The argument that the book of Revelation does not mention the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and must therefore have been written before 70 A.D. is a weak argument. Making assumptions does not make one's case. John was shown a specific vision and told to write it down. Why would John add something that had no relevance to what he was told to write? He wrote what the Spirit inspired him to write. Nothing more.

The second name calculated in Greek by Irenaeus to be 666 is Lateinos (Λατεῖνος—perhaps ancient Greek for "Latin man"), the Latin or Roman Empire. This is the numerical value in Greek: Λ = 30 + α = 1 + τ = 300 + ε = 5 + ι = 10 + ν = 50 + ο = 70 + ς = 200 = total 666. Irenaeus writes, "Then also Lateinos (ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ) has the number six hundred and sixty-six; and it is a very probable [solution], this being the name of the last kingdom [of the four seen by Daniel]. For the Latins are they who at present bear rule: I will not, however, make any boast over this [coincidence]."[151] "J. E. Clark shows that ἡ Λατινὴ βασιλεία, 'the Latin Empire,' likewise gives the number 666."[152] Is this merely coincidence? Of the two calculations, this is the most sensible, and for several reasons. Remember, brothers and sisters, the Bible needs to be its own best interpreter. In the Bible, the symbol "beast" is never a kingdom or empire apart from a man (Dan. 7:17, 23). Revelation 13:16-18 says, "he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given *a mark* on their right hand, or on their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has *the mark*, either the *name of the beast* or the *number of his name*. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding *calculate the number of the beast*, for *the number is that of a man*; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six" (emphasis supplied). The "mark" is the name of the beast and the number of the man's name, which is also the number of the beast. In verse 17, the Greek αὐτοῦ can be translated as either "of his" or "of its." The former would refer forward to "the number is that of a man," while the later would refer back to "the name of the beast." Both equate to the same thing considering the number of the beast, which is a kingdom, is the number of a

[151] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.30.3, posted on <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html >.
[152] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 1:844.

man. With the above information, the pieces of the puzzle start connecting to form a clear picture.

You have the Latin Empire, the Latin Church, and Latin "Christianity." Rome's language, civil and ecclesiastical, has always been Latin. This is too great a "coincidence" for us to simply ignore. Throughout this chapter you are going to see some *great* "coincidences" that need answering.

Identifying Characteristics

In this section we shall examine the qualifying characteristics laid out for us in the various passages of Scripture. By the end of this section, you should be able to identify who they are speaking of. You may not understand all of the qualifying characteristics listed, unless you are extremely familiar with history, but there should be enough of them that stand out and arrest your attention.

Daniel 7

1. It is a *little* kingdom (v.8).
2. It comes up *among* them, among the ten nations of the divided Roman Empire (v.8).
3. It comes up *after* them (v.24).
4. It plucks up three kingdoms by their roots (v.8, 24), leaving no trace of their bloodlines behind.
5. It is different from the other kingdoms (v.24), being a religious *and* political kingdom. Do you know of any such kingdom?
6. It has a man at the head of it (v.8, 20, 24-26). What religious, political kingdom do you know that has a man at its head?
7. It speaks blasphemy (v.8, 20, 25). How do the Scriptures define blasphemy? Do any of these sound familiar?
    a. Blasphemy is the claim to have power to forgive sins (Mark 2:7).
    b. Blasphemy is a man making himself to be God (John 10:33).
    c. Blasphemy is persecuting the church in the name of God (1 Tim. 1:12-13).
8. It is a persecuting power (v.21, 25). Who do you know that has persecuted the saints of the Most High?
9. It seeks to change times and laws (v.25).
10. It reigns sovereignly for 1260 prophetic days (v.25).

2 Thessalonians 2

1. The apostasy must come first (v.3). You cannot be an apostate unless you once held to a claim of the true faith and have abandoned it, or you hold to a perverted form of that faith—keeping parts, omitting parts, and changing parts.

2. The man of sin is revealed *through* apostasy (v.3). This man would come out of the midst of the apostasy, claiming either *to have been* a "Christian" or *to be* a "Christian."
3. The man of sin exalts himself against every god (v.3).
4. The man of sin sits in the temple of God—the church (v.3). Who do you know of that sits in the church as its ruler?
5. The man of sin proclaims himself to be God (v.3).

Revelation 13

1. The beast is given great power and authority (v.2).
2. The beast received a mortal wound that would be healed (v.3).
3. Those who dwell upon the Earth worship the beast because of this healing of the wound (v.4).
4. The beast is given 42 prophetic months to exercise its authority (v.5).
5. The beast is allowed to persecute the saints (v.6). Who do you know that has severely persecuted the saints for many centuries?
6. The beast is given authority over multitudes (v.6). Who do you know that has great authority over multitudes of people?

Revelation 17

1. The kings of the Earth are involved with this illicit infidelity (v.2).
2. Those who dwell upon the Earth are greatly affected by it (v.2).
3. This city rests upon or is built upon the foundations of a previous kingdom or empire (v.3). What city do you know of that has this sort of foundation?
4. This city's colours are purple and scarlet, and she is rich with gold and jewels that she displays without shame (v.4). Catholic clerics wear purple and scarlet.
5. Through a "cup," this city fornicates with political powers (v.4). Whom do you know who dispenses salvation via the means of a cup?
6. This city represents ancient Babylon at heart (v.5).
7. This city is responsible for the deaths of the saints and martyrs (v.6). What city do you know of that has killed hundreds of thousands of Christians from the first century to present day?
8. Two things may be said: the very sight of this city results in great admiration, but moreover John marveled at her because she put to death the saints and martyrs of Jesus (v.6).
9. This city sits on seven hills (v.9). What city do you know of that is called "The City on Seven Hills"?
10. This city holds sway over the bodies and souls of many peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages (v.15). What city do you know of that has this kind of influence?
11. This city reigned over the kings of the Earth (v.18).

Revelation 18

1. This city is a source of demonic presence and powers (v.2).
2. This city is responsible for the economic riches of certain individuals associated with her (v.3).
3. God calls His elect children out from under this city's abominable influence (v. 4).
4. In contrast with God's people, whose sins He has forgotten, God has remembered this city's sins (v.5).
5. This city claims to be the seat of a "Queen" (v.7). What city do you know of that has a "queen" as part of its religion?
6. This city has always been a great foe against God's people, from the day she became an empire until modern day (v. 20).
7. Splendid music and craftsmanship have been a spectacle from this city, but will eventually be no more (v.22).
8. This city is guilty of deceiving the nations (v.23).
9. This city was found guilty of the blood of God's children (v. 24).

Remember, we said that calculating the number of the beast, which is a number of a man, solves only part of the problem. All the other details of prophecy must fit with that name. Once we have all of that, then we have found our answer. What one city do you know of that, throughout all of church history, has fit and currently fits all of these descriptive details? There is, of course, only one—the Roman Church State, Vatican City! Who is the one person who fits these descriptive details? The pope! Let us see how.

Examining the Evidence

At present, the Christian has *2000 years* worth of church history with which to search for a fulfillment to the prophetic words spoken in Scripture. One would be a fool to ignore twenty centuries of Christianity in favour of a future fulfillment. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 we read:

> "Let no one in any way deceive you, for [the day of the Lord] 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 may 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. And 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. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."

We have already seen that the early Christians *knew* who the restrainer was, and as we have just examined above, they admitted that it was the Roman Empire. Early Christians understood that the man of sin would arise once Rome fell. The Roman Empire was considered to be an eternal empire and to speak ill fortunes of it would not bode well for you. So it is clear why Paul would not mention them by name in his letter, lest it bring upon him greater persecution than he was already facing merely for testifying about Jesus Christ. I also want to point out to you that *nowhere* in this passage does it say the man of sin is *one man for all time*, but simply calls this man "the man of lawlessness" and gives us a description of him. This passage also *does not* say anything about Jesus returning *immediately or shortly after* he is revealed, but tells us that at the appointed time He will "slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming."

In an earlier chapter we looked at the fact that Paul *never* uses the term "temple of God" in reference to the physical Jewish temple, but in regard to Christians—the church. It is said that the man of sin rises from the apostasy and sits in the church, displaying himself as being God. Apostasy is a departure from the gospel, from the true faith, and from truth. You cannot be an apostate unless you once held to a claim of the true faith and have left it, or you hold to a perverted form of that faith—keeping parts, omitting parts, and changing parts. Both of these make an individual antichrist, in the same manner in which John spoke in his epistles.

Does anything in the above passage sound familiar in the least, brothers and sisters? Think Rome. The pope sits in the church claiming to be the vicar of Jesus Christ on this Earth. "Vicar" comes from the Latin meaning "substitute." Do we have a substitute Jesus, brothers and sisters? No, we do not. We have the *real* Jesus. There is no need for a substitute. *The Catholique Nationale*, July 1895, said, "The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but *he is Jesus Christ himself* hidden under a veil of flesh. Does the pope speak? *It is Jesus Christ who speaks*" (emphasis supplied). *Blasphemy!* Jesus does indeed have a representative here on Earth, but it is *not* the pope. It is the Holy Spirit! "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you *another Helper*, that He may be with you forever" (John 14:16, emphasis supplied); "But *the Helper, the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14:26, emphasis supplied); "When *the Helper* comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is *the Spirit of truth*, who proceeds from the

Father, He will bear witness of Me" (John 15:26, emphasis supplied).

It is claimed by the Roman Catholic Church that the pope is infallible: "**889.** In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her a share in his own infallibility. **890.** …Christ endowed the Church's shepherds with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals. **891.** The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office…"[153] The pope is said to be the infallible chief teacher [prophet], ruler [king], and supreme pontiff [high priest] of the entire church. A "pontiff" was a chief priest in ancient pagan Rome. As you can see, the pope does indeed set himself up to be God. He claims the titles of prophet, priest, and king for himself; titles which belong to Christ Jesus alone. He calls himself the "holy father," but Jesus said we have *one* Father—and that is *not* the pope. He claims he has the authority to forgive sins and to give that same power to others in his employ, but Scripture says God *alone* can forgive sins. The Roman Catholic Church ascribes titles and characteristics of God the Father and God the Son to both the pope *and* to the "virgin," which evidences that "They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him" (Titus 1:16). Therefore, it can be said that the Catholics have received a "deluding influence" because they "believe what is false." The Catholic Church is indeed antichrist.

The pope is *one man*. Although the position has been filled by *many* men, it is still *one man*. Since the description of the pope is a dead ringer with the description of the man of sin, it would only be logical to conclude that this man of sin is the pope. The pope still sits in the same seat *to this day*, and Christ Jesus has not yet returned. When He does return, it is clear that this man will be destroyed who sits in the place of God and is worshiped as if he were God. From as early as the 13th century (if not earlier), until the early 20th century, Christians have unanimously agreed that the pope was the man of sin. Early Protestant creeds acknowledged the pope as antichrist. The 1611 King James Bible, in the Dedicatory to King James, says (in modern English), "the zeal of your Majesty towards the house of GOD, does not slack or go backward, but is more and more kindled, manifesting itself abroad in the furthest parts of *Christendom*, by writing in defense of the Truth, (which has given such a blow unto that man of Sin, as will not be healed)."[154] These translators identified the pope as the man of sin from 2 Thessalonians 2. Even Futurists will admit that the "harlot" of Revelation 17 is the Catholic Church.

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[153] *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Revised in Accordance with the Official Latin Text Promulgated by Pope John Paul II* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), 235.

[154] *The Holy Bible 1611 Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2005), 56.

Preterists, on the other hand, believe that the man of sin was Nero (but then again they believe everything in the Bible, including Jesus' return, was fulfilled prior to 70 A.D.).

But this is only a single passage, so let us look at another passage; let us look at Revelation 17:

> And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth." And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly. And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

The angel interprets what John was seeing. We have already established that the symbol "beast" is never a kingdom apart from a man. The symbol "horn" represents kings (Dan. 7:24, Rev. 17:12). The angel gave two meanings to the seven heads: it is seven hills or mountains on which the woman sits (v.9); and it is also seven kings, which the angel informs John that five have already fallen, one currently is, and the seventh is yet to come. The sixth king was reigning during John's lifetime. The seventh king would reign prior to the appearance of the "man of sin," although for a short time (v.10), since we are told that the beast is an eighth king (v.11) that belongs to the seven and will eventually go to its destruction at the return of Jesus Christ.

Matthew Henry and Matthew Poole comment saying that these refer to the different sorts of governments, which are: kings, consuls, tribunes, decemviri, dictators, emperors pagan, and emperors Christian; saying that the papacy makes the eighth government, which sets up idolatry again. I confess that at present I am unsure of what this refers to, but know for a fact that the sixth *was* in place during John's lifetime, as the angel told him.

Some commentators, regarding verse 9, start commenting on how "mountains" are symbolic of kingdoms in the Old Testament (i.e. Isa. 2:2; Jer. 51:25; Ezek. 35:3; Dan. 2:35, 45; Zech. 4:7). While that may be, such an explanation seems utterly ridiculous to me considering the angel has just interpreted the "seven heads" as being "seven mountains." Why would the angel interpret a symbolic image with another symbolic image? That seems to defeat the purpose of interpretation.

The angel interprets the "many waters" to be "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues" (v.15), and the "harlot, woman" to be "the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth" (v.18). In the Old Testament, Israel was typified as a harlot for her illicit identity with strange and foreign political powers (Ezek. 16:15-63). It is not unusual in the Bible for idolatrous or apostate cities to be called harlots (Isa. 1:21; Ezek. 23:2). The woman in Revelation 17 could only be considered as a harlot if, like Israel, her primary calling is religious. So, it should be noted that the "woman" in this passage is contrasted against the "woman" of Revelation 12, which is the church. Brothers and sisters, Rome has been drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, just like the woman in verse 6, having burned at the stake those saints who translated the Bible into common language for the common people and would not submit to her atrocious apostasy and idolatry. Rome sits on seven hills, just like the woman in verse 9. Rome sits over "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues," just like the harlot in verse 15. Rome reigned over the kings of the Earth then, just like the woman in verse 18, and still reigns over kings of the Earth now.

During the eleventh century, Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII opposed each other. Gregory excommunicated Henry from the church and

threatened to depose him if he did not repent. When Henry felt that he would lose his kingdom, he decided to submit to the pope. He traveled to Italy and the pope made him stand outside in the snow for *three days*![155] If you read up on your history, you will see that the Church of Rome did indeed rule over the kings of the Earth. It is a fact substantiated by history that cannot be ignored or refuted. The pope claims absolute authority over not only all Christians, but the entire world including civil governments and non-Christian religions. Whenever possible, the pope has exercised this authority without mercy. History proves without contest that whenever and wherever the pope can rule, he *will* rule. The number of martyrs under papal persecutions far outnumbers those of the early Christians under pagan Rome.

Thrice in Revelation 17 it says that the beast "was and is not" (Rev. 17:8, 11) adding twice that it is yet to come (v.8). The angel tells John that "the beast which was and is not" is also an eighth king that belongs to the seven kings (v.11). It is this eighth king that shall receive a mortal wound. Some have suggested that the beast "is not" at the time of John's writing, which is an unrealistic interpretation. Why? Because the angel told John that "five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while" (v.10). The beast is an eighth *belonging* to the seven, which is to come *after* the seventh, so it *cannot* possibly refer to the time of John's writing.

Revelation 13:15 says that the image of the beast should "cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed." Revelation 13:17 says that "no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name." Here we have control over life and control over commerce, all of which center around one's worship. Worship is involved with this prophecy. Whatever political power the "man of sin" may have, he is a religious figure who presents himself as God within the temple of God, which is the church. Can we find such a thing having taken place in history? If we consider the historical realities of the Crusades and the Inquisition, all of which were *Catholic—not* "Christian" (they were under the guise of Christianity but were contradictory to what Christianity teaches), we certainly can.

The image of the beast should "cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (Rev. 13:15). The spirit and practice of the Inquisition spanned from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries wherein the Church of Rome held sway over the bodies and souls of men. According to Catholic authorities, the purpose of the Inquisition was: "To discover and

[155] For a full recollection of the event, see B. K. Kuiper, *The Church in History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 109-115; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 5:47-59.

suppress heresy and to punish heretics... the relapsed heretics who were found guilty were turned over to the civil government... The fact that secular law prescribed death must be understood in the light of those days when heresy was anarchy and treason."[156] During those times, any view that was opposed to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church was considered treason and was worthy of the death penalty, exactly as Jesus had predicted in Revelation 13. The various punishments that the Church of Rome would employ were execution via burning at the stake or strangulation, short or perpetual imprisonment, exile, and confiscation of property (similar to what we read about in Muslim countries today when someone converts to Christianity). Individuals who did not worship in accordance to the dictates of the Roman Catholic Church were subject to the death penalty, which is evident from these prophecies. The fulfillment of these prophecies is evident from all historical books describing the events of those times. During the Crusades and the Inquisition, the motto of the Roman Catholic Church could have been, "Convert, or die by the sword," a similar motto which Islam practices today.

"No one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name" (Rev. 13:17). Monsignor Philip Hughes, in regard to Canon 27 of the Third Lateran Council held in 1179, wrote: "There is a long and very detailed decree about the restraint of heretics... Both the heretics and those who protect them are excommunicated; no one is to give them shelter, or allow them in his territory, or to do business with them."[157] Here we have an official law regarding economic repression straight out of the Roman Catholic Church stating that nobody was "to do business" with any individual whom the Church of Rome deemed to be a heretic. Could you ask for a more precise fulfillment?

Simon Kistemaker offers this parallel between the two witnesses and the second beast:

Two Witnesses	Second Beast
1. Prophets (11:10)	1. False prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10)
2. Perform signs (11:6)	2. Perform signs (13:13, 14; 19:20)
3. Receive authority from God (11:3)	3. Receives authority from the first beast (13:12)
4. Torment the inhabitants of	4. Deceives the inhabitants of

[156] John A. Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 280.

[157] Mgr. Philip Hughes, *The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils, 325-1870*, posted on <http://www.christusrex.org> and several other Catholic websites.

the earth (11:10) 5. Two olive trees; lamps (11:4) 6. Breath of life from God (11:11)	the earth (13:14) 5. Two horns (13:11) 6. Breathes into the image of first beast (13:15)

[158]

Using the Keys Given Us

Dispensationalists tell us that we are supposed to interpret the book of Revelation *literally*. But this defies all logic and contradicts how Scripture itself tells us to interpret it. In Matthew 13, Jesus explained two of the parables He spoke, providing His disciples, and us, with keys as to how His other parables need to be interpreted in order to understand them correctly. With regard to parables, it should be noted that Luke is the only other book of the Bible to mention the name Lazarus (other than Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha found in the book of John), and the account contained within chapter 16 is *not* a parable. First, nowhere is it identified as a parable. Second, Jesus does not use "like" or "as" when speaking it, comparing it with something else. While the two characters may or may not have been real people, the words He speaks are nonetheless truth on their own. When you label it as a parable, you are on the verge of denying a literal hell.

We have already looked at some of the keys found within the books of Daniel and Revelation, which were provided for us by certain angels. Believers throughout all centuries have almost unanimously agreed that Daniel 7, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 13 and 17 are connected. In Revelation 1:20, Jesus Christ *Himself* interprets the lampstands or candlesticks to be churches. In Revelation 11, the two witnesses are called "two olive trees" and "two lampstands." Using Jesus' key, the two witnesses represent the church. They are *not* individual persons, such as the Dispensationalists want us to believe. Such an interpretation does violence to the text and to the keys that are provided for us to arrive at a correct interpretation. You *have* to use what is given. You cannot be making things up as you go.

In Zechariah chapter 4, we have a lampstand with an olive tree on either side (vv.2-3) and olive branches that feed oil to the lamps (vv.11-14). When asked what the olive trees are, the angel responds, "These are the two anointed ones, who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth." Olive trees are the source of olive oil. The church, represented by the lampstand, converts the olive oil it receives into light that may guide the footsteps of its members (Ps. 119:105). Consideration of these issues suggests that the olive oil represents the Word of God.

[158] Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, 12:336.

In Revelation 11:6, we encounter a deed of Moses and a deed of Elijah, which would suggest that a division exists between the Law and the Prophets. In the book of Zechariah, we encounter only a single lampstand among two olive trees. This implies the second lampstand was not present at the time. Therefore, it would seem that the two olive trees represent the Law and Prophets (as Scripture would seem to suggest: Luke 16:29, 31; 24:27, 24; John 1:45; Acts 26:22; 28:23), and that the two lampstands represent the Old Covenant church and the New Covenant church.

Likewise, the keys that were given in Revelation 17 will also help us to interpret Revelation 13 correctly. Since the "woman" in Revelation 12 represents Christ's church, then the "woman" in Revelation 17 might represent Satan's church, since the headquarters for this church are located in "the great city" and this city sits on seven hills, over "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues," and reigned over the kings of the Earth. Some would argue and say that this city is "rebuilt Babylon," but nowhere in Scripture does it speak of such a thing. The verse says that her name is a *mystery*, which implies that the term "Babylon" is only symbolic, that she represents something similar in regard to Babylon. We are not to confuse this city with the Chaldean Babylon.

In Revelation 12:3, we are given an image of a "dragon" that represents Satan. In Revelation 13:1, we are given an image of a "beast" that shares a similar description to that of the dragon (with the exception of the crowns being numbered differently), which represents Satan's helpers. This beast is *in* the image of the dragon. In Revelation 17, the woman is pictured on top of this beast. In other words, we might say that the beast is the foundation upon which the woman rests or is built. The symbol "beast" refers to a kingdom ruled by a man, and the Latin Church is without a doubt a kingdom on its own ruled by the pope.

Three and One Half

I want you to know that *none* of these verses (Dan. 7:25; 12:7, 11; Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5) say *anything* about the return of Christ in any way, shape, or form, whether immediately or shortly thereafter; just as we observed in regard to 2 Thessalonians 2. They also say *nothing* about the length of reign the man of sin has outside of his given time of authority. There is also *no* 7-year period associated to *any* of these verses. It is generally agreed upon that all of these references refer to the same period of prophetic time and that they will all occur at the same time.

Daniel 7:25 says that the saints will be given into the hand of the Roman "little horn" for the duration of this time, while 12:7 is the length of time given as the answer to how long the "time of distress" (v.1) would last.

Revelation 11:2 says that the outer court will be trampled by the nations for this length of time, while 11:3 says that the two witnesses will prophesy for this same period. Revelation 12:6 and 14 say that the "woman," the church, will be nourished for this amount of time in the wilderness. Revelation 13:5 says that authority was given to the first beast for this length of time.

There are those individuals who would claim that we have in these prophecies three and one half *literal* years, but this seems a highly unlikely interpretation. Why? In Bible prophecy, brothers and sisters, one day equals one year: "According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you shall know My opposition" (Num. 14:34); "When you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year" (Ezek. 4:6). Several of the older writers, such as Matthew Henry and Matthew Poole, agree upon this principle. If we use this system, let us see what we arrive at.

History records that the Roman papacy exterminated three of the ten original tribes of divided Europe: the Vandals (454 A.D.), the Heruli (493 A.D.), and the Ostrogoths (538 A.D.). They were *literally* "pulled out by the roots" (Dan. 7:8, 24), seeing as how not a single bloodline today can be traced back to these kingdoms. The defeat of the Ostrogoths left the pope's claim to ecclesiastical supremacy unchallenged, and so the Roman Catholic Church could now (and would) exercise her full authority. Philip Schaff writes, "Vigilius…ascended the papal chair under the military protection of Belisarius (538-554)."[159] In 538 A.D., the papacy began its rule, becoming a sovereign state under the decree of Emperor Justinian and under the military protection of Belisarius. If we calculate 1260 years from this date, we arrive at 1798 A.D., when, under Napolean Bonaparte, "General Berthier made his entrance into Rome, abolished the papal government, and established a secular one" (*Encyclopedia Britannica 1941 edition*). Could this not constitute as a fatal wound?

In 1929, the Italian government recognized Vatican City once again as an independent state. *The San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 11, 1929, wrote, "The Roman question tonight was a thing of the past, and the Vatican was at peace with Italy... In affixing the autographs to the memorable document *healing the wound of many years*, extreme cordiality was displayed on both sides" (emphasis supplied). Do you see the prophetic language used here? *The New York Times*, July 7, 1929, wrote, "Rome, June 7.—From 11 o' clock this morning there was *another sovereign independent State in the world*. At that time Premier Mussolini, as Italian Foreign Minister representing King Victor

[159] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 3:327.

Emmanuel—the first Italian Premier ever to cross the threshold of the Vatican—exchanged with Cardinal Gasparri, Papal Secretary of State, representing Pope Pius XI, *ratifications of the treaties signed at the Lateran Palace* on Feb. 11. By that simple act *the sovereign independent State of Vatican City came into existence*" (emphasis supplied).

Although there are several different interpretive concepts about these verses (Dan. 7:25; 12:7, 11; Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5), this seems to be the best one. While I confess that I am unsure how to handle them *myself*, be assured that there is *no* valid reason to believe that this time period is yet future. We have 2000 years of Christian history to comb through first before we make such assumptions and predictions. Unless we are prophets who can predict the future with deadly accuracy, we are only adding to the Word of God.

A Sad Situation

How many Catholics are there world-wide? In 2003, Brazil was the country with the largest baptized Roman Catholic population in the world, totaling over 100 million. The United States of America, Mexico, Italy and the Philippines each had between 50 and 100 million Catholics. Canada, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Spain, Poland, Dr Congo, Nigeria, India, China, and Uganda had between 10 and 50 million Catholics. These stats came from the Vatican, based on data from 2003.

Revelation 13:3-4 say that the "whole earth…followed after the beast; and they worshiped the dragon." Revelation 13:12 and 14 say the second beast "makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast…and he deceives those who dwell on the earth." The first beast and the dragon are being worshiped together. When the pope arrives in a specific country, look how the Catholics gather before him in form of worship and adoration. Watch how young adolescent boys and girls cry at just being in his presence. What is wrong with that picture, brothers and sisters? Jesus means *nothing* to them. He is just a by-word. Mary is their true god. Their prayers are directed toward her. They call her the Queen of Heaven and refer to her as a Co-Redemptrix and Co-Mediatrix, etc. *Co-redeemer!?* What did Mary ever do to redeem us from the penalty of sin and death? *Co-mediator!?* Where in Scripture does it teach such a thing? The Bible says "there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Mary called Him her Saviour because she knew she was a sinner in need of salvation (Luke 1:46-47). She is no different than you or I, other than the fact she was chosen by God to carry His Son.

Directing your prayers to her or any of the other "saints" is like directing your prayers toward me. Catholics claim they pray to the "saints" for those

things that are too small for God to worry about, such as lost keys. What you have here, brothers and sisters, is superstition. The Church of Rome has adopted the idolatrous practices and superstitions of *so many* cults, and engaged in grievous sins that Christians have been commanded to avoid and put to death, that she has indeed become the Mother of Harlots.

Everything the Catholic Church says in regard to Mary is a bold-faced lie not based on Holy Scripture. Mary was *not* a perpetual virgin. Jesus' brothers are referred to in Matthew 12:46, Mark 3:31, Luke 8:19, and Acts 1:14; and His sisters are referred to in Matthew 13:56. Jesus has a conversation with his brothers in John 7:1-10. His brothers are specifically mentioned by name in Matthew 13:55. In Galatians 1:19, Paul refers to James, "the Lord's brother." The epistles of James and Jude were written by two of Jesus' brothers. Likewise, everything the Catholic Church says about Peter is also a bold-faced lie not based on Holy Scripture. Peter was *never* a pope. Contradictory to the Catholic Church's teachings, Peter *was* married. His mother-in-law is mentioned in all three of the synoptic gospels: Matthew 8:14, Mark 1:30, and Luke 4:38.

If the perversions we have just discussed in this section are not a literal fulfillment of Revelation 13:6, I do not know what is. Look through the history of the Roman Catholic Church, brothers and sisters, and you tell me if you do not see fulfillment line after line. The prophecies in Revelation span the entire length of our present evil age, which will culminate with the second coming of Christ Jesus.

Benjamin Franklin said, "When religion is good, it will take care of itself. When it is not able to take care of itself and God does not see fit to take care of it so that it has to appeal to the civil power for support, it is evident to my mind that the cause is a bad one." In other words, if God will not support it, why should the secular governments? The moment that the religious entity has to appeal to the civil entity for support or money or finance or influence, it is in deep trouble. We see that all around us. The moment churches do this, the government tells them what they can and cannot preach.

Conclusion

As you can see, the evidence is overwhelmingly supportive of the Latin Empire and the Latin Church being that of which Jesus prophesied. The details surrounding the Roman Catholic Church and the pope are unmistakenly precise to those prophetic details provided by Daniel, Paul, and John. Paul said that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work in his day. How can we ignore church history, believing that something that was already at work then has not been able to break through into the open for 2000 years? We need to start in the first century and work forward. When we have found

that which was working during Paul's days, and it fits with all the details of the prophecy, then we have found the "man of sin." It makes absolutely *no sense* to start in our day and work backward, and it makes *even less sense* to theorize that it is something yet in our future. According to Dispensationalism, the Jews have been without salvation of any sort for over 2000 years and there has been no fulfillment of any biblical prophecy for over 2000 years. To believe that as the case is simply incredulous.

For us to reject each pope of the Roman Catholic Church as being "the man of sin" is to ignore the blasphemy of the titles they assume (those that belong to Christ Jesus alone) and to forget all those godly saints who were burned at the stake or strangled because they dared to translate the Bible into any other language, or even possess a Bible in any other language, except for *Latin*! (Remember the calculation of the beast earlier?) For us to deny the pope of the Roman Catholic Church as being "the son of destruction" is to turn our backs on the hundreds of thousands of martyrs whose bodies were horrifically mutilated by the "Holy" Inquisition. For us to deny that the Roman Catholic Church is "the apostasy" (*apostasia*, ἀποστασία) spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2 is to minimize the gross perversion of sound doctrine that still emanates forth from within the walls of the Vatican. "Those who think that a mere seven years of Tribulation in our future could possibly be worse than the realities of the Middle Ages need to brush the dust off their history books."[160]

Are the individuals within the Roman Catholic Church to be blamed for the actions of the Roman Church State? No! They, and the rest of the world with them, have been deceived. Individual Catholics are *not* our enemy—the Roman Church State is. The individuals held captive by this system need the salvation of Jesus just like any other man or woman on this planet, but they have been deceived into believing the lie.

Several Dispensationalists are ditching the "revived Roman Empire" fable and starting to jump on the "Islamic Antichrist" bandwagon. While the acts of Islam are similar to those of the Church of Rome from history, the problem with this belief is that Islam is not an apostate from Christianity. Go back through the *Identifying Characteristics* section and ask yourself how many of them are true of Islam. You might come up with a few that are identical, but each and every single one does not fit Islam as they do the Roman Church State. Islam is only another news-headline interpretation in a long list of news-headline interpretations made by Dispensationalists. The perpetrator of this new twisting of Scripture began with Walid Shoebat, and while he makes a convincing argument through the random, isolated and disconnected

[160] David Vaughn Elliott, *Nobody Left Behind: Insight into "End Time" Prophecies* (Methuen, MA: David Vaughn Elliott, 2004), 189.

passages he cites, nevertheless it is unconvincing for the student of the Bible who *studies* his Bible and church history *very* carefully.

Be aware that Catholics and Catholic-friendly advocates, who are ignorant* and ill-informed of the history of the Church of Rome, will attack informed individuals who expose the Roman Catholic Church for what it truly is by calling them "anti-Catholic know-nothing religious bigots." They do this because they are delusionally deceived, and more than likely strongly committed to her erroneous ways.

* Ignorance does not in any way, shape, or form denote or connote stupidity. The literalness of a word is its denotation; the broader associations we have with a word are its connotations. "A person can be ignorant (not knowing some fact or idea) without being stupid (incapable of learning because of a basic mental deficiency). And those who say, 'That's an ignorant idea' when they mean 'stupid idea' are expressing their own ignorance." (Paul Brians, *Common Errors in English Usage* (Wilsonville, OR: William James & Co., 2009), 118.
<http://public.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/ignorant.html>

Chapter 8
Israel and the Church

According to the Bible

As we learned in chapter 1, Dispensationalism is that system of theology that makes a fundamental distinction between Israel and the church: church-age saints form one body and all other saints form another. But is this what the Holy Scriptures teach us? I submit to you that it is *not*. The following passages of Scripture should suffice to prove my case:

> "For just as we have many members in *one body* and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are *one body* in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Rom. 12:4-5).
>
> "Since there is one bread, we who are many are *one body*; for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17)
>
> "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are *one body*, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into *one body*, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. … But now there are many members, but *one body*" (1 Cor. 12:12-13, 20).
>
> "For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in *one body* to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity" (Eph. 2:14-16).
>
> "There is *one body* and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and

Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6). "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful" (Col. 3:15).

> "But if *some* of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were *grafted in among them* and *became partaker with them* of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' Quite right, *they were broken off for their unbelief*, but *you stand by your faith*. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, *if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in*; for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?"
>
> (Romans 11:17-24, emphasis supplied)

Tell me, brothers and sisters, who or what does the root represent in this passage? Who or what does the olive tree represent? Who are the branches that were broken off? Why were they broken off? Who are the branches that remain? Why do they remain? Who are the wild branches? Into what are the wild branches grafted? Why were they grafted in? Into what will the natural branches that were broken off be grafted? What will result in their being grafted back in? In order to understand the truth presented in this passage, these are some of the questions that you need to ask and answer. The root is Jesus Christ and the olive tree is Israel, *true* Israel.

> "For indeed circumcision is of value, if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. If therefore the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And will not he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? For *he is not a Jew who is one outwardly*; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But *he is a Jew who is one inwardly*; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."
>
> (Romans 2:25-29, emphasis supplied)

> "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For *they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel*; neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: 'Through Isaac your descendants will be named.' That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants."
>
> (Romans 9:6-8, emphasis supplied)

In Romans 11, Paul states that the branches that were broken off are *unbelieving* Israel. Therefore, the remaining branches, logically, are *believing* Israel. According to Romans 2, the branches that were broken off *are not* true Jews: "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly." Therefore, logically, the remaining branches *are* true Jews: "He is a Jew who is one inwardly." In Philippians 3:3, Paul said that *we*—Christians—are the *real* circumcision. Why? Because we have been circumcised of the heart, just as Moses commanded them to be (Deut. 10:16). According to Romans 9, the branches that were broken off *do not belong* to Israel: "They are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." Therefore, logically, the remaining branches *belong* to Israel. In Galatians 6:16, Paul called the church "the Israel of God." Although Dispensationalists want to deny this, Paul's words are as clear as day. Paul has just divided national Israel in two—believing Israel and unbelieving Israel, of which he says they are not true Jews nor do they belong to Israel. He states in Romans 11:5 that at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. He states in verse 7 that the *elect of Israel* obtained what Israel sought but *the rest* were hardened. He says that if the broken off branches do not continue in their unbelief they will be grafted *back in*. Into what? Into believing Israel, which will make them true Jews belonging to true Israel.

The branches that were broken off were broken off because of their *unbelief*, which means the ones that remained had remained because of their *belief*. Paul says that the wild branches, Gentiles, are grafted in because of their faith, which is *belief*. Therefore, you have believing Jews and believing Gentiles together in *one body*. Into what are the Gentiles grafted? Our belief grafts us into Christ, into Abraham, into the true Israel, and into the church. Galatians 4:28 says, "And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise." All Christians—Jew or Gentile—are children of the promise. Romans 4:13-16 says, "For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of

Abraham, who is the father of us all." All those who believe—Jew or Gentile—are Abraham's offspring.

John the Baptist said, "Do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 3:9-10). Likewise, John records, "They answered and said to Him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, 'If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father.' They said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.' Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. … You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. 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.'" (John 8:39-42, 44).

These words attest to what Paul was saying in Romans chapters 2 and 9. Just because you are an ethnical Jew does not make you a true Jew, Paul said in chapter 2. Just because you are physically descended from Abraham and Israel does not make you part of true Israel, Paul said in chapter 9.

In Romans 4:13, 9:8, and Galatians 4:28, Paul speaks in regard to the "promise." What promise? Well, Galatians 3:16, 27-29 say: "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is, Christ. … For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with 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. And *if you belong to Christ*, then *you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise*" (emphasis supplied). This passage teaches us:

1. Abrahamic promises were made to Abraham *and* his seed (v.16).
2. His seed is Christ (v.16).
3. *And* his seed is all who belong to Christ (v.29).
4. Therefore, the promises belong to Christ *and* to all who are His (v.29). [161]

Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who

[161] Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?*, 36.

> are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- remember that you *were* at that time *separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel*, and *strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope* and *without God in the world*. But *now* in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off *have been brought near by the blood of Christ*. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are *no longer strangers and aliens*, but you are *fellow citizens with the saints*, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
>
> (Ephesians 2:11-22, emphasis supplied)

Verse 12 of this passage of Scripture clearly teaches us that:

Gentile Christians *were*:

1. separate from Christ
2. excluded from the commonwealth of Israel
3. strangers to the covenants of promise
4. without hope
5. without God in the world

Gentile Christians *are now*:

1. in Christ
2. included in the commonwealth of Israel
3. heirs of the covenants of promise
4. with hope
5. with God in the world[162]

Dispensationalists will argue that 1, 4 and 5 are true of Gentile believers, but they want to deny 2 and 3 as being true as well. But Paul made it crystal clear that *all* of verse 12 was *formerly* true of Gentiles while *none* of verse 12 is currently true of Gentile Christians. Paul confessed that the mystery was "that the Gentiles are *fellow heirs* and *fellow members* of *the body*, and *fellow*

[162]Ibid, 33-34.

partakers of *the promise* in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. 3:6, emphasis supplied). "The body" refers to a singular entity in which all who are Christ's belong—Old and New Testament saints. "The promise" refers to that promise we have just looked at, which spoke of Christ. This is where Henrietta Mears' quote from before comes in: "In the Old Testament, the people in God's kingdom were the Israelites. In the New Testament and now, the people in God's kingdom are those who believe in and follow the Lord Jesus Christ."[163]

The *true* Israel is the *true* church and the *true* church is the *true* Israel. "For there is *no* distinction between Jew and Greek" (Rom. 10:12, emphasis supplied). There is no longer Jew or Gentile because God has broken down the dividing wall and made of the two one new person (Eph. 2:11-19). There are not two plans of redemption and two ways of receiving salvation. You are either in Christ Jesus or you are not. There is salvation by no other means and in no other name. Anything beyond this is heresy!

Dispensationalists tend to make false accusations claiming that Amillennialism and Covenant Theology teach "Replacement Theology," but as you have seen with your own eyes in this chapter, the Bible teaches an "Expansion Theology." National Israel is divided into believing and unbelieving. It is said of the unbelieving that they are not true Jews (Romans 2) and that they do not belong to true Israel (Romans 9). But if they turn, repent, and believe, they will be grafted back in with believing Israel.

The Old Testament prophesied of the Gentile inclusion in several passages, predicting God's work of taking from among the Gentiles a people for Himself. One such passage is Amos 9:11-12. So if the Old Testament prophesied about the Gentile inclusion, and Romans 11:17-24 describes that inclusion, then we must logically conclude that the *true* Israel is the *true* church and the *true* church is the *true* Israel. For God has only *one* people that make up *one* body who were baptized by *one* Spirit. Let us adhere to what the Bible teaches.

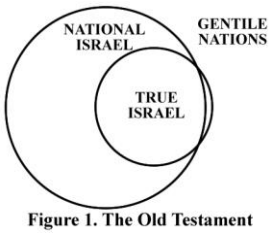

Figure 1. The Old Testament

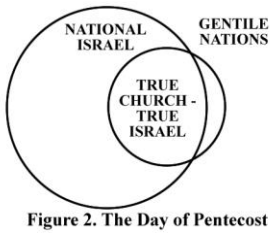

Figure 2. The Day of Pentecost

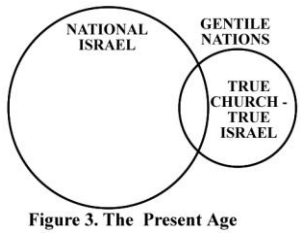

Figure 3. The Present Age

[164]

[163] Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 698-699.

[164] Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God*?, 39-41

Jesus, the True Israel

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Just as Jesus is the second Adam, so He is the second Israel, although Scripture never refers to Him by such a term. In Matthew 2:15, Hosea 11:1 is quoted as a fulfillment in Christ Jesus: "Out of Egypt did I call My Son." However, if you look at the context of Hosea 11:1-2 (and the rest of the chapter), there is *no* prediction being made here. It is speaking historically in regard to Israel. So how is it that Jesus fulfills something historical to national Israel? It is because Jesus is the *true* Israel. Israel was in the desert 40 years where they were to learn that "man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD" (Deut. 8:3). They failed to learn this lesson. However, Christ Jesus was led into the desert for 40 days wherein He quoted to Satan, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4).

Jesus has made obsolete (Heb. 8:13) and has abolished the Old Covenant in order to establish the New Covenant (Heb. 10:9). Dispensationalists deny this by their claims that the 7-year Great Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom will return to Jewish practices under the Mosaic Law. If something has been abolished and made obsolete, you cannot return to it. The book of Hebrews denies everything Dispensationalists attempt to set up.

An Unforeseen Age?

Dispensationalism claims that the church age was entirely unforeseen in the Old Testament and that it was not revealed until Jesus Christ came along and introduced it. However, this is a contradiction to Scripture. After Pentecost, Peter declared in Acts 3:24 that "*all* the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also *announced these days*" (emphasis supplied). Dispensationalists claim that the day of Pentecost marks the beginning of the church age and that it was never predicted in the Old Testament. But Peter affirms that it was not only foreseen, but also that *all* the prophets had announced it. In Acts 7:38, Stephen said, "[Moses] is the one who was in the [church] (*ekklesia*, ἐκκλησίᾳ) in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai…" Once again we find that Dispensationalism is in clear contradiction to the teachings of the Bible.

Since there are Old Testament prophecies that clearly demonstrate the church age as having been foreseen, the concept that we are living in a "parenthetical gap" cannot be legitimately sustained. It cannot be substantiated in or by God's Word. It is nothing more than vain imagination.

The true Israel is the remnant of believing Jews, which in Jesus' time were the disciples. True Israel now includes believing Gentiles who have been

grafted into this body together with faithful Jews (Rom. 11:17-24). Contrary to Dispensationalism, God has not "suspended" His purpose for national Israel; He has fulfilled it and is fulfilling it in the *true* Israel—*the church*. There is no separate purpose for the Jews outside of and apart from Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

God is not through with the Jewish people as a whole, which is what Paul addresses in Romans 9-11. They were hardened in order that salvation might be brought to the Gentiles and to make the Jews jealous. There is still a fullness of Jews that shall be saved and be grafted back in with believing Israel, the one body of Christ, the church.

Dispensationalists also claim that the gospel was not preached in the Old Testament, but this is a denial of God's Word, too. Paul declares in Galatians 3:8 that God Himself preached the gospel to Abraham: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations shall be blessed in you.'" Paul also says that this gospel was preached by *all* of the prophets in Holy Scripture (Rom. 1:1-4). Paul explains in Romans 10:15-17 that the gospel of salvation was preached by Isaiah (Isa. 52:7; 53:1). The book of Hebrews informs us that this same gospel was preached during Moses' life (4:2), which Jesus specifically states that Moses wrote of Him (John 5:46-47).

Promises Fulfilled

Dispensationalists deny that many of the Old Testament promises and prophecies have been fulfilled. It is not my desire with this book to examine all the promises and prophecies they deny and to demonstrate via Scripture how they have been fulfilled. I only want to focus on a single promise to illustrate the folly of Dispensationalism. Dispensationalists claim that the land promise to Israel as a nation has *never* been fulfilled. But according to Scripture, it *has been* fulfilled. For your consideration:

Promise	Fulfillment
Gen. 13:16 Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:18	2 Chr. 1:9; 1 Chr. 27:23* 1 Kings 4:20-21; Josh. 11:23; 21:41-45*; Neh. 9:21-25

It must be acknowledged that Abraham did not look for an earthly promise, as Dispensationalists insist. Hebrews indicates that Abraham was looking for a city that had foundations and whose Maker was God (11:9-10, 13-16). His calling was to a heavenly city, of which we, the church, are a part (Gal. 4:21-31; Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 21:2, 9-10). Further, Hebrews 3:1 says that Jews were partakers of the heavenly calling. So you see, an earthly

inheritance was never in view.

Jeremiah's New Covenant

Dispensationalists claim that the covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34 is for Israel only and that the Church has no part in it. John Walvoord says, "The premillennial view, though varying in details in the interpretation of the new covenant, insists that the new covenant as revealed in the Old Testament concerns Israel and requires fulfillment in the millennial kingdom."[165] J. Dwight Pentecost concurs in his book *Things to Come*. It is rather difficult to find fulfillment in a period that does not exist, at least according to the pre-millennial understanding of that period. But what Mr. Walvoord and Dispensationalism tend to forget is that Jesus' disciples were Israelites, those in the upper room were Israelites, and those present on Pentecost were Israelites. So to say that this prophecy was not fulfilled literally is to deliberately ignore the evidence staring us in the face. This covenant *was* made with Israel, but more importantly it was made with *true* Israel, *spiritual* Israel. That is why we see the fulfillment of it—the writing of God's law on the hearts of men (Jer. 31:33) and the Spirit of God abiding in their hearts enabling them to keep it (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26)—in the conversion and life of the Christian. As we witnessed above, Gentiles are grafted *in with* Jews and become *partakers* of the promise. In truth, the new covenant *is* for Israel, but Israel according to Scripture—spiritual Israel—and *not* according to the falsified information provided by Dispensationalists.

John Walvoord argues that Amillennialism "identifies Israel with the church and transfers the promises of the new covenant to believers in Christ in this dispensation, both Jews and Gentiles."[166] Even though he is opposed to this, this is precisely what the Bible teaches, as we observed in the first section of this chapter. In order for Dispensationalism to be true, they would have to remove the passages we looked at in the first section from the Bible, plus *many* more. Mr. Walvoord further argues that "Amillenarians have indirectly admitted [the promises of the new covenant as contained in Old Testament prophecy correspond precisely to the premillennial interpretation], first, by acknowledging that 'Jewish' interpretation anticipated an earthly, literal reign of the Messiah in which the covenant would be fulfilled."[167] Mr. Walvoord's argument is flawed on a number of levels. Because Amillennarians admit the fact of how the Jews' interpretation *anticipated* an

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[165] John Walvoord, *Millennial Series: Part 18: The New Covenant with Israel*, posted on <http://www.walvoord.com>

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

earthly, literal reign, Mr. Walvoord argues that, therefore, Amillennarians have indirectly admitted that this is how it *should* be interpreted. But that is a deliberate and wicked twisting of what the Amillennarians are saying. Amillennarians are admitting a fact about *how* the Jews interpreted the passages. *Period. Not* that their interpretation was correct. Mr. Walvoord contends it is an admission of defeat, which is sheer nonsense.

As we stated earlier in the book, which would go hand-in-hand with Mr. Walvoord's argument, the Jews were looking for a literal, physical kingdom. This is a fact. They *were* looking for a literal, physical kingdom. But just because that is *what they were looking for* and that is *how they interpreted it*, does that mean that that is the truth of the matter? *No!* As we observed, Christ Jesus Himself stated crystal clearly that "The kingdom of God *is not* coming with signs to be observed… behold, the kingdom of God *is in your midst*" (Luke 17:20-21, emphasis supplied) and "My kingdom *is not of this world*" (John 18:36, emphasis supplied). How the Jews interpreted the Scriptures and how Jesus interpreted them are two different things. The Jews' interpretation was in error.

J. Dwight Pentecost argues that "In the New Testament [the Jeremiah covenant] has no reference whatever to the church in this age."[168] If this is true, why is it that the book of Hebrews in chapters 8 and 10 quote and apply the Jeremiah covenant as fulfilled in and by Christ's New Covenant? Further, Hebrews 10:9 states "He takes away the first [covenant] in order to establish the second [covenant]." Therefore, the covenant that national Israel was under was taken away when Jesus made His new covenant. There cannot be two covenants in operation at the same time. The old one was taken away, made obsolete (Heb. 8:13), and abolished (Heb. 10:8). So Dispensationalism does not have a leg to stand on here. They are arguing *against* scriptural evidence. Let us read Jeremiah's covenant from 31:31-34:

> "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, "declares the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for

[168] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 122.

I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

The Dispensationalist's literalism falls apart in this prophecy like sand breaking beneath the beatings of the waves. In verse 32, are we to understand this as God's *literal* hand or His *spiritual* hand that led Israel out of Egypt? Are we to understand God as a *literal* husband or a *spiritual* husband to Israel? Literalism can *never* be used as a true consistent biblical hermeneutic.

Concerning this covenant, Mr. Pentecost says, "If the church fulfills this covenant, she may also fulfill other covenants made with Israel and there is no need for an earthly Millennium."[169] This statement proves that Mr. Pentecost apprehends the truth of Scripture, but due to his position regarding the millennium he refuses to accept the New Testament interpretation and fulfillment of Jeremiah's covenant. He accepts Matthew 1:23 as the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14, but does not accept Hebrews 8 and 10 as the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31. Regardless of what Mr. Pentecost and other Dispensationalists think, the author of Hebrews declared that the Jeremiah covenant was fulfilled by Christ and applied to the church:

> But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the LORD, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant, and I did not care for them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.
>
> (Hebrews 8:6-13)

The author of Hebrews says in 10:9 "'Behold, I have come to do Thy will.' He takes away the first in order to establish the second." Hebrews 10:1-10 argues that the Old Testament sacrifices were insufficient to purify the conscience and take away sins, which is why Hebrews 10:9-18 states that God sent a new sacrifice in the person of Jesus Christ to replace the old covenant

[169] Ibid, 116

with the new covenant. Notice that verses 16-17 are quoted from Jeremiah's covenant? The author of Hebrews uses this as his basis for the fulfillment thereof. True to Dispensationalism, rather than accepting what the Bible gives them, they increase it. We have seen that the Dispensationalists have created three resurrections, three judgments, three comings, and two "thief in the night" events, where Scripture speaks *only* of one each. Dispensationalism, thanks to Lewis Sperry Chafer, also teaches that there are *two* New Covenants: one for national Israel, and one in which the church partakes. They just cannot accept what the Bible is telling them. They consistently have to *add* to the Bible.

The New Jerusalem

Dispensationalists look at the new Jerusalem in Revelation and tell us that it is a "literal," physical city Jerusalem. But that is *not* what the Scriptures tell us. Look with me to Revelation 21:1-11

> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband*. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "*Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb*." *And he* carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and *showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God*. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.
>
> (Emphasis supplied)

The first thing to notice is the new heaven and new earth. It says that the

first had passed away. When did they pass away? We learned from Job 14:12 that they passed away when the resurrection took place, and we learned from 2 Peter 3:10-12 that they passed away when the day of the Lord came. Now, notice how John describes the new Jerusalem, brothers and sisters: "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem…made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." That language is rather telling what is being described here, but let us play ignorant and pretend we are not able to tell. John informs us that an angel said to him, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb," and then that angel carried him away and "showed me the holy city, Jerusalem." The angel said he was going to show him the bride and showed him new Jerusalem. The evidence is clear, brothers and sisters. The new Jerusalem is the bride of Christ, which is the church. It cannot be denied.

Conclusion

Dispensationalism is theologically bankrupt. It is nothing more than revived Judaism. If you do not believe me, just look at where their focus is. Look at who is at the center of what they teach. Israel. To them, the Bible is Israel-centric rather than Christ-centric, and everything in the Bible is about Israel rather than about Christ. Dispensationalism makes salvation by race—not by grace. Dispensationalism is unbliblical, as we have been witnessing throughout this entire book. As Christians, we *must* reject anything that does not stand up to biblical scrutiny. Brothers and sisters, Dispensationalism *does not* stand up *at all*. It is a sensationalizing and fictionalizing of the biblical text in order to make it more "exciting" and "relevant" to the world at large. Dispensationalists interpret Scripture based on news headlines—what they see in the world around us. This is how we get false prophets and false teachers.

Are we going to believe a teaching so young, not even 200 years old from its conception via Edward Irving and systematizing via John Nelson Darby, and barely over 100 years old from C. I. Scofield's popularization thereof, or are we going to believe what *over 1800 years* of Christianity taught and believed?

The Jeremiah covenant *has been* fulfilled and ratified in and by the blood of Christ Jesus. If the Jews are to *ever* be saved, they *must* come under Jesus' New Covenant, for there is salvation in *no other* name and there is *no* salvation outside of that covenant (Acts 4:11-12). Scripture repeatedly states that God in Jesus has already provided salvation for Israel. To deny this is to call God a liar and to deny the truths of His Word.

Chapter 9
Arguments for Amillennialism

The Historical Argument

1. The early church *did not* believe in the imminency of the Lord's return. Imminence means "something about to occur; ready to take place; around the corner; impending; looming; pending; threatening (as in *hanging threateningly over one's head*)." Since the Apostles were waiting for certain signs, events, and prophecies to occur first, leading up to Jesus' return, it *was not* seen as "imminent." We will look at this a bit closer in the final chapter, *Final Words*.
2. The millennial kingdom was not taught by Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, or Polycarp of Smyrna, who taught the things "he had learned from the Apostles and which the church handed down."
3. The millennial kingdom cannot be found in any of the following fifteen creeds and confessions of the church:
    1. The Apostles' Creed (second century).
    2. The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed (A.D. 381).
    3. The Athanasian Creed (fourth century).
    4. The English (Episcopalian) Confession of Edward VI, (A.D. 1553). Article XLI states, "Those who endeavour to recall the fable of the Millenarians, oppose the sacred Scriptures and precipitate themselves into Jewish insanities."
    5. The Belgic (Dutch Reformed) Confession (A.D. 1561).
    6. The Anabaptist Confession (A.D. 1600).
    7. The First Dutch Mennonite Confession (A.D. 1627).
    8. The Second Dutch Mennonite Confession (A.D. 1630).

9. The Memorable Mennonite Confession (A.D. 1632).
10. The Augsburg (Lutheran) Confession (A.D. 1530).
11. The Westminster (Presbyterian) Confession (A.D. 1647).
12. The Westminster (Presbyterian) Larger Catechism (A.D. 1647).
13. The Westminster (Presbyterian) Shorter Catechism (A.D. 1647).
14. The New Hampshire Baptist Confession (A.D. 1833).
15. The Free Will Baptist (A.D. 1834 and 1868).[170]

4. Dispensationalism began with Edward Irving and was developed under John Nelson Darby, having its roots only in recent history. Informed Dispensationalists recognize this fact while the ill-informed Dispensationalists try to deny it in the face of reality.
5. No Christian in history held to any sort of "undeveloped" form of Dispensationalism. Historical doctrinal beliefs condemn the doctrinal beliefs of Dispensationalists as the height of speculative nonsense.

Hermeneutics

6. Amillennialism is the only view which allows a *true* interpretation of all Old and New Testament passages with regard to the correct manner in which each is supposed to be interpreted. Spiritualized interpretations such as Jesus and the Apostles provided still convey a literal truth, which Dispensationalists want to deny.
7. Amillennialism recognizes there is *no* distinction between Israel and the church (Rom. 10:12; Eph. 2:11-19) because God prophesied of the Gentile inclusion (Amos 9:11-12), which Paul said was a mystery (Eph. 3:6) and expanded on (Rom. 11:17-24; Gal. 3:16, 27-29; Eph. 2:11-19). This reveals an Expansion Theology because the Gentiles are added to the true Israel, which makes the true Israel the true church and the true church the true Israel.
8. Unlike Dispensationalists, Amillennialists maintain a consistent pattern of interpretation. They do not bounce all over the place jumping from literal to speculative to allegorical. If the passage they examine is symbolic, they interpret it symbolically. If the passage they examine is historical, they interpret it historically without jumping to futuristic interpretations that the Bible does not speak of.
9. Amillennialists use the interpretive keys provided in order to interpret figurative, symbolic or parabolic passages correctly, doing the biblical text the greatest justice.

[170] Landis, *The Faith of Our Fathers on Eschatology*, 4-29.

The Reality of Tribulation

10. Amillennialism recognizes the term "great tribulation" appears only *thrice* in Scripture and *never* is it a proper noun—a name. It is *never* preceded by "the." It is a description. These tribulations are three *different* tribulations (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 2:22; 7:14).
11. Amillennialists recognize that Jesus used the first "great tribulation" to inform the disciples about great affliction that was going to come upon Israel in 70 A.D., which far exceeded the events of the Holocaust. For those who doubt, go read Josephus' *War of the Jews* where he accounts the great calamities that came upon Jerusalem and the Jews. Had those days not been cut short, every Jew would have perished. Many of those that the Romans did not kill, providing they were not fighting each other, committed suicide.
12. The first great tribulation is properly interpreted by Amillennialists as a time of great peril to come upon Israel (Matt. 24:21-22; Mark 13:19-20; Luke 19:43-44; 21:20), which took place in 70 A.D.
13. The *only* Old Testament passage that relates to a tribulation, which was fulfilled in 70 A.D., has *no* future connotations connected to it whatsoever (Dan. 12:2).
14. The *only* New Testament passage that relates to a tribulation for Jerusalem (Matt. 24:21) was spoken in regard to a calamity that was about to come upon Israel.
15. The other New Testament passages that deal with tribulation are a warning to one of the seven churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 2:22), and the tribulation that comes upon believers for their testimony (7:14).
16. In contrast to Dispensationalism, Amillennialism provides an adequate and correct explanation for the great tribulation mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24.
17. In contrast to Dispensationalism, Amillennialism provides an adequate and correct explanation for the great tribulation mentioned by the angel in Revelation 7.
18. The possibility of a believer escaping this first tribulation is mentioned in Matthew 24:15-16 and Luke 21:36
19. The church of Philadelphia was promised to be guarded from the "hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10), which was fulfilled verbatim during the time of Trajan as emperor.
20. The proper connection is maintained between the prophetic trumpets of Scripture by Amillennialism. There is no proper ground for the pivotal argument of Dispensationalism that there is no established connection

between the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11, the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52, and the trumpet of Matthew 24:31. They are one event.

21. The unity of Daniel's seventieth week is maintained by Amillennialists, as opposed to Dispensationalists who destroy the unity of Daniel's seventieth week by inventing an imaginary gap that cannot be substantiated in or by Scripture.

The Myth of the Rapture

22. The "translation" of believers is a fairytale *nowhere* revealed in the New Testament, while the second coming is a prominent and verifiable doctrine of both Testaments.
23. The "translation" of the church is *never* mentioned in *any* passage of the Bible. It is a made up concept.
24. *No* passage dealing with the resurrection of the saints at the second coming in either Testament *ever* mentions a "translation" of the saints.

The Nature of the Church

25. The church is not appointed to wrath (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 5:9) because she has been redeemed by the Lamb. The church will, however, be present at the judgment at the second coming along with the wicked (Matt. 13:37-43, 47-50; Matt. 25:31-46), which is "the great day of [the wicked's] wrath" (Rev. 6:17). That day involves blessings for the righteous (Isa. 4:2-6; 30:26; Hos. 2:18-23; Joel 3:9-21; Amos 9:11-15; Mic. 4:6-8; Zeph. 2:7; Zech. 14:6-9; 2 Tim. 1:12, 16-18; 4:7-8) and curses for the unrighteous (Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18-20; Zech. 1:14-15; Matt. 7:21-23; 24:35-39; Luke 10:8-12; 2 Thess. 1:9-10; John 12:44-50).
26. The church is informed that the day of the Lord, which comes like a thief (Matt. 24:37-44; Luke 12:36-40; 1 Thess. 1-2; 2 Pet. 3:10-12; Rev. 16:15), shall not surprise them (1 Thess 5:4) as it will the rest of the world (1 Thess. 5:3) in the same manner that it did those in Noah's days (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27) and Lot's days (Luke 17:28-30) because they are not of the darkness (1 Thess. 5:5) and have been commanded to be on guard, be ready, stay awake, and keep vigil (Matt. 24:42, 44; Mark 13:33, 35, 37; Luke 21:36; 1 Thess. 5:6).
27. Amillennialism does not divide the body of Christ the way that Dispensationalism does. The dividing of Jews from Gentiles and the Old Testament saints from the New Testament saints is based on the false doctrine of the Rapture. Hebrews informs us that the Old Testament saints should not be perfected apart from us, the New Testament saints (Heb. 11:40). Scripture declares that there is *no* distinction between Jew and

Gentile (Rom. 10:12) because we have been united into *one* body (Eph. 2:11-19). Dispensationalism maintains there are *two* bodies in direct defiance of Scripture.

28. Scripture teaches that *all*, not part, of the saints shall be resurrected together on the day of the Lord (Job 14:12; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 6:38-40, 44-45, 54; 11:24; 1 Cor. 15:22-26; 1 Thess. 4:14-17)
29. The godly remnant of the tribulation come "from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues" (Rev. 7:9-10, 13-14), not merely Israelites as maintained by Dispensationalists.
30. Amillennialism, as opposed to Dispensationalism, does not confuse general terms such as *elect, saints, church*, and *in Christ*, which refer to the saved of *all* ages. Dispensationalists maintain that those *in Christ* refers *only* to those of this age, but Scripture is perfectly clear that you *cannot* be saved if you are not *in Christ*. The Old Testament saints looked forward by faith, which set them *in Christ*. Apart from Christ they should not be saved.

The False Doctrine of Imminency

31. The reason Dispensationalism is the only view which teaches that the coming of Christ is imminent is because it contradicts the plain teachings of Scripture. See point one.
32. The second coming is described as imminent (Matt. 24:37-44; 25:1-13; Luke 12:36-40) only so far as every sign, event, and prophecy leading up to it has been fulfilled.
33. The exhortation to be on our guard, to be ready, to stay awake, and to keep vigil (Matt. 24:42, 44; Mark 13:33, 35, 37; Luke 21:36; 1 Thess. 5:6) for the coming of the Lord is significant only in the Amillennial view, and is especially contradicted by Dispensationalism.
34. Our salvation is a deliverance from the wrath that would otherwise be stored up for us, which the wicked shall justly receive on "the great day of their wrath" (Rev. 6:17). That wrath will come "upon those men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image" (Rev. 16:2), which obviously are not believers.
35. The resurrection and judgment, which take place at the second coming of the Lord (John 6:38-40, 44-45, 54; 11:24; 12:44-50; 1 Cor. 15:22-26; 50-55), concern both the saved and the unsaved (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
36. Satan was bound from deceiving the nations (Rev. 20:3) at Christ's first coming (Matt. 12:28-29; Mark 3:27), will be released shortly before the end of the age (Rev. 20:7-8), and will be cast into the lake of fire at

Christ's second coming (Rev. 20:10).

Chapter 10
Turning Believers into Bereans

First Things First

Studying the Bible is *not* coming to it and looking for verses to support your beliefs. It is coming to it with an open mind, allowing it to say what it says, and then to conform your beliefs to it. One might want to read Ezekiel 14:4 and examine himself to see what idols are in his own heart when he comes to God's Word.

> Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols.

If you approach God's Word with idols or pre-conceived ideas in your heart, God is going to *allow* you to see whatever you desire to see simply because you *want* to see it. You are unwilling to see anything else that He desires to show you. In a sense, you are quenching the Holy Spirit. You are so proud and stubborn that you choose to elevate how you were raised and what you were taught (or worse yet, your subjective opinions and personal feelings) *above* the Word of God. In so doing, you have become unwilling to listen to rational biblical teaching.

I have stated earlier that reading only those books that support your position *is not* studying the Bible. It is the *epitome* of being spoon-fed. The reason you stick with books that only support your view is because you enjoy your ears being tickled. You do not want to have to *think*, and you want even less to have to admit that *you were wrong* in the beliefs that you held. This is

known as pride, which does not impress the Lord. It is important to study biblical positions *other than your own* position, because:

- You *may* be wrong.
- You need to understand *compassionately* the doctrinal views of Christians who disagree with you.
- Your own position *will be stronger* if it is tested by being exposed to other positions.
- Truth is *never* afraid of light.

I was raised under the beliefs of Dispensationalism. I attended a Dispensational Bible Institute. When I discovered that the Rapture was *nowhere* to be taught in Scripture, I fought hard to hold onto those beliefs. In fact, I tried to take the easy route out by telling myself, "*Whether there is or is not a Rapture, I know where I am going when I die or Jesus returns.*" However, because I desired God's truth *over* and *above* the way in which I was raised and what I had been taught, I submitted to the Spirit's leading and to the truth as revealed in God's Holy Word. The more I studied the Bible simply for what *it* had to say, the more I noticed the flaws and holes within the Dispensational system of theology. I had no choice but to submit to what was revealed in Scripture if I wanted to be obedient to my Lord and be taught His truths.

Obviously, the first step you need to do in order to have effective Bible study is to pray. Before you open up your Bible, you should pray. Before you read it, before you study it; pray. Never, never, *never* open the Scriptures without the Holy Spirit. Pray for His guidance and His leading. *Do not* ask the Lord to show you what you already perceive to be true. Ask Him to reveal *His* truth to you, and make sure that you are doing so with a willing heart to accept that truth *no matter what it may cost you*. If you ask Him to show you His truths, but are unwilling to humble yourself and submit to them, regardless of whether or not you like what you are shown, then you are merely asking out of insincerity, which is sin. You ask Him to show you His truths but have no intention of humbling yourself and submitting to them in obedience. What you really want for God to do is to verify your pre-conceived pre-suppositions, regardless of whether they contain an ounce of truth or not. So the truth is that you do not really desire the truth. Such an attitude in a professing Christian is tragic.

Prerequisites of Interpretation

You need to be regenerated. If you are not saved, seek Jesus diligently in prayer and ask Him to save you. If you are saved, then avoid sin and allow Him complete control over your life. The unregenerate person is spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4) and spiritually dead (Eph. 2:2). He cannot discern things of

a spiritual nature (1 Cor. 2:9-16). The Holy Spirit is the Author of truth (John 16:13) and will guide the believer into the truth of God's Word, providing the believer is willing to subject Himself to that truth in humility. As you are guided into the truth, you need to react to the Word in obedience. Disobedience to God's revelation quenches the Spirit's leading, which makes the believer susceptible to error in both interpretation and practical application (James 1:22; 4:17).

The Bible is holy (2 Tim. 3:15), therefore you need a genuine reverence, respect, and hunger for and interest in the Bible. Having such will protect you from laziness and carelessness. You need to be willing to study and do research, gaining knowledge of biblical culture, history, and theology so that you can approach God's Word with sound judgment and understanding (2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11). If all God's people had the same principles of hermeneutics and did thorough, accurate study, all the doctrinal conclusions would be the same. Unfortunately, there is much pre-conceived subjective opinions based on personal feelings that dominate the scene. Interpretation based on personal feelings and opinions is the evidence of a disobedient person unwilling to submit to the authority of God and the truth of His Word.

Recognize that even when approached with the greatest care, humility and prayerfulness, no human interpretation is infallible. Watch out for pride! Be teachable by being willing to receive teaching from those God has gifted in the Church to teach others (Acts 2:42). Be careful whom you trust. It is so very important that you test *everything* against the Bible, no matter how great a man of God he may be. Scripture is the final authority of truth.

Errors to Avoid

As you study Scripture, there are several common interpretational errors that you *must* avoid.

1. Do not make the Bible say what *you* want it to say. I addressed this in the Introduction, and I have mentioned it frequently throughout this chapter. You *cannot* come to the Bible looking for what *you want* to find in it. Otherwise you are trying to conform the Bible to *you*. It is *you* who are to be conformed to the Bible. Let the Bible say what God intended it to say. The first rule of hermeneutics is: If the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense.
2. Do not think the Bible is all about you or that it was written to you. There is much that can be applied to you, but you cannot apply something that was meant specifically for an individual of the Bible. There are four gaps that need to be overcome so that you can understand the Bible correctly, the way it was meant to be understood. These are the language gap, the cultural gap, the

geographical gap, and the historical gap. They are precisely what their names suggest.

3. Do not try and interpret Scripture through the lens of your customs and culture. For example, just because you benefit from electricity today, do not be ignorant and assume that this is the way it has always been or that this is the way it is for everybody in the world. It is untrue. London, Ontario first turned on its power only 100 years ago. Imagine, 100 years ago they did not have what you have, enjoy, and take for granted today. You cannot interpret the Bible based on your perceptions of life. That is why point 2 is so critical; studying the various gaps that lead to proper interpretation. A further example: Throughout history, and in the majority of the world today, people operated based upon familial units. The self-centered individualistic Western mindset did not exist until the Renaissance. So Westerners *cannot* read and interpret certain aspects of the Bible based on their individualism. They *must* understand those aspects in terms of familial units. When the head of the household converted, the entire household followed instinctively, whether they personally agreed or not. Abraham is a perfect example, as is Adam in being our head and representative.
4. Avoid superficial interpretation. Some examples of this are when individuals will say things like, "I feel…" or "To me, this passage means…" Other examples, such as "collapsing context," are when individuals will take the same term or word and try to unify them into a singular doctrine or teaching. We addressed one example in chapter 4, where Dispensationalists claim the two "little horn's" are one and the same, when the context clearly reveals that this is not the case. Another example can be found in the section *Context* later in this chapter.
5. If you study the New Testament carefully, you will find that Jesus and the Apostles re-interpreted many Old Testament passages, even spiritualizing them. Dispensationalists will tell you that this should never be done, but the evidence clearly demonstrates that Jesus and the Apostles did precisely this. We should follow their example. However, we *are not* to make up our own spiritualizing of the text. Simply read the text as it was written and allow the Bible to interpret itself. If the New Testament quotes an Old Testament passage, carefully note how it interprets it. If it spiritualizes it, then *that* is how you must understand that passage.

How to Study the Bible

The wrong way to study the Bible is by relying entirely upon others. Far too many Christians are clothed in spiritual "hand-me-downs," borrowing or stealing conclusions of others (pastor, Bible school professor, commentator, Christian writer, etc.) for the biblical knowledge they possess—or do not possess. Relying solely on others is known as being spoon-fed. If the people you parrot misinterpreted the text to begin with, how tragic it is for you and those you attempt to teach? As I pointed out in the Introduction, secondary biblical knowledge does not produce a genuine heart-felt faith. It never becomes real to you because you have not settled it in your heart and made it your own. This kind of knowledge lacks the deep faith, spiritual power, and intimacy with Christ that all Christians should crave.

The right way to study the Bible is the long, thorough and intensive way. Proper biblical study takes a great deal of time and effort. Again, as I said in the Introduction, merely reading your Bible every day *is not* studying the Bible. In order to study the Bible rightly, you need a guide (Acts 8:30-31). According to John 16:13, our guide *must be* the Holy Spirit, Who is the Author of truth. As I indicated in the opening of this chapter, you must *never* open the Scriptures without the Holy Spirit.

In order to be a successful expositor, you need the proper knowledge and tools to do your job. Before you begin to study the Scriptures, there are three principles/rules that you must apply.

STEP 1—Observation of the text. You need to ask the question, "What does it say?" First, you must observe the internal text, becoming familiar with your selected text by reading over it several times until you can see all of its elements and details. Second, you must observe the external context, realizing that everything in the Bible is tied together, and so locating these other passages of Scripture and becoming familiar with them lest you arrive at some very wrongly divided conclusions. Always start with 1:1, because every text has a beginning. The Bible was not written with the divisions of verses and chapters as we have today; so do not trust them. You can determine the main subject by asking "Who?" or "What?" Note when the main subject changes and mark that place as the end of your text. You might use a mark such as this: ///.

When observing the internal text, you need to be able to answer such questions as: What is God doing in the text? What people are mentioned? What are they doing? Does the text mention a date, a time, or a place? Does the text refer to something else in the Bible? You should be able to answer these questions and more once you have become familiar with your selected text. When observing the external context, you need to examine the surrounding verses (immediate context), the surrounding chapters (sectional

context), and other passages (canonical context). You also need to become familiar with the outline, purpose, and themes of the book in which your text resides, looking for similarities to your selected text. You should be studying the grammar, history, and theology of the text.

STEP 2—Interpretation of the text. You need to ask the question, "What did it mean?" After accomplishing everything in step one, you should be able to make some preliminary statements concerning the meaning of your selected text. You need to be aware of what the original audience understood by the words that were being spoken to them. Remember, contrary to Dispensationalism, Jesus and the Apostles *never* spoke over the heads of their listeners. What they told their hearers had *direct* application to them, and they would have understood it clearly. To claim that Jesus and the Apostles spoke over the heads of their hearers with grand things having to do with millennia in the future, of which they would have no understanding whatsoever, is a cop-out for *poor* biblical study.

When you interpret the text, you need to do so critically in regard to your interpretation, making use of rational and logical sense. Texts *only* have *one* meaning. A text *cannot* mean one thing to me and another to you. God says what He means and means what He says. Exegesis is a taking out of the text based on what it says. Eisegesis is a reading into the text based on how one feels. We have covered many eisegetical interpretations of the Dispensationalists within the pages of this book, correcting them apologetically via exegetical interpretation.

After you have studied your selected text thoroughly and conclusively, using some study tools to aid you in the process, and are sure of your interpretation, it is time to verify your interpretation by consulting with others. This is where consulting commentaries should come in. They are the last step in your biblical study and interpretation process. If you examine several, you can see whether or not you have strayed from the general consensus. If you seem to be out of sorts with a wide variety of commentators, it might be wise to double check your work. You may have made an error along the way. But also remember that the commentators are fallible men, so just because they may all agree does not mean they are correct. Study your text carefully, thoroughly, with humility, and under the Spirit's guidance, willing to submit to His leading and teaching. If the evidence backs your interpretation, it just might be that the other commentators approached the text via a pre-supposition and misunderstanding. None of us are infallible.

STEP 3—Application of the text. You need to ask the question, "What does it mean for me?" After you have verified your interpretation of the text, then you need to believe that interpretation and act accordingly. Remember, James told us that faith without works is dead. Faith needs to be put into action, just as Abraham was justified by offering up Isaac. His faith was put

into action, and because He believed God, His faith was counted for righteousness. Scripture aims at changing our lives, and when we have learned a particular truth about Scripture, we need to allow it to change our life. Otherwise we are being disobedient children.

The most important aspect of Bible study is not in the knowledge or application of what you have learned, but in sharing that truth with others. When others have it wrong, we are obligated to correct them as Christ corrected us. If we learn a truth and do not share it, we do our brothers and sisters a disservice. We are not pleasing the Son and glorifying the Father. God wants us to share His truths with the rest of His children. Remember it! Share it!

Context

When you read 1 Thess. 4:13-18, it *sounds* like it teaches what the Dispensationalist wants to convince you of, but what does it say when you read it in the context of the entire chapter? What about in the context of the entire letter or book? Ah, now it takes on an entirely different understanding. About the only book in the Bible where you can quote random, isolated verses and still have them reflect their original context is the book of Proverbs. There are three things you should always remember when interpreting the Bible: Context, context, context!

Remember, start with 1:1. Examine the surrounding verses (immediate context), the surrounding chapters (sectional context), and other passages (canonical context). If you make sure you do this consistently, you will prevent yourself from performing what is called "collapsing context," where you take two separate passages (Proverbs 8:1-17 and 1 Corinthians 1:30) and connect them as if they are related.

Some genuine Bible preachers will mistakenly preach a sermon wherein they teach that because Jesus is the wisdom of God, Proverbs 8 must be referring to Jesus. However, certain cults, like the Jehovah's Witnesses, also teach this because in this passage it says that wisdom is created, and they believe Jesus to be a created being—not God Himself. The biggest evidence that Proverbs 8 is *not* speaking about Jesus as being the Wisdom of God is that Proverbs calls wisdom "she." Jesus is not a she. The wisdom spoken of here is the attribute of wisdom and is contrasted against the harlot throughout the entire book of Proverbs. So the two passages have *nothing* to do with each other. Even John Calvin mistakenly associated Proverbs 8:15 in relation to Christ Jesus being the eternal wisdom of God in his commentary on Daniel, even though Jesus is such.

Exegesis vs. Eisegesis[171]

The word "exegesis" comes from the Greek verb ἐξήγησις (from ἐξηγεῖσθαι "to lead out"), which means "to draw out." Simply put, exegesis is about *drawing out from* the text the true meaning of a biblical verse or passage. "Exegesis does not take a quote from the Bible to prove the Bible. It scientifically scrutinizes the text according to historical context, cultural context, literary context and usage, multiple languages that might have been used, archeological finds, etc. A good way to support your thesis is to ignore all evidence to the contrary."[172] Exegesis, then, is an investigation. It attempts to determine the historical, cultural, and geographical context within which a particular verse exists. The questions we always have to be asking are: Who is doing the speaking? Who is being spoken to? What is being said? What is going on here? When observing the external context, proper exegesis examines the surrounding verses (immediate context), the surrounding chapters (sectional context), and other passages (canonical context). It lets the Bible speak for and interpret itself. Today's reader must try to enter the world of the biblical author and seek to understand what the author was saying. If we fail to pay attention to the world in which the Bible was written, we will simply read biblical texts and infuse them with meaning from our social world and conclude that the Bible does not speak directly to our circumstances. "The interpreter must come to the Bible as open as possible, without any theological bias or presuppositions."[173] Exegesis utilizes "hermeneutics," which means "the art and science of biblical interpretation."

In contrast to this, what many do instead is what some theologians refer to as "frontloading"; i.e., they read their own personal, political, or ideological beliefs back *into* the Bible instead of reading *out from* the Bible what the original authors were saying. This process of reading one's own presuppositions, agendas, biases, and/or ideas into the interpretation of the Bible is called "eisegesis," from the Greek εἰς, which means "into." "It is the interpreter's job to represent the text, "not the prejudices, feelings, judgments, or concerns of the exegete. To indulge in the latter is to engage in eisegesis, 'a reading into' a text what the reader wants it to say.""[174] Eisegesis occurs when a reader imposes her/her interpretation *into* and *onto* the text. There is *only* ever *one* interpretation to a text; but there may be *many* applications to a text.

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[171] Parts of this section were contributed to by Alex Haiken.

[172] Manfred T. Brauch, *Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 293.

[173] Mal Couch, *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2000), 169.

[174] Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), 45.

Personal experience *does not* interpret or determine what the Word of God says. Personal feelings and opinions *do not* interpret or determine what the Word of God says. Presumptions, inferences, assumptions, and conclusions drawn from assumptions *do not* interpret or determine what the Word of God says. Personal presuppositions, prejudices, agendas, biases, and/or ideas *do not* interpret or determine what the Word of God says. The practices and acceptances of our day and age *do not* interpret or determine what the Word of God says. All of this is to engage in eisegesis. Eisegesis is at best unwise, and at worst extremely dangerous.

Exegesis and eisegesis are conflicting approaches to interpreting the Bible. Why? Exegesis is *reading out from* the Bible what the original authors were saying. Eisegesis is *reading into* the Bible one's own ideas or prejudices. Exegesis is about *drawing out* the true meaning of a Bible passage. Eisegesis is about *putting into* the text something never intended by the author. Exegesis tends to be *objective* when employed effectively while eisegesis is regarded as highly *subjective*. The Bible gives us a clear example of exegesis: "They read from the book...translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading" (Neh. 8:8). Exegesis, however, is not an easy task and is not for the faint of heart. Like most things of value, it requires some work on our part.

Tools to Be Assimilated

Remember that *only* the Bible is infallible, inerrant, and inspired. While they are helpful indeed, we are never to view the concordances, dictionaries and commentaries in this light. The wise student will choose his tools (and teachers) *very* carefully, making sure they line up with Scriptural truths.

There are several excellent tools for study available these days, which represent the selfless efforts and labour of many gifted servants of God. Assimilating the right tools into your trade will benefit you immensely and greatly enrich your efforts. These tools must *never* replace your own personal efforts, otherwise you are falling back into the realm of being spoon-fed. Remember, not all tools are equal. If you are unsure of the author and what they believe or teach, find someone trustworthy to receive godly counsel from. There have been several heretics who have released their own tools under the guise of being "Christian" material. One such man was Charles Finney who, in his "Systematic Theology," attacks every historically-held doctrine of the Bible.

Concordances:

Concordances are handy little tools that allow you to look up a specific word and find where else in Scripture that same word has been used, enabling you to observe the progression of a particular idea or doctrine. They allow

you to develop distinctly biblical theology through the study of specific words, allowing you to trace an author's emphasis of a particular word while learning the various shades of meaning behind that word. They are also handy for helping you to locate a particular verse that seems to be evading you. Some will even help you identify the word in Hebrew or Greek, ascertaining the usage of that word so that you can better understand its meaning. It is a good idea to be sure your concordance is based on the Bible translation that you are studying from. Three English concordances are:

- *Strong's Strongest Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*
- *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*
- *Cruden's Complete Concordance*

As my Theology professor was fond of saying, "Strong's for the strong, Young's for the young, and Cruden's for the crude." There are also original-language concordances that allow you to trace the use of a particular Hebrew or Greek word throughout the Bible:

- *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament*
- *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*

Another great book that would fit in this category is the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, a colossal cross-reference volume.

Word Studies:

There are several word study books that may be *very* helpful to you because they examine the specific meanings of words within the context of a passage (and of the Bible itself), offering an enriched perspective and an in-depth understanding of the text and how it should be communicated. As you know, the Bible was not written in English, but in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. It is a good practice to get familiar with the original words and how they were used and what they meant, because *no* translation from the original manuscripts is perfect. Some of the more trustworthy word studies are as follows:

- *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* – Joseph Thayer
- *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* – Francis Brown, C. Briggs, S. R. Driver
- *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* – Kittel, Friedrich, Bromiley
- *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old & New Testaments* – Spiros Zodhiates, editor
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A. T. Robertson
- *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* – Kenneth Wuest
- *Vincent's New Testament Word Studies* – Marvin Vincent

- *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* – W. E. Vine

Dictionaries/Encyclopedias/Handbooks:

Bible dictionaries list and explain words and subjects found within the Bible. There are even some Hebrew and Greek dictionaries. Bible encyclopedias provide historical, doctrinal, cultural, geographical, and bibliographical background information. Bible handbooks provide historical and cultural background information, usually with comments on particular books and passages. A few sources in this area are:

- *New Unger's Bible Dictionary* – Merrill Unger
- *Encyclopedia of Bible Words*
- *Encyclopedia of Bible Characters*
- *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* – J. I. Packer & M. C. Tenney
- *New Unger's Bible Handbook* - Merrill Unger
- *Wilmington's Bible Handbook* – Harold Wilmington
- *Halley's Bible Handbook* – H. H. Halley
- *Ryken's Bible Handbook* – Leland Ryken, Philip Ryken, James Wilhoit
- *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* – Leland Ryken
- *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* – Millard Erickson

Some of these, such as *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, *Unger's Bible Handbook*, and *Wilmington's Bible Handbook*, will reflect the author's pre-suppositions, so be careful. Remember, these works are not inspired—only the Holy Bible is.

Commentaries:

These should *never* be your first line of defense. Commentaries are your *last* resort in your study. Commentaries give the author's opinion in regard to how a text is to be interpreted. They provide helpful background, introductory, and summary information on the books of the Bible. There are many excellent single-volume and multi-volume works. Some may be devotional in style while others may be analytical or exegetical. Choose your commentaries carefully and wisely, reading with great discernment and comparing their opinions against Scripture. Some of the more trustworthy commentaries are as follows:

- *Calvin's Commentaries* – John Calvin
- *Hebrews* – John Owen
- *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* – Matthew Poole
- *Matthew Henry's Commentary*

- *Bible Commentary* – Jamieson, Fausset & Brown
- *Treasury of David* – Charles Spurgeon
- *Commentary on the Old Testament* – Keil & Delitzsch
- *New Testament Commentary* – Hendriksen & Kistemaker
- *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* – Wiseman, editor
- *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* – Morris, editor
- *Reformed Expository Commentary* – various authors
- *The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary* – various authors
- Various commentaries by James Montgomery Boice
- *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* – Beale & Carson, editors

Commentaries to be *extremely cautious* with (and perhaps safer to avoid): J. Vernon McGee, Warren Wiersbe, John Phillips, John MacArthur, William MacDonald, Merrill Unger, H. A. Ironside, and John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, editors.

Systematic Theologies:

"Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, 'What does the whole Bible teach us today?' about any given topic."[175] It is the gathering of verses and passages that are specifically relevant to any given doctrine or teaching of Scripture so that we can better understand the whole of that doctrine or teaching in order to know what we should believe about it. Some of the more trustworthy systems of theology are as follows:

Reformed (or Presbyterian):

- *Institutes of the Christian Religion* – John Calvin
- *Biblical Theology* – John Owen
- *The Works of John Owen* – John Owen
- *The Words of Jonathan Edwards* – Jonathan Edwards
- *Systematic Theology* – Charles Hodge
- *Reformed Dogmatics* – Heinrich Heppe
- *Dogmatic Theology* – William G. T. Shedd
- *Systematic Theology* – Robert Lewis Dabney
- *Outlines of Theology* – A. A. Hodge
- *Biblical and Theological Studies* – B. B. Warfield
- *The Doctrine of God* – Herman Bavinck
- *Reformed Dogmatics* – Geerhardus Vos
- *Systematic Theology* – Louis Berkhof
- *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* – J. Oliver Buswell
- *Collected Writings of John Murray* – John Murray

[175] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 21.

- *An Old Testament Theology* – Bruce K. Waltke
- *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* – Robert L. Reymond
- *Foundations of the Christian Faith* – James Montgomery Boice
- *Systematic Theology* – John M. Frame
- *A New Testament Biblical Theology* – G. K. Beale
- *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* – Michael Horton

Baptist:

- *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* – John Gill
- *Abstract of Systematic Theology* – James P. Boyce
- *Systematic Theology* – Augustus Strong
- *Christian Theology* – Millard Erickson
- *Systematic Theology* – Wayne Grudem

Systematic Theologies to avoid: Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles Ryrie, Henry Thiessen, Norman Geisler, and Thomas Oden.
Systematic Theologies to avoid containing *great* heresies: Charles Finney.

Conclusion

The Bible tells us that the Bereans were more noble because "they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). God's Word tells us to study "to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Interestingly enough, Scripture shows us how we are to do just that: "They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading" (Neh. 8:8). *That* is proper biblical study. *That* is exegesis. Read from God's Word; translate in order to give the sense. I hope that is not only what I have shown you throughout this book, but what I have taught you in this chapter.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you my passion, the study and defense of God's Word. I pray God has used it to bless you and that He has used it to glorify His name.

"*Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Thy name give glory.*" **–Psalm 115:1**

Final Words

Is Christ's Return Imminent?

The following was borrowed from an article by Dr. Robert Morey.[176] While there are a couple doctrinal/interpretational points I disagree entirely with him on, I agree entirely with the point of this article on how Christ's return *was not* and *could not* be "imminent" until certain things had happened.

A. The common denominator: No Christian can rightfully set a date for Christ's return for no one knows the exact hour or day of His return (Matt. 24:36, 42, 44; 25:13).

B. The imminent return theory: Christ's return is possible this very minute. It is always at hand, ready to happen at any moment. There are no signs or prophecies that must precede Christ's coming for the church. It will be an absolute surprise to the Christian for it will come "as a thief in the night." This means Christ's return will be sudden, without warning, a surprise, and a secret.

   According to this theory, Christ's return was imminent for the apostles for they looked for Christ's return to happen suddenly and without warning. It has always been imminent throughout the ages.

C. The historic and majority view:

   1. Christ's return for his church is preceded by signs and fulfilled prophecies which the observant Christian will see and thus prepare himself for the return of Christ. Only the disobedient Christian will be caught off guard by the

[176] Dr. Robert Morey, *Is Christ's Return Imminent?*, posted on <http://faithdefenders.com/bible-prophecy/Is_Christs_Return_Imminent.html>.

coming of Christ. For the obedient Christian, Christ's return will not be as "a thief in the night" (Matt. 24:25; I Thess. 5:1-9, II Thess. 2:1-12).

2. Because of the absence of the necessary signs in the sky and on the earth and the many prophecies which must yet be fulfilled which precede Christ's coming, His coming was not imminent from the time of the apostles up to the present day.
3. While we cannot know the exact hour or day of Christ's return, the presence or absence of the signs and fulfilled prophecy which precede and herald that coming do indicate, according to Scripture, if that coming is far or near (Lk. 21:25-31; Matt. 24:32-33).
4. Because there are signs and fulfilled prophecies which precede Christ's return, we are told to watch for them (Matt. 24:42; 25:1-13; Lk. 21:28).
5. The nearness or farness of Christ's return should not affect our continued preparation for His return. All the signs and prophecy may come to pass in any generation of believers.
   Illustration: A young couple prepares for their first baby even though they know it is months away and that the birth is preceded by the signs of labor.
6. Once all the signs and fulfilled prophecies have come to pass, then the return of Christ is truly imminent.

D. The teaching of Christ (I Tim. 6:3-4): Christ taught that certain signs and fulfilled prophecies would precede His return. These signs and prophecies mean that His return is not to be viewed as secret, private, sudden, a surprise, or "as a thief in the night" so far as the observant Christian is concerned (Lk. 21:25-28). The following things are to precede Christ's return according to His own teaching. These things reveal that the apostles could not have possibly thought or taught that Christ's return was imminent.
   1. Before His ascension, Christ prophesied the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Because of this prophecy, Christ could not come until His words had been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Thus from His ascension to Pentecost, Christ's return was not imminent (Lk. 24:49).
   2. Before His ascension, Christ prophesied that Peter would grow old; he would then be captured and finally be martyred for his testimony for Him. Because of this prophecy, Christ could not return as long as Peter was alive. Peter had to grow old, be captured, and finally be martyred

to fulfill the words of Christ. All the Christians knew that as long as Peter was alive, Jesus could not come. Peter died around A.D. 67. Thus from the ascension to Peter's death (67 A.D.), Christ's return was not imminent (John 21:18-19; I Pet. 1:13-15).

3. Having established that Christ's coming was not imminent until Peter's death (A.D. 67), none of Paul's or Peter's Epistles can have any references to an imminent return of Christ because all of the epistles were written before A.D. 67 and both men knew the prophecies of Christ, and that His coming was not possible at that time. The epistles of Paul and Peter make no reference to an imminent return of Christ.
4. Before His ascension, Christ prophesied that His church would be planted in Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria, and then to "the ends of the earth." This prophecy was not fulfilled by the early church and has yet to be fully fulfilled. Until the church has been planted in every tribe, tongue and nation, Christ's coming is not imminent (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:7f; Rev. 7:9).
5. Before His ascension, Christ prophesied the total destruction of Herod's temple by foreign armies. The temple was not destroyed until A.D. 70. Thus from His ascension to the destruction of Herod's temple (A.D. 70), Christ's return was not imminent (Matt. 24:1; Mk. 13:1; Lk. 21:5-6).
6. Before His ascension, Christ prophesied certain signs to precede His return. These signs were not present in the early church and are not fully present right now. They are still future. Thus until all these signs are clearly and fully fulfilled, Christ]s coming is not imminent (Matt. 24; Mk.13; Lk. 21).
7. After His ascension, Christ prophesied that the apostle Paul would go to Rome and preach His gospel. Until Paul got to Rome, Christ could not come. Thus from His ascension to the time when Paul got to Rome (A.D. 61), Christ's return was not imminent (Acts 23:11; 27:24). None of Paul's epistles written before he got to Rome could possibly teach that Christ's return was imminent.
8. After His ascension, Christ prophesied that the church at Smyrna would pass through a great persecution in the future. He challenged them to suffer faithfully. Until the Smyrna church had been through this trial, Christ could not

come. Thus from His ascension to the trial of the church at Smyrna, Christ's coming was not imminent (Rev. 2:10).

9. Christ in various parables connected His church and His coming with the end of the age. Until all the Biblical Prophecies leading up to the end of the age, and the prophecies concerning the end of the age have been fulfilled, Christ cannot come. Thus Christ's return cannot be imminent (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50; 25:14-30)

E. The teaching of the apostles: In addition to Christ's prophecies which were to precede the second coming, the apostles added prophecies of their own which made an imminent return impossible.
   1. Peter stated that Christ could not return until the time for restoration of all things as predicted by the Old Testament prophets. To Peter, Christ's coming could not be imminent because of his prophesied death and the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets (Acts 3:21).
   2. Paul prophesied a coming apostasy in the Ephesian church. Until this great apostasy in the Ephesian church had taken place, Christ could not come. His return was not imminent (Acts 20:28-30).
   3. Paul plainly states in II Thess. 2 that Christ's coming was not imminent because the great apostasy and the coming of the Antichrist must take place first. Christ's return is not imminent until these things are accomplished.
   4. The book of Revelation places the return of Christ in Chapter 19. Until all the events leading up to this chapter are accomplished, Christ's return cannot be considered imminent.
   5. In Scripture, the coming of Christ is always connected with the end of the age (Matt. 24:28:20; I Cor. 1:8; 15:23-24). The following things must happen before the end of the age, thus before the return of Christ:
      a. Israel had to be destroyed as a nation, enslaved and scattered over all the earth. A long time of persecution and distress would be upon the Jew (Deut. 28:63-68; Ezk. 37f). Until they were gathered back to the land, Christ's return was not imminent. Thus the early church knew that Christ's return was not imminent. It has only been since 1948 that this prophecy has been fulfilled.
      b. The Roman Empire had to be destroyed. This

empire would break apart into many states. The empire would be in this condition until the end of the age. Until the fall and ruin of the Roman Empire had taken place, Christ could not come. To the early church this was conclusive proof that Christ could not return in their day until the then present very powerful Roman Empire fell apart, went into ruin (Dan. 2:40-43; 7:7-8, 23-25).

c. When the last stages of this age begin, the world must be sufficiently one in religion, commerce, and government for the Antichrist to take complete control of the earth. Until the World is at this condition, Christ's return is not imminent.

d. Another possible proof is gained from the widely held view that Rev. 2-3 gives prophetically the seven future spiritual conditions of the church. Thus until the church had reached the Laodicean stage, Christ's return could not be imminent.

Conclusion.

The coming of Christ could not have been imminent for the early church because of the many prophecies that had to be fulfilled first. The coming of Christ cannot be imminent today because the Scriptures definitely prophesy certain events to precede the coming of Christ. These events are still future.

Matthew 24: The Disciples' Two Questions

> "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?'"
>
> (Matthew 24:3)

Dispensationalists teach that the disciples had asked three questions here. They must in order to impose their system of theology into the text. But Dispensationalists are wrong once again. There are *two* questions asked here:

1. When shall these things be?
2. What shall be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?

Jesus' return and the end of the age are one and the same. They happen at the same time. The moment Jesus returns, it is the end of this age and the age to come (eternity) is ushered in. The second question is one question, not two.

When Will the Temple Be Destroyed?

The first question was in regard to the destruction of the temple. They were told that there would be many false signs (**24:4-8**). The first true sign of

the temple's coming destruction would be tribulation (**24:9-14**). The second and final sign would be the "Abomination of Desolation" (**24:15-20**). The answer to their first question was fulfilled in 70 A.D.

With verse 21, things start to get a little stickier to interpret. There will be an increase in tribulation leading up to the destruction of the temple. But the language seems to go beyond just 70 A.D. ("no human being"). There will continue to be false prophets during this time of further tribulation (**vv. 23-28**), but do not be tricked because when Jesus returns, *everyone* will know it (**v. 27**). Jesus begins to answer the second question (**vv. 29-31**). The period of tribulation will some day end without warning. What has to happen before Jesus returns? Tribulation. The church has lived in constant tribulation, and it will continue to do so until Jesus returns and the end of the age occurs. Jesus' point here, through the end of chapter 25, is that there is *no specific sign or warning*.

When Will You Return and the End of the Age Occur?

Jesus speaks specifically about signs preceding the two events (the destruction of the temple, and His return). With regard to the first question, they were told to watch for the signs (**vv. 32-35**). With regard to the second question, they were told that there would be no signs preceding His return because *no one* knows when Jesus will return (**v. 36**).

Jesus' return...

- Will catch people unaware (**24:37-44** [especially 42 and 44]).
- May come sooner than you think (**24:45-51**).
- May come later than you think (**25:1-13**).

Be prepared for His return. Do not become preoccupied with looking for signs. How can you be prepared? We prepare for His return by being good stewards of what He has given us (**25:14-30**).

Matthew 25:31-46 is Jesus' discourse on the final judgment.

Eschatology is primarily ethical—not a detailed road map into the future. People who get preoccupied with looking for this sign and that sign have taken their eyes off of Christ. They examine this tree and that tree, but miss the forest for the trees. Our eyes are to be set on Christ and focused on Him alone. We are to be striving to enter heaven and to become like Him. Remember, the Bible tells us that without holiness no one will see Jesus. Faith "alone" is not enough. We need to *act* in accordance with that faith. "Actions speak louder than words." Do not just talk the talk, walk the walk.

Dispensational Address

If you are a Dispensationalist, you must, if you are at least humble and honest, agree with me that your system of theology is relatively new, having never been taught prior to the early 1800's. It was first introduced in the early

19th century by a man named Edward Irving and later picked up by John Nelson Darby. Samuel P. Tregelles (1813-1875), a noted biblical scholar, rejected Darby's new interpretation as the "height of speculative nonsense."[177]

According to your interpretation of Scripture, my Dispensationalist friend, we must conclude that the church was wrong about her theology for *1800 years* until you, and your partners in this new-fangled theology, came along and got it right. In other words, it means that God, in all His great wisdom and providence, allowed His church to be purposefully languished for 1800 years before He "enlightened" His ambassadors, the Dispensationalists, to the truth. It calls into question Jude's admonition; that the faith *has been* once delivered to the saints.

You are saying that we have all had it wrong and that we are just now getting it right. You are saying that the historical position of the church's ecclesiology and eschatology, by the greatest minds the church has ever known, were, for all intents and purposes, completely wrong; that they did not know the truth. They all had it wrong. And Dispensationalists have it right.

On that note alone, ponder promptly and heavily.[178]

Doctrines Produced During the 1800s

This entire section has been borrowed from John C. Egerdahl's book, *The Bible Versus Dispensationalism*, found on pages 254-256.[179]

Seventh Day Adventism was enhanced by Ellen G. White. She was converted to Adventism in 1842 at the age of fifteen. Adventists today hold her as their prophet equal to those of the Bible. She had over two thousand visions, on which they base their beliefs. One of her doctrines was that Christ had a sinful fallen nature.

Jehovah's Witnesses was started by Charles Russell (1852-1916). Russell was the founder of the International Bible Students Association. Russellites have now split off and formed the Jehovah's Witnesses. They deny Christ's deity.

Mormonism was started by Joseph Smith in 1830. Mormons claim Joseph Smith was a prophet equal to Christ. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, in 1847 the Mormons settled in Utah. They are now known as The Church of

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[177] Clarence Bass, *Background to Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 21.

[178] Originally, this address had been made by C. Matthew McMahon to Baptists in regard to the debate about Infant Baptism <http://www.apuritansmind.com/Baptism/MyRetraction.htm>. I thought the wording was absolutely beautiful, so I adapted it and altered it for my purposes here. Credit where credit is due, right?

[179] Egerdahl, *The Bible Versus Dispensational Eschatology*, 254-256.

Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Mormons deny the deity of Christ.

Christian Science was started by Mary Baker Eddy in 1866. Eddy was the author of Christian Science. She went to Europe to study under George W. F. Hegel and came up with the view that sin was not a reality. She stated that the blood of Christ was no more efficacious to cleanse sin when it was shed on the cross then when it was flowing in His veins (but see Hebrews 9:22).

Darwinism was begun by Charles Darwin (1809-1882), an English naturalist. Darwin wrote the *Origin of Species*, published in 1859, which spawned the theory of evolution. In 1835, Darwin went to the Galapagos Islands and came up with the concept that all species of plants and animals developed from earlier forms of hereditary transmission of slight variations in successive generations. Out of this arose "the survival of the fittest" theory.

Marxism (or *Communism*) was started by Karl Marx (1818-1883). Communism, or religious atheism, arose as Dialectic Materialism. Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 and *Das Kapital* in 1867. Marx, born of Jewish parents in Rhenish, Prussia, was a German philosopher of history. His coworker was Freidrich Engels. Marx was strongly influenced by George W. F. Hegel. Most early communist movements were in religion, based on a literal interpretation of Scripture (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). At age twenty-five, Marx said, "Religion is the opiate of the people." Marx did not find the answer to his communist movement in religion but in a system of social organization based on common property. In 1824, his father, a lawyer, embraced Christianity, and all the members of his family were baptized Protestant.

Two proponents of Communism were Vladamir Lenin (1870-1924) and Joseph Stalin (1879-1953). Lenin was brought up in the Russian Orthodox Faith, but at the age of sixteen, he ceased to believe in God. Under his leadership, the Bolsheviks (originally a radical branch of the Socialist Democratic Party in Russia) came into power in 1917 and formed the Communist Party. Stalin was later premier and marshal of the Soviet Union.

Hegelian Philosophy was begun by George Hegel (1770-1831). Hegel was a prophet of Absolute Idealism, which affirmed that "only the rational is real." In his view, the irrational, so called sin and evil, has no true reality. Mary Baker Eddy received this teaching.

Psychoanalysis was developed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Freud, who was Jewish, fathered a modern-day psychology of psychoanalysis that left God out of the picture of man's make-up.

The "*God Is Dead*" theory, introduced by Friedrick Nietszche (1844-1900), stated that man could perfect himself through forcible self-assertion.

The *Modern Liturgical Revival* (1850) was a movement that sought to take away individual liberty and experience before God.

Existentialism was developed by Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881). There

are many aspects to existentialism. In it, man's ideas, experiences, and formulations become determinative.

Dispensationalism was officially introduced into Christianity in 1830. Authors of this theory dissect God's Word into seven dispensations, and supposedly interpret the Bible literally. They advocate two and three comings of Christ instead of one.

In *Modern Humanism*, the emphasis is on the secular, centered on human interests rather than on natural interest and religion. Self-realization comes through reason. Proponents of Modern Humanism reject the supernatural.

Unitarianism was developed by William Channing (1819-?). Channing said Christ was a being distinct from the one God and thus did not have the same status as God.

Conclusion

While no one should be dogmatic on such issues as Bible prophecy, seeing as how good and godly men have disagreed down through the centuries, it is not difficult to see that the Amillennial view is the simplest and least complicated of all positions. Amillennialism is as orthodox as the historic creeds of the church, and has been held by great Christians throughout the ages (Augustine, Calvin, Vos). We know from our study that the Dispensational system of theology is absolutely bankrupt. To believe it is to reject the Bible.

Chart A:

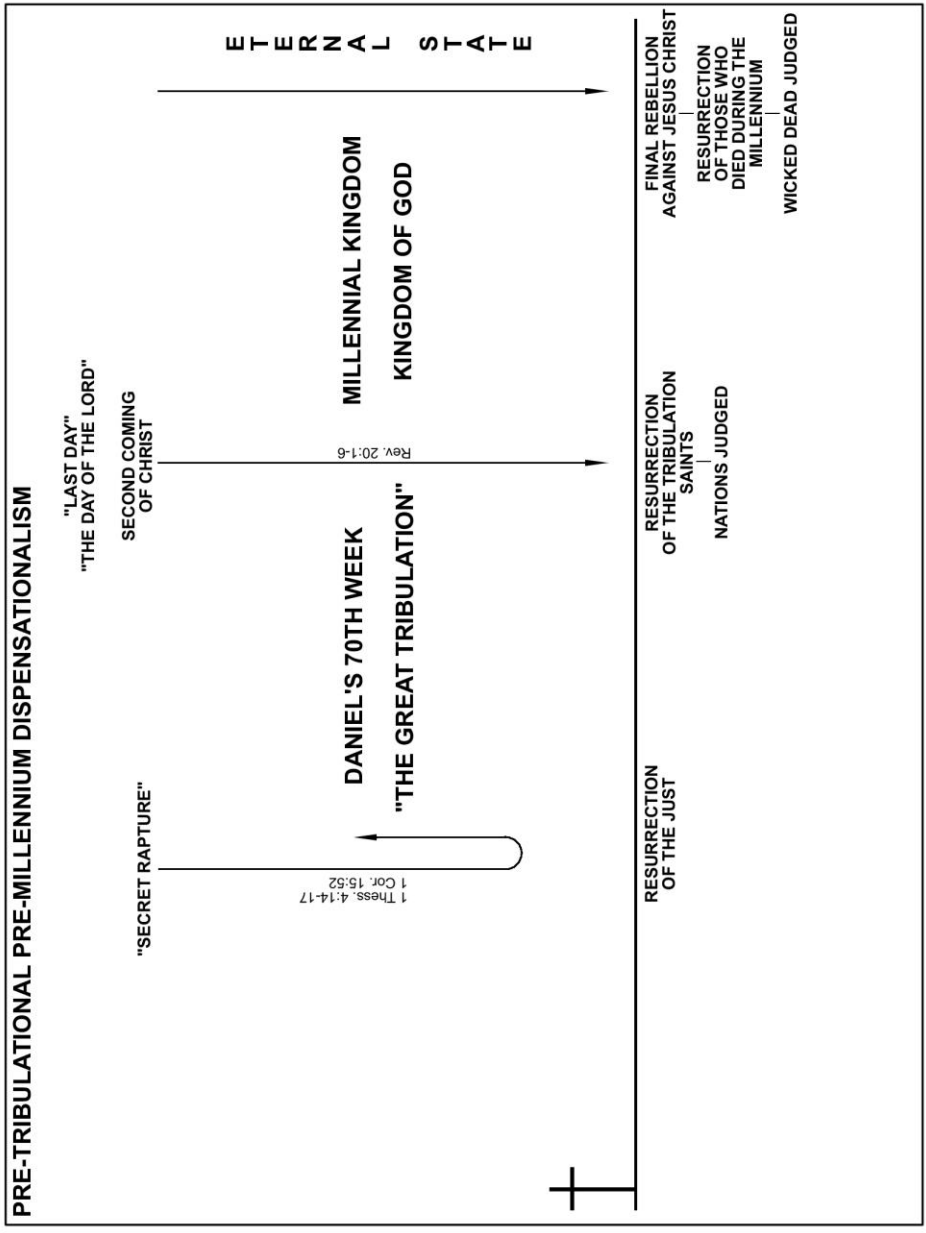
PRE-TRIBULATIONAL PRE-MILLENNIUM DISPENSATIONALISM
"LAST DAY"
"THE DAY OF THE LORD"
SECOND COMING OF CHRIST
"SECRET RAPTURE"
1 Thess. 4:14-17
1 Cor. 15:52
DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK
"THE GREAT TRIBULATION"
Rev. 20:1-6
MILLENNIAL KINGDOM
KINGDOM OF GOD
ETERNAL STATE
RESURRECTION OF THE JUST
RESURRECTION OF THE TRIBULATION SAINTS
NATIONS JUDGED
FINAL REBELLION AGAINST JESUS CHRIST
RESURRECTION OF THOSE WHO DIED DURING THE MILLENNIUM
WICKED DEAD JUDGED

Chart B:

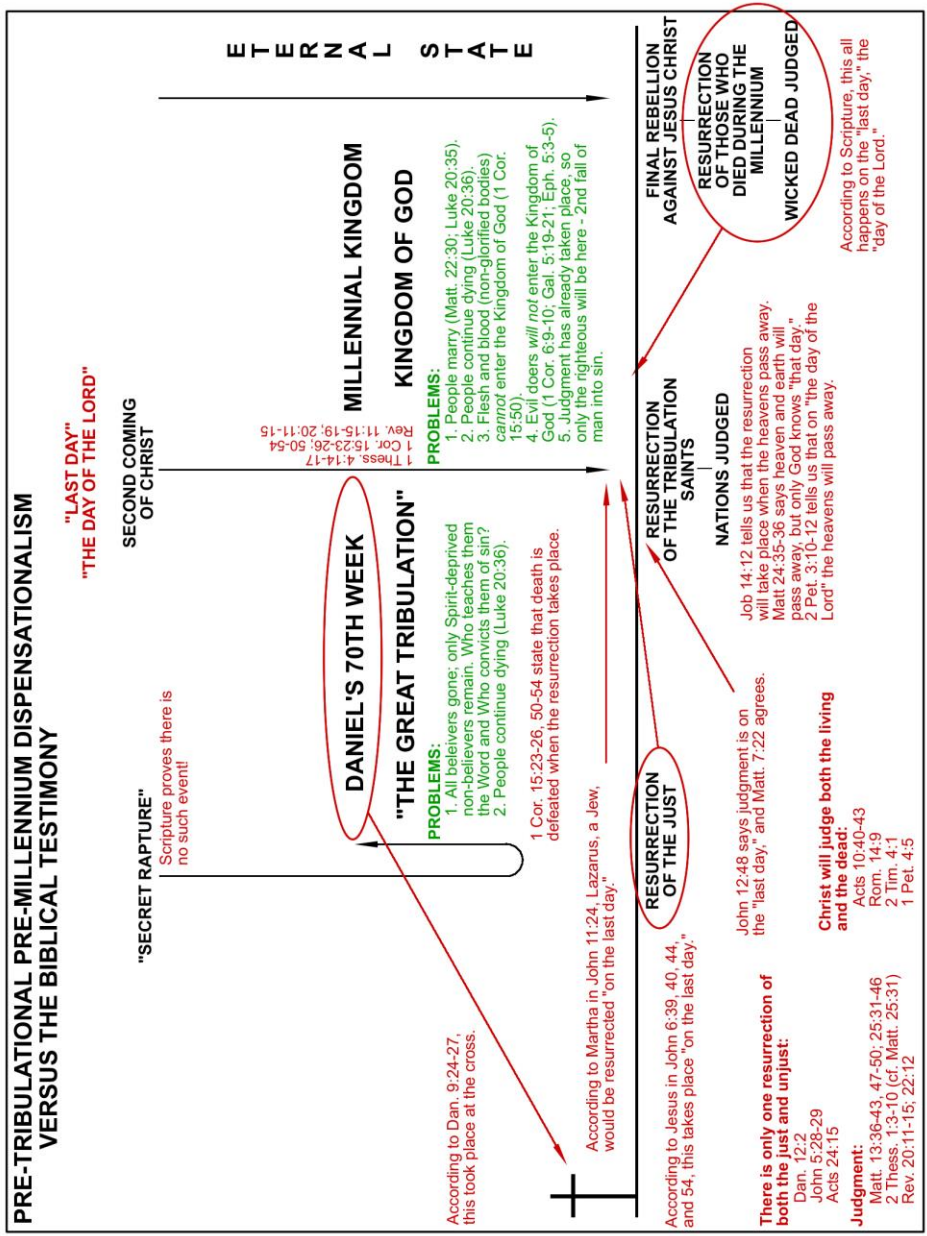
PRE-TRIBULATIONAL PRE-MILLENNIUM DISPENSATIONALISM
VERSUS THE BIBLICAL TESTIMONY
"LAST DAY"
"THE DAY OF THE LORD"
SECOND COMING OF CHRIST
"SECRET RAPTURE"
Scripture proves there is no such event!
DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK
"THE GREAT TRIBULATION"
PROBLEMS:
1. All beleivers gone; only Spirit-deprived non-believers remain. Who teaches them the Word and Who convicts them of sin?
2. People continue dying (Luke 20:36).
1 Cor. 15:23-26, 50-54 state that death is defeated when the resurrection takes place.
1 Thess. 4:14-17
1 Cor. 15:23-26; 50-54
Rev. 11:15-19; 20:11-15
MILLENNIAL KINGDOM
KINGDOM OF GOD
PROBLEMS:
1. People marry (Matt. 22:30; Luke 20:35).
2. People continue dying (Luke 20:36).
3. Flesh and blood (non-glorified bodies) *cannot* enter the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50).
4. Evil doers *will not* enter the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5).
5. Judgment has already taken place, so only the righteous will be here - 2nd fall of man into sin.
ETERNAL STATE
According to Dan. 9:24-27, this took place at the cross.
According to Martha in John 11:24, Lazarus, a Jew, would be resurrected "on the last day."
According to Jesus in John 6:39, 40, 44, and 54, this takes place "on the last day."
RESURRECTION OF THE JUST
RESURRECTION OF THE TRIBULATION SAINTS
NATIONS JUDGED
FINAL REBELLION AGAINST JESUS CHRIST
RESURRECTION OF THOSE WHO DIED DURING THE MILLENNIUM
WICKED DEAD JUDGED
John 12:48 says judgment is on the "last day," and Matt. 7:22 agrees.
Job 14:12 tells us that the resurrection will take place when the heavens pass away. Matt 24:35-36 says heaven and earth will pass away, but only God knows "that day." 2 Pet. 3:10-12 tells us that on "the day of the Lord" the heavens will pass away.
According to Scripture, this all happens on the "last day," the "day of the Lord."
There is only one resurrection of both the just and unjust:
Dan. 12:2
John 5:28-29
Acts 24:15
Judgment:
Matt. 13:36-43, 47-50; 25:31-46
2 Thess. 1:3-10 (cf. Matt. 25:31)
Rev. 20:11-15; 22:12
Christ will judge both the living and the dead:
Acts 10:40-43
Rom. 14:9
2 Tim. 4:1
1 Pet. 4:5

Chart C:

THE BIBLICAL TESTIMONY
"LAST DAY"
"THE DAY OF THE LORD"
SECOND COMING OF CHRIST
1 Thess. 4:14-17
1 Cor. 15:23-26; 50-54
Rev. 11:15-19; 20:11-15
THIS AGE
Matt. 12:32; 24:3; 28:20
Mark 10:30
Luke 18:30; 20:34
Rom. 12:2
1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6-8
2 Cor. 4:4
Gal. 1:4
Eph. 1:20-21; 2:2
1 tim. 6:17
Titus 2:12
The Line of Demarcation Between the Ages:
Matt. 13:39, 40, 49
THE AGE TO COME
Matt. 12:32; 13:40
Mark 10:30
Luke 20:35
1 Cor. 6:9-12; 15:50
Gal. 5:21
Eph. 1:21; 5:5
1 Thess. 2:12
2 Thess. 1:5
1 Tim. 6:19
2 Tim. 4:18
"THAT DAY"
Matt. 7:22; 24:36
Luke 10:12
1 Thess. 5:4
2 Thess. 1:10
2 Tim. 1:18; 4:8
"LAST DAY"
John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48
Rev. 11:15-19
"DAY OF GOD"
2 Pet. 3:12
Rev. 16:14
"DAY OF CHRIST"
Phil. 1:10; 2:16
2 Thess. 2:2
"DAY OF THE LORD"
Acts 2:20
1 Cor. 5:5
2 Cor. 1:14
1 Thess. 5:2
2 Pet. 3:10
RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT
REWARDS GIVEN OR LOST
There is only one resurrection of both the just and unjust:
Dan 12:2
John 5:28-29
Acts 24:15
Judgment:
Matt. 13:36-43, 47-50; 25:31-46
2 Thess. 1:3-10 (cf. Matt. 25:31)
Rev. 20:11-15; 22:12
Christ will judge both the living and the dead:
Acts 10:40-43
Rom. 14:9
2 Tim. 4:1
1 Pet. 4:5
"LAST TRUMPET"
Isa. 27:13
Matt. 24:31
1 Cor. 15:51-52
1 Thess. 4:16
Rev. 11:15-19
"THIEF"
Matt. 24:43
Luke 12:39
1 Thess. 5:2
2 Pet. 3:10
Rev. 16:15
"DEATH DEFEATED"
Hos. 13:14
Isa. 25:8
1 Cor. 15:23-26, 50-55
"RESURRECTION"
Job 14:12, 14; 19:25-27
Dan. 12:2
Matt. 22:30; 25:31-46
Luke 14:14
John 5:28-29; 6:38-40, 44-45, 54; 11:24
Acts 24:15
1 Cor. 15:50-55
2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:1-10
Rev. 11:15-19; 20:11-15