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## THEME OF THIS ISSUE: BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

### INSIDE THIS EDITION

- Should Bible Prophecy Be Interpreted Literally? *Laurence A. Justice* ..... Page 3
- Proofs of the Millennium, *John Gill* ..... Page 4
- The Budding of the Fig Tree, *S.P. Tregelles* ..... Page 5
- Literal Grammatical Interpretation, *George N.H. Peters* ..... Page 6

## PURPOSE

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

## WHY WE PUBLISH THE *PREMILLENNIAL BAPTIST JOURNAL*

Why a new magazine? Why a new magazine with emphasis on Premillennialism? These questions raise legitimate concerns and we desire to make our purpose known.

We do so because we are responsible to teach the *whole counsel of God!* As eschatology is part of that counsel we cannot be true to our commission unless we teach what Scripture reveals on this subject. We believe the 1,000 year reign of Christ, which is revealed in Scripture, is a real reign and this reign is Premillennial! We believe this will be a literal reign of 1,000 years on this earth, as promised by the prophets from the foundation of the world. We believe Premillennialism is a part of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Our purpose is, therefore, to set forth the truth of God on the Premillennial reign of Christ as the Lord gives us the light to see it. We intend to exegete both the Old and New Testament teaching on the millennium and to show the harmony of both on this subject.

We believe the Premillennial reign of Christ is visible, literal and spiritual (in the true sense of the term). The millennial reign of Christ will not begin until certain unmistakable events transpire:

- *The return of Christ in glory*
- *The resurrection of the saints*
- *The glorification of the saints*
- *Christ's kingdom established*
- *Beast and False Prophet cast into the Lake of Fire*
- *Satan bound and cast into the Abyss*
- *The regeneration*
- *The restitution*
- *Israel restored*

Thus, it is our purpose to make known what we believe Scripture teaches on this subject. We will present what we believe in a positive manner without impugning those who differ with us. Of course, we will necessarily be compelled to consider the opposing views of Postmill, Amill, Preterist, and the Dispensationalist positions and show why we believe these are in error. We purpose to meet, frankly and boldly, the arguments against the literal 1,000-year reign of Christ by Scriptural arguments, demonstrating the Scripturality of Premillennialism.

### **When we discuss issues with those with whom we differ we will:**

1. Discuss doctrines and practices, not men or motives
2. Accurately quote those to whom we refer and give the source of all quotes
3. Give their views full credit
4. Face opposing arguments with solid Scripture and sound reasoning
5. Impute to them no motives or propositions they do not espouse
6. State their propositions so precisely they will readily accept them as their own
7. Manifest the spirit of Christian love toward all



## Should Bible Prophecy Be Interpreted Literally?

Luke 1:30-33

by Laurence A. Justice

One of the outstanding characteristics of Biblical religion is the predictive prophecy of the Bible. Only God's word makes prophecies. None of the sacred books of other religions contain predictive prophecy. Only God knows the future and in his Word he declares the end from the beginning, as He says in Isaiah 46:10.

The Bible is preeminently a book of prophecy. There are 6,000 verses of prophecy in it, about 3,000 of which have already been fulfilled. The other 3,000 will be fulfilled in the years to come. Fully one-fourth of God's word was prophecy when it was written. More Scripture is prophetic than anything else. Seventeen of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are prophetic besides the numerous prophetic passages in the Pentateuch and the Psalms. In the New Testament whole chapters in the Gospels, many passages in Paul's letters and the whole book of Revelation are given to prophecy.

Yet many believers today neglect the study of prophecy either because they see it as difficult or they are told that it has already been fulfilled. I believe with the apostle Paul that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable..." and that therefore we must study prophecy because it is part of the Scriptures, an important part!

Christ is the center of the Bible. The central focus of the messages of the prophets is the two comings of Christ to this world. Nobody knew 500 years ago that George Washington would be born or 200 years ago that Ronald Reagan would be born. Only God can give details about a man before he is born. In God's word we have a man, Jesus Christ, described hundreds and even thousands of years before he was born by not one but 20 or 25 men who had never seen the man they were describing.

Some people allegorize or spiritualize the prophetic Scriptures, thus giving them meanings other than that suggested by the plain sense of the words. Such interpretation of prophecy can be traced in history back to the Bible School at Alexandria, in Egypt, that reached its peak in the second century AD under the

leadership of such early Christian fathers as Clement of Alexandria and Origen. This school began to interpret the scriptures allegorically rather than literally. Origen considered the literal sense of Scripture as unimportant and unedifying. In his mind the only value of the literal record of God's Word was to serve as a vehicle for figurative meaning.

To this day the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture invented by the School at Alexandria still plagues Christianity in both the Amillennial and Post Millennial camps. These people interpret God's Word by, as they call it, spiritualizing that word in order to come up with the true meaning. Charles Feinberg said, "The word 'spiritual' is often used like a fairy's wand to touch difficult passages and thereby change from the obvious and literal into a spiritual and fanciful meaning."

The literal interpretation of Scripture is the crux of the whole argument between Amillennialism and Premillennialism. The millennium refers to the 1,000 year period mentioned in Revelation chapter 20 when Jesus Christ will reign on this earth from Jerusalem. *Pre* means *before* and a Premillennialist is one who believes that Jesus Christ will come back to this earth *pre* or before the 1,000 year kingdom is established on this earth. *A* means *no*. An Atheist-believes there is no God and an Amillennialist believes there will be no millennium, no 1,000 reign of Christ on this earth. Amillennialists use a principle of interpretation of prophecy called "spiritualizing" that destroys the obvious meaning of the language and substitutes a meaning that does not appear on the surface of the text. Premillennialists tend to a more literal interpretation of the prophetic portions of God's word.

(Justice: continued on page 10)

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## Proofs of the Millennium

by John Gill, D.D.



Christ will have a special, peculiar, glorious, and visible kingdom, in which He will reign personally on earth. Now the proof of this point, may be taken from various passages in the Psalms, in the Prophets, and in the books of the New Testament.

“The LORD reigneth, let the earth rejoice” (Psalm 97:1), which shews that the Psalm respects the kingdom of Christ on earth; and which will take place at His coming to judge the world, as it appears by its connection with the last verse of the preceding Psalm, and which coming of His, will be in the clouds of heaven, and with flames of fire. The 145<sup>th</sup> Psalm treats of the kingdom of Christ, and the glory of it, and represents the saints in speaking to one another of it; of its glory, majesty, and duration (verses 11-13), which can suit no state so well as this; in which the saints will be employed in converse with each other, about the glory of their King, the glory of His coming to His kingdom, of His glorious acts done by Him in it, and the glorious things they enjoy therein.

“The LORD shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one LORD, and His Name one” (Zechariah 14:9). This kingdom will be on earth; and will be when there is no other; and when the homage and worship paid to Christ, this King, will be universally the same. And though there may be some passages in this chapter which belong to the spiritual reign, the first branch of Christ's kingdom; yet there are others, as well as this, which can only agree with His personal reign, upon His second coming; for it is expressly said, “The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee;” which will be fulfilled, and not before, when Christ shall descend from heaven, and bring all His saints with Him (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14,16).

And this reign of Christ over all the earth, will be when the saints are in a perfect state; and so not before His second coming, and the resurrection of the just. Holiness will now be so universal, that

proverbially speaking, it will be written on the bells of the horses; and every member of the new Jerusalem-church-state, into which nothing defiling shall enter, meant by every pot in Jerusalem and Judah, shall be holiness to the LORD, or be completely holy; and there shall be no Canaanite, neither a profane sinner, nor a carnal professor, in the house and church of God; nor any sinful lusts in any of its inhabitants.

“Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). To this, as a proof, it may be objected, at first sight, that this is the kingdom of the Father; since it is “Our Father which art in heaven” the petitions are directed to. To which it may be replied, that the same kingdom may be called, the kingdom of the Father, and the kingdom of Christ, as it is certain this kingdom we are treating of is so called; as appears by comparing Matthew 26:29 with Luke 22:30. And there is a good reason to be given for it: because this kingdom is a kingdom which the Father had appointed to Christ, and that which will be given Him by Him (Luke 22:29; Daniel 7:14), and for the same reason the Father calls Him His King, because appointed and set by Him as King over His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2:6), this kingdom may be called His.

Now this is a kingdom yet to come, and is prayed for as being future; and so can design neither the kingdom of providence nor the kingdom of grace, nor the gospel dispensation; and though it may include the spiritual reign, the first branch of Christ's kingdom, yet will not be fulfilled in that; since it respects a perfect state, when the will of God will be done on earth by men, as it is in heaven by the angels. The saints in the kingdom state, will serve Christ their king constantly and incessantly, and so perfectly; and this will be a kingdom on earth, where the will of God will be perfectly done, as it is in heaven, and so is a distant state from that.

To all which may be added, that the coming of this

*(Gill: continued on page 14)*



## The Budding Of the Fig-Tree

by S.P. Tregelles

“Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” (Matt. 24: 32, 33)

In this instruction of our Lord to His disciples He shows them the manner in which their expectation was directed to coming events. He had told them of the condition of things, in connection with Jerusalem, which should immediately precede His coming in the clouds of heaven; and He then employs this illustration in order to show the real practical use which there was in the things which He had thus unfolded.

Centuries have passed since the discourse on the Mount of Olives, but still the intimations which our Lord gave have not taken place; in other words, the fig-tree has not budded. If we then desire to use the truths which Christ then spoke, we have still to turn our eyes to the spot which He has marked out for us, and wait to see the appointed intimations.

It may be said, What use can it have been to the Church to have had to wait for so many years? What profit is there to us in being directed to that which for eighteen hundred years has not taken place? If Christ has commanded it, that is enough—He will always vouchsafe blessing to those who are doers of His will—but further, there is profit which a spiritual mind can apprehend; for if this word had been heeded by saints, it would have kept them from many of those associations and objects which are contrary to the leadings of the Spirit: for thus they would have had before their minds the character and close of this dispensation, and the place of Christ’s faithful servants in the midst of the nations, holding the gospel of the kingdom as a witness, but seeing the world’s corruption as a thing which flows on unchanged in its nature (while souls are gathered one by one out of it), even up to the coming of the Lord Himself. Had this exhortation been rightly heeded,

the hope of the coming of Christ would not have passed away from the minds of saints, so as to be looked at as a thing which, at all events, is not a practical doctrine.

Suppose I were cast upon some uninhabited isle, in a clime in which I could not (from my ignorance of its situation) count the seasons by months; and if the object of my hopes was the summer, and I found a fig-tree, and knew that its budding forth would intimate the approach of that season. I should watch the tree; I should often examine whether it was beginning to bud forth. I might look week after week and see nothing; I might think I saw some indications of sprouting, and then find it all come to nothing, but still I should watch on. Now, if I also knew that a ship came to the island at a particular time in the summer, this would be a point of hope to me, for it would hold out the prospect of deliverance; and this would make me doubly diligent in watching and waiting for the budding. Hope would connect itself with those things which indicate its accomplishment. And these things occupying my mind, I should be preserved from the thought of regarding the solitary isle as my abode. I might find long patience to be needful, but at length the buds would come forth; and then, according to the indication of the season, the wished-for vessel.

Thus is it with regard to the Church. God has given us a point of hope, and He has also instructed us with regard to indications of its accomplishment: the point is that to which the soul tends, while the detail of intervening circumstances affords the needed instruction, from which is learned the practical walk of those who possess such a hope. If held in the Spirit, these things cannot take away from the power of the hope—they were revealed for the directly contrary purpose: the early church knew them, and found them to have a practical and separating power; and in the body of detail with which the epistles (especially the later ones) are furnished, the dark statements of coming evil are in order that the evil may be avoided,

*(Tregelles: continued on page 15)*

## Literal Grammatical Interpretation

This excerpt is from *The Theocratic Kingdom*, volume I.

by George N.H. Peters

*The literal, grammatical interpretation of the Scriptures must (connected with the figurative, tropical, or rhetorical) be observed in order to obtain a correct understanding of this kingdom.*

On a proposition which has brought forth many volumes in its discussion, we desire simply to announce our position, and assign a few reasons in its behalf. Its import is of such weight; the consequences of its adoption are of such moment; the tendency it possesses of leading to the truth and of vindicating Scripture is of such value, that we cannot pass it by without some explanations and reflections.

### Observation 1.

We unhesitatingly plant ourselves upon the famous maxim (*EccL Polity*, B. 2.) of the able Hooker: "I hold for a most infallible rule in expositions of the Sacred Scriptures, that where a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changes the meaning of words, as alchemy doth, or would do, the substance of metals, making of anything what it pleases, and bringing in the end all truth to nothing." The primitive Church occupied this position, and Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 2, C. 27) gives us the general sentiment when (in the language of Neander, *Hist. Dogmas*, p. 77) "he says of the Holy Scriptures: that what the understanding can daily make use of, what it can easily know, is that which lies before our eyes, unambiguously, literally, and clearly in Holy Writ." However much this principle of interpretation was subverted, as history attests, by succeeding centuries (not without protests), yet at the Reformation it was again revived. Thus Luther (*Table Talk*, "On God's Word", 11) remarks: "I have grounded my preaching upon the literal word; he that pleases may follow me, he that will not may stay." In confirmation of such a course, it may be said: if God has really intended to make known His will to man, it follows that to secure knowledge on our part, He must convey His truth to us in accordance with the well-known rules of language. He must adapt Himself to our mode of communicating thought and ideas. If his words were given

to be understood, it follows that He must have employed language to convey the sense intended, agreeably to the laws grammatically expressed, controlling all language; and that, instead of seeking a sense which the words in themselves do not contain, we are primarily to obtain the sense that words obviously embrace, making due allowance for the existence of figures of speech when indicated by the context, scope, or construction of the passage. By "literal," we mean the grammatical interpretation of Scripture. Some writers, to avoid lengthy or circumlocutory phraseology, have employed the phrase "literal interpretation," by which they denote, not that every word or sentence is to be taken in its rigid literalism, but that the language of the Bible is to be interpreted by the customary rules of grammar and rhetoric, which are used in determining the sense of the "Iliad," "Paradise Lost," and works of human composition. We are to accept of a strictly literal rendering, unless we have the distinctive marks of figures of speech, when the tropical sense is also received, without *afterward*, *in addition*, engrafting upon it another and separate sense which is not allowed by the rules of grammar, but which (i.e., last added sense) is applied by many to the Bible, as if the language of that book was not fairly circumscribed by, but formed an exception to, the universal laws of language. This is our position endorsed by the exhortation given to all to search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11, John 5:39), by the frequent appeals made to the fulfillment of prophecy on a literal basis, by the obligations to know God's Word founded on the ability (Matt. 24: 5) to comprehend it, etc. When employing the word "literal," we are to be comprehended as also fully acknowledging the figurative sense, the beautiful ornaments of language; we cordially accept all that is natural to language itself, its naked strength and its charming adornments, but object to additionally forcing on it a foreign element, and enclosing it in a garb that hides its just proportions. When, too, it is said that the Bible is thus to be interpreted like any other book, governed by the laws which alone can protect us against a wrong imposition of meaning, reference is solely made to its grammatical construction, and not, as Liberals and others employ this idea in behalf of unbelief, that it is merely a human

(Peters: continued on page 7)

*(Peters: continued from page 6)*

production. With the human element there is also a Divine; grammatically, to accord with our infirmity, it is constructed like any other book, but under, in and through this are truths far beyond human conception and productions

### Observation 2.

The only true standard of interpretation is the grammatical (aided by the historical), and this opposes 1. That spiritual or mystical one which looks for an internal revelation either in or under the letter; 2. The rationalistic notion that such an interpretation must be attached to the letter as will best accommodate itself to reason; 3. The Romish idea that an interpretation of the letter can only be accepted as is in unison with the authoritative utterance of the Church; 4. And the High Church notion, that only such a meaning as is consistent with symbolical representations can be received. The adoption of any one of these four opinions immediately causes a *prejudicing* of the Word, and thus *unqualifies* the person from becoming an unbiased interpreter.

Let the reader consider that the grammatical interpretation was for ages the only one used; and can a reason be given why it should suddenly be abandoned for another? Much of Scripture was presented long before Christ, and the portion thus written was literally comprehended by the Jews, not only without rebuke from, but with the decided approbation of, the Almighty. God appeals to the literalness of His Word, as affording proof that each part shall find in due time its mate. His veracity and power are staked on a literal fulfillment. Now if the Word was not thus to be understood; if a hidden and recondite sense lay beneath it waiting for Origen, Swedenborg, etc., to reveal it, how could the Jews be censured for misapprehending the Scriptures; how could they derive comfort and edification from them; and how could they possibly have entertained an enlightened faith and hope? To suppose this is equivalent to saying, that for many centuries the Jews held to an erroneous sense—to the “husk,” as Neander and others phrase it—and that they were guided into, and confirmed in, such a belief by the express words of God himself. If we reject the literal and substitute another mode of interpretation, there is no

*It is the most reasonable to anticipate, that a principle of interpretation once universally held and for ages applied, would not undergo a reversal without a plain direction from God authorizing it to be made.*

deliverance from this dilemma, however much men may attempt to gloss it over by “progression,” “development,” etc. Admitting that revelation was gradual, that truth and additional light were introduced by degrees, all this has nothing whatever to do with the mode of interpretation, seeing, as we shall abundantly show hereafter, that a consistent unity can only be preserved by a continuous application of the same method of interpretation to the respective additions given. It is the most reasonable to anticipate, that a principle of interpretation once universally held and for ages applied, would not undergo a reversal without a plain direction from God authorizing it to be made.

### Observation 3.

Such a reversal or change is, unfortunately, inferred from several passages of Scripture, and professing to be controlled in this matter by the Word, it becomes requisite to examine the legitimacy of the inference. 1 Cor. 2:14 is advanced as in conflict with our proposition and as fully endorsing its opposite, viz: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” This passage pushed to an extreme, forms the key-note of the mystical, spiritualizing, origenistic system of interpretation; the founda-

tion of countless vagaries. Let us test it, e.g., by the facts connected with the incarnation and death of Jesus; these were revealed by the Spirit and realized in such a manner that they are to be understood literally (as commands, duties, etc.), but to one class they are foolishness, and they do not *know* them, in the sense of appreciating their value, or importance, or relation to God and man (for knowing is used, as any concordance will show, as an equivalent for appreciation, experience, etc.); while to another class they are known by spiritual discernment.” What does this latter expression denote? That we are to attach to the incarnation and death a spiritual meaning and discard the literal? No! “Spiritually discerned” is discerning “of things of the Spirit,” i.e., things given by the Spirit; noting how the Spirit reveals and records them in the Scriptures, submitting ourselves to the guidance and enlightening influence of the Spirit through the written Word, until by His teaching and Divine aid we learn to appreciate and

*(Peters: continued on page 8)*

*(Peters: continued from page 7)*

to appropriate the truths revealed to ourselves; and not to reject a literal rendering, and fasten, under the assumption of special superadded enlightenment, another sense upon the Scriptures. "The things of the Spirit" are a matter of record, and not left to the fancies or heated imaginations of every man who professes to be remarkably guided and influenced by the Spirit. Therefore, to properly discern what are the teachings of the Spirit, the record itself must be received in the sense prescribed by the usage of language. Even if the passage be regarded as teaching that the soul, mind, or Spirit discerns the truth, this does not invalidate the literalness of the recorded things of the Spirit, as already evidenced by the example presented. For in the context it is distinctly stated that God reveals His truth through the Spirit, and that such a revelation is contained "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth," but (in the words) "which the holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things" (i.e. the things taught by the Spirit) "with spiritual things" (i.e. with other things also received from the Spirit). This brings us back to the question already answered, How are the words themselves to be apprehended—as teaching what they grammatically contain, or as including some other meaning?

Another passage often paraded as against us is found in 2 Cor. 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." While it is impossible to preserve the force and true apprehen-

sion of this Scripture without understanding what is meant by the New Testament or covenant (which will be examined Prop. 50, in connection with the Abrahamic covenant), yet, aside from this, sufficient reason can be advanced to rebut its reference to a literal, or any other system of interpretation. Asking what is meant by "the Spirit," the answer comes in the very same chapter "Now the Lord is that Spirit" (v. 17, comp. Barnes' admissions, etc.) and (in v. 18, according to Barnes, Beza, Wolf, Locke, Rosenmuller, Doddridge, etc.) the Greek is "from the Lord the Spirit." If Christ be the Spirit here denoted, how can it refer to interpretation? Or, if the testimony of the apostle, that by the Spirit Christ is meant, is set aside, we ask then, how comes it, according to the statement of Neander and a host of writers, that the apostles could not rid themselves of the "materialistic husk" of a literal interpretation of the Word? If the "literal application killeth" as some declare, how does it come then that God gives his Word *in such a form*? Is it reasonable or credible, that he who is justly lauded for benevolence, mercy, and grace, would give truth surrounded by a deadly covering—truth too indispensable to secure the happiness and peace of man? Is it not the rule of the Divine procedure (uttered by Jesus, Matt. 7:8, 9, 10, etc.) that even man will not give to an asking son a stone for bread or a serpent for a fish, much less God? Such are a few of the questions that immediately suggest themselves, when making the passage advocate a proceeding that would be inconsistent in man. The simple, unpretending meaning of the verse is this: that the

*(Peters: continued on page 9)*

**Rejoice! Rejoice! In Christ Our Savior  
Who Died That We Might Live Again!  
Rejoice! Rejoice! For He Is Coming  
and On the Earth Shall Reign!  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Together Let Our Praises Ring!  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice!  
In Christ Our Coming King!**

B. B. McKinney



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*(Peters: continued from page 8)*

Word of God in its letter (i.e. in its plain, unambiguous written form) cannot give life: that possessing the letter alone would inevitably lead to death, for having *only* the letter the covenant promises could *not* be realized, but that having the *Spirit, even Christ*, the assurance is given that the letter itself—death without Christ or the Spirit—or the promises of God contained in the letter, shall be duly verified and accomplished. Two passages throw light on this verse; the one where even the letter of the preaching of the apostles, may prove to be a “savor of death unto death” (2 Cor. 2:16) without Christ; and the other (John 6:63), Jesus, to indicate the future resurrection and possession of eternal life says, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth” (comp. 2 Cor. 4:14; John 5:21; Rom. 8:11; Gal. 4:17; Phil. 3:21), keeping in view that this quickening is applied to Christ in 1 Pet. 3:18, “being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” Hence the literal aspect of the truth is far from being condemned or set aside; if so, it would sweep away *the most precious promises* that the Bible contains. It is then to be received, but in connection with it, that also which alone gives it efficacy and power in this world, and in that which is to come. The idea, therefore of the apostle is, that without the related work and power of Jesus, as the Christ, and His Spirit exerted in our behalf, the mere reception of the truth in its material form will, instead of delivering from, only conduct to death. There is nothing in the scope of the passage to indicate any such reference as many attach to it, so condemnatory to the Bible and the practice of the apostles.

“The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:32-33

### Observation 4.

Briefly, then, we are forced by a regard for consistency to endorse the proposition for the following reasons: 1. God communicates with us through language, and He follows, in order that we may understand, the usages of language. 2. The literal interpretation was the ancient mode employed down to the time of Christ. 3. It was the early Christian Church method, and continued thus until subverted by the Alexandrian and monkish one. (Comp. e.g. in reference to interpretation of Scriptures relating to kingdom, Props. 70-78). 4. It is the one to which God alone appeals in behalf of the veracity, etc., of His word. 5. It is the only one that can give us the certainty that it is not the work of man. 6. The fundamental truths of Christianity, the covenants, the incarnation, life, and death of Jesus, the promises, the fulfillment of prophecy, etc., are based upon it. 7. It is the one that maintains its reasonableness and accordance with the laws of language, and can thus be tested and proven. 8. It presents a simplicity which binds together the Old and New Testaments in unity of language and of design that no other bestows. 9. It brings forth most prominently the analogy of Scripture and of faith. 10. It not only preserves the promises of God but it fully shows how and when they are fulfilled. 11. It conduces to bring out most distinctively a perfect Redeemer and a completed redemption. 12. It prevents a host of contradictory meanings applied to the kingdom, clearly tracing and presenting it as the covenants and promises demand. 13. It effectually closes the door to a flood of wild and antagonistic interpretations fastened on the Word under the claim of superior spiritual enlightenment, discernment, and sanctity. 14. It aids us fairly to meet, without lowering

*(Continued on page 15)*

*(Justice: continued from page 3)*

How then shall we interpret God's word? Shall we interpret Bible prophecy literally or figuratively? The first thing I want us to consider in this message is the question

### **What Does Literal Interpretation Mean?**

When we deal with methods of interpreting God's word, we are delving into the field of hermeneutics, the science of Biblical interpretation. Literal interpretation means the Scriptures must be understood according to the normal, historical, socially accustomed use of the words. Each passage of scripture should be taken in its proper, natural sense unless the context demands otherwise.

Those who interpret the Scriptures literally take the words literally unless they are clearly shown by the context to be otherwise intended. God's Word is meant to be symbolic only when the context makes it obvious that it is symbolic! God's Word should be understood literally in the same way any literary piece should be understood.

A.T. Robertson, the great Baptist Greek Scholar, wrote what has come to be known as the Golden Rule of Scripture Interpretation. *"When the plain sense of the scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context studied in light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."*

Like all other areas of God's Word, prophecy is to be interpreted literally. Most of God's Word is perspicuous and clear as to its meaning. God has not used words in the Scriptures that can only confuse the ignorant. It is never wrong to assume that the language of Scripture was intended to make its readers understand its meaning. It is those who reject the face value of Biblical language who must assume the burden of proof as to their means of interpretation.

### **How Do We Know That Bible Prophecy Is To Be Interpreted Literally?**

We know this because the Bible prophecies that have already been fulfilled have all been fulfilled literally.

*When the plain sense of the scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense;....*

The only way to know how God will fulfill prophecy in the future is to find out how he has done so in the past. The prophecies that have already been fulfilled are our pattern for interpreting the prophecies that relate to the future. The greatest proof of the validity of literal interpretation of prophecy is the fact that the prophecies that have already been fulfilled were literally fulfilled. Hundreds of prophecies in God's Word have been literally fulfilled hundreds of years

after they were uttered and written. No prophecy that has already been fulfilled has been fulfilled in any other way than literally! All the prophecies of Christ's first coming were literally fulfilled. Why then should we expect those prophecies concerning his second coming to be fulfilled in any other way? The common sense way to find out how God will fulfill prophecy in the future is to find out how he has fulfilled it in the past.

There are a number of great prophetic events that are still in the future if we take Bible prophecy literally. There is the universal apostasy, the revelation of the personal Antichrist, the return of Israel to her land, the conversion of all Israel, the Battle of Armageddon, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory and the reign of Christ on this earth for a thousand years. If Jesus Christ came and literally fulfilled the prophecies of a suffering Savior, will he not just as surely come and likewise fulfill the prophecies of a glorified Messiah, reigning in power and glory over the earth as predicted in Psalms 2, Psalms 72, Daniel 7:13-14 and Isaiah 9, 11 & 60? There is no fact or principle that does away with the literal sense of the return of Christ, or the return of Israel to her land, or the glorious kingdom of Christ that is coming on this earth!

### **Some Examples of Bible Prophecies That Must Be Interpreted Literally**

There are the prophecies concerning the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. The prophecies of Christ's first coming were all fulfilled literally.

- Genesis 3:15 prophesied that Messiah would be of the seed of the woman.
- Genesis 12:3 prophesied that Christ would be of the seed of Abraham.
- Isaiah 7:14 prophesied that Christ would be born of

*(Justice: continued on page 11)*

(Justice: continued from page 10)

- a virgin.
- Micah 5:2 prophesied that Christ would be born at Bethlehem.
- Zechariah 9:9 prophesied his entry into Jerusalem on an ass.
- Psalms 41:9 prophesied that Christ would be betrayed by a friend.
- Zechariah 11:12 prophesied that he would be sold for thirty pieces of silver.
- Psalms 22:2 prophesied that he would be abandoned by his Father at the cross.
- Psalms 22:7-9 prophesied that he would be scorned and scoffed at by the people.
- Psalms 22:17 prophesied that his hands and his feet would be pierced.
- Psalms 22:18 prophesied that the soldiers would part his garments among them and draw lots for his clothing.
- Isaiah 53:3 prophesied that he would be scorned and rejected by the people.
- Isaiah 53:7-8 prophesied that he would be mistreated and would experience anguish.
- Isaiah 53:9 prophesied that he would be executed among the wicked.
- Isaiah 53:9 prophesied that he would be buried in the grave of a rich man.
- Psalms 34:20 prophesied that at the cross not a bone of him would be broken.
- Psalms 69:21 prophesied that at the cross they would give him vinegar and gall to drink.
- Psalms 16:10 and Jonah 1:17 prophesied his resurrection from the dead after three days and nights.
- Psalms 8:5-6 and Psalms 110:1 prophesied his ascension to heaven after his resurrection.

All of these prophecies and hundreds of others concerning his first coming were literally fulfilled! In light of this, we have every reason to believe that the prophecies concerning his Second Coming will also be literally fulfilled.

This is especially true when prophecies concerning Christ's first and second comings are combined in the same passage of Scripture, such as is the case in our

text in Luke 1:30-33. The first part of this prophecy, that in verse 31, has been literally fulfilled: "*And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.*" The angel prophesied here that Mary would conceive and bear a son and would call that son's name Jesus. These things literally happened just as they were prophesied.

The second part of this passage will, by any rule of proper interpretation of Scripture, be fulfilled literally as well. Look at verses 32-33: "*...The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*" If we believe verse 31 was literally fulfilled, we must also believe that verses 32-33 will be literally fulfilled. The prophecy in this text requires that Christ will literally reign over the house of Jacob on the throne of David.

Isaiah 9:6-7 says, "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*"

We know that a son was literally given and a child was literally born. Therefore, proper interpretation would mean that he shall literally govern from the throne of David and reign in peace and justice.

God's word prophesies that Jesus Christ will literally return to this earth and a number of things in connection with that return.

- I Thessalonians 4:16 prophesies that he will return personally.
- John 5:28 prophesies that the dead will hear his voice.
- Zechariah 14:4 prophesies that he will stand on the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem when he comes.
- II Thessalonians 1:8 prophesies that he will come in flaming fire.
- Matthew 24:29-30 prophesies that he will come in

*The common sense way to find out how God will fulfill prophecy in the future is to find out how he has fulfilled it in the past.*

(Justice: continued on page 12)

*(Justice: continued from page 11)*

the clouds of heaven.

- Job 19:25 prophesies that he will stand on this earth.
- Jude 14 prophesies that his saints will come with him when he returns.
- Revelation 1:7 prophesies that every eye shall see him when he comes.
- II Thessalonians 2:8-12 prophesies that he will destroy the Antichrist when he comes.
- Isaiah 45:23 prophesies that every knee shall bow to him when he comes.
- Matthew 19:28 prophesies that the apostles will sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel when he comes.
- Revelation 2:27 prophesies that he will rule all nations with a rod of iron. The sufferings prophesied for Christ were literally fulfilled and the prophesied glory that shall follow shall also be literally fulfilled.

Some other examples of Bible prophecies that must be interpreted literally are those passages concerning the millennium. Both Old and New Testament prophecies foretell a future earthly kingdom of righteousness and peace on this earth and this will be Christ's kingdom. Isaiah 2:2-4 says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Daniel 7:14 also prophesies this kingdom: "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which

shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

The 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation also prophesies this future kingdom of Christ on the earth. Revelation 20:1-4, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." God's Word prophesies here that the reign of Christ on this earth will be for a literal time period of 1,000 years.

Our Amillennial friends deny that such a kingdom will ever exist and interpret the prophecies concerning it in a non-literal sense, applying them to the church during this age. Most people will agree that in Revelation 20 the angel, heaven, the pit, Satan, the nations, and the

resurrections mentioned are all literal. Why then must the Amillennialists spiritualize or allegorize the 1,000 years in this chapter rather than taking it literally? It is an inconsistent interpretation to accept the literalness of all these other things in Revelation 20 and then to deny the literalness of the time element! A thousand years means a thousand years! This is the natural, ordinary meaning of the language.

The earliest commentators on Revelation 20 took it literally and not figuratively; men like Irenaeus, and Hippolytus, and Tertullian, and Victorinus, and Justin Martyr. This was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The allegorical and

spiritualizing method, invented by the School at Alexandria, put an end to literal interpretation of Revelation 20 for a long time. Augustine, who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and helped father the Catholic church,

*The sufferings prophesied for Christ were literally fulfilled and the prophesied glory that shall follow shall also be literally fulfilled.*

*(Justice: continued on page 13)*

*(Justice: continued from page 12)*

taught that the millennium is to be interpreted spiritually as fulfilled in the Christian church. To Augustine, the millennium is the time between the two comings of Christ.

Verses 1-3 of Revelation 20 prophesy the binding of Satan with a chain and his being cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Augustine taught that the binding of Satan took place during the earthly ministry of our Lord and that Satan has since that time been bound. But here in Revelation 20 the binding of Satan is done by an angel acting on orders from heaven, not by the Lord Jesus himself and when we look at the activities of Satan in the world today there are absolutely no signs that he has been bound. The TV news every day reveals more activities of Satan than can be imagined by us. Look at world affairs! The nations are still being deceived by Satan and more so as time passes. Satan's opposition to the preaching of the gospel is getting worse, not better. The gospel is being increasingly rejected in the so-called Christian nations today while false gospels are being readily accepted. One time I told my father that I had heard the famous Southern Baptist preacher Herschel Hobbs say that Satan has already been bound and he replied, "Hmmm! *Must be a mighty long chain!*"

### **Some Examples of Scriptures that must be Interpreted Figuratively**

Literal interpretation of Scripture does not deny that there are figurative and symbolic elements in Bible prophecy. When there are compelling reasons in the scripture itself for figurative meanings, they should be readily adopted.

Each passage of God's word explains much of itself by its own context. The following passages of scripture are obviously figurative in their meaning: Genesis 49:9 says Judah is a lion's whelp. That's figurative language! Proverbs 23:1-2 says, "Put a knife to thy throat." This would be absurd and immoral if taken literally. Nebuchadnezzar's metallic image with head of gold, chest and arms of silver, torso of brass, legs of iron and feet of iron mixed with clay is figurative and represents the great world empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome.

In John 7:38-39 the Lord Jesus says, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given..." "...Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters" is figurative and it is explained to be figurative when the very next verse in the context goes on to say, "...This spake he of the Spirit..."

When we read in the book of Daniel of Rome being the fourth beast, "exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron and his nails of brass," this obviously does not mean that one day the world would see a creature of this physical description. This outward ugliness and fierceness speaks figuratively of the strength and fierceness and cruelty of Rome as an empire.

### **Conclusion**

Amillennialists accuse Premillennialists of "rigid literalism" as the alternative to their "spiritualizing" the Scriptures, but one does not have to choose between rigid literalism and spiritualizing the Scriptures. No careful interpreter of God's Word can be a completely literal interpreter or a completely figurative one. A careful interpreter of God's Word will interpret both literally and figuratively as the Scripture demands and he will remember that when he interprets a passage figuratively he must give valid reasons for interpreting it figuratively. I'm afraid that some interpreters of Scripture make the prophetic passages figurative because their system of eschatology requires it and not because the passage itself demands it.

So, should Bible prophecy be interpreted literally? The Bible is both literal and figurative in its expression but in general we should interpret Bible prophecy literally. We should take the language of Scripture in its plain, clear and everyday sense. ✪



*Each passage  
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(Gill: continued from page 4)

kingdom is to be prayed for; not only the first branch of it, in the spiritual reign, as in Isaiah 62:6-7, but the second coming of Christ, to take possession of His kingdom personally, saying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" and this may, and should be a prayer of faith; for since He has directed His people to pray daily for the coming of this kingdom, it may be assured that it certainly will come; for Christ would not direct His saints to pray for that which never will be.

"Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) The sceptre according to ancient prophecy, was now departed from Judah and Judea was become a province to the Roman Empire. Now the Jews had a notion, that when the Messiah came, He would restore the kingdom, and redeem them from the Roman yoke, and make them a happy people, as to temporal things; and with this notion, the disciples themselves were tinctured; and as they believed that Jesus was the Messiah, they had raised expectations of this matter; but when He was dead, their hopes seem to be almost quite gone (Luke 24:21).

But Christ being raised from the dead, their hopes

revived; and it was a notion that prevailed with the Jews, and does to this day, that the coming of the King Messiah, to deliver them, and the resurrection of the dead, will be at the same time; and, indeed, Christ's personal reign will take place after the resurrection of the just. And now there having been a resurrection of many of the saints (Matthew 27:52-53), and especially Christ Himself being risen, and also had spoken to His disciples of things pertaining to the kingdom of God (verse 3), they might hope that this was the time the kingdom would be restored.

Now though they had very obscure and carnal notions of the kingdom, yet Christ does not deny that there would be a kingdom hereafter he should enjoy, and which should be restored to Israel; only blames them for their curiosity in enquiring into the time of it (verse 7), and which shews that this kingdom will not be till Christ comes to judge the quick and dead, which time none knows but the Father only (Matthew 24:36), and exactly agrees with this passage.

(The above are just a few quotations from John Gill's work entitled, "*A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*," Book 7, Chapter 8 - "Of the Millennium"). ✪

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and the hope of the glory of the day of Christ might shine through it all and in contrast to it all. Had not the church been so taught, the taunt, "Where is the promise of His coming?" might indeed be felt as troubling the soul; but when we know that we have been warned of deeper darkness before the morning, we may indeed feel that the more conscious we are of deepening gloom the more rejoicingly may we look onward to the dawn.

Nothing gives us any indication of the immediate introduction of the latter day, except this to which Christ directs us; we may see many things to make us expect that the fig-tree would soon bud, but when we see the buds (and not till then) can we speak with certainty as to what is forthwith to come to pass. We might see attempts of the nations to set the Jews in the Holy Land—this ought to make us look carefully to Jerusalem; God might hinder those efforts, or He might allow the fearful closing scenes of this dispensation to issue out of them, as at length He will do.

The importance of the detail of prophecy is very great to the believer: it certainly is a sad thing to see this extensive portion of God's truth overlooked and neglected. It is by the detail of prophecy that we learn to walk in the midst of present things according to God; it is thus we learn His judgment about them, and what their issue will be. Many Christians directed their minds much to this a few years ago; but it cannot I believe, be denied that this portion of revealed truth has more recently been neglected and overlooked. Those who have done this have surely omitted to see how important its present bearing is on the conscience and conduct: that other portion of revelation shows clearly the separateness from all that is opposed to the Lord, to which believers are called?

*The whole  
testimony of  
the word is our  
safeguard.*

There is such a thing as having held truths and then to let them slip; this shows a want of Christian watchfulness. There is such a thing as having set truths before others, and when the time of their application arrives, failing in using them ourselves. Most spiritual minds feel conscious of the power of Satan being great at this time and his workings peculiarly dangerous; but if I see from the word of God that these things are to be, I shall be one of those who know these things beforehand and this knowledge is to be used as my safeguard, that I be not carried away with the error of the wicked. The voyager who knows from his charts those parts of his course in which danger most exists should be found the most prepared to act in the emergency; it will not take him by surprise.

But it may be said that if results are rightly known nothing more is needed; but surely then we would be using our own thoughts as to all the things connected with those results. The mere knowledge of a coming deluge would never have led to the construction and arrangement of the ark. The knowledge of a result may lead to presumption of the most fearful kind. The whole testimony of the word is our safeguard.

The following Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the book of Daniel are intended especially to direct the mind towards some of the important portions of the detail of prophecy with which the Scripture furnishes us. Should they be found helpful to Christians who desire the prophetic word and to know for themselves what that word teaches, their object will be fully attained. To this end may the Lord vouchsafe His blessing! ✪

*(Peters: continued from page 9)*

and degrading the Word by abject concessions and the accommodation theory, the assaults of unbelievers. The bearing of all this will be evidenced as we pass over the leading doctrine of the Bible; and the result of our labors, the fruit of adherence to grammatical interpretation will indicate the solidity of the ground occupied. ✪

## PREMILLENNIAL BAPTIST JOURNAL

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**Theme of next issue:**  
***THE KINGDOM***

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### J.C. RYLE ON LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

**W**e must look for a literal accomplishment of the prophecies concerning that second coming and not for a figurative and spiritual one. Forever let us hold fast this great principle. Happy is that Bible-reader who believes the words of the Bible to mean exactly what they seem to mean. Such a man has got the true key of knowledge in looking forward to things to come. To know that predictions about the second advent of Christ will be fulfilled literally, just as predictions about the first advent of Christ were fulfilled literally, is the first step towards a right understanding of unfulfilled prophecy.

Daily Readings from All Four Gospels by J. C. Ryle,  
Evangelical Press, Auburn, MA, 2001, Reading for June 5<sup>th</sup>

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# Premillennial Baptist Journal

VOLUME I ISSUE II

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A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION



## Theme of This Issue: The Kingdom

### Inside This Edition

- ♦ What is the Kingdom of Heaven? *Dan Cozart*..... Page 3
- ♦ What is Taught About the Reign of Christ, *G.E. Jones* ..... Page 6
- ♦ Millennium: Distinctions Which Make Difficulties Disappear, *B.W. Newton* ..... Page 15

## Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

## When The Kingdom Is Established

Though the darkness and gloom triumphant  
 O'er the whole of the world abides,  
 And the armies of Evil conquer  
 Till there seemeth no pow'r besides;  
 Though the sword with its wake of sorrow,  
 And the fields where the battles rage,  
 Seem to mock at the Prince of Salem,  
 And the Hope of the Coming Age—

Yet the kingdom is surely coming,  
 By the prophets so long foretold,  
 When the sword shall be sheathed forever  
 In a peace that can ne'er grow old;  
 For the King will Himself, 'tis promised.  
 In millennial splendour reign,  
 And the world overflow with gladness,  
 For His plan shall at last be plain.

Oswald J. Smith

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## What Is The Kingdom Of Heaven?

Matthew 13:1-3, 10-17

Dan Cozart

“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea-side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat. And the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables...And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

There are seven parables in Matthew 13 which deal with the subject: “The Kingdom of Heaven.” Notice after the first parable, all of the rest of the parables are prefaced with “the Kingdom of Heaven is like....”. This is an introductory sermon to a series of messages dealing with each of these seven parables. In this opening sermon, I would like to answer the question: “What Is The Kingdom Of Heaven?” How can we understand it if we don’t know what it is? Defining the subject thus becomes very important.

**I. Divine Assistance Is Essential If We Are To Understand The Kingdom of Heaven Because It Is A Mystery.** The Scripture plainly states in Matthew 13:11, “It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” The Bible term “mystery” does not mean that which cannot be known, but rather that which has not yet been revealed. If God gives understanding, men will know it. If He does not, men will never understand it. This knowledge does not come from man’s intellect and education, but by God’s divine revelation of truth. We need to pray for such revelation of truth.

**II. The Kingdom Of Heaven And The Kingdom Of God Are Used Synonymously In Scripture.** We need to compare the account of Matthew 13 with the account of Mark 4. They both refer to the same teachings of Jesus, and the same period of time. Matthew consistently uses the term, “the kingdom of heaven” in his thirteenth chapter. However, Mark calls it, “the kingdom of God.” Mark 4:11, “And he said unto them. Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the **Kingdom of God.**”

Also, look at Mark 4:26,30: “And he said, So is the **kingdom of God**, as if a man should cast seed into the ground....And he said, Wherefore shall we liken the **kingdom of God**? Or what comparison shall we compare it?” Other references demonstrate the same thing. John the Baptist preached the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew 3:1-2: “In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the **Kingdom of Heaven** is at hand.” The Lord Jesus resumed the same message after John’s imprisonment in Matthew 4:12,17: “Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into

*(Cozart: continued on page 4)*

Dan Cozart is a native of North Carolina. He has been pastor of the Grace Baptist Church of Tyler, Texas since 1981. He is greatly in demand as a preacher at Bible conferences.

(Cizart: continued from page 3)

prison, he departed into Galilee...From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the **Kingdom of Heaven** is at hand." Mark's account of the same passage says our Lord preached the Kingdom of God in Mark 1:14-15: "Now after that John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the **Kingdom of God**....And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the **Kingdom of God** is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." The time setting is the same. It came after John's imprisonment. Repenting and believing the Gospel is a preparatory part of the Kingdom of Heaven, or Kingdom of God, which gospel is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Again, the Lord ordered his disciples to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand in Matthew 10:7: "And as ye go, preach, saying, the **Kingdom of Heaven** is at hand." After the resurrection Jesus taught his disciples things pertaining to the Kingdom of God in Acts 1:3: "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the **Kingdom of God**." Phillip also preached the Kingdom of God in Acts 8:12: "But when they believed Phillip preaching the things concerning the **kingdom of God**, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Thus, both terms, the **kingdom of heaven** and the **kingdom of God** are equal, and are used interchangeably in the scripture.

### III. The Church And The Kingdom Are Not The Same.

"Kingdom" comes from the Greek word, **basileia**, meaning to rule. "Church" comes from the Greek word, **ekklesia**, meaning called out to assemble or assembly. The Kingdom of Heaven refers to the rule of the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The church is an assembly of baptized believers coming together for the purpose of carrying out the commands of Christ. There are seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3. Seven is the number of completion. It gives us a complete picture of the church from the beginning to the second coming of

Christ. There are seven parables dealing with the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew 13. These parables give to us a picture of the kingdom as it progresses until the return of Christ.

### IV. Matthew Uses The Term "Kingdom Of Heaven" Exclusively.

He uses "the kingdom of God" but four times, but he uses "the kingdom of Heaven" 32 times. The rest of the gospel writers use "the kingdom of God." John presents Christ as the Son of God. Luke presents Christ as the Son of Man. Mark presents Christ as the Servant of God. However, Matthew present Christ as King of the Jews. Thus, "Kingdom of Heaven" is a Messianic term!!

### V. The Kingdom Of Heaven In Its Three-Fold Presentation Is Clearly Seen.

First, the kingdom of God *sovereignly* presented in Daniel 4:34-35: "And at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and **His Kingdom is from generation to generation**....And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and **He doeth according to His will** in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Also, I Timothy 1:17 says: "Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever." This kingship refers to Almighty God in his eternal state. He is eternal, immortal and invisible. God has always and always will rule over His creation. He will never abdicate his throne. Lucifer tried to take over, and God threw him out of glory.

Second, the kingdom of God *soteriologically* in Luke 9:23 which says: "If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Our Lord Jesus spoke these

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Messianic  
term!**

words. When a person is saved, he bows his knees to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Lord sets up rule in the believer's heart as Lord and King. This is clearly set forth in the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus. Prior to being converted, Paul lived his own life and had his own way. But when the Lord saved him, he responded: "What wilt thou have me do?" Immediately the rule of Christ was established in the heart of Paul. Thus Christ reigns in the hearts of all of his believers, and that reign is going on today. One cannot know him as Saviour without knowing him as Lord.

The third area in which the Kingdom of Heaven is presented is *eschatologically*. Paul states in I Timothy 1:15: "Which in his times, He shall shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Please notice this is in the future tense. This does not mean that Christ has never been king, but that he has not fully shown or demonstrated it. Christ is prophet, priest and king. He has already shown himself as prophet and priest, but not yet as king. When He comes the second time, such a demonstration will take place. Just as there is a past and present aspect to the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Heaven, there is a future aspect as well. The repentant thief on the cross said: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Obviously, it was future then. In the model prayer, which Christ prayed, he said: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." If the kingdom was already here, why pray for it to come? Matthew 8:11 says: "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Since there is no east, west, north or south up in the glory world, I have to accept it as being down here on this earth. Christ will establish the kingdom down here on this earth, and when he does, every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess!! And that simply has not happened!! This is what puzzled the apostles when they asked the resurrected Lord a question in Acts 1:6: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The Lord did not

censure them for that question. He simply told them that it was not for them to know the times and seasons for such an event. Their immediate business was to preach the Gospel into all the world. Such a kingdom would come later.

**Christ is prophet, priest and king. He has already shown himself as prophet and priest, but not yet as king**

**Conclusion:** This final aspect of the kingdom of heaven has not yet taken place. It will not be preached in by the gospel, but will be personally brought in by the Lord Jesus Christ at his second coming. In that day, the will of the Lord will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Christ will establish a throne of righteousness on this earth, and personally reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords. Satan shall be subdued, the enemy shall be conquered, and Christ with his saints shall reign on earth. Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and

holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign **with Him a thousand years.**" Revelation 11:15: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. **And He shall reign forever and ever .**" Zechariah 14:4-9 says: "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, And there shall be a very great valley. And half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south...And the Lord shall be king over all the earth..." That did not happen to the Mount of Olives when our Lord ascended into Heaven, but it will happen when he returns the second time. He shall touch down on that mountain...and that is when he will begin to reign over all the earth in a literal, personal, physical, real kingdom.

"The kingdom is coming, Oh, tell ye the story,  
God's banner exalted shall be;  
The earth shall be full of His knowledge and glory,  
As waters that cover the sea."✠



# What Is Taught About the Reign of Christ

G. E. Jones



## 1. He is to Govern the Nations on the Earth.

"O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth," Ps. 67:4.

## 2. He is to Be Given the Uttermost Parts of the Earth for His Possession.

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," Ps. 2:8-9. This is the promise of the Father to the Son, and the Son makes a like promise to those who overcome. "And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I have received of my father," Rev. 2:26-27.

Notice it is the nations over which Christ is to rule, and the overcomers are to rule, and it is the uttermost parts of the earth over which Christ is to have possession. Some stumble over the expression that Christ will break the nations into pieces as a potter's vessel. But remember that when a vessel is marred in the potter's hand he refashions it into a better vessel. Read Jer. 18:4.

## 3. He is to Have Dominion from Sea to Sea.

"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and the abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," Ps. 72:7-8.

Notice, this dominion is on this earth. His dominion is to be from sea to sea. There will be no sea on the new earth, see Rev. 21:1. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Since this reign is to be from sea to sea it is not the Lord's reign on the new earth that is under consid-

eration. Neither is heaven under consideration because it is said the dominion is to be to the ends of the earth.

This reign is to be one of peace that shall last as long as the moon endureth. There will be no moon when the new earth comes. "The city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it." It will be a reign of peace while the moon endureth. The moon was made to give light on this earth. "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night;...and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth," Gen. 1:14-15. This reign is to be on this earth while the moon endures to give its light. It is to end when the moon ceases to endure. This is one phase of the everlasting reign of Christ, and can be none other than the thousand years reign, which shall come to an end.

## 4. Christ Must Reign Until He Has Put All Enemies Under His Feet.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," 1 Cor. 15:24-26.

The word *then* in this place does not mean *at that time* as Nonmillennialists would have people to believe. It means *afterwards*. The dictionary gives *afterwards* or *at another time* as one of the meanings of the word *then*. We are not to take which one suits our purpose, but the meaning that the context and the original language support. The Greek word translated *then* in this place is "eita." Both Thayer's Lexicon

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and Young's Analytical Concordance render this word *afterwards*, *next*, and *after that*. See Thayer's Lexicon, page 188, and Young's Concordance, page 972.

Paul showed an order or sequence of events when he said "In Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own *order*: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then (after that) cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he *shall have put down* all rule and all authority and power *for* he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet," 1 Cor. 15:23-24. Here is a series of events with intervals of time between. The first event is the resurrection of Christ, Himself. The next is the resurrection of the saints which will take place after the interval of time between the Lord's resurrection and His second coming. Last in order is the end when He *shall have delivered* the kingdom back to the Father. This comes when He shall have put all enemies under His feet. Between the raising of the Lord's people at His coming and the *end* there will be another interval of time, during which the reign under consideration will be taking place. The statement in verse 24 is explained by the next verse, "For (or because) he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The reign occupies the last interval of time, the one which intervenes between the resurrection of the saved and the *end*, which comes *afterwards*.

The reign under consideration here is not an everlasting reign, but one that lasts till Christ shall have put all enemies under His feet. There is to come a time when the reign spoken of here is to end, and Christ is to turn the kingdom back to the Father. No such thing is said about the reign in Revelation 22:5.

##### 5. Christ is to Rule in the Midst of His Enemies.

"The Lord shall send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies," Ps. 110:2.

If the Lord rules in the midst of His enemies His

rule will be on earth. 1 Corinthians 15:25 says, "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." One and the same reign is under consideration in both these places.

The *Zion* mentioned can be no other than earthly Zion, the seat of David's kingdom. In Psalms 2:6 God says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill in Zion." He goes on to say, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Here the *king* is connected with *Zion* where the earth is to be his possession.

##### 6. The Zion of This Earth is the City of the Great King.

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole *earth*, is Mount Zion, in the sides of the north, the *city of the great king*," Ps. 48:2.

This was the city of David. "Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes,...that he might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of *the city of David, which is Zion*," 1 Kings 8:1. From this place David ruled. And from this place Christ will rule. He is the *great king* of Psalms 48:2. The *Zion* here is the joy of the whole *earth*.

##### 7. Christ is to Reign in Mount Zion and Jerusalem.

"Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall *Reign in Mount Zion and Jerusalem*, and

before his ancients gloriously," Isa. 24:23. David reigned in *Mount Zion* and Jerusalem. Christ was promised the throne of David. So he will reign in *Zion and Jerusalem*, as did David.

##### 8. He is to be Given the Throne of David, and Jerusalem where David's Throne was *will be His Throne*.

The angel who appeared to Mary said to her about Jesus who should be born, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David,"

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**Christ was  
promised the  
throne of David.  
So he will reign  
in Zion and  
Jerusalem, as  
did David.**

(Jones: continued from page 7)

Luke 1:32.

“At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers,” Jer. 3:17-18.

Some who wish to evade the truth revealed here say the Jerusalem in this place is the new Jerusalem, Heavenly Jerusalem. Neither the word “New” or “Heavenly” is found connected with Jerusalem in this place. If God had meant the new Jerusalem he would certainly have had the word *new* put in this place, and not have left an unfinished statement for men to fill out for him.

The context itself shows it to be Jerusalem on this earth. In connection with the statement that Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, the prophet tells that Judah, which was the southern kingdom, and Israel which was the northern kingdom, shall come together out of the north to the land which God gave to their fathers for an inheritance. That was the land between the river of Egypt and the river Euphrates. “In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates,” Gen. 15:18. This land, which God gave to their fathers for an inheritance, is on this earth. It is to this land that both Judah and Israel, all the tribes, will be gathered in the days when Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord. See Jer. 3:17-18.

God has never cancelled or disannulled the covenant He made with Abraham concerning the land He gave to him and his seed. Here is proof. “An angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have

brought you into the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, *I will never break my covenant with you,*” Judges 2:1. Also see Gal. 3:15-17.

“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man *disannulleth* or *addeth* thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

The covenant God made with Abraham concerning the land of promise in Genesis 15:18, and which He swore He would never break (Judges 2:1), was confirmed with God’s oath, and can never be disannulled. The law covenant, a conditional covenant, which was made 430 years after the Abrahamic covenant, did not disannul the promise to Abraham, neither can it.

This covenant was confirmed in Christ and will be fulfilled in Christ. That is why Christ must be on His throne at Jerusalem, and the Israelites must return in faith to their land, to be permanently settled in that land.

#### **9. Christ is to Reign and Prosper and Execute Judgment and Justice in the Earth.**

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a **righteous** Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the *earth*. In his days shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord Our Righteousness.*” Jer. 23:5-6. Christ’s throne, like that of David will be on earth.

What God said to Coniah is used by some to try to refute the Bible truth at this point. Let us examine that passage:

**The covenant God made with Abraham concerning the land of promise was confirmed with God’s oath, and can never be disannulled.**



"Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus said the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah," Jer. 22:28-30.

But the objectors stop too soon. They should continue into the next chapter, to where the Lord said a *righteous Branch* would be raised up unto David, and a King shall reign and prosper *in the earth*. None of Coniah's seed will, but this *righteous Branch*, Christ, who is not of Coniah's seed, will reign and prosper on David's throne on this earth, and at Jerusalem. See Jer. 3:17 and 23:5.

Coniah's seed were cut off and this the line of Solomon was cut off from the throne. But Luke shows that Christ descended from David through his son Nathan, and not through Solomon. See Luke 3:23-31.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 belongs to the same context as Jeremiah 22:28-30. The chapter division is the work of man. The passage in Jeremiah 23:5-6 which follows right after that about Coniah in the verses above shows that even though Coniah and his seed were cut off, and none of them should ever prosper, sitting on the throne of David in Jerusalem, yet David would have a *righteous Branch* (not an ungodly one like Coniah), who would sit on his throne and prosper and reign in the earth.

The verse that follows Jeremiah 23:5 shows that when this righteous Branch reigns and prospers in the *earth* Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely. No one can find a time up until this hour when Judah has been saved and Israel has dwelled safely. Until the present time the lives of these people have been in jeopardy every hour. But when Christ, the righteous Branch, shall reign and prosper in the earth they shall dwell in safety.

**No one can  
find a time up  
until this hour  
when Judah  
has been  
saved and  
Israel has  
dwelled safely.**

#### 10. The Land of Palestine was Made for a Place for the Lord to Dwell in.

In this connection, look at a part of the song which the children of Israel sang after their passage of the Red Sea.

"The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of *Palestina*...Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance *in the place*. O Lord, which thou hast made for *thee to dwell in*, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established," Ex. 15:14-17. So, Palestine, the land into which the Lord led the Israelites, is the *place* which he made for Himself to *dwell in*. This will put His dwelling place *on the earth*.

#### 11. The Lord will Return to Zion and Dwell in Jerusalem.

"Thus said the Lord; I am *returned* unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of *Jerusalem*: And Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: if it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of the people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? Saith the Lord of hosts," Zech 8:3-6. Dr. Smith, in the Goodspeed translation, translates verse 3, "I will return to Zion, and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem." He translates verse 6, "If it seem incredible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, in my sight also will it seem incredible?"

This is a prophecy of Christ's return to Zion to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. When Jeremiah said, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord" (Jer. 3:17), he meant the

*(Cont: continued on page 10)*

(Jones: continued from page 9)

Jerusalem where David dwelled and where David had his throne.

### 12. When the Lord Appears in His Glory He Will Build Up Zion.

"When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory," Ps. 102:16. This connects the building up of Zion with the Lord's return in glory.

### 13. When the Lord Comes in His Glory He Will Sit Upon the Throne of His Glory

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, *then* shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," Matt. 25:31.

This is when He shall appear in His glory and build up Zion, as in Psalms 102:16. It is when He shall return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, as in Zechariah 8:3.

The judgment that follows Matthew 25:31 is not the judgment of the dead who come from the sea, death and Hades to be judged, mentioned in Revelation 20:11-13. Matthew 25:32 says, "Before him shall be gathered all nations." The living constitute nations, not the dead. It will be those who are left living on this earth at our Lord's return to sit on His throne (Matt. 25:31) who shall be gathered before Him to be judged at that time. See Matt. 25:32-46.

### 14. The Lord at His Return to Earth Will Come to Mount of Olives.

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against the nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great val-

ley; and half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south," Zech. 14:1-4.

**He is coming to fight against the nations that are in the very act of destroying the city.**

Here is a prophecy of our Lord's return to the earth. It is to come in the midst of a battle that is raging over Jerusalem. It is to come at a time when Jerusalem is being destroyed and when half of the city has been captured. He is coming to fight against the nations that are in the very act of destroying the city. His coming brings to an end that destruction. At His coming His feet will stand on the mount of Olives. At that time the mount of Olives will be split asunder. Half of the mountain will move toward the north and half of it toward the south, forming a valley running east and west, the natural consequences of part of the mountain going north and part of it going south.

The feeble effort of those who oppose Premillennial truth to get around this plain prophecy is pathetic, and a downright denial of the word of God. They say this was fulfilled when Jesus was here the first time. But saying something is one thing, proving it is another. It is very easy to make an affirmation. But oftentimes it is impossible to prove it. They show where Jesus was on the mount of Olives when He was here the first time. That is readily admitted. But where is their proof that the mount of Olives was split assunder at that time? Where is their proof that half of it was moved toward the north and half of it toward the south, forming a great valley east and west? Where is the proof that all nations were gathered against Jerusalem to battle at that time? Where is the proof that the city was being destroyed and plundered at that time, and that Jesus fought against those nations, bringing to a halt the destruction of the city? When they bring the proof that all these things happened when Jesus was here the first time they have proven their contention, and not before. But they cannot bring this proof, and they know they cannot. Therefore, they simply show that Jesus was on the mount of Olives when He was here the first time, and pass it off with that. This writer cannot accept such loose handling of the word of God. He wonders if such a treatment of this whole

passage of prophecy is really satisfying to those who make such a flimsy effort to explain it away. They know they cannot bring the proof that all of these things happened when Jesus was here the first time. The best they can do is prove that He was on the mount of Olives, and stop at that. They try to forget, or get the people to forget, the many other things which must happen to fulfill this prophecy. Such methods of dealing with the word of God do not satisfy this writer. For this reason he is a Premillennialist. A Premillennialist can believe that all the things foretold in this passage must and will happen.

This prophecy proves that Jesus will return to this earth, and His feet shall stand on the earth. This was what Job believed and foretold when he said, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the *earth*: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," Job 19:25-26.

Job expected to see Christ on this earth after the Lord had raised the old patriarch from his grave. The Lord must return to the earth as the many passages which have been given plainly show. None but Premillennialists believe this. Because of this fact, this writer can never be anything else than a Premillennialist.

#### 15. Christ is to Return in the Midst of the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty, Commonly Known as the Battle of Armageddon.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles which go forth unto the kings of the earth and the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. *Behold, I come as a thief.* Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon," Rev. 16:13-16.

This is a gathering of all nations of the whole world

to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The coming of Christ is mentioned in the same connection. The gathering place for the armies is Armageddon. This will be the logical place for the gathering. It is inland, just a short distance from the port of Hiafa, the main seaport in Palestine. It is in the right place for the forces coming by sea to join the forces coming by land from the north.

However, let it be noticed, it does not say the battle will be fought at Armageddon, but that the nations will be gathered there. The fight will probably range from here south to Jerusalem. Armageddon is some fifty miles or more north of Jerusalem.

This is the same battle which Zechariah foretold in chapter 14, verses 1 to 15. In Revelation, John calls it the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Zechariah said, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh." John said the kings of the whole world would be gathered to it. Zechariah said all nations would be gathered against Jerusalem to battle. The Lord warns of His coming in connection with this great battle. Zechariah states that the Lord shall come to *fight* against those nations.

In Revelation 19:11-21 is a prophecy of our Lord's coming and the battle of the great day of God Almighty. "I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge *and make war*," verse 11. This is Christ coming to make *war* or to *fight* against the nations gathered to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, as foretold in Zech. 14:1-4, and Rev. 16:13-16.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God," verses 12-13. This is more proof that this is Christ, for He is The Word of God.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white

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**This is a  
gathering of all  
nations of the  
whole world to  
the battle of the  
great day of  
God Almighty.**

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and clean," verse 14. These are the saints of God coming back from heaven with Christ. They are clothed in fine linen. Revelation 19:8 states, "The fine linen is the righteousness of saints." These are the saints of God, previously raptured with Christ in the air, now coming back with Him to the battle. This is in keeping with what Zechariah foretold, "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee," Zech. 14:5. Compare with Revelation 19:11-14 where Christ is shown coming out of heaven and the saints coming with Him.

In Revelation 17:14, speaking of the kings who shall be associated with the beast, John said, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." This is the same battle described in Revelation 19:11-21 and in Zechariah 14:1-15. The "called and chosen and faithful" who are with the Lamb in this place are the saints of Zechariah 14:5 and of Revelation 19:14 who shall come back from heaven with Christ as He comes to make war with His enemies and overcome them.

But let us proceed with our study of the battle in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation. "And out of his mouth

goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings and Lord of lords.*"

This should settle any doubt one might have as to the identity of the white horse rider in this passage who is coming to make war. He is called Faithful and True. He is called the *Word of God*. He is called King of kings, and Lord of lords. This can be none other than Christ. He is pictured coming out of heaven, and the saints with Him, coming to make war. This must be one and the same event as that foretold by Zechariah in chapter 14, verses 1 to 5, where the Lord comes to fight against Israel's enemies.

He is to rule the nations with a rod of iron, and is to smite the nations with a rod of iron. This corresponds with Psalms 2:8-9, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

## The Kingdom Of God On Earth

Do the Scriptures predict the setting up of a kingdom on earth with Jesus Christ reigning as King? If so, how will it be ushered in, and what events will precede its coming? Upon what principles will it be founded, and what changes will follow its inauguration? Will restored Israel share in its glory?

The answer is, Yes, there will be a Kingdom. The present Age is drawing to a close and soon the Kingdom will be ushered in. For nearly two thousand years the Church has prayed, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). And this prayer, God given, must and will be answered. The time will come when it will never have to be offered again. The long promised Kingdom will be here, and the reign of Christ begun. Every prophetic utterance regarding the Millennium will be fulfilled.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

But what will happen when the Kingdom is ushered in? What changes will take place during the Millennial reign of Christ? These are the questions of the day. For this is Saturday night in the history of the Church. The Times of the Gentiles have almost run out. Man has had his day. The Eleventh Hour has struck. What now is to happen? Let the Word of God answer, for we have no other source of information. It, and it alone, is authoritative

Let us read the closing verses of Revelation 19. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse (verses 11 to 16), and against his army. And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

This is the consumation of the battle. The beast and the false prophet are cast alive into a lake of fire. The kings with them and their armies are all destroyed. This does not mean, however, that there will not still be people in the nations from which these armies came. All the people of a nation do not go into an army.

The beast and the false prophet are seen in this connection. Their influence is seen in Revelation 16:3-16 gathering the kings of the earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The kings are seen in this connection. They are mentioned in Revelation 17:14 as making war against the Lamb. The coming of Christ is seen in connection with the battle of the

great day of God Almighty in Revelation 16:4-5. It is foretold in Revelation 17:14 that the Lamb shall overcome those kings. He is seen coming and fighting against those kings and their armies in Revelation 19:11-21.

The purpose in the minds of the beast and his associates will be to destroy Israel. But in coming against Israel they will find they have come against the Lord of hosts, the One mighty in battle. They will meet with the King of glory, King of kings and Lord of lords, the One mighty in battle. "Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," Ps. 24:8.

While the beast and kings of the earth will have their purpose in gathering to this battle, which will be to destroy Israel, God will also have His purpose. Both purposes are found in Micah 4:11. "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion." This shows the purpose of the nations in that gathering. But let us look at God's purpose. "But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thy hoof brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces

*(Jones: continued on page 14)*

and authentic. What it promises will surely come to pass.

For those who would like to make a thorough study of "The Kingdom of God on Earth," I have compiled the following passages of Scripture. It has been my privilege to expound them before intensely interested audiences. They will convince any honest student of the establishment of a literal Kingdom. In them the glories and characteristics of the Kingdom are graphically presented. These are the passages:

Ps. 72:2-17; Isa. 2:2-4; Isa. 9:6-7; Isa. 11:1-9; Isa. 12; Isa. 14:1-2; Isa. 24:23; Isa. 25:8-9; Isa. 27:6; Isa. 32:15-18; Isa. 33:20-22, 24; Isa. 35; Isa. 51:3, 11; Isa. 60; Isa. 61:4-6; Isa. 65:18-25; Jer. 23:5-8; Jer. 32:37-41; Jer. 33:15-17; Ezek. 11:17-20; Ezek. 21:25-27; Ezek. 28:25-26; Ezek. 34:11-13, 23-28; Ezek. 36:24-38; Ezek. 37:1-28; Ezek. 39:25-29; Dan. 2:34-35, 44; Dan. 7:9-14, 18, 22, 27; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:1-7; Hab. 2:14; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 6:12-13; Zech. 8:4-5, 20-23; Zech. 9:10; Zech. 14:8-11, 16-21; Mal. 3:1-5, 12; Matt. 2:6; Matt. 4:17; Matt. 6:10; Matt. 13:41-43; Matt. 25:31; Matt. 27:11, 37; Luke 1:6-7; Acts 2:30; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 6:2-3, 9-10; 1 Cor. 15:24-25; 2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 8:2; Rev. 3:21; Rev. 5:10; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 20:1-4. See also Ps. 102:16; Ps. 96:13; Luke 23:42.

Oswald J. Smith  
Pastor of The Peoples Church, Toronto  
From *Prophecy—What Lies Ahead?*, Chapter V

(Jones: continued from page 13)

many people, and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."

All these passages show the prophecy of Zechariah 14:1-5 to be predictions of an event still in the future. It must be fulfilled, and it will be fulfilled in connection with our Lord's return to earth.

Some who do not want to accept the truth of these prophecies make light of the prediction that Christ will return from heaven on a white horse. They sneeringly ask, "Is there a livery stable in heaven?"

First of all, let it be said that nothing in the Bible was written to be laughed at, or to be made the source of a jest. That borders on railing, which the Bible greatly condemns. The Bible, and everything in it, was written for our profit, and our enlightenment. In the next place, the Bible teaches that horses are a symbol of warfare. In Proverbs 21:31 it is stated, "The horse is prepared against the day of battle." Since Christ is coming in Revelation 19:11-21 to make war, then he is pictured riding a white horse.

If the reader will turn to 2 Kings 6:8-17 he will find similar horses. When the armies of the Syrians came to take the prophet Elisha God had the prophet protected by horses and chariots of fire. Elisha's servant had to be supernaturally enabled to see these horses and chariots of fire. The horses of Revelation 19:11-14 will be after this same fashion. John saw them in a vision. The beast and his armies may be able to see them at the last moment when the heavens open and the Lord and His hosts descend upon the heads of the unsuspecting followers of the beast.

The Bible foretold the place to which Christ would come the first time. That place was Bethlehem, found in Micah 5:2. It also foretells the place to which He will come the second time. That will be the mount of Olives, found in Zechariah 14:1-4.

#### 16. Christ is to be King Over the Whole Earth.

**The Bible, and everything in it, was written for our profit, and our enlightenment.**

This takes us back to the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Zechariah. After telling about the Lord coming with His saints in the midst of the battle against Jerusalem the prophet went on to say, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one," verse 9.

Now, if the reader will take up where we left off in our discussion of the battle in Revelation 19:11-21, and will read on down to chapter 20, verse 6, he will read about the thousand year reign of Christ and His saints. These prophecies of Zechariah and John fit together. In many ways they foretell the same things. They both foretell of all the nations being gathered together to war. They both foretell the coming of the saints with Christ. They both foretell that the

Lord will be victorious. They both foretell the reign that shall follow the coming of Christ. Zechariah adds some details that John does not have, and John gives some details that Zechariah does not have, but the pattern and general outline is the same in both prophecies. Zechariah states the reign will be on the earth. John states it is to last a thousand years. The whole context in Revelation shows the reign is to be on the earth. ✪

*From The Earth's Great Jubilee, Chapter 1.*

*Jesus shall reign where're the sun*

*Does his successive journeys run;*

*His kingdom spread from shore to shore,*

*Till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

Isaac Watts



## Millennium: Distinctions Which Make Difficulties Disappear

B.W. Newton

*(The following is taken from the valuable booklet, *On the Prophecies Respecting the Jews and Jerusalem*).*

I am well aware that many who have written on the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus have, by crude and mistaken statements, given ground to the attacks of their opponents. But the doctrine of the millennium, as it is taught in Scripture is not to be rejected on account of the errors of its advocates. We cannot blot from the Scripture such words as these: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (high places); (Daniel 7:27); nor can we cancel the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of that chapter. And again: "they (those who will have part in the first resurrection) shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6).

It would indeed be strange if Satan were always permitted to be the "deceiver of the nations" – "the god of this world." And if he is to be bound, and to be cast into the bottomless pit, it is impossible that preaching or any form of moral influence could accomplish such an end. The binding of Satan, and other events associated therewith, require for their accomplishment an agency different from any that God is at present pleased to employ. The day of the Lord, the day when He will come "out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isaiah 26:21), will bring the world and all that is therein under the operation of a power very different from that which beareth on it now. "The LORD my God," says the prophet Zechariah, "shall come, and all the saints with thee," after which "the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and His Name one." See the connection of these verses in Zechariah 14.

We are not, however, to suppose that because the Lord will reign over the Land of Israel and the earth, He will cease to have His dwelling place in heaven.

Heaven will ever be His home and the home of His glorified saints. The glory of Jerusalem that is above will be as different from that of the earthly Jerusalem in the day of her forgiveness, as heaven is different from earth. The former will be the city of the glorified saints, and will be above the created heavens; the latter during the millennium will be the terrestrial city of converted Israel. The fact that Moses and Elias have visited this earth and appeared in glory by the side of their transfigured Lord has not made earth their heavenly home. Even now, holy angels visit this earth, unseen, indeed, yet exercising their ministry on behalf of those who are to inherit salvation: but angels are not thereby rendered inhabitants of earth.

In like manner, when Christ shall reign from heaven over Israel and over the earth, and when pardoned Jerusalem shall be the earthly seat and centre of His government and the place of His throne, this shall not render earthly, either Christ, or the saints, or the angels who shall act under Him, although they shall from time to time, in accomplishing the objects of their ministration, visit the earth and hold intercourse with those who dwell therein. "Heaven," saith the Lord Jesus "is God's throne...the earth is His footstool...Jerusalem...is the city of the Great King" (Matthew 5:34-35). And as the earth and all that pertaineth thereunto will stand in visible contrast to heaven and the heavenly city during the whole millennial period, so likewise it equally differs from the new heavens and new earth which will be created after the millennial heavens and earth shall have ceased to be.

In the new earth there shall be nothing that bears the likeness of the first Adam. There, all will reflect the glory of the Second Man: there all the redeemed shall be finally united – alike perfect - alike con-

*(Newton, continued on page 16)*

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# Premillennial Baptist Journal

Victory Baptist Church

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## Theme of next issue: *Israel and the Millennium*

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*(Newton; continued from page 15)*

formed to the likeness of their glorified Lord. Millenarianism as taught in Scripture confounds not heaven and earth. It preserves their distinctness. It leaves intact the everlasting distinction between the flesh and the Spirit – the old and the new creation, the first Adam and the last Adam.

Some have imagined that because there is no difference between Jew and Gentile as viewed in Christ, and in their relation to heaven, therefore there can be no temporary distinction between them in the earthly dispensations of the Lord below. But are we prepared thus to interpret the verse throughout? As viewed in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (Colossians 3:11); for all are one in Christ Jesus. But does this imply that there are no temporary distinctions between these various classes in the earth? Does it not belong to the man to govern, and to the woman to obey? The man, if qualified by the Spirit, has a right to speak in the Church, but the woman is commanded "to keep silence." In Christ, Philemon and Onesimus were one;

but as to the arrangements of earth, Philemon was the master, and Onesimus the slave.

Christianity is not Socialism. It gives unity of blessings in the heavens, but it destroys not the distinctions which God has established in the earth. The national standing of Israel and of the gentiles in the earth is something altogether distinct from that heavenly citizenship common to all believers, whether Jew, or whether gentile. At present [*this was written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century -Ed*] the Gentiles dominate over Jerusalem. Since the time of Nebuchadnezzar, because of Israel's sin, they have been commissioned to trample Israel under foot. But soon this is to be reversed. "Unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem" (Micah 4:8). There may be a reason why gentiles who know not God should wish to hide from themselves this truth. But it should be otherwise with those who, washed from their sins in the Blood of the Lamb, are taught to look to the hour of Israel's forgiveness as the hour at which they will themselves enter on their heavenly glory. ✪

*From Watching and Waiting*  
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# Premillennial Baptist Journal

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## Israel and the Millennium

### Inside This Edition

- The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews, *Charles Spurgeon* ..... Page 3
- Is God Finished With Israel, *Royce Smith*..... Page 5
- Israel Means Israel, *Stephen A. Toms* ..... Page 8
- What Did They Believe ..... Page 10

## Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

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*For lo! the days are hastening on,  
By prophet-bards foretold,  
When with the ever-circling years  
Comes round the age of gold;  
When peace shall over all the earth  
Its ancient splendors fling,  
And the whole world send back the song  
Which now the angels sing.*



## The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews

C.H. Spurgeon

Ezekiel 37:1-10 "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

This vision has been used, from the time of Jerome onwards, as a description of the resurrection, and certainly it may be so accommodated with much effect. What a vision of the great day the words picture before the mind's eye! The great army of the quick, who once were dead, seem to start up as we read. Here, too, we have a very fit and appropriate question to be asked in a charnel-house—"Son of man, can these bones live?" Looking down into the dark grave, or watching the sexton as he throws up the mouldering relics, once instinct with life, well may unbelief suggest the enquiry—"Can these bones live?" Faith cannot at all times give a more satisfactory answer than this—"O Lord God, thou knowest."

But while this interpretation of the vision may be very proper as an accommodation, it must be quite evident to any thinking person that this is not the meaning of the passage. There is no allusion made by Ezekiel to the resurrection, and such topic would have been quite apart from the design of the prophet's speech. I believe he was no more thinking of the resurrection of the dead than of the building of St. Peter's at Rome, or the emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers. That topic is altogether foreign to the subject in hand, and could not by any possibility have crept into the prophet's mind. He was talking about the people of Israel, and prophesying concerning them; and evidently the vision, according to God's own interpretation of it, was concerning them, and them alone, for "these bones are the whole house of Israel." It was not a vision concerning all men, nor, indeed, concerning any men as to the resurrection of the dead, but it had a direct and special bearing upon the Jewish people.

This passage, again, has been very frequently, and I dare say very properly, used to describe the revival of a decayed Church. This vision may be looked upon as descriptive of a state of lukewarmness and spiritual lethargy in a Church, when the question may be sorrowfully asked—"Can these bones live?" Can that dull minister wake up to living power? Can these cold deacons glow with holy heat? Can those unspiritual members rise to something like holy earnest self-sacrifice? Is it possible that the drowsy formal Church should start up to real earnestness? Such suggestions might well have occurred to many minds at the time of the Reformation. It did seem impossible, when Popery was in its power, that spiritual life should ever again return to the Church. Piety seemed to be dead and buried, and the cloister, the clergy, superstition and deceit, like great graves, had swallowed up everything that was good; but the Lord appeared for his people, and brought up the buried truth out of its grave, and once more in every part of the known world the name of Jesus Christ was lifted up, and sound doctrine was preached. So was it in our

*(Spurgeon: continued on page 4)*

(Spurgeon: continued from page 3)

own country. When both the Establishment and Dissent had fallen into spiritual death, we might well have said—"Can these bones live?" But Whitfield and Wesley were raised up by God, and they prophesied upon the dry bones, and up they stood, filled with the Spirit of God, "an exceeding great army." Let the crowds of Kingsdown, and the multitudes on Kennington Common, tell of the quickening power of Jesus' name. Decayed Churches can most certainly be revived by the preaching of the Word, accompanied by the coming of the heavenly "breath" from the four winds. O Lord, send us such revivals now, for many of thy Churches need them: they are almost as dead as the corpses which sleep around them in the graveyard. But while we admit this to be a very fitting accommodation of our text, yet we are quite convinced that it is not to this that the passage refers. It would be altogether alien to the prophet's strain of thought to be thinking about the restoration of fallen zeal and the rekindling of expiring love; he was not considering the Reformation either of Luther or of Whitfield, or about the revival of one Church or of another. No, he was talking of his own people, of his own race, and of his own tribe. He surely ought to have known his own mind, and led by the Holy Spirit he gives us as an explanation of the vision, not—"Thus saith the Lord, my dying Church shall be restored," but—"I will bring my people out of their graves, and bring them into the land of Israel."

With very great propriety, too, this passage has been used for the comforting of believers in their dark and cloudy days. When they have lost their comforts, when their spiritual joys have drooped like withering flowers, when they have been no longer able to

"Read their titles clear  
To mansions in the skies,"

They have been reminded that God could return to them in grace and mercy, that the dry bones could live, and should live; that the Spirit of God could again come upon his people; that even at the time when they were ready to give up all hope and lie down in despair, he could come and so quicken them, that the poor trembling cowards should be

turned into soldiers of God, and should stand upon their feet an exceeding great army. No grave of grief can hold the immortal joy of a believer: on the third day it shall rise again, for, like the Lord who gave it, it shall never see corruption. Bone to his bone shall your comforts come together, and an army of joys shall live in your soul. The passage certainly may be so used without violent wresting, and might thus yield much comfort to the people of God; but still we take the liberty of saying that this is not the drift of the prophet, and that we do not believe he was thinking of anything of the kind, but that he was speaking only of his own people, his own "kinsmen according to the flesh."

**The way in  
which Israel  
shall be saved  
is the same by  
which any one  
individual sinner  
shall be  
saved.**

Once more. There is no doubt that we have in this passage a most striking picture of the restoration of dead souls to spiritual life. Men, by nature, are just like these dry bones exposed in the open valley. The spiritual frame is dislocated; the sap and marrow of spiritual life has been dried out of manhood. Human nature is not only dead, but, like the bleaching bones which have long whitened in the sun, it has lost all trace of the divine life. Will and power have both departed. Spiritual death reigns undisturbed. Yet the dry bones can live. Under the preaching of the Word the vilest sinners can be reclaimed, the most stubborn wills can be subdued, the most unholy lives can be sanctified. When the holy "breath" comes from the four winds, when the divine Spirit descends to own the Word, then multitudes of sinners, as on Pentecost's hallowed day, stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army, to praise the Lord their God. But, mark you, this is not the first and proper interpretation of the text; it is indeed nothing more than a very striking parallel case to the one before us. It is not the case itself; it is only a similar one, for the way in which God restores a nation is, practically, the way in which he restores an individual. The way in which Israel shall be saved is the same by which any one individual sinner shall be saved. It is not, however, the one case which the prophet is aiming at; he is looking at the vast mass of cases, the multitudes of instances to be found among the Jewish people, of gracious quickening, and holy resurrection. His first and primary intention was to speak of

(Spurgeon: continued on page 12)

## Is God Finished With Israel? An Outline

Royce Smith



Acts 15:13-17; Romans 11:25-31

**INTRODUCTION:** Is God forever finished with Israel as a nation? Some say He is; others say He is not. Who is correct?

**Note:** Generally speaking, the amillennialist says He is. According to his view, God rejected Israel when Israel rejected Christ; Thus He turned to the church. The church is now Israel, and the promises made to Israel are fulfilled in the church.

1. **James declared God is not finished with Israel,** Acts 15:13-17. These words are his interpretation of Amos 9:8-12.

- (1) God will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob. Is the church ever called the "house of Jacob"?
- (2) The tabernacle of David is said to be fallen down. Can it ever be said that the spiritual throne of Christ is fallen down?

2. **Paul concurred God is not finished with Israel,** Romans 11:25-31. His interpretation is in harmony with that of James.

- (1) Israel blinded for a time that the full number of God's elect among the Gentiles might be brought in, Cf. Romans 11:10, 11. God is now taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name. This work will end when the full number is brought in; hence, the phrase "the fullness of the Gentiles" Cf. Luke 21:24, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."
- (2) All Israel then shall be saved. "And so (houtu, thus, in this manner) in V. 25 references the preceding statements in Vs.12, 15, 23, 24.

**Note:** These inspired N. T. interpretations of the O.T. Scriptures show us God is not forever finished with Israel as a nation. These interpretations, then, must guide us in our interpretation of other O. T. prophecies.

**PROPOSITION:** God is not finished with Israel! Four reasons why he is not finished with this nation:

**I. God is not finished with Israel because of the promise he made to Abraham.**

1. **The aspects of the promise,** Cf. Genesis 12:1-3. Everything promised must be given.

- (1) *The land.* Time and again God's promise to Abraham linked with "the land."
- (2) *The nation.* Only one nation is ever in view in this promise; the church is not a nation in a literal sense, Cf. 1 Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"
- (3) *The blessings.* Five blessings are enumerated here.

2. **The specificity of the promise,** Cf. Genesis 15:1-5, 18-21. The land is geographically identified.

- (1) Israel has never possessed all this land. What Israel inherited under Joshua and what they have today is much smaller than what God promised.

(Smith: continued on page 6)

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(Smith: continued from page 5)

- (2) Israel must have all this land someday, or Moses will be proved a false prophet, Cf. Deuteronomy 18:22, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." The marvel of all true prophecy is the specificity of it. Cf. Ezekiel 26:3-5, "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations." The specific details of the prophecy concerning Tyre are similar to that concerning Israel and the land it is inherit. We must not minimize the details of prophecy.

**Note:** It is difficult to spiritualize the land. The land is physical.

## II. GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH ISRAEL BECAUSE ISRAEL HAS NEVER POSSESSED ALL THE LAND GOD PROMISED THEM.

1. The first land promised to Israel that of Canaan, Cf. Genesis 12:1, 4-7; 15:16; Exodus 3:8, "And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites." The twelve spies sent only to this land, Cf. Numbers 13:17, "And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:"

2. The land inhabited by Israel enlarged at the request of two and one-half tribes, Cf. Numbers 32:5, 33-42. Why did God give permission for this extension to the promised land? Was it not because this area was included in the all the land God had promised to Israel?
3. The Six Cities of Refuge limited to the land divided to Israel by Joshua, Cf. Numbers 35:9-15; Joshua 20:7-9. If Israel inherited land all the way to the Euphrates River, why were there no cities of refuge set aside in that area?

**Note:** What about Joshua 21:45? "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." Does the *all* that came to pass refer to the land of Canaan or all the land promised in Genesis 15:18? The Book of Judges reveals Israel had not even occupied all of Canaan during the life of Joshua, Cf. Judges 1:19-36.

**Note:** What about 1 Kings 4:21? "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life." Reigning temporarily over other nations is not the same as possessing the land as one's own. Cf. Genesis 15:18, "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:" Deuteronomy 11:24, "Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be." Deuteronomy 11:31, "For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein." Deuteronomy 12:10, "But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;"

## III. GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH ISRAEL BECAUSE OF THE COVENANT HE MADE WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB,

Cf. Ezekiel 16:60, "Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant."

1. **A confirmed covenant cannot be disannulled or made void.** Cf. Galatians 3:15-17, "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." God cannot promise to do something He will not do.
2. **A broken covenant would reflect against God.** Therefore, He keeps His covenant with Israel for His name's sake, Cf. Ezekiel 36:21, 22, "But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went."

**Note:** Nothing Israel ever did in all their history disannulled God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This covenant typifies His everlasting covenant with His Son, Cf. Hebrews 13:20, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," If one of God's covenants could be broken due to human sin, what would prevent another from being broken for the same reason? Cf. Jeremiah 33:20, 21, "Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers."

#### IV. GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH ISRAEL BECAUSE HE WILL YET REGATHER THEM INTO THEIR LAND.

1. **He will gather them out of all countries.** Cf. Deuteronomy 30:4, 5, "If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." Ezekiel 20:34, "And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out." Ezekiel 20:42, "And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers." The re-gathering of the Jews into their land following the Babylonian exile was only from Babylon, Ezra 2:1, "Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;"
2. **He will give them all the land promised to Abraham.** Cf. Ezekiel 48:1-35. That land reaches from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River.

**Note:** Israel will not be given all this land until God re-gathers them into it. Then the prophecy of Ezekiel 47:10 will be fulfilled. "And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many."

**Note:** What has the church to do with land? This world is not the church's home. The church has never been promised it would receive a certain piece of land.

## Israel Means Israel

Stephen A. Toms



"In reading prophecy, remember that Israel means Israel and not Believers; Jerusalem means Jerusalem and not Heaven; Zion means Zion and not The Church; Babylon means Babylon and not Rome; Egypt means Egypt and not The World." It is a good idea to have those words placed somewhere inside the pages of your Bible.

**Israel:** I recently heard a preacher refer to the new covenant spoken of in Hebrews 8:8 as if it were a covenant with Gentiles. It may not be wrong to apply it to Gentiles, but God specifically says with whom the covenant is. I once heard Mr. Fromow ask a minister, who was inclined to amillennialism, why the apostle had quoted the Jeremiah prophecy in full. The words "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" had not been deleted. The minister could not give a reason, and, as far as I know, never did. This scripture speaks of a time when it will not be necessary to tell others to know the Lord. Surely that is not now! We read here of a time when both kingdoms of Israel will be blessed in fulfillment of God's unconditional covenant with them, not a covenant based on works as was the Sinaitic one.

There are those who would tell us that Israel means all believers and they point to Romans 9:6 and 2:28. But in neither of these verses are we told that Gentiles are Israel or Jews. A right exposition is that some of Israel, or of the Jews, are not regenerate. To read the words "believers" or "the Church" every time the words "Israel" or "the Jews" are found in the book of Romans is a stupidity. The same people will also speak of Galatians 6:16. But the word Israel in this verse means Israel, Gentile believers being previously included in those who are a new creature.

In Ezekiel 34:11, we read of Jehovah seeking out His sheep. It is not wrong to apply that to all those saved by sovereign grace, but the passage refers to Israel. In verse 26, we read of the showers of blessing. It is not wrong to seek such from the Lord, but

the passage refers to Israel. In Ezekiel 36:26, we read of a new heart being given. It is not wrong to say that is what God does for all His elect, but the passage refers to Israel. In verse 37, we are specifically told that Israel will have to pray for the blessings promised in these chapters. Ezekiel 37 is often used to explain God's dealings with sinners. That is not a wrong application but the passage states that it refers to "the house of Israel" (verse 11). There are many similar prophecies.

**Jerusalem:** Isaiah 1:1 tells us that the prophecy is a vision he "saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." The same words are in chapter 2:1. So Isaiah is a book about Judah and Jerusalem. Mr. James Payne used to say that if you were writing a history of England you would include reference to France and Germany, etc. So, although Isaiah mentions many other nations, God says that the subject is Judah and Jerusalem. Either God is telling the truth or He is not. I recently heard a preacher refer to Isaiah 40:9, and he made much emphasis of the word Jerusalem saying that it meant all Christians, and not only preachers, were to lift up their voices. The application may be right but it is not what the verse says.

In Revelation 21:2 we read of a "new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven" and in Hebrews 12:22 of the "heavenly Jerusalem." Bishop Thompson said at one of our meetings long ago that worldly people sing, there will always be an England, but that is not strictly true. He added that there will always be a Jerusalem. There is to be a millennial Jerusalem; there is to be a heavenly Jerusalem, but when the Bible tells us about a Jerusalem on the earth, God means what He says. The earthly Jerusalem may be a type of heaven, but it is still Jerusalem, the city that we know here below.

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When Mr. W.K. Puttnam spoke at an S.G.A.T. meeting some years ago on Zechariah 8, I remember Mr. Fromow saying afterwards that verse 5 tells us that the boys and girls will be fit to play in the streets of Jerusalem, and the streets will be fit for the children to play in. And the previous verse reminds us that old people will be there as well as the young. There are many such wonderful prophecies about Jerusalem.

**Zion:** Zechariah 8:3 speaks about Zion, which is, of course, in Jerusalem; it is described as "the holy mountain." Zion certainly is a type of the Church, for in Psalm 125:1-2 it speaks of Mount Zion, "which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. And as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about His people."

I know a man who frequently, in prayer, thanks God He has set His King on His holy hill of Zion, as if it is something which has already happened. But Psalm 2 refers to the future, to the end of this age with nations raging and people imagining vain things; of kings and rulers being against the LORD. God's answer to all this will be to set the Lord Jesus, at His second coming, here on the earth, at Zion.

There are many Psalms which tell us about Zion but perhaps Psalm 48 is worthy of special thought as it recalls some of the blessings of the millennium. "Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge" etc.

**Babylon:** A preacher said recently in my hearing that he could not understand why Christians are so worried about Islam as when he read his Bible he understood that Rome is the system which should cause concern. Well, there is nothing more in the

Bible about Papal Rome that there is about Islam. The truth is that they both, with many others, emerge from the Babylon of Nimrod and will return to the Babylonish system. Bishop Thompson used to say that Babylon is the mother of harlots and Rome is one of the daughters; he considered Rome to be the worst daughter, but only a daughter. When we read in the Bible of the Babylonish system, it includes Papal Rome, but it also includes Islam and many other false religions.

Application is good, but to say that the Scripture does not mean what it says is nonsensical.

The Babylon chapters go in pairs – Genesis 10 and 11, Isaiah 13 and 14, 46 and 47, Jeremiah 50 and 51, Zechariah 5 and 6, and Revelation 17 and 18. It is not reasonable to say that the Babylon in Revelation is a different place from that in the rest of the Bible. I would suggest that it is a weakening of our Protestant position, as if Babylon in the New Testament means Rome, Peter must have gone to Rome. Surely that is a compromise to the Papacy who falsely claim Peter to be the first pope. In fact, he went east and wrote from Babylon (1

Peter 5:13).

**Egypt:** Egypt is a type of the world, and we have a lot to learn from that. But Egypt means Egypt. I remember a minister speaking from Isaiah and in dealing with the early chapters he said that Egypt meant the world. I asked him what he would say when he reached chapter 19. He did not reach it, and I never received an answer to my question. Verse 25 says, "Blessed be Egypt My people." God has a purpose for Egypt as we are told in verse 12, and that is an ultimate purpose of blessing.

Application is good, but to say that the Scripture does not mean what it says is nonsensical. We need to believe what the Bible states. We do not profess to understand everything, but it is right to believe what we do understand. ☆

From an article entitled "The Differences Between Application and Interpretation" in *Watching and Waiting Magazine*, October/December 2006

**And so all Israel will be saved. Romans 11:26a**

## What Did They Believe..... About the Future of Israel?



Here are samples of the views of some great men of God concerning the future of the nation of Israel, ethnic Israel, Israel as a nation.

### JOHN GILL

Jeremiah 30:3. "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord,..." And they are yet to come; the prophecy is not yet fulfilled. Kimchi says this belongs to the days of the Messiah; but not to his first coming, or to his coming in the flesh, which the Jews vainly expect, but to his spiritual coming in the latter day: "that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord;" which cannot be understood of their return from the Babylonish captivity; for, as Kimchi rightly observes, only Judah and Benjamin returned from thence; and though there were some few of the other tribes that came with them, especially of the tribe of Levi, yet not sufficient to answer to so great a prophecy as this, which refers to the same time as that in Hosea 3:5; as appears by comparing that with Jeremiah 30:9; and when, as the Apostle Paul says, "all Israel shall be saved", Romans 11:25; "and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it;" the land of Canaan, given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and which shall be again possessed by the Jews their posterity; for, without supposing that the Jews upon their call and conversion shall return to their own land, in a literal sense, I see not how we can understand this, and many other prophecies."

*From John Gill's Exposition of the Old Testament*

### CHARLES SPURGEON

Ezekiel 37:1-10. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel.

*From Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit,  
"The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews"*

### ROBERT HALDANE

Romans 11:26. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Here the Apostle further unfolds the mystery of which he would not have his brethren to be ignorant. In the foregoing verse he had declared that blindness had come upon Israel—that blindness which he had before shown was inflicted on part of the Jewish nation by the judgment of God, verses 8-10, which would continue till a certain period was accomplished. He now declares that at that period all Israel shall be saved. The rejection of Israel has been gen-

eral, but at no period universal. This rejection is to continue till the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in. Than the people of Israel, as a body, shall be brought to the faith of the Gospel. Such expressions as that "all Israel shall be saved," are no doubt, in certain situations, capable of limitation; but as no Scripture demands any limitation of this expression, and as the opposition here stated is between a part and all, there is no warrant to make any exception, and with God this, like all other things, is possible.

As it is written, "Whether Isaiah, in 59:20", says Mr. Stuart, "had respect to the salvation of Gospel times, has been called in question. But the context seems to me very clearly to indicate this." But why are we to rest our conviction on this point on our view of the connection? The Apostle's quotation of the words is ground sufficient to bear the conclusion. This method of treating the Apostle's quotations of prophecy should be most strenuously opposed. That it is prophecy ought to be rested on the ground of its being quoted as prophecy. "And even if he had respect to temporal deliverance," Mr. Stuart continues, "there can be no difficulty in the Apostle's using his words as the vehicle of conveying his own thoughts with regard to spiritual deliverance." There is indeed no difficulty in supposing that the same prophecy may, in its primary sense, refer to a temporal deliverance, and in its secondary, to a spiritual deliverance. But there is a very great difficulty in supposing that the Apostle would cite a prophecy respecting a temporal deliverance, which had no reference to the deliverance of which he was speaking. This would be very puerile. It would be worse than puerile—it would be a perversion of Scripture. It would be employing a false argument.

*From The Epistle to the Romans*

### Charles Hodge

Romans 11:26. "And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written." Israel, here, from the context, must mean the Jewish people, and all Israel, the whole nation. The Jews, as a people, are now rejected; as a people, they are to be restored. As their rejection, although national, did not include the rejection of every individual; so their restoration, although in like manner national, need not be assumed to in-

clude the salvation of every individual Jew. *Πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ* is not therefore to be here understood to mean, all the true people of God, as Augustin, Calvin, and many others explain it; nor all the elect Jews, i.e., all that part of the nation which constitute "the remnant according to the election of grace;" but the whole nation, as a nation.

In support of what he had said, the apostle appeals to the Old Testament prophecies. It is probable that here, as elsewhere, he does not intend to refer exclusively to any one prediction, but to give the general sense of many specific declarations of the ancient prophets. Isa. 59:20-21; 27:9; Jer. 31: 31-34; Ps. 14:7, are the passages which seem to have been immediately before the apostle's mind, and to have given colour to his language.

*From Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*

### MENNO SIMONS

The Jews despised this King Christ and therefore they were blinded. Yet they shall return and come to Christ, their King David, as Paul testifies, saying: Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away the ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins, Isaiah 59:20. Since Israel is yet to be converted unto Christ, it follows incontrovertibly that the King David, whom Israel shall seek, can be none other than Christ.

*From The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, p. 38*

### John Gill

Some of his own people also well knew how to render his visits interesting to themselves and pleasing to him. He would seldom converse on trifles; but, touch the string of prophecy—the calling of the Jews—the latter day glory—or, introduce any interesting question on Christian experience, he was engaged at once, and out of the abundance of the knowledge and grace, treasured in his heart, his mouth freely spake. ✠

*From A Brief Memoir Of The Life And Writings Of The Late Rev. John Gill, D.D. Vol. 1 Exposition Of The Old and New Testaments by John Rippon*

**The Jews, as a people, are now rejected; as a people, they are to be restored.**

(Spurgeon: continued from page 4)

them, and though it is right and lawful to take a passage in its widest possible meaning, since "no Scripture is of private interpretation," yet I hold it to be treason to God's Word to neglect its primary meaning, and constantly to say—"Such-and-such is the primary meaning, but it is of no consequence, and I shall use the words for another object." The preacher of God's truth should not give up the Holy Ghost's meaning; he should take care that he does not even put it in the background. The first meaning of a text, the Spirit's meaning, is that which should be brought out first, and though the rest may fairly spring out of it, yet the first sense should have the chief place. Let it have the uppermost place in the synagogue, let it be looked upon as at least not inferior, either in interest or importance, to any other meaning which may come out of the text.

The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel.

I. First, THERE IS TO BE A POLITICAL RESTORATION OF THE JEWS. Israel is now blotted out from the map of nations; her sons are scattered far and wide; her daughters mourn beside all the rivers of the earth. Her sacred song is hushed; no king reigns in Jerusalem; she bringeth forth no governors among her tribes. But she is to be restored: she is to be restored "as from the dead." When her own sons have given up all hope of her, then is God to appear for her. She is to be re-organised; her scattered bones are to be brought together. There will be a native government again; there will again be the form of a body politic; a state shall be incorporated, and a king shall reign. Israel has now become alienated from her own land. Her sons, though they can never forget the sacred dust of Palestine, yet die at a hopeless distance from her consecrated shores. But it shall not be so forever, for her sons shall again rejoice in her: her land shall be called Beulah, for as a young man marrieth a virgin so shall her sons marry her. "I will place you in your own land," is God's promise to them. They

shall again walk upon her mountains, shall once more sit under her vines and rejoice under her fig-trees. And they are also to be re-united. There shall not be two, nor ten, nor twelve, but one—one Israel praising one God, serving one king, and that one king the Son of David, the descended Messiah. They are to have a national prosperity which shall make them famous; nay, so glorious shall they be that Egypt, and Tyre, and Greece, and Rome, shall all forget their glory in the greater splendour of the throne of David. The day shall yet come when all the high hills shall leap with envy, because this is the hill which God hath chosen, when Zion's shrine shall again be visited by the constant feet of the pilgrim; when her valleys shall echo with songs, and her hill-tops shall drop with wine and oil. If there be meaning in words this must be the meaning of this chapter. I wish never to learn the art of tearing God's meaning out of his own words. If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage—meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away—must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a king is to rule over them. "Thus said the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."

I am not now going into millennial theories, or into any speculation as to dates. I do not know anything at all about such things, and I am not sure that I am called to spend my time in such researches. I am rather called to minister the gospel than to open prophecy. Those who are wise in such things doubtless prize their wisdom, but I have not the time to acquire it, nor any inclination to leave soul-winning pursuits for less arousing themes. I believe it is a great deal better to leave many of these promises, and many of these gracious out-looks of believers, to exercise their full force upon our minds, without depriving them of their simple glory by aiming to discover dates and figures. Let this be settled, however, that if there be meaning in words, Israel is yet to be restored.

"Yet not in vain—o'er Israel's land  
The glory yet will shine;  
And he, thy once rejected King,  
Messiah, shall be thine.

His chosen Bride, ordain'd with him  
To reign o'er all the earth,  
Shall first be framed, ere thou shalt know  
Thy Saviour's matchless worth.

Then thou, beneath the peaceful reign  
Of Jesus and his Bride,  
Shalt sound his grace and glory forth,  
To all the earth beside.

The nations to thy glorious light,  
O Zion, yet shall throng,  
And all the list'ning islands wait  
To catch the joyful song."

But there is a second meaning here. ISRAEL IS TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL RESTORATION OR A CONVERSION.

Both the text and the context teach this. The promise is that they shall renounce their idols, and, behold, they have already done so. "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols." Whatever faults the Jew may have besides, he certainly has no idolatry. "The Lord thy God is one God," is a truth far better conceived by the Jew than by any other man on earth except the Christian. Weaned forever from the worship of all images, of whatever sort, the Jewish nation has now become infatuated with traditions or duped by philosophy. She is to have, however, instead of these delusions, a spiritual religion: she is to love her God. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." The unseen but omnipotent Jehovah is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth by his ancient people; they are to come before him in his own appointed way, accepting the Mediator whom their sires rejected; coming into covenant relation with God, for so our text tells us—"I will make a covenant of peace with them," and Jesus is our peace, therefore we gather that Jehovah shall enter into the covenant of grace with them, that covenant of which Christ is

the federal head, the substance, and the surety. They are to walk in God's ordinances and statutes, and so exhibit the practical effects of being united to Christ who hath given them peace. All these promises certainly imply that the people of Israel are to be converted to God, and that this conversion is to be permanent, for the tabernacle of God is to be with them, the Most High is, in an especial manner, to have his sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore; so that whatever nations may apostatize and turn from the Lord in these latter days, the nation of Israel never can, for she shall be effectually and permanently converted, the hearts of the fathers shall be turned with the hearts of the children unto the Lord their God, and they shall be the people of God, world without end.

We look forward, then, for these two things. I am not going to theorize upon which of them will come first, whether they shall be restored first, and converted afterwards, or converted first, and then restored. They are to be restored, and they are to be converted too. Let the Lord send these blessings in his own order, and we shall be well content whichever way they shall come. We take this for our joy and our comfort, that this thing shall be, and that both in the spiritual and in the temporal throne, the King Messiah shall sit, and reign among his people gloriously.

**...both in the  
spiritual and  
temporal  
throne, the  
King Messiah  
shall sit and  
reign among  
his people...**

II. Now I come to the practical part of my sermon this evening; THE MEANS OF THAT RESTORATION. Looking at this matter, we are very apt to say, "How can these things be? How can the Jews be converted to Christ? How can they be made into a nation? Truly, the case is quite as hopeless as that of the bones in the valley! How shall they cease from worldliness, or renounce their constant pursuit of riches? How shall they be weaned from their bigoted attachment to their Talmudic tradition? How shall they be lifted up out of that hardness of heart, which makes them hate the Messiah of Nazareth, their Lord and King? How can these things be?" The prophet does not say it cannot be; his unbelief is not so great as that, but at the same time, he scarcely ventures to think that it can ever be possible. He very wisely, however, puts back the ques-

*(Spurgeon: continued on page 14)*

(Spurgeon: continued from page 13)

tion upon his God—"O Lord God, thou knowest." Now some of you are very sanguine about this tonight, and you are expecting to see the Jews converted very soon, perhaps in a month or two. I wish you may see it as soon as your desires would date it. Others of us are not very sanguine, but take a more gloomy view of a long future of woes. Well, let us both together come before God tonight, and say, "O Lord God, thou knowest; and if thou knowest it, Lord, we will be content to leave the secret with thee; only tell us what thou wouldst have us to do; we ask not food for speculation, but we do ask for work; we ask for something by which we may practically show that we really do love the Jew, and that we would bring him to Christ." In answer to this, the Lord says to his servants, "Prophecy upon these bones," so that our duty tonight, as Christians, is to prophesy upon these bones, and we shall then see God's purpose fulfilled, when we obey God's precept.

I want you to observe that there are two kinds of prophesying spoken of here. First, the prophet prophesies to the bones—here is preaching; and next, he prophesies to the four winds—here is praying. The preaching has its share in the work, but it is the praying which achieves the result, for after he had prophesied to the four winds, and not before, the bones began to live. All that the preaching did was to make a stir, and to bring the bones together, but it was the praying which did the work, for then God the Holy Ghost came to give them life.

Preaching and praying, then, are the two heads of this part of my sermon tonight, and we will speak upon each briefly.

1. It is the duty and the privilege of the Christian Church, to preach the gospel to the Jew, and to every creature, and in so doing she may safely take the vision before us as her guide.

She may take it as her guide, first, as to matter. What are we to preach? The text says we are to prophesy, and assuredly every missionary to the Jews should especially keep God's prophecies very

prominently before the public eye. It seems to me that one way in which the Jewish mind might be laid hold of, would be to remind the Jews right often of that splendid future which both the Old and the New Testaments predict for Israel. Every man has a

**...a greater prominence should be given to prophecies in teaching the Jews than among any other people.**

tender side and a warm heart towards his own nation, and if you tell him that in your standard book there is a revelation made that that nation is to act a grand part in human history, and is, indeed, to take the very highest place in the parliament of nations, then the man's prejudice is on your side, and he listens to you with the greater attention. I would not commend, as some do, the everlasting preaching of prophesy in every congregation, but a greater prominence should be given to prophecies in teaching the Jews than among any other people.

But still, the main thing which we have to preach about is Christ. Depend upon it, dear brethren, the best sermons which we ever preach are those which are fullest of Christ. Jesus the Son of David and the Son of God; Jesus the suffering Saviour by whose stripes we are healed; Jesus able to save unto the uttermost—here is the most suitable subject for Gentiles, and God has fashioned all hearts alike, and therefore, this is also the noblest theme for Jews. Paul loved his countrymen; he was no simpleton; he knew what was the best weapon with which to assail and overcome their prejudices, and yet he could say, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Lift up the Messiah, then, both before Jew and Gentile. Tell of Mary's Son, the eternal Son of God, the Man of Nazareth, who is none other than the incarnate Word, God made flesh, and dwelling amongst us. Preach his hallowed life—the righteousness of his people; declare his painful death—the putting away of all their sins. Vindicate his glorious resurrection, the justification of his people; tell of his ascent on high, their triumph over the world and sin; declare his second advent, his glorious coming, to make his people glorious in the glory which he hath won for them, and Christ Jesus, as he is thus preached, shall surely be the means of making these bones live.

Let this preaching resound with sovereign mercy; let it always have in it the clear and distinct ring of free grace. I was thinking as I read this chapter just now, that of all the sermons which were ever preached, this sermon to the dry bones is the most Calvinistic, the most full of free grace, of any which were ever delivered. If you will notice it you will find that there is not an "if," or a "but," or a condition in it: and as for free-will, there is not even a mention of it. It is all in this fashion—"Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." You see it is all "shalls," and "wills," and covenant purposes. It is all God's decrees declared, and declared, too, as if there were no possibility of man's resisting them. He does not say, "You dry bones, you shall live if you like, you shall if you are willing." He doth not say to them, "You shall stand upright and be an exceeding great army if it pleases you to consent to my power." No, but it is, "I will," and "you shall." As for will, it is altogether put out of the question, for how shall the dead have a will in the matter? And so, dear friends, I would have the gospel preached both to the Jew and the Gentile with a very clear and distinct note of free, sovereign, almighty grace. Man has a will, and God never ignores that will, but by his almighty grace he blessedly leads it in silken fetters. He never stops to ask that will's consent when he comes forth upon his errands of effectual grace, but he wins that consent by the sweet persuasions of his own omnipotent love. He comes arrayed in the robes of his omnipotent grace, and the most hardened of rebels see at once such an attractive force in the love of God in Christ, that with full consent against their ancient wills they yield themselves captives to the grace of God. I do not believe that the Jews, or anybody else, will ever be converted, as a usual thing, by keeping back any of the doctrines of grace. We must have God's truth, and the whole of it; and more distinct utterances concerning evangelical doctrines and the grace of God are required both for Jews and for Gentiles. Preach, preach, preach, then, but let it be the preaching of Christ, and the proclamation of

free grace. The Church, I say, has a model here as to the matter of preaching.

And I am certain that she has also a model here as to her manner of preaching. How shall we preach the gospel? Was Ezekiel to do what some of my hyper-Calvinistic brethren say preachers ought to do—to warn the sinner, but never to invite him? Was Ezekiel to go and talk to these bones, but never to say a word to them by way of command? Was he to explain the way of salvation, but never bid them walk in it? No, after he had declared covenant purposes, he was then to say, "Thus saith the Lord, ye dry bones live." And so the message of the gospel minister when he has declared the purposes of divine grace, is to say to sinners, "Thus saith the Lord, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; trust Christ, and you are saved." Whoever you may be, Jew or Gentile, whether your speech be that of the land of Canaan or of a Gentile tongue, whether you spring of Shem, Ham, or Japheth, trust Christ, and you are saved; trust him, then, ye dry bones, and live. Withered arm, be outstretched; lame men, leap; blind eyes, see; ye dead, dry bones, live. The manner of our preaching is to be by way of command, as well as by way of teaching. Repent and be converted, every one of you. Lay hold on eternal life. "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

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We have a model here, moreover, as to our audience. We are not to select our congregation, but we are to go where God sends us; and if he should send us into the open valley, where the bones are very dry, we are to preach there. I trust that my brethren of the *Society of the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews* will never confine their labours to the good Jew, the respectable Jew, the enlightened Jew—let them seek after him among the rest—but I hope they will also seek after the ignorant, the degraded, the poor, and the fallen. The Church's best harvests have generally been reaped among the poor. For every grain of wheat which has fructified upon the hillsides of wealth, thousands have sprung up to bring forth much fruit in the valleys of poverty and obscurity. "The poor have the gospel preached to them"—this is the gospel's pride; the poor re-

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### Theme of next issue: *The First Resurrection*

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*(What Did They Believe: continued from page 15)*

ceive the gospel—this is its success. Preach to the dry bones, then. Do not say, “Such-and-such a man is too bigoted;” the case rests not with him, nor with his bigotry, but with God. These bones were very dry, but yet they lived. There is very little to choose after all, between one man and another, when all are dead; a little difference in the dryness does not come to much account when all are dead in sin. That some men are drunken and some are sober, that some men are debauched and some are chaste, makes a very great difference in the moral and civil world, but a very little difference indeed in the spiritual world, for there the same things happen to them both. If they believe not they shall alike be lost, and if they trust Jesus Christ they shall alike be saved. Let not, therefore, the greater viciousness of a people, or their greater hardness of heart, ever stand in our way, but let us say to them, dry as they are, “Ye dry bones, live.”...✪

*From Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit #582*

*(Royce Smith: continued from page 7)*

### CONCLUSION: GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH ISRAEL AS A NATION.

1. This fact clearly demonstrated from both O.T. and N.T. Scriptures. This truth takes nothing away from the church or Gentile believers.
2. This fact gives us great confidence for the future. The greatest revival ever known to man awaits both Jews and Gentiles, Cf. Romans 11:12, 15, 30-36. ✪

*Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever.*

*Jeremiah 31:35-36*



# Premillennial Baptist Journal

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## The First Resurrection

### Inside This Edition

- A Study of Revelation 20:4-6, J.C. Settlemoir ..... Page 3
- G.E. Jones on The First Resurrection ..... Page 7
- Horatius Bonar on The First Resurrection ..... Page 10
- A.J. Casper on The First Resurrection ..... Page 12

## Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

**Indeed** there will be a difference between the resurrection of the just and of the unjust, both in the time of their rising, the dead in Christ will rise first at the beginning of the thousand years, the wicked not until they are ended; and in the means and manner of their rising; they will be both raised by Christ, but the one by virtue of union to him, the other merely by his power; the just will rise in bodies not only immortal, and incorruptible, but powerful, spiritual, and glorious, even like to the glorious body of Christ; the wicked will rise with bodies immortal, but not free from sin, nor glorious: yea, their resurrection will differ in the end of it; the one will rise to everlasting life and glory, the other to everlasting shame and damnation.

From *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* by John Gill

**Many** have erred in assuming that there is but one general resurrection and one general judgment for all mankind, saved and lost alike. When our Lord was here on the earth He did teach that all men, saved and unsaved alike, will be raised again at some future time. His words are clear when He says, "All that are in the graves...shall come forth" John 5:28-29. Paul said, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" Acts 24:15, but there is not the slightest implication that both classes would be raised at the same time. Revelation 20:5 makes it clear that between the two resurrections there will be the space of one thousand years.

From *The Book of the Revelation* by Lehman Strauss

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## A Study Of Revelation 20:4-6

J. C. Settlemoir

### LITERAL TERMS IN REVELATION 20

Because Revelation uses many symbols some have jumped to the conclusion this book and especially this chapter contains only symbols! But there are many terms in Rev. 20 which are certainly literal as opposed to symbolic. Consider a few of these: angel, heaven, bottomless pit, devil, nations, dead, God, Christ, lake of fire, False Prophet, torment, to mention a few. These examples should encourage us to look at this passage more critically. But whether a word is a figure or literal we are to give each term its proper weight. And when dealing with a symbol one cannot give it a meaning arbitrarily. It is to be determined by study. No one has a right to say a symbol has a meaning foreign to anything in text or context, near or far. We dare not attempt to make the symbols of a passage into silly putty so they can be stretched to absurd lengths or squeezed down to a miniscule whim. Such elasticity produces in interpretation an effect like that of crossing wires in an electrical circuit.

### A LITERAL RESURRECTION

In this passage (vss 4-6) we have two groups described. One group in vs 4 and one group in vs. 5. They are distinguished from each other. Some details of both groups are found in vs. 6.

Among the first group some are said to sit upon thrones who were alive at Christ's coming (1 Thess. 4:15; 1 Cor.15:51). No doubt this verse also includes all those who died in Christ in all ages (Mt. 8:11) as well as those who remain unto the coming of the Lord. The dead in Christ are raised and then the living are translated as we learn from other Scriptures. Of those, who reign, some of them are described as having been dead, but raised to life—**they lived!** This refers to all the saints of God who are dead at the time, not just martyrs. It also embraces all the saints of God who are still living—**they**, (1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-54) both living and dead in Christ **reigned with Christ a thousand years**. This is the **first resurrection** but it excludes those in vs 5.

*First* in the phrase *the first resurrection* is an adjective of time. It refers to a resurrection which is *first* in order. That is it is the earliest, or earlier than others, Phil. 1:5; Acts 20:18. Cf. Arndt & Gingrich Greek English Lexicon of the NT—henceforth A&G.

In vs 5 it is said of the second group, that these dead *lived not again*. This harks back to those in vs 4 of whom it is said, **they lived**, that is they lived **again** or were resurrected in contrast to those in vs 5. But the dead in vs 5, do not **live again**, that is they are not resurrected at the beginning of the thousand years, as were those in vs. 4, but only after the thousand years are finished. Then they too will experience a resurrection but of a vastly different kind.

This is a strong indication that the *living* under consideration in both verses is of the same kind but for different purposes at different times. Those in vs 5 do *not* live. They are dead and remain dead. Those in vs 4 **live** but of the second group, the writer says they **lived not again**—that is as the first group did. One group is in the *first resurrection*, the other group is excluded from the first resurrection. The first group **lived—lived physically**. The second group **lived not physically**—did not live until the specified time. I see no way to make those who live in vs 4 refer to anything other than a real resurrection and that is the very essence of the *first resurrection*. Stuart emphasizes this idea:

They lived means they revived, came to life, returned to a life like the former one, viz., a union of soul and body. So does the word mean in Rev. 1:8, and in many other passages. Any other exegesis here would seem to be incongruous. They 'lived' must mean, here, reviving, or rising from the dead. Thus the Saviour spoke of Himself in Rev. 2:8 as being He who was 'dead and alive again,' after the death of the body. Thus too, it is said of the Beast, Rev. 13:14, that had the deadly wound of the sword, that he 'did live.' Thus, in our context, also, it is said, the rest of the dead 'lived not' until,

*(Settlemoir: continued on page 4)*

J.C. Settlemoir has pastored churches for over forty years in Michigan, Indiana and Iowa. He is the author of *Landmarkism Under Fire*.

(Settlemyre: continued from page 3)

etc. The point of antithesis, which decides the whole case, is the distinction of order, or succession, not of kind. The exigencies of the passage absolutely demand the sense of a bodily resurrection. Indeed, if this be not a position in the interpretation of Scripture, which is fully and fairly made out by philology, I should be at a loss to designate one which is. [Stuart *Apoc.* II, 360, 475].

### RESURRECTION OR REGENERATION?

There is a strong presumptive theory copied from Augustine and much in vogue today. He taught the first resurrection was regeneration. Is this idea true?

We do not deny there is an analogy between *regeneration* and *resurrection*. In a sense, regeneration is *like* resurrection but it is only an analogy. Regeneration is also *like* a chrysalis, but this is not to say that regeneration is a chrysalis. The Bible nowhere states *regeneration* is the same thing as *resurrection*. The terms are different, distinct, separate, designedly so.

The metaphor when used properly is a comparison not an equation. The noun for resurrection (*anastasis*) occurs in the NT forty-two times. In no single instance does it refer to regeneration unless it does in this passage. In only one case does it have a figurative meaning, namely Lk. 2:34, unless it is so in the two instances under discussion. This idea is very ingenious but we reject it on textual considerations.

### RESURRECTION AND REGENERATION DISTINGUISHED

*Resurrection* has the body for its primary reference. *Regeneration* has the soul or spirit for its primary reference. The reference of *anastasis* then is *the body*, whereas *palingenesia* is the spirit, or the soul, distinct from the body. Regeneration takes place at an indefinite number of times through all ages, so many as are the elect of God, when they are brought to Christ and salvation, as the Holy Spirit works, when, how and where He pleases (Jn 3:8). On the other hand, *anastasis* takes place only at specific and widely separated times. "After His resurrection," "every man in his own order," 1 Cor 15:23; "Christ the first fruits;" "they that are Christ's at His coming," "the first resurrection;" "the earth shall

cast out the dead," "worthy to attain unto the resurrection," "the dead in Christ shall rise first," and so on. Thus resurrection and regeneration are not equal to each other and hence not the same thing. We should not mix dissimilar things.

We also recognize most of the saints of God are disembodied. Their spirits are with the Lord while their bodies sleep in the cemeteries of earth. Thus they have no capacity to reign with Christ as these in the text are said to do. In order for them to take part in the dominion and greatness of the kingdom and to reign with Christ two things must occur: the kingdom must come and they must be resurrected. This is what happens in the first resurrection—the dead in Christ *live!*

Another indicator that the *first resurrection* in this passage does not mean *regeneration* is found in vs 4. Some of those in vs 4 are said to *live* after they refused to worship the beast and his image, and refused his mark. They were decapitated because of their faith. The resurrection referred to in the text follows activity which indicates regeneration had already taken place before they *lived*. They died because of the testimony of Jesus Christ. This means that they had been regenerated before they got this *life* in the text! Hence the first resurrection could not be regeneration or else these described in the text suffered martyrdom before they were regenerated!

There is another reason why I believe this theory is false. The first resurrection is not the same thing as regeneration because of the fact that Jesus Christ was resurrected and his resurrection was the foun-

The metaphor when used properly is a comparison not an equation.

**It is of no use to speak of a resurrection of spirits. Indeed it is a manifest piece of absurdity; for inasmuch as spirits cannot die, they cannot be raised from the dead.**

From *Papers on the Lord's Coming* by C.H. MacIntosh

vation and a part of the first resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23; Mt. 27:53) but it would be blasphemy to say he was regenerated!

To assign an altogether unique meaning to the term *first resurrection* without any evidence begs the question. The non-millennialist attempt to turn the first resurrection into regeneration is comparable to the alchemist's attempt to turn lead into gold!

### THE FIRST RESURRECTION

*First* distinguishes this resurrection from the resurrection to follow. You cannot have a first without a second. We see this in 1 Thess 4:13-17, where the dead rise *first*, that is, *first* before the living. If both the dead and the living rise at exactly the same time, why would Paul use the term *first* and then indicate a separation between the two groups? It would be nonsensical to maintain that *first* means something entirely different than a numerical sequence. You have the transaction of the dead in Christ *rising*. Then you have the living *translated*. The dead rise first and secondarily you have the living translated. So in a similar manner in Rev. 20 we have the *first resurrection*. Later in the chapter you have the resurrection of an entirely different kind which is necessarily the *second resurrection*, but not specifically so called. These two resurrections are separated in the text by 1000 years so they cannot be at the same time! The *first* is a resurrection of the *just*, the second is a resurrection of the *unjust*. The one is a resurrection *out from among* the dead—the second is the resurrection *of the dead* (Rev. 20: 12). Because the just are dead and because they belong to Christ, they are raised to live with Christ. This is the consensus of the whole context.

West gives this summary:

The spiritualizing, allegorizing, and idealizing expositors seek to evade the doctrine of the pre-millennial Advent of Christ, by teaching that the "First Resurrection," Rev. 20:5, is not a literal Resurrection of the Body, but means something else. In like manner, they seek also to evade the fact that the sublime scene of the Diademed Warrior on the White Horse, Rev.19:11-16, is not that of the Second Advent itself, but means something else. Thus, the literal Resurrection denied here, the literal Second Advent is denied also. But if the "First Resurrection" is literal here, it must be coincident with the literal Second Coming of Christ. That the "First Resurrection" here announced is literal, the following testimony is adduced to prove. It might have been multiplied to a volume:

...The words 'they lived,' can mean nothing else than what is expressed in the explanatory clause, 'This is the First Resurrection;' the possession again of their bodily life in that glorification which the resurrection brings with it, to the saints. It is what Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:23, occurring at the Parousia of Christ. Either this 'First Resurrection' is a bodily one, or that of the 'Rest of the dead,' Rev. 20:13-15, is not a bodily resurrection, and the Apocalypse shows no resurrection of the dead at the close of our age, or of the world's history! Whatever 'they lived' means in the one case, it means in the

**B**ut another interpretation has been proposed. I once had the misfortune to listen to an excellent friend of mine who was preaching upon this very text, and I must confess, I did not attend with very great patience to his exposition. He said it meant, blessed and holy is he who has been born again, who has been regenerated, and so has had a resurrection from dead works by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the while he was preaching, I could not help wishing that I could propose to him the difficulty, how he would make this metaphorical interpretation agree with the literal fact, that the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished? For, if the first resurrection here spoken of is a metaphorical, or spiritual, or typical resurrection, why the next where it speaks of the resurrection of the dead must be spiritual, and mystical, and metaphorical too. Now, no one would agree to this. You know, when you read a chapter, you are not to say, "This part is a symbol, and is to be read so, and the next part is to be read literally. Brethren, the Holy Ghost does not jumble metaphors and facts together..."

The fact is, in reading this passage with an unbiased judgment, having no purpose whatever to serve, having no theory to defend, and I confess I have none, for I know but very little about mysteries to come, I could not help seeing there are two literal resurrections here spoken of, one of the spirits of the just, and the other of the bodies of the wicked; one of the saints who sleep in Jesus, whom God shall bring with him, and another of those who live and die impenitent, who perish in their sins.

*The First Resurrection, C.H. Spurgeon*

(Settlemeir: continued from page 5)

other. Steffan, *Das Ernie*, 312. Quoted by West. *Thousand Years*, p. 465-6].

### SOULS OR BODIES?

Some argue *souls* are here described and it is the souls separate and apart from their bodies that live and reign with Christ in Heaven. Consequently, they say, this passage cannot pertain to a physical resurrection. They insist only the souls *live* and only as souls do they reign with Christ! But these souls are described as they were before they were raised. Surely we do not need to say their bodies must be restored to them for them to live! In 1 Thess. 4:16 Paul says “the dead in Christ shall rise first....” He cannot possibly mean they are dead after their resurrection! So here. These souls are said to live because the whole man lives. Elliott comments:

The word ‘souls’ is but a term designative of their state just previous;...and thus it no more indicates that they were still mere (psuchai) incorporeal souls, than the title ‘dead’ (nekroi) just after in verse 12—‘I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God’—implies that these last were still at that very time of their standing before Him, *dead men*. [Horae *Apocalypse*, iv. 147, Fourth ed. Quoted in Brown, *Christ’s Second Coming*, p. 215].

### THE FIRST RESURRECTION IS A RESURRECTION OF SEPARATION

The first resurrection is a resurrection of separation because it designates those who are resurrected as separate from those who are not resurrected. This is what Rev. 20:4-6 teaches. We see this also in such passages as the following: Acts 17:31; 3:15; 4:10; Phil. 3:11 to mention a few. This is true because the preposition *from* when used of the resurrection refers not to a general resurrection of all the dead but

one which separates those in this resurrection from those who are not in it.

This is the meaning of *from, out of, (ek)* and it is used frequently of the resurrection: ...*from, out of, away from*. 1. to denote separation.—a. to introduce the place fr. which the separation takes place. Hence esp. with verbs of motion....b. with a group or company fr. which the separation takes place.... [A&G].

**The first resurrection is a resurrection of separation because it designates those who are resurrected as separate from those who are not resurrected.**

This is the usage which is attached to the resurrection from the dead. Examples of this are given by A&G. Now take some of these cases of *ek*. I have italicized the appropriate word in each text which represents *ek* in the Greek.

“raised him *from* the dead” Acts 17:31.

Were all the dead raised with Christ or was He raised *out of* the dead? This indicates He was raised *from* the dead. Others were not raised.

“And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised *from* the dead...” Acts 3:15.

Did all the dead rise? Impossible! To take this case as if all the dead arose with Christ is nonsensical and means *ek* does not indicate separation. [Cf. DNTT, III, pp. 1188-90].

Was there no separation between Christ and those who were not raised? Col 1:18 is another example of the necessity of separation when *ek* is used. This cannot be the case if all the dead rise at the same time. *Ek* would have no place in the description of a resurrection which includes all the dead. This would mean it was the resurrection *of the dead* not a resurrection *from the dead*! If all the dead rise at the same time why would Scripture (not merely in one

(Settlemeir: continued on page 15)

**T**he 1000 years come in between Rev. 19:11 through 20:15. He must deny the perspicuity of the Scriptures, altogether, who persists in denying this, or seeks to refute it. The first resurrection is a corporeal one. The dead “became alive” in that part in which they were dead or mortal, consequently in their body.

From *Gnomon of the New Testament* by J.A. Bengel

G.E. Jones on

## The First Resurrection



Premillennialists have always believed that the first resurrection mentioned in Rev. 20:5-6 would be the bodily resurrection of the dead in Christ. Postmillennialists and Non-millennialists have tried to escape the force of Premillennial argument in this place by claiming that the first resurrection is the new birth. A few Non-millennialists apply it to the people who came out of their graves when Christ was crucified and resurrected. I shall give that due attention in time.

The English word "Resurrection" is translated from the Greek word "Anastasis." This word means a standing or rising up. It is found 42 times in the New Testament. It occurs 40 times in the Gospels and the Epistles, and twice in Revelation. This word is translated "Resurrection" 39 times. In Mark 9:10 it is translated "Rising again." In Acts 26:23 it is translated "That should rise." In Heb. 11:23 it is translated "Raised to life again." One time this word is compounded. It is "Exanastasis," and it is found in Phil. 3:11. It means "A standing up out of." If we count this compounded form of "Anastasis" then we have just 43 times this word occurs in the New Testament. In no case in the Gospels and the Epistles does it refer to anything but the body. The new birth is nowhere in the Bible called a resurrection. Neither can the Greek word "Anastasis" ever be found applied to the new birth or regeneration. If the reader will bear with me I shall show that in the Gospels and Epistles it always applies to the body.

The word resurrection (Gr. Anastasis) occurs ten times in our Lord's conversation with the Sadducees about the woman who had married seven brothers. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection and they were trying to trap Jesus with their question as to whose wife she would be in the resurrection. In the three accounts we have of this conversation the word resurrection is found ten times, Matt. 22:23; 22:28; 22:30; 22:31; Mark 12:18; 12:23; Luke 20:27; 20:33; 20:35; and 20:36. It is easy to see that a bodily resurrection from the dead is under consideration in these places.

The word is found twice in John 5:28-29: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Again the body is under consideration.

The word is found twice in connection with the raising of Lazarus. Martha said, "I know he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live," John 11:24-25. A bodily resurrection is under consideration in these two places.

We find the word resurrection in Luke 14:14 where Jesus tells His disciples they shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

The word "resurrection" is found eleven times in connection with our Lord's resurrection. In Matt. 27:53 it is translated from the Greek word "Egersis." In the other places it is a translation of the word "Anastasis," Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:33; 17:18; 17:32; Romans. 1:4; 6:5; Phil. 3:10; I Peter 1:3; I Peter 3:21. No one could say that regeneration was under consideration in any of these places.

The word "resurrection" (Anastasis) is found four times in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of First Corinthians where Paul is proving by the resurrection of Christ that the dead do rise: I Cor. 15:12; 15:13; 15:21; 15:42.

In Acts 4:1-2 we find the Sadducees were grieved because the apostles preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Then in Acts 23:8 we find that the Sadducees say there is no resurrection. The body is under consideration in these places.

*(Jones: continued on page 8)*

G.E. Jones was a Baptist pastor in Morrilton, Arkansas. He passed away a number of years ago. His many books include *The Millennial Issue* and *The Earth's Great Jubilee*.

(Jones: continued from page 7)

In Acts 24:21 Paul, in his defense before Felix, said that he was called in question touching the resurrection of the dead which he preached. By going back to Acts 23:6-10 we read that a great tumult had been raised in Jerusalem between the Sadducees and the Pharisees when Paul declared that he was a Pharisee on the question of the resurrection of the dead. The Roman soldiers had to intervene to keep Paul from being pulled in pieces. So Paul had in mind a bodily resurrection both in Acts 23:6 and 24:21. Then in Acts 24:15 Paul declared his belief in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

In II Tim. 2:17-18 Paul said certain men had erred in saying the resurrection was past already. Paul did not believe it to be past, but future. This shows that he had the body in mind.

The English word "resurrection" is found twice in the Book of Hebrews. In Heb. 6:2 the writer speaks about the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. In Heb. 11:35 he speaks about certain ones who were being tortured but would not accept deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. The connection shows plainly that the body is under consideration. In the same verse it is said that women received their dead raised to life again. Here the Greek verb "anastaseos" is used. We still have the body under consideration.

In Phil. 3:10, Paul spoke about the death and resurrection of Christ and in the next verse he expressed his desire to attain "unto the resurrection (Gr. Exanastasis) from the dead." This also refers to the body.

After our Lord's transfiguration He told Peter, James and John to say nothing about the matter until He was risen from the dead. Then the apostles questioned among themselves what the rising from the dead (Gr. Anastanai) should mean, Mark 9:10.

The above takes into consideration every place the word resurrection is found in the New Testament and every place the noun "Anastasis" or its verb form occurs, except the two places in Rev. 20:5-6.

**Paul said certain men had erred in saying the resurrection was past already. Paul did not believe it to be past, but future.**

Here again we have the English word "resurrection" and the Greek word "anastasis." Now, if this English word "resurrection" and the Greek word "anastasis" have their application to the body in all the places where they occur in the Gospels and the Epistles, then by what process of logic can one reason that it means something different in Rev. 20:5-6? I ask, do not those who claim that regeneration is under consideration here throw all Bible examples and usage to the winds and strike out in a direction foreign to all other Scriptures? In the many places in the Gospels and Epistles where the new birth is under consideration the words "resurrection" and "anastasis" are never found. And in all places in the Gospels and the Epistles where these words are found the reference is clearly to the body. Then I ask, what Scriptural authority and example do Post-millennialists and Non-millennialists have to justify them in saying that the word resurrection as found in Rev. 20:5-6 refers to the new birth and not to a bodily resurrection?

But if it be argued that Paul taught that the new birth was a resurrection in Eph. 2:6, where he said, "God hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ," then I can assure them that the new birth is not under consideration in this place.

Paul is simply setting forth our federal position in Christ Jesus in this place. In Eph. 1:20, Paul speaks about God raising Christ from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand in HEAVENLY PLACES. Surely Paul was talking about the bodily resurrection of Jesus in this place. In Eph. 2:6, in which he is talking about the same thing that is under consideration in Eph. 1:20, Paul tells us that God hath raised us up together, (that is, together with Christ) and made us sit together in HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus. Christ was raised up from the dead, bodily. At the same time, in God's reckoning, we were raised up bodily with Him and in Him, our Federal Head. After His bodily resurrection Christ was made to sit down bodily at God's right hand in the HEAVENLY PLACES. At the same time God made us to sit together with Him, our Federal Head, in heavenly places. This passage simply means that in the reckoning of God we were all raised from the dead in the resurrection of our Fed-



eral Head, Jesus Christ, when He rose from the dead. When he was glorified and exalted to his own right hand in the HEAVENLY PLACES, then, in God's mind, we were also glorified and made to sit in HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus, our Federal Head.

This takes away from the Postmillennialists and Non-millennialists the last vestige of an argument they can make on the new birth being a resurrection. It is never called such in the Bible. That is simply some of their twisting of the Scriptures in a vain effort to dodge Premillennial truth.

In closing this part of this work I wish to consider the theory that the first resurrection has reference to those who came out of their graves when Christ arose. Such an interpretation wholly ignores all references to the beast and his mark, and the death some who are in the first resurrection shall suffer. This death they will suffer (a physical death) for refusing to worship the beast or receive his mark. All this was still future when the saints came out of their graves at the resurrection of Jesus. This interpretation shows ignorance of the divisions of the Book of Revelation. Jesus Himself divided the Book of Revelation into three divisions. John was told to write. (1) "The things which thou hast seen." (2) "And the things which are," (3) "And the things which shall be hereafter." Rev. 1:19. So the third and last division was about things which were to be afterwards. By turning to Rev. 4:1 we find that the third and last division of the Book of Revelation starts with that verse. Here a voice said to John, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which MUST BE HEREAFTER." So the part of Revelation which deals with the things HEREAFTER commences with Rev. 4:1 and continues to the end of the book. The resurrection of Christ and the incident about the saints coming out of their graves were already past when John was given this revelation. By no means could they be classed as "things which must be HEREAFTER." So all the things about the beast, his mark, the first resurrection, the thousand years reign, the great white throne judgment, and the coming down of the New Jerusalem all belonged to the future in the days when John received

**Since Christ must come before the saints can rise, then the thousand years reign, which comes after the first resurrection, must come after our Lord's return.**

this revelation. These critics would do well to make a careful study of the Book of Revelation, its three divisions, where those three divisions are found, and with what they deal. I have my first person to see yet except Premillennialists who paid the least attention to the divisions of the book our Lord made in Rev. 1:19 and Rev. 4:1. It is no wonder they blunder so in the Book of Revelation when they go about its study in such a haphazard way. In fact not many of them make any effort to study this book and to know its contents. The Non-millennialists of the early centuries rejected the Book of Revelation as being uninspired. The Non-millennialists of today, as a rule, give it a good letting alone. So far as they are concerned it may as well not have been inspired. Most of them have as little to do with it as they do the Koran of the Mohammedans.

In the argument presented above I have shown that the first resurrection is a bodily resurrection of the saved. Neither have I yet used all the argument that is to be made on this line. Since the first resurrection is the bodily resurrection of the saved it will not come until Christ returns. In speaking of the order of the resurrection, Paul said, "Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits: afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming," I Cor. 15:23. This verse tells plainly that it is Christ's people that shall be raised at His return. There is not a hint here about the resurrection of the wicked at the same time. Their resurrection must come later. In Rev. 20:5, John tells us it will not be until after the thousand years: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Since Christ must come before the saints can rise, then the thousand year reign, which comes after the first resurrection, must come after our Lord's return. So Premillennialists are right... ☆

*From: The Millennial Issue*

**Why should anyone seek to set aside the plain force of such a passage? Why not bow to it? Why not get rid, at once, of all our old and fondly cherished notions, and receive with meekness the engrafted word?**

*From Papers on the Lord's Coming by C.H. McIntosh*

## Horatius Bonar on The First Resurrection



"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" Revelation 20:6

Resurrection, not death, is our hope... It is not the putting off this vile body (or this "body of our humiliation"), but the putting on of the immortal and incorruptible that is our hope; not our going to Christ, but His coming to us; not merely our victory over sin and its spiritual consequences, but victory over death and the grave. This hope grew brighter as the ages went on, till it was fully revealed in Him Who is the resurrection and the life. But still more was needed: and it was reserved for Paul and John fully to unfold the hope.

This twentieth chapter of the Revelation is a very wonderful one, and specially valuable as giving us details of the resurrection-hope.

An angel is seen descending out of heaven; he has the key of the bottomless pit, or abyss, and a great chain in his hand. He seizes the dragon, the *old serpent* (the murderer and liar *from the beginning*, John 8:44), who is the devil, and Satan; binds him for a thousand years; casts him into the abyss; shuts him up; sets a seal above upon him, to hinder his escaping and deceiving the nations for a thousand years. Then thrones are set up (Daniel 7:9); and there are sitters upon them, to whom judgment is given (1 Corinthians 6:2); the souls (Acts 2:41; 7:14) of the martyrs and the non-worshippers of the beast are made to live again; and being thus raised, they reign with Christ (chapter 5:10). But the rest of the dead are not raised till the end of the thousand years. This is the first resurrection.

It gets the designation of "first," not because of its pre-eminence and glory, but because it is before another. Properly speaking, the great resurrection fact is but one, - "all that are in their graves shall arise;" but it divides itself into two parts or acts, separated from each other by a considerable interval, - an interval (like that between the Lord's two comings) not at first revealed. But here the interval is explicitly announced, - a thousand years. The righteous rise to glory at the beginning of that period, and during it they live and reign with Christ. At its close, the wicked rise, and are judged. This resurrection of the wicked at the close of the thousand years, sets aside the doctrine of annihilation entirely. They do not rise in order to be annihilated. They do not get new bodies merely in order to have these new bodies destroyed.

### When Is It To Be?

It is when the Lord comes the second time. In the preceding chapter He is described as coming with the hosts of heaven for the destruction of His enemies (see also 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:1). He comes as the Resurrection and the Life; the Abolisher of death, the Spoiler of the grave, the Raiser of His saints.

### Of Whom It Is To Consist

This passage speaks only of the martyrs and the non-worshippers of the beast; but other passages show that all His saints are to be partakers of this reward. "This honour have all His saints;" all who have followed Christ, or suffered for Him, from Abel downwards. They have suffered with Him here, and they shall reign with Him here. They have fought the good fight; they have overcome the world, and the god of this world. The conflict and the tribulation have been sore, but the recompense is glorious. Oneness with Christ now secures for us the glory of that day.

### What It Does For Those Who Share It

It brings to those who share it such things as the following:

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) was a Scottish churchman and poet. He was a popular author, writing many books, tracts and hymns.

1. *Blessedness.* Peculiar blessedness is to be theirs. God only knoweth how much that word implies, as spoken by Him Who cannot lie, Who exaggerates nothing, and Whose simplest words are His greatest.

2. *Holiness.* They are pre-eminently "the saints of God;" set apart for Him; consecrated and purified, both outwardly and inwardly; dwelt in by Him Whose name is the "Holy Ghost;" and called to special service in virtue of their consecration. Priestly-royal service is to be theirs throughout the eternal ages.

3. *Preservation from the second death.* They rise to an immortality which shall never be recalled. No dying again, in any sense of the word; not a fragment of mortality about them, nothing of this vile body, and nothing of that corruption or darkness or anguish which shall be the portion of those who rise at the close of the thousand years. "Neither can they die any more" (Luke 20:36). They "shall not be hurt of the second death" (Revelation 2:11), but shall feed upon the tree of life. Their connection with death in every sense, is done for ever.

4. *The possession of a heavenly priesthood.* They are made priests unto God and Christ – both to the Father and the Son. Priestly nearness and access; priestly power and honour and service; priestly glory and dignity; – this is their recompense. They, with their glorified and reigning Head, form the link between creation above and creation below, between the Creator and the creature, carrying up the incense of prayer and praise and service from all parts of a holy universe, now linked to Godhead for ever, beyond the possibility of fall. They maintain the communication between God and His world, between Paradise gained and the Paradise that was never lost; nay, between God and His innumerable worlds throughout all space. For priesthood is not for sacrifice alone, but for carrying on the endless intercourse between heaven and earth.

5. *The possession of the Kingdom.* They shall reign for a thousand years over a renewed earth, where there are traces still of the fall, and on which Satan is for a brief season to be let loose; and they shall reign for ever and ever over a world thor-

oughly restored and purified, into which Satan shall never again find entrance. They are kings as well as priests, both in one; God's Melchizedecs, wearing the priestly mitre, and wielding the royal sceptre. Having their home and place; and throne in the new Jerusalem, they rule over a delivered creation, over the converted nations, over a world now filled with the Holy Spirit in all its nations.

Such are our prospects; let us live accordingly. Let our coming honors influence us now; making us self-denied, consistent, heavenly; quickening us to zeal and love.

Sinner, walking in unbelief, and worldliness, and pleasure, what are your prospects? Have you considered them? Are they satisfactory? What is your hope? What is judgment to do for you? What is resurrection to bring? Look at the following alternatives, and ask which is to be yours: Everlasting gladness, or everlasting sorrow? Everlasting glory, or everlasting shame? Everlasting songs. Or everlasting wailing? The marriage supper of the Lamb, or the perpetual banishment from all that is good and holy? The new heavens and earth, or the eternal wilderness, with its parched and burning wastes? The heavenly Jerusalem, with the Lamb as its light, or the blackness of darkness? The fruit of the tree of life and the waters of the celestial river, or the eternal hunger and the unquenchable thirst? (Luke 16:24). The first resurrection, or the second death?

These are the alternatives before you; and there is no middle doom. O that second death, and that resurrection unto condemnation! (John 5:29; Revelation 20:13). Thou shalt arise, O man; but what will that rising do for thee? When thou wert carried out at the first death, there were tears shed upon thy bier; but shall it be so when

thou art carried out at the second death? Thy funeral procession moves on; but there are no friends, no mourners. What means that dark procession? It is a legion of fallen angels come to escort thee to that place where the worm dieth not. They lament not, but rejoice that they have got thee, both soul and body, into their keeping for ever. O man! Man,

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## A. J. Gordon on The First Resurrection



There are two distinct and radically opposite theories concerning the order of the resurrection, viz.: the theory which maintains that all the dead, the righteous and the unrighteous, will be raised at the same time; and secondly, the theory which holds that the faithful dead only will rise at the coming of Christ, those who have died in unbelief remaining under the power of death for a thousand years longer, at the expiration of which time they in turn will be raised up and brought to judgment. In brief, the first theory is that of one resurrection, embracing as its subjects all who have died from the beginning of the world to the hour of the sounding of the last trumpet; and the second, that of two resurrections, distinctly separated in time, and totally different, both in respect to their subjects and their issues.

It will be the aim of this paper to show the ground on which the latter view rests, and to defend with what ability we may be able to command, the theory which it presents. It being purely a question of interpretation, we shall make our appeal solely to the word of God, though we might commend the doctrine very strongly by showing its antiquity and arraying the great names from all ages and branches of the Church who have lent to it the sanction of their scholarship. The first passage which we shall consider is that in Rev. 20:4-6:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second

death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Now, it would seem on the face of it that here is an unmistakable statement of two distinct resurrections of the dead, with a thousand years between, in which risen saints reign with Christ. But by a large class of interpreters this is denied. It belongs to a book that is highly figurative, it is said, and, therefore, the statement must be taken in a strictly figurative sense. Hence the whole scene has been spiritualized, the death, the resurrection and the reign with Christ, and the representation made to apply not to bodily resurrection at all, but to the quickening from the death of sin.

Not for the sake of controversy, but in order to present in the fairest and most candid way the view of the passage most commonly held by the believers in one resurrection, I transcribe the comment of Bishop Wordsworth on the text as given in his Lectures on the Apocalypse. If we shall succeed in answering him we shall have answered the largest and best class of anti-literal interpreters.\* He says on the passage:

First let us observe that the words are not spoken of the bodies of the saints but of their souls. "I saw the souls of them who have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus." This must be carefully borne in mind, because the error of the Millennarians is mainly due to a neglect of this distinction. They imagine a bodily resurrection, whereas St. John speaks of a spiritual one. Secondly, it is not said in the original that their souls lived again, but that they lived and reigned with Christ. It is clear, then, that what is here said is spoken not of a corporeal, but of a spiritual resurrection. Thirdly, it is not said that Christ reigns with his saints, but that they reign with Him. He is in heaven and will remain till He comes to judge, when all true believers will be caught up to meet Him in the air. Therefore, what is here said is spoken not of an earthly but of a heavenly resurrection. And what now is the spiritual resurrection of the Christian? Our natural condition is one of death. By nature we are spiritually dead; but Christ, who is the

\*He quotes Bishop Andrews, Archbishop Leighton, Lightfoot, and others as holding the same view.

Adoniram Judson Gordon (1836-1895) pastored the Clarendon Street Baptist Church in Boston, MA. He wrote *The Ministry of the Spirit* and *The Second Coming of Christ* and is the author of the hymn *My Jesus I Love Thee*.

prince of life, hath quickened us who are dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, our first or spiritual resurrection is our death to sin and new birth into righteousness—it is our engrafting into the true vine, our incorporation into the body of Christ.” *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, pp. 58-9.

We wish, against this interpretation, to show why, in our view, the first resurrection, as here described, must be literal and corporeal, and not spiritual. And in doing so we would emphasize just the points that Dr. Wordsworth emphasizes.

First—John saw “the souls of them who had been beheaded.” As the word, *πεπελεκισμένοι* (beheaded) unhappily can not be spiritualized, we clearly have men literally dead as the subjects of the quickening. And, therefore, we infer at once that the quickening is a literal quickening. When, as in the Epistle to the Ephesians, we have men described as “dead in trespasses and sins,” and then are told that these have been “quickened together with Christ,” we infer immediately and rightly that a spiritual revivification has taken place, because the condition on which the change took effect was spiritual. And so here, the condition of literal death having been so unmistakably pointed out, the inference is immediate and inevitable that the quickening is a literal and corporeal quickening.

Secondly—It is agreed that we have disembodied spirits as the subject of the vision, and we are told that these lived. We infer this meant that they lived literally in reunion with their bodies; because this word *ἐζήσαν* is never applied, in any instance that we can discover in the New Testament, to the soul in its disembodied state, while it is constantly used to describe that reanimation by which the soul is united again to its tabernacle of flesh. In saying that the word is not used of the spirit disembodied, we do not mean to intimate the Scriptures teach the non-existence of souls in the intermediate state, or their cessation from consciousness. But the truth would seem to be that the words “life” and “live,” as employed in the Scriptures, belong to man in his complex condition as possessed of spirit and body united in one, and are not applied to him in his imperfect dissevered

state. We have a striking illustration of this idea, in our Lord’s discussion with the Sadducees in regard to the Resurrection. They held that there is no resurrection of the body. He replies: “If this were so, God could not be called the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead but of the living.” Abraham must be raised, therefore, before he can be strictly said to live. So that as we have said the word *ἐζήσαν* can not, according to Scripture usage, be applied to man while dispossessed of the body. That the word is employed to denote physical reanimation in contrast from death, a multitude of passages show, e.g., Acts 2:25-27. And, moreover, the cognate verb *ζωοποιῶν*, is the word that runs all through 1 Cor. 15 to signify resurrection from the dead. So we affirm that, if there were nothing else to determine the meaning of the passage, the *usus loquendi* of this verb of itself would fix it as teaching a literal resurrection.

Thirdly—Suppose, however, that there were still such obscurity in the statement as to render it im-

**Here is one of the few instances found in the Apocalypse where the Spirit interprets His own words...**

possible clearly to determine its meaning. We find immediately following an explanatory clause, which defines and fixes this meaning—“αὐτὴ ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη.” “This is Resurrection, the First.” Here is one of the few instances found in the Apocalypse where the Spirit interprets His own words, telling us explicitly what they are meant to convey. For certainly no word is more definite in its signification than this word *ἀνάστασις*. It occurs forty-two times in the New Testament, and, with one exception, where it is used in its strictly etymo-

logical sense [“This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel,” Luke 2:34], it always signifies the resurrection of the body. It is not a little strange that Bishop Wordsworth should have overlooked this fact when so confidently identifying this passage with those in Colossians and Ephesians where a spiritual quickening is spoken of. The term *ἀνάστασις* is used in none of those instances, nor in any other instance in the New Testament to denote spiritual quickening. Hence we affirm that the use of the word here, as defining the previous clause, fixes the meaning of the passage beyond question as teaching a literal corporeal resurrection.

(Gordon: continued from page 13)

Fourthly—It will be noted that we have in the text two resurrections contrasted. In a passage closely connected, a distinction is drawn between one class, who live at first, and another class who do not live till a thousand years subsequent. In the latter case, from the immediate connection of the statement with the judgment scene, the opened books, the sea giving up its dead, and the dead, small and great, standing before God, the conclusion is inevitable that the reference is to a literal resurrection. Bishop Wordsworth admits this, as do all the authorities whom he quotes in defence of his view. And maintaining that the first resurrection is spiritual, therefore he has the difficult task before him of showing how two things which differ entirely in their meaning, can be described in the same connection by identical language; so that in interpreting the passage we must pass from the spiritual to the literal and from the literal back to the spiritual again, with nothing in the terms to indicate or even suggest the transition. This we believe is too adventurous a feat of exegesis for any one to succeed in. It does such extreme violence to the natural and most obvious uses of language, that we believe it were far easier to run the spiritual interpretation entirely through the chapter, than to attempt to use words in such a flexible and double sense. The two resurrections are so distinctly contrasted and their descriptions so intimately blended and interlaced, that we believe it is well nigh impossible to take them in such opposite senses. The meaning of the one fixes the meaning of the other. And to impose a directly opposite meaning on them, can hardly fail to awaken a suspicion of arbitrariness against the interpreter, or of a divided allegiance between the obvious sense of the language and a certain required sense.

Fifthly—We call especial attention to the manner in which this whole Apocalyptic scene is introduced: "I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit," etc. So generally has this been taken as referring to Christ that Bishop Wordsworth says too strongly, "This angel, it is confessed by all, is none other than Jesus Christ, the angel of God's presence, the angel of the covenant." But when does Christ come down from heaven? Put this

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passage with that in I Thessalonians 4:16, the prediction of Christ's return to raise His saints, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven," says Paul. "I saw an angel descending from heaven" says the revelator, the words in the Greek being precisely the same. And if you say that the angel does not refer to Christ, but is to be taken as a literal angel, which we are inclined to admit, then remember that in Thessalonians an angel is represented as accompanying Christ in His descent to earth. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the *archangel* and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." In either case the coincidence of language is so striking as to identify the two scenes almost beyond a question. We have thus given five arguments for the literal interpretation of the passage, any one of which, it would seem, ought to be sufficient to establish the point. And if we have answered Bishop Wordsworth's theory we answered all others of the same class; for to prove that the two resurrections are literal is to prove that they can not be spiritual—whether in the sense which we have been considering or in any other sense.

It only remains now for us to identify in a word the subjects of these resurrections respectively, and then we shall pass on to consider other texts. The words "blessed and holy" applied to those first raised from the dead, and the words "the second death" as described by the doom of those afterward raised, would appear to fix beyond question the two parties as embracing the righteous dead on the one hand and the wicked dead on the other. But it has been said that, admitting the first resurrection to be literal, it only proves the awaking of the martyrs from their tombs, since it is predicted only of those who have been "beheaded for the witness of Jesus." To which we reply, that if we have identified the "first resurrection" here mentioned, with "the resurrection of the just," mentioned in other Scriptures, we know outside of this passage and independently of it who its subjects are. "The dead in Christ," whom the Apostle names as rising first at the appearing of the Lord; and "they that are Christ's at His coming," whom he elsewhere names as the subjects of the same resurrection, every one, we sup-

pose, concedes to mean all the sainted dead who shall be in the grave when the Lord comes. So that if "the first resurrection," described in the Apocalypse, is the same as the resurrection of the saints at the Parousia which is elsewhere described, the subjects must be the same, viz.: all the faithful dead. And thus by supplementing Scripture with Scripture, we supply whatever knowledge our text fails to give in regard to the participants in the resurrection scene. Summing up the whole passage, then, and bringing it into connection with the twelfth verse of the same chapter, when the "rest of the dead" appear in judgment, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," we see how distinctly the dead are separated

in their rising and destiny. There are the dead who live, and the dead who do not live till a thousand years later. There are the dead who sit with Christ on His throne, and reign with Him; there are the dead who stand before the throne to be judged. There are the dead who have immortal bodies; since upon them "the second death hath no power." There are the dead who have mortal bodies, since they are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. And, as clearly as we discern these two distinct classes, so clearly do we see a thousand years stretching between their resurrections, and putting them as wide apart, in the time of their rising, as in the character and destiny of that rising... ✧

From *The Second Coming of Christ*

(Settlemeir: continued from page 6)

place but in numbers of places) speak of a resurrection which is separated from those who are still dead? If there is but one resurrection including both the saved and lost of all ages then there would be no company from which the separation could take place.

"The dead, the entire population of the dead, without the exclusion of a single person, rise instantly together," so we are told. But it is not an easy thing to distinguish some from a group if that group does not exist! According to this theory there are no dead remaining. How then can you have a resurrection *out from the dead* when there are no dead from which they are separated?

### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

We hear objections to our interpretation of the First Resurrection and the Premillennial advent. Rather than take up each of these I will conclude with a general reply. Some of these anti-millenarian arguments are mentioned by Bonar:

We cannot reconcile a personal Advent and reign with the intercession of Christ in heaven. We do not see how Christ can be said to come with all his saints, if there are to be men converted after He comes. We cannot conceive how there can be such an incongruous mixture upon earth as the risen saints, with their glorified bodies, and others still in mortal flesh. We cannot think of so degrading Christ as to bring Him down to earth to reign. [Bonar. *Prophetical Landmarks*, p. 117].

On almost every page of Holy Writ there are problems which, without the eye of faith, will appear to be impossible. But this is no way to establish what

we believe. We are to accept what Scripture reveals and believe the Lord is able to fulfill everything He has promised! This was manifested in the lives of those who lived before our Lord's first coming. Think of what they had to believe!

They had to believe that their Messiah was to be God, yet also man; that His goings forth were to be from everlasting, yet that He was to begin his life as an infant; that He was to come from heaven, yet that He was to be born at Bethlehem; that He was to be perfectly holy, yet that He was to be the offspring of a sinful woman on earth; that He was to be the Prince of life, yet that He was to die; that He was to be King of kings, yet that He was to hang upon a cross; that He was to be fairer than the children of men, yet that He was to be without form or comeliness. These, and innumerable other *apparent contradictions*, they were called upon to believe. [Bonar. *Prophetical Landmarks*, p. 116].

But those who were blessed with faith believed these things in the plain and literal sense. They longed for the fulfillment of them even though they were not believable without a God-given faith. How exactly they were fulfilled! How careful was the Lord Himself to dot every "I" and to cross every "t" (Mt. 26:54). Shall we not depend on Christ to do what He promised in Rev. 20:4-6?

Here the plain literal sense makes good sense and there are no insurmountable problems with this interpretation (Mk. 10:27) if we have faith. This is strong proof that we have correctly understood this portion of Scripture. By His grace, therefore, we receive these things as the truth of God. May this lead us to live in anticipation of Christ's coming, the first resurrection and the glory to follow! ✧

## Premillennial Baptist Journal

Victory Baptist Church  
9601 Blue Ridge Extension  
Kansas City, Missouri 64134



Theme of next issue:  
*Daniel's Colossus*

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(Bonar: continued from page 11)

made in the image of God, and made for fellowship with God, is this to be thine end? Man, with a soul susceptible of such gladness and such sorrow, and with a body capable of such pleasure and such pain, is this to be thy doom? Is this the end of all times, hopes, and fears, and dreams; its songs, and smiles, and laughter? Is this the end of sermons, and Sabbaths? Is this the end of warnings, and judgments, and providences, and entreaties, and messages of

love? Well may hell from beneath be moved at thy coming, and say, Art thou too become like one of us?

Oh, ere the last trumpet sound, ere thou liest down upon thy earthly deathbed, lift up thine eyes to the Saviour! There is healing in a look. Look and live! Though it were thy last look here, ere the eye closes for ever, it would suffice. The uplifted Saviour saves even at the last, saves even the chief of sinners. ✪

From *Watching and Waiting*, Oct/Dec 2002

H. Bonar's photo acquired from <http://www.cyberhymnal.org>

It does not mean that they lived *spiritually*, for so they did before, and whilst they bore their testimony to Christ and against Antichrist, previous to their death; *nor in their successors*, for it would not be just and reasonable that *they* should be beheaded for their witness of Christ and His word, and *others live* and reign in their stead. Nor is this to be understood of their living in their *souls*, for so they live in their separate state; the soul never dies. But the sense is they *lived again*, as in verse 5, they lived *corporeally*, their souls lived again in their bodies, their bodies being raised and reunited to their souls. Their *whole persons* lived; and this is called the first resurrection in the next verse.

From *Commentary on the Whole Bible* by John Gill



# Premillennial Baptist Journal

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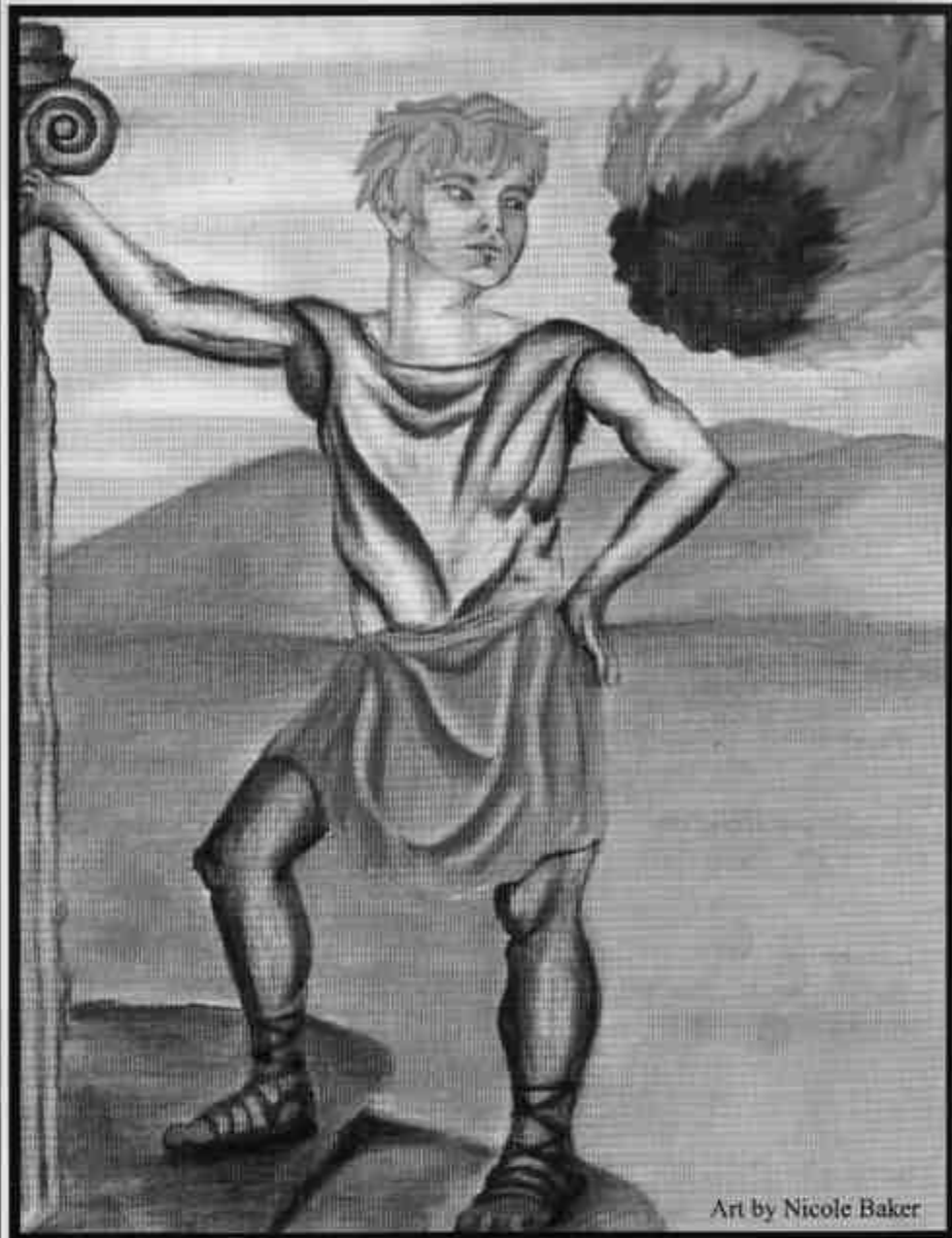
## Daniel's Colossus

### Inside This Edition

- The Kingdom of Stone, *Wayne Camp*..... Page 3
- The Image (Daniel 11), *S.P. Tregelles*..... Page 6
- When Daniel Saw the Kingdom, *Oswald J. Smith*..... Page 13
- The Times of the Gentiles, *Rene Pache* ..... Page 15

## Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism



Art by Nicole Baker

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## The Kingdom Of Stone (of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream)

Wayne Camp

Daniel 2:28-45 "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be

in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

### But There Is A God In Heaven

Daniel is about to reveal the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The wise men, astrologers and soothsayers of Babylon had prayed to their gods but had received no revelation as to the meaning of the dream. When Daniel is brought into the picture, he begins his explanation with these words, "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." (Daniel 2:28).

Daniel did not pretend to be the one who was revealing these future events and future kingdoms to Nebuchadnezzar. In contradistinction from those gods of Babylon that were made by men, could not move, talk, walk, hear, feel or touch, "there is a God in heaven" who reveals secrets and makes known things that will happen in the future. He is the one

Wayne Camp pastored Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church of Memphis, TN for 17 years. He is publisher of *The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator* and currently a missionary to Thailand.

“declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” (Isaiah 46:10).

Of the four great Gentile empires, only one then existed—the Babylonian. The Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires were yet to come to their glory, and that only one at a time.

The last of these empires, the Roman, was the weakest because of its governmental system. It was eventually overthrown by ten barbarous nations from outside the Roman Empire. These ten barbarous nations came from outside the Roman empire, the ten toes represent ten kings and nations that are yet to arise on earth and will come from the restored Roman empire. Keep in mind that they must come from within the empire and could not be the same with the ten barbarous nations that came from outside the empire.

#### Ten Toes—Ten Kingdoms Yet To Come

As I pointed out earlier, the ten kingdoms are yet to come. They may already be in existence as separate nations but will eventually form, or complete the formation, of a federation of nations that will seek to dominate the world. I will venture to say that we can see a possible indication of this with the formation of the European Union at this present time. It is in the days of these kings that God will set up a kingdom on earth. Now, I must get to the subject of this article—The Kingdom Of Stone.

#### Some Important Considerations

The other kingdoms is this dream were literal kingdoms on this earth—it would be strange if God were to suddenly change from literal kingdoms on this earth to a spiritual kingdom that no one could see. Daniel 2:44 “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

This stone kingdom will never be destroyed nor left to other people but will break in pieces those other earthly kingdoms and it will stand forever. This stone kingdom will bring utter destruction to those nations whose god is not the God of Daniel and will

do it on this earth—he is not going to take them up into heaven to destroy them and set up his rule there where he already rules. Consider the following from the book of Revelation. Revelation 17:12-18 “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

This utter destruction was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. Daniel 2:34-35 “Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

This stone kingdom obviously will be set up after the division of the Roman Empire which was accomplished in 1054 AD—the legs of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream-image represented the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic divisions of the Roman Empire. [Author’s note: Various historical writers give varying dates so I have been liberal with my dates]. The point is that the legs precede the ten toes and it is in the days of the ten toes that this stone kingdom will be set up.

As is revealed in the passage above, this stone kingdom, once it has destroyed all the other kingdoms and removed every remnant of them from the earth

will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. It was pointed out earlier that these Gentile kingdoms were literal kingdoms that existed here on earth. Their destruction by the stone kingdom, the Kingdom which our Lord Jesus Christ will set up when he returns to this earth, will be a literal destruction. And, the kingdom will be set up on this earth and will fill it beyond that of the Roman Empire.

The stone cut out of the mountain without hands with one single crashing, crushing blow will prepare this earth for the rule and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. This stone kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ does not spread gradually over this earth with the preaching of the gospel and triumphant march of the churches. Jesus is not acting in grace as he destroys his foes and the enemies of his people. He comes with caustic, scathing, stringent judgment. Men, in the face of this judgment, will cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from his wrath. Revelation 6:15-17 "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

### Throughout Scripture Christ Is The Stone And The Rock

How well the nations of the lost will realize this when he pours out his wrath upon them. Psalm 2:6-12 "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the

way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Thank God we can say with Moses that their rock is not as our Rock. Deuteronomy 32:30-31 "How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

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Christ**

Jesus was the Rock which followed Israel and supplied them with water when there was none to be had elsewhere. 1 Corinthians 10:4 "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

Jesus is the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence who crushes all who fall upon him. 1 Peter 2:7-8 "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

Jesus is coming again as the crushing stone. He is coming again as the destroying stone. He is coming again with the armies of heaven following him and will execute judgment on the ungodly. Jude 14-15 "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

The old Roman Empire has been terribly weakened, divided, and for the most part destroyed as a political power. But, the paganism that she spread still permeates the thinking of much of this world and this wicked thinking increases daily. But when that blessed stone kingdom shall come all the wicked kingdoms of this world will be crushed into powder

*(Camp; continued on page 16)*



## The Image (Daniel 11)

S.P. Tregelles

The book of Daniel is that part of Scripture which especially treats of the power of the world during the time of its committal into the hands of the Gentiles, whilst the ancient people of God, the children of Israel, are under chastisement on account of their sin.

The first chapter opens with the statement that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem, that he besieged the city, that "the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure-house of his god." This may, I believe, be regarded as such an introduction to the book as shall guide our thoughts as to its subject; the nation of Israel had departed from God, and He now delivers Judah, that portion of them with whom He had dealt in the most protracted long-suffering, into the hands of Gentiles, to whom He now commits power over His chosen city, Jerusalem. The distinctive object in the book of Daniel is to reveal, at the very period at which this committal has been made, what would be the course, character, and consummation of the power so bestowed.

We may divide this book into two portions—that part which is written in the Chaldee language, and that which is written in Hebrew. While we see that the book has one general scope—namely, Jerusalem given by God for a time into the power of the Gentiles who bear rule—we may regard this in two ways; we may either look at Gentile power in the outline of its history, or we may look at those things relating to this power in their local connection with Jerusalem. Now, the course, character, and crises of Gentile power are taken up in this book in the Chaldee language, while those things which are limited in their application to the Jews and Jerusalem are written in Hebrew.

There are very few portions of the Scripture which are written in Chaldee, there are some parts of Ezra

(chap. 4:8 to 6:19, and 7:12-27) so written, which bring before us the children of Israel as being under the power of the Gentiles; there are some parts of this book; and there is one verse in Jeremiah (10:2) which contains a message sent to the Gentiles. This verse occurs just as the gods of the nations had been mentioned in contrast with the living God.

It is important that we should so bear in mind the inspiration of Scripture as to recognize that nothing respecting it can be looked on as accidental; there must be in every circumstance a reason as to whatever God has written, and however He has written it, whether we possess sufficient spiritual intelligence or not to apprehend it. Now, in such a case as the present we may be sure that God has not made this difference of language without a very definite object. The Chaldee portion of Daniel commences at the fourth verse of the second chapter, and continues to the end of the seventh chapter: all the rest of the book is written in Hebrew. In the Chaldee portion we see power in the hands of the Gentiles presented before us to its character, course, and consummation; and in the latter portion of the book we see the same power localized in connection with the Jews and Jerusalem. The Gentile power is in each part that which is prominently before us, although looked at in different aspects.

We are often instructed in Scripture by having the same set of facts presented before us in different aspects: each aspect may show but a few features of difference, but still enough will be found to evince that the variety is not without its value. As an illustration of this we may take the parables of our Lord, in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew. He teaches there on one general subject, the effects which would result from the introduction of the gospel amongst

Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875) English Presbyterian theologian & hymn writer, author of *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* and *Hope of Christ's Second Coming*.

men: He illustrates the results, both of good and of evil (from the counter working of Satan), until the day when the tares shall be separated from among the wheat—when the fishes, good and bad, shall receive their respective allotments. Instead of one narrative, or one continuous parable, He uses many, and thus we receive instruction in its individuality as to its several parts, and also in its completeness as to the whole instruction given.

This mode of Scripture teaching, by the presentation of many pictures of the same truths, in order that their bearings and connections may be clearly and rightly apprehended, is especially found in the book of Daniel; in the first chapter of which we see Judah, because of sin, delivered into the hands of their enemies and carried into exile to Babylon.

Thus it is that the prophet is placed in the land of strangers: Daniel had not personally committed the sins which led to the captivity, but as part of the Israelitish nation it was his to share their lot. He and his companions are brought into a place of particular connection with the King's court, and this was an occasion of proving if their hearts were faithful to God or not. Daniel refused the appointed portion of the king's meat, of which he, as an Israelite, could not partake without defilement, and thus in the midst of Babylon was separate unto the Lord his God. This was nothing in which he sought to bear any ostentatious testimony; in the then circumstances of his nation, rejected by God because of their sins, it was not a time for endeavoring to set forth before the Gentiles that Israel was God's favored and chosen people, to whom was confided the knowledge of God's truth in the earth. Each had now to stand in a great measure on his own individual responsibility before God. And thus Daniel maintains a separation which was well-pleasing to God, so that in the midst of Nebuchadnezzar's court, and whilst occupied in the service of Gentile kings, his heart was right with God and his actions were directed by a conscience duly exercised. To most he might have seemed but as a faithful servant of the Babylonian king, while the eye of God could mark him as rejecting "the portion of the king's meat," as avoiding those things in which he could not obey God, thus truly owning allegiance and service to earthly sovereigns, but always with

**The four metals of which the image consisted represented four kingdoms which should successively bear rule in the earth.**

the limitation that God's supreme authority should be upheld.

In the second chapter we read of the vision shown by God to the king of Babylon. God appears to be meeting him in the thoughts and inquiries of his own heart. Nebuchadnezzar had seen his own power rising to a great extent, and his own soul was in some measure bent on knowing what the issue of all this would be. We see this from verse 29, "Thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter." The extent of his power, so different from that of any who had gone before him, seems to have led his heart to meditate upon the circumstances in which he was set, and the vision declared to him the course and crisis of the power so committed. But although the vision was shown to him, yet he had to receive not only the interpretation, but even the vision itself again, through the instrumentality of the prophet.

In the vision of this chapter the moral character and acting of this power towards God are not stated (except indeed as one who knew the mind of God might gather it from the crisis), but for this we must look for further light in the subsequent visions of the book.

Here all is presented as set before the king according to his ability of apprehension, the external and visible things being shown as man might regard them. The vision of Nebuchadnezzar was of a great image with the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs of iron; in the interpretation all these several parts are taken up, and the symbolic meaning of each is stated. The four metals of which the image consisted represented four kingdoms which should successively bear rule in the earth.

To understand the Scriptures aright we have no occasion to go beyond the limit of the Scriptures themselves. The same passage of revealed truth which tells us of the authority of holy Scripture tells us also of its sufficiency: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" 2 Tim. 3:16-

17). Thus nothing can be *needed* by the man of God, in order that he should be "thoroughly furnished", beyond the inspired writings contained in the Bible. We have then no necessity to go out of the Scripture itself in order to gain information as to those things of which we read in Scripture; we may find many things which are interesting as bearing upon Scripture, but still whatever God looks on as needful for the establishment of the souls of His people, and for their spiritual intelligence in His truth, is to be found within the limits of His Scripture. History is not revelation; and we are nowhere commanded to search history to learn the truths found in God's word; although it may be owned most freely that God's word sheds a light upon the things which man has written as history, and that many lessons may be learned from seeing how different are the thoughts of God and of man about the same events.

We have no occasion whatever to go beyond the limits of Scripture to learn what the four kingdoms are which are thus mentioned in Daniel.

**We have no occasion ... to go beyond the limits of Scripture to learn what the four kingdoms are which are thus mentioned in Daniel.**

*First.* It was said expressly to Nebuchadnezzar that the head of gold symbolized his kingdom (v. 37-38): "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory: and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." These last words fix the first kingdom incontestably to be that of Babylon, which had grown to its greatness under Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, as to the terms in which the extent of Nebuchadnezzar's power is stated, of course we are not to understand that he actually held and exercised this rule over every part of the inhabited earth, but rather that, so far as God was concerned, all was given into his hand, so that he was not limited as to the power which he might obtain in whatever direction he might turn himself as conqueror; the only earthly bound to his empire was his own ambition. This is just what we find also in Jer. 27:5-6: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, ... I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have

given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him." Of course Nebuchadnezzar knew nothing of all this when carrying on his conquests; he had gratified himself without being aware that he was thus the instrument in the hand of God.

*Second.* He was told, "after thee shall rise another kingdom inferior to thee." To find out what kingdom was intended we have only to inquire what kingdom succeeded to that of Babylon; in 2 Chron.

36:20 we read of Nebuchadnezzar, "them that had escaped from the sword, carried he away to Babylon, here they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia". And indeed in this book of Daniel itself we find a plain intimation of what the second kingdom should be which should succeed that of Babylon; in chapter 5:28 it is said, "Peres; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Although these were two nations, yet the Medo-Persian kingdom is regarded as

being one, as we also find in chapter 8:20.

*Third.* In the vision the king had seen "his belly and his thighs of brass" (v.32), and this is defined in the interpretation to be "another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth". In chapter 8 we learn (v. 21) what this kingdom was, to which dominion was given after that of the Medes and Persians—"the rough goat is the king of Grecia"; this symbolic goat had been previously spoken of as destroying the ram, which was used in that vision as the symbol of the Medo-Persian kingdom. The commencement of chapter 11 tells us the same thing.

*Fourth.* In the vision the image had been seen with "his legs of iron" (v. 33). In the interpretation we read, "the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise" (v. 40). We shall not find the *name* of this fourth kingdom in the Old Testament, although we see here, and in other places, its character and description. But we learn from the New Testament what this kingdom is; for we there find another bearing rule over the earth after that of Greece had passed away. Thus in Luke 2 we read that there



was a certain empire or kingdom which professed to bear rule over the whole inhabited earth at the time when our Lord was born, and in Luke 3 we find things so fully spoken of after the Roman arrangement and order that the ministry of our Lord's forerunner is dated "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea"; thus we see that the empire of the Caesars had then begun, and that the governor sent by that empire exercised authority for it in the land of the Jews. The same thing is also shown by the reply of our Lord to the question which was put to Him about the tribute-money, and also by the frequent mention made of Rome and Roman power in the book of the Acts.

Thus we may see that it is wholly needless to go to any other source than that of the Revelation of God in order to discover what these four successive kingdoms are—the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman.

It must be obvious to the Christian student of Scripture how much more satisfactory it is thus to learn the details of facts from the word of God than from the records of history; the latter may be true, but the former commands our faith, and leaves us with a confidence of certainty which we never can have with regard to facts derived from other sources. It would have been indeed strange if it had been necessary for us to draw from the doubtful statements of profane historians in order to understand prophecy; and we must also remember how many would find it impossible to do this.

The metals which symbolize these kingdoms become less and less pure. A certain process of deterioration appears to be marked out as to power, while passing from one kingdom to another.\*

When Nebuchadnezzar received the committal from God it was simply power from Himself, not derived from man, not dependent on the will of others, but put by God into his hand and exercised in responsibility to Him alone, as the only ruler of princes. Nebuchadnezzar might rightly bear, as far as man was

concerned, the name of autocrat: his will was law. Now, we can see in part from Scripture how power deteriorated in its character in the other kingdoms. The kingdom of Persia was said to be "inferior" to that of Nebuchadnezzar, and we see that this was the case as to the power of its kings. In chapter 6 of this book we find Darius unable to deliver Daniel from the hands of the princes who sought to cast him into the lions' den; not so had Nebuchadnezzar ruled—"all peopled, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive" (v. 19). In the case, too, of Ahasuerus in the book of Esther, the king and the princes act together, and the king could not undo what they had jointly decreed about queen Vashti. In Ezra 7:14 we find authority given to that servant of God from the king and his seven counselors. All this shows us not a king acting in the mere right of his royal prerogative, but a king in a certain sense controlled by counselors, without whose advice and consent he could not act.

In the continual hindrances thrown in the way of the Jews after their return from Babylon, when they attempted to carry out the edicts of the Persian kings in their favor, we see manifest proof how the governors, and others in authority under the Persian kings, could oppose the execution of the pleasure of the sovereign.

We do not read much in Scripture as to the Grecian power, and therefore details as to the manner of the deterioration are not to be pressed; only the fact of such deterioration of power being intimated should be noticed.

In one respect the Scripture appears to indicate the mode of this deterioration, when it tells us of the divisions of the third kingdom, so that it continued in a fragmentary and not a united form. Babylon and Persia stood as kingdoms and fell as kingdoms; the empire of Alexander continued in broken parts, and these parts were destroyed one by one.

The fourth kingdom is said to be "as strong as iron". As a metal this is in many respects inferior to brass, although possessed of much more strength for certain purposes, and capable of far more extensive application. Strength and force are spoken of, but still apparently deterioration.

\*It may be worthy of observation that the metals in the image lessen in their specific gravity as they go downwards; iron is not so heavy as brass, and thus the weight is so arranged as to exhibit the reverse of stability, even before we reach the mixture of clay and iron.

It may also be noticed that the deterioration of the fourth kingdom is especially shown in its last state. Each of the four kingdoms appears as succeeding that which had gone before, not as annihilating it, but as incorporating it with itself—each making, as it were, the dominion of the metal which had gone before a part of itself. Just so do we read in chapter 5:28 of the manner in which the kingdom of the Medes and Persians succeeded to that of Babylon: “Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians”; the kingdom not being, as it were, destroyed, but transferred—that is, the cities and nations were to continue in existence, while the glory which had belonged to them passed into the hand of other powers. Babylon stands as the head of the image, and this headship existing throughout the whole gives the image its identity. The four powers succeeded one another as the actual holders of the dominion, and as they thus came into view, so is their place seen successively in the image.

**Babylon stands as the head of the image, and this headship existing throughout the whole gives the image its identity.**

Babylon may be defined as having been power in the form of absolute autocracy; Persia, power in the hands of the king, while nobility of person and descent were everything—the nobles were the king's equals in rank though not in office. In Greece there was the aristocracy not of birth but of supposed excellence as evinced by the power of the mind of man, and individual influence. In Rome, power had a still lower character, for the emperor was entirely dependent upon popular choice, the soldiers commonly bestowing the imperial dignity upon a successful general—in fact, the very name of “emperor” (Imperator) arose from any commander having been so saluted by his soldiers after a victory if they were satisfied with his conduct; if they did not so salute him, then he could not receive the public honors of a triumph. Thus we see that in the Roman Empire power actually was derived from the people, and it may also be worthy of observation that the emperors succeeded one another rather in the way of popular military election than in that of hereditary rule.

The committal of power in all the fullness spoken of in verses 37-38 appears to belong to Nebuchadnezzar personally, or at all events to have been confined to the kingdom of Babylon.

In verse 40 we have rather the character of the Roman power than its territorial extent; this latter subject does not appear to belong to the scope of the present vision, which we have to regard especially as speaking of these kingdoms in their succession from Babylon, and the crisis to which they tend.

The “potter's clay” (v.41) means, I believe, simply “earthenware”—that which is hard but yet brittle; softness does not seem to be at all the thing pointed out. Now, an image which stood partly upon feet of earthenware would be very stable so long as there was nothing but direct pressure brought to bear upon these feet, while a blow falling upon them would break them to pieces, and that only the more thoroughly from the fact of iron being intermixed with the earthenware; this I believe to be the thought here presented to us.

We see from verse 42 that the part of the feet thus formed of iron and clay intermixed was the toes; and the interpretation which is given is, “the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken” (or, rather, “brittle”). In verse 43 the explanation is continued, “they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men”; thus there will be power (in its deteriorated form, iron) mixed up with that which is wholly of man, and which, when put to the proof, is found to be only weakness itself.

Thus we see this fourth empire especially brought before us at a time when in a divided condition, and when thus debased. The number of the toes of the feet appears to imply a tenfold division: this may be taken as a hint given to us here, although the more specific statement of the fact is not told us, till farther on in this book. This kingdom is then divided into parts, which we shall see from other portions of the Scripture (especially chapter 7) to be exactly ten. Power in the hands of the people is seen, having no internal stability, although something is still left of the strength of the iron.

Verse 44. Here we see that when the image is fully developed, even to the toes of the feet, then destruction falls on it. In the vision it had been stated (verse 35) that all the materials of the image became, when smitten, “like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no

place was found for them." This expression may give us some intimation of the moral character of these kingdoms before God, such as we do not find anywhere else in the chapter; just as we read in the first Psalm, "The ungodly...are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."

The expression in verse 44, "in the days of these kings", is worthy of attention, for it brings before our minds more than had been expressly stated, either in the vision or in the interpretation; namely, that the kingdom which had last borne rule has been divided, and that the toes of the feet do actually symbolize such divided parts. "These kings" cannot mean the four successional monarchies, because in that case the plural number could not be used seeing that they *do not co-exist* as the holders of power. The fourth kingdom is divided into parts (which other Scriptures show to be exactly ten), and "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed".

This kingdom is in its character utterly unlike the four which had preceded it; it has nothing springing from Babylonian headship, which may be transferred, and become deteriorated in the hands of men, but it stands in direct contrast to all that has been.

It is important to observe very distinctly what is the crisis of the image: "a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (ver. 34-35).

Now, what does the stone so falling upon the feet of the image symbolize? It has been sometimes thought that it alludes to grace, or to the spread of the gospel; but surely if the very words of the Scripture be followed, we shall see that destroying judgment on Gentile power is here spoken of, and not any gradual diffusion of the knowledge of grace.

The image is standing on its feet, part of iron and part of earthenware; the stone then falls from above upon these feet, and the whole image is destroyed as it were with one crash.

Now, our Lord speaks of Himself as the "stone", and makes reference, or direct citation of, several passages in the Old Testament in which he had been so designated. Thus in Matthew 21 He says, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?...And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (v. 42, 44). Our Lord here cites from Psalms 68, and alludes to the mention made in Isaiah 8 to the stone on which Israel has stumbled and been broken; and he likewise clearly refers to the destroying judgment which takes place when the stone, now exalted at the head of the corner, falls thus upon the fabric of Gentile power—"it will grind him to powder".

"The stone" must be taken as a definite appellation of our Lord. We see this from Psalm 68:22, Isaiah 8:14, 28:16, Acts 4:11, and 1 Peter 2:4, 6, in all of which Christ is spoken of under this name. Now, this cannot refer to Him as born into the world, because the fourth kingdom was not then in its divided condition—no toes were then in existence. This falling on the feet of the image could not, therefore, have anything to do with our Lord when He was upon earth. Equally impossible is it for this to symbolize the spread of the gospel; for, so far from Christians being put in the place of destroying those that bear earthly rule, they are taught submission to the powers that be as ordained of God, and their place is to suffer, if needs be, but not to rebel.

...when the image is fully developed, even to the toes of the feet, then destruction falls on it.

Thus, it is clear that the Lord Jesus is here referred to as coming again—in the day when He shall take to Himself his great power and shall reign—when He shall be revealed "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess 1:8).

It might occur as a difficulty that the Roman empire does not exist as one united body; and hence it

might be thought that the stone falling on the image must have been some past event; but observe, the Roman empire is presented in its divided condition. It is true that these divisions commenced about 1,400 years ago, but under the divided parts of the Roman empire we still live, and its last condition is that in which the stone of destruction falls upon it—a condition in which as yet it has never been.

Now, we may regard "the stone" in three different ways, for we find it in Scripture so spoken of, in connection with Israel, with the Church, and with the Gentile powers. In Isaiah 8:14-15 we read that the Lord of Hosts would become "a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken and snared and taken." We see from the words of our Lord already cited from Matthew 21, and from what Peter says, Acts 4:11, how Judah stumbled upon Christ according to the words of the Prophecy. We see also from 1 Peter 2:7-8 how Israel in their dispersions did also stumble upon Christ as preached unto them—"a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed". Thus *both the houses of Israel* have fallen upon this stone, and they are *broken*, not destroyed—cast off for a time though still "beloved for the fathers' sakes."

How different is the connection of the Church with this stone! "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood", etc. Thus could the Apostle Peter address those who by nation belonged to Israel, who through grace had trusted in the blood of the Lamb, without blemish and without spot. And as the Church consists of "us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles", this blessing is true of the whole family of faith—we are built upon this "stone", this tried foundation; we are thus identified with it, and not with those who have fallen upon it, nor yet with those upon whom it shall fall.

...we may regard "the stone" in three different ways, ...in connection with Israel, with the Church, and with the Gentile powers.

I have already spoken of the relation of this stone to Gentile power, but I would remark further, that the utter distinctness of this power from that which stands in grace is most vividly presented to us in the crisis of this power. The Church is built upon the stone; the image is destroyed by the stone falling upon it. We ought carefully to note the distinctions which God makes in His word, and no line of demarcation which He has laid down is more plain than that which exists between the world and its power on the one hand and the Church on the other. How wondrously does it show the power of Satan in confusing the mind as to things that differ, that it should have been supposed to be possible for the Church rightly to rest upon the power of this world—upon that which the Lord Jesus is going thus to judge!

Let the saints rightly value their place as identified with Christ, as resting upon Him, and then they will see aright how to act as to any connection with the world and its power. A saint who identified himself with the image would be, as it were, so far seeking to put himself in the place of that which will receive destroying judgment. It is quite true that God will keep from final condemnation every soul that He has quickened by the Spirit to believe in Christ; but it would evince a hardihood of mind which seems scarcely compatible with grace for any one deliberately to say, "God will keep me, and so I may put myself in the place where judgment will fall." It is for us to have nothing to do with that upon which the judgment of God will fall, but to realize our union with Him who will execute the judgment, and in whose coming kingdom his people will share.

The second chapter of Daniel may be looked on as the alphabet of the prophetic statements contained in the book and it is well for the mind to be grounded in the truths contained in this portion of the book, before other parts of it are searched into. We have here the four successive empires, the last of these in a divided and deteriorated condition and then, in contrast to the whole that had preceded, a kingdom, which shall last for ever, set up by the God of heaven—the coming of the Lord Jesus in

(Tregelles: continued on page 14)

## When Daniel Saw the Kingdom

Oswald J. Smith



No Prophet has ever given such a practical forecast of the King and the Kingdom as Daniel. Some six hundred years before Christ, he wrote of His coming. Two thousand five hundred years have now gone by and his greatest predictions still await fulfillment.

Many of the prophets wrote of Christ's humiliation, His sufferings, and His death. Daniel wrote of the King in His beauty, His glory, His exaltation. Daniel saw Him enthroned—a world ruler, supreme over all. That day is yet to come. Not until all other kingdoms have been overthrown will it be realized.

Have you ever noticed how often the words "King," "Kingdom," "rule," "govern," "throne," are used in the Book of Daniel? Count them, if you will, and you will be amazed. Daniel is the Book of the King and His kingdom. Earthly kingdoms are discussed and set aside. All culminates in the rule of Jesus Christ, who is to sit on David's throne and govern the entire world. All nations, kings, and potentates are to bow before Him, for He is to be Lord of lords and King of kings. As a matter of fact, He is spoken of in Revelation 1:5 as "the Prince of the kings of the earth." Hence, He is to rule over all other kings.

### World Powers Destroyed

First of all, see Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

This is the vision that describes the sudden destruction of the last great world power. It is not gradual; it is sudden. Christ is a smiting stone. The present world systems are to be destroyed. Those who look for world conversion are totally ignorant of the meaning of this vision. Christ's kingdom fills the whole earth only after the smiting. It is worldwide in its dominion and influence.

But let us go back a little. You remember the vision as seen by King Nebuchadnezzar. "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image... This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (Dan. 2:31-33).

The gold, you will remember, represented Babylon, the first great world power; the silver, the next great empire, Media-Persia; the brass, Greece; and the iron, Rome. All of them were world empires, and they appeared in that order, exactly as foretold.

Then the king saw a stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, crash into the feet of the image and grind it to powder. God was making known to the king, Daniel said, what was to come to pass. Already the four world powers have appeared. Rome disintegrated, but the fragments still remain. Out of the present world systems will come ten nations represented by the ten toes, and then the Stone will strike.

That, then, will be the next great event in world history. Soon now will come the crushing blow that will demolish all world powers. With the appearing of Jesus Christ in millennial power and glory, as Lord of lords and King of kings, will come the complete and final overthrow of all earthly governments, powers and dominions.

### When Will It Take Place?

Not one word of this prediction was fulfilled at the first advent. The world powers were not destroyed. They never have been destroyed, nor will they be until Christ, the Smiting Stone, at a single stroke, demolishes them all. It will be judgment, sudden and final. The fatal blow was not struck when He came the first time. Then the world struck Him. When this

Oswald J. Smith (1889-1986) was a long-time Canadian pastor, evangelist, and missions supporter. He also wrote 1200 poems & hymn lyrics, over 200 of which were set to music.

happens He will do the striking. It will be a startling and world shaking catastrophe and, immediately after, the kingdom of God will be established on earth.

When will it be? "In the days of these kings." Never yet have they been seen. The revived Roman Empire has yet to be ruled by ten dictators. When that day comes the Stone will strike, and not until then. That is the direction in which we are now headed. Ten men will finally rule the world. When that day dawns, judgment will fall. Christ will come. At a single stroke all ten will be overthrown and destroyed. No dictator will survive. All are doomed.

"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." Man does not bring in the kingdom. The Church does not do it. All this talk about co-operatives, church union, a world church—all such talk is nothing but trash. It is absolutely contradictory to the precepts of the Word of God. The Devil himself would sanction a world church. The synagogue of Satan is already in the making. And all who are working for a world church are working for the enemy. No, my friend, God Himself is to usher in the kingdom.

This is not the spiritual kingdom in which we all believe; it is a literal kingdom right here on earth, established after the striking of a single blow, as if by a hydrogen bomb, world-wide in its destruction. This is the kingdom described by the prophets—the glorious reign of Christ.

### A Universal Kingdom

Next, Daniel 7:27: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

This is a different vision, but of the same kingdom. It is to be established "under the whole heaven". No kingdom has ever been so great, so magnificent, so powerful. It will be governed under Christ by the people of God. All nations will bow down and obey Him. Hence it will be universal. He, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be the supreme Ruler, for the mountain of His kingdom is to fill all the earth. What a day that will be! This is man's day; God's day is coming.

☆

From *When the King Comes Back*

This scene in Daniel looks forward toward the end of this present age. What then of the Christian's attitude toward human government during this age? The answer is simple. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). Human governments have been established by God for the rulership of this present age. They are part of God's plan for it. They safeguard our lives and our liberties. We owe them our allegiance, our loyal support. They are "ministers of God" to us "for good" (Rom. 13:4). We are to be subject to them (Rom. 13:1). We are to pray for them (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Yet we are to remember that they are limited in duration to this present age. When this age ends at the coming of Christ their place and purpose ends. A new age begins. "The kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ." Human governments of this age are replaced by the government of Jesus Christ in the coming age.

From *The End of the Age*  
by James H. McConkey

*(Tregelles: continued from page 12)*

destroying judgment being the turning point which changes the whole scene; all that had failed in the hand of man then passing away, and that which is kept in the Lord's own hand being then introduced.

If we refer to the 8th Psalm, we shall see the extent of Christ's dominion spoken of in terms very similar to those which in this chapter had been used to describe the power committed to Nebuchadnezzar: we thus see how the power of the earth, entrusted to him, and which failed in his hand, is taken up by Christ, as One who really is able to hold and to exercise aright this dominion in all its wide extent. ☆

# The Times Of the Gentiles

After the Tower of Babel, God by raising up Israel had made them the first people of the world. He had established His dwelling at Jerusalem, and from there He governed the world. But the elect people rejected the theocracy, and under the leadership of the kings became more and more disloyal. For that reason God withdrew His presence and put an end to their independence and caused the temple, together with the city of Jerusalem, to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Since then He has let the pagan nations take the direction of world affairs and trample under foot Palestine, which He had at first chosen and preserved.

The period which extends from the first destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to the last restoration at the beginning of the Millennium is called by Jesus Himself "the times of the Gentiles": "Jerusalem shall be trampled under foot by the nations until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). During this long period, the throne of David is vacant. It shall be occupied when Jesus Christ, the Son of David, shall finally institute His kingdom. When the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, is it at this time that thou shalt establish the kingdom of Israel?" (Acts 1:6), they asked Him, in fact, when would be the end of the time of the Gentiles.

If we consider the history of the nations taken together, we can establish the following table:

1. *The beginning of the nations:* from Cain until the Tower of Babel (Gen. 4-11). Israel interrupts the history of the nations.
2. *The apogee of the nations:* the four empires of Daniel, from Babylon to Rome, from about the year 600 B.C. to the coming of the Savior. The Church is a parenthesis in the time of the nations.
3. *The end of the nations:* three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist and the judgment of Great Babylon. The Millennium puts an end to the kingdoms of the nations.

As soon as Israel is converted and reintegrated in the place which it lost, an entirely new period shall begin: that of the Messianic kingdom, which shall endure a thousand years here on earth. We shall see later that at that time those among the nations which have endured the Great Tribulation shall themselves be transformed. All

the earth shall be placed under the reign of Christ. In place of violence and injustice the regenerated nations shall finally know peace, justice, and happiness. That is why we wish with all our hearts for the end of the "times of the Gentiles."

Daniel, who was deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, is par excellence the prophet of the Gentiles. Under the form of the statue of chapter 2 and of the animals of chapters 7 and 8, he gives us a vision of the history of the world from his time until the time of the end. Among all the earthly empires, he mentions four which are going to play an essential role in the prophetic point of view. At the moment when God was putting an end to the independence of Israel and abandoning the government of the world into the hands of the Gentiles, it was of the greatest interest that He should reveal in bold strokes:

1. That which the Gentiles were going to do;
2. That which would happen to His people until the establishment of the Messianic kingdom on earth.

Interest in these prophecies has not diminished today, but rather has quickened, since they are oriented above all toward the time of the end.

There have been many empires in history which are not mentioned by Daniel. The prophecy occupies itself uniquely with those who have a close connection with Israel and Palestine, as long as the Jews are in their country. The first empire of which Daniel speaks is Babylon (2:39). The fourth subsists until the establishment of the kingdom of Christ (2:34,44). However, the era of the Church is omitted by Daniel because the Old Testament does not yet speak of it (the Church is, in fact, the mystery revealed by Christ and His apostles, Eph. 3:3-6, 8-11), and because during this period the Jews are absent from their country. As long as their world-wide dispersion lasts, the prophecies which concern them are in some manner suspended.

The four empires, therefore, of Daniel cover the period of time from Nebuchadnezzar to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70, and the years which immediately precede the glorious return of Jesus Christ during which the Jews shall be regathered in Palestine. ✠

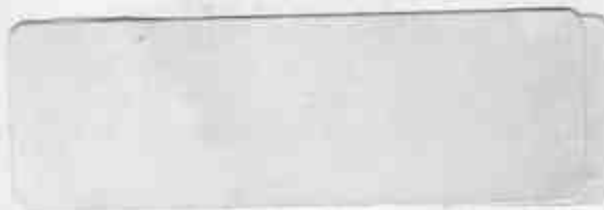
From *The Return of Jesus Christ*  
by Rene Pache (1904-1979), a French theologian

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**Theme of next issue:  
*The Binding Of Satan***

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(Camp: continued from page 5)

and blown away as chaff. And the saints will rejoice in that stone kingdom which God will set up on this earth." Revelation 20:4 "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their fore-

heads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation 5:9-10 "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." ✪

The only questions which arise relate, first to the character of the final catastrophe symbolized by the fall and destruction of the image, and secondly to the time of its fulfillment; and any difficulties which have been raised depend in no way upon the language of the prophecy, but solely upon the preconceived views of interpreters. No Christian doubts that the "stone cut out without hands" was typical either of Christ Himself or of His kingdom. It is equally clear that the catastrophe was to occur when the fourth empire should have become divided, and be "partly strong and partly brittle." Therefore its fulfillment could not belong to the time of the first advent. No less clear is it that its fulfillment was to be a sudden crisis, to be followed by the establishment of "a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Therefore it relates to events still to come. We are dealing here, not with prophetic theories, but with the meaning of plain words; and what the prophecy foretells is not the rise and spread of a "spiritual kingdom" in the midst of earthly kingdoms; but the establishment of a kingdom which "shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms."

Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918) from *The Coming Prince*



# Premillennial Baptist Journal

VOLUME II ISSUE IV

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2007

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION



## The Binding of Satan

### Inside This Edition

- |   |      |   |       |
|---|------|---|-------|
| ◆ The Binding of Satan, <i>Bill Lee</i>         | p. 3 | ◆ The Removal of Satan, <i>John MacArthur</i> | p. 12 |
| ◆ The Binding of Satan, <i>John F. Walvoord</i> | p. 6 | ◆ The Removal of Satan, <i>Lehman Strauss</i> | p. 15 |
| ◆ Is Satan Now Bound, <i>W.E. Dalling</i>       | p. 9 |   |       |

## Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

## FINANCIAL NEWS

When we began publication over a year ago we announced that we would publish only when we had cash in hand to pay for the issue published. A number of individuals and churches pledged and sent financial support at that time and it has carried us through a little over one year.

We now need churches and individuals to send money for the second year in the midst of which we now find ourselves. *After this current issue we will not be able to publish again* until we receive at least **\$1400** which is what one issue costs to print and mail.

If you believe the Premillennial Baptist Journal is important in spreading the truth of the Premillennial return and reign of our Savior on this earth, please send financial help as soon as possible whether it be \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100, \$200 or more.

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**T**here are three persons consigned to the lake of fire without trial—the Beast, the False Prophet, and the Assyrian (Isa. 30) at the commencement of the millennial reign; also the devil at the close of the reign. Having seen the two chief ministers of Satan, the leaders of the hosts on earth opposed to the Lamb and His saints, ignominiously cast alive into the lake of fire, followed by the destruction of their armies, we ask, What about the unseen spiritual being who goaded and lured on to destruction his agents and their followers? Does he escape? No! Summary judgment overtakes **him** as it did **them**. They are dealt with on earth by Christ; the devil is the subject of God's judgment from on high. The dragon, the real instigator of the rebellion so effectually crushed, is seized upon by an angel from Heaven and chained up in the abyss or bottomless pit. He will be sent to join his followers in the lake of fire a thousand years after. He has yet other work to do on earth, but till then he is shut up and prevented from doing further mischief.

It must be borne in mind that Satan, from the time of his expulsion from the heavens (chap. 12.9), is on the earth, blighting, destroying, and ruining everything which has the semblance of standing for God. Thus the angel, the minister of his punishment, is witnessed by the Seer "descending from the Heaven." Satan is seized on earth. It is a reality, although no human eye may witness it....

Walter Scott from *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, ppg 395-399



## The Binding of Satan

Bill Lee

Revelation 20:1-3. Our intent in this study is not to examine everything that is stated in this passage of Scripture, but rather to focus our attention upon the binding of Satan and the effect this binding will have upon Satan, as well as upon the world.

As John gives us the revelation that he had received, he states; "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: after that he must be loosed a little season." Many questions and debates have developed over the years as to the meaning and extent of these words of John. But what seems to me to have been overlooked by many is the clause of purpose that is contained in John's statement concerning the binding of Satan. In verses two and three of Revelation 20, John stated that Satan would be bound and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, with a seal placed upon him "that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be fulfilled." We are given, in very plain language, the purpose of God in the binding of Satan. We can be easily misled and even deceived concerning this passage of Scripture, if we lose sight of God's purpose in this matter. It is the realization and acceptance of this divine purpose that will give unto us the proper understanding of the binding of Satan. The divine purpose stated in the Scripture will also cause us not to be misled into thinking that this binding has already occurred. For when Satan is truly bound, as stated in our text, he will "deceive the nations no more" until the term of his binding is completed or fulfilled. During the extent of his being bound he will not deceive the nations, not by himself nor by his instruments, such as his demons or false teachers, as in II Peter 2:1-3 and II Corinthians 11:13-15.

Satan is termed in Scripture as both the prince and the god of this world, John 12:31, II Corinthians 4:4.

It appears that the kingdoms of this world are under his control and being ruled by him. In Matthew's account of the temptation of Jesus, it is written; "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." It is interesting to note that Jesus did not dispute Satan's claim to be able to deliver unto Him all the kingdoms of the world, as well as the glory of these kingdoms, if Jesus would only meet Satan's stipulations.

In Ephesians 2:2 the Apostle Paul called Satan "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Notice that Paul was not nearly as convinced, as some are today, that Satan was already bound. Instead Paul said that he "now worketh." And as Paul could say that Satan "now worketh" during his lifetime and ministry, even so we can also say that Satan "now worketh" in our generation.

All one has to do is to review the history of mankind in order to see the results of the working of Satan. His work is evident in every generation, with ours being no exception. Since he first deceived Eve until our present time, the working of Satan and his diabolical deceit have been stamped upon all of the nations of this world, with no exceptions.

More than two thousand years have passed since Satan bruised the heel of the Seed of the woman. During this time it is evident, to even a casual observer, that he has not yet been bound, nor has he lost any power and control of the nations of this world. In fact, right the opposite seems to be the case, for his deception is not only prospering in the realm of religion, but also in every aspect of human life, including political and social.

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Jesus said in Matthew 12:26; "And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" Notice that Jesus refers to "his kingdom," or the kingdom of Satan. Through his deceit, as he effectively deceives the nations, Satan's kingdom seems to be flourishing today, rather than diminishing. This should be proof enough to the discerning observer that he is not yet bound, but still deceiving the nations. He is still "the spirit that now worketh".

J. R. Graves, in his sermon entitled *Satan Dethroned*, stated; "Do the Acts of the Apostles, or any history of the triumphs of the gospel, give an instance of even one entire city, town, village or hamlet being converted to the faith and obedience of the gospel by all of the labours of all the Apostles or modern missionaries? The sun has never witnessed the sight." To these words we agree, and affirm that Satan remains active and successful in deceiving the nations. False religion continues to flourish, while Christianity remains in the minority among the religions of the world. The deception of Satan continues among the nations because he has not yet been bound. He is still "the spirit that now worketh." He is still deceiving the nations. Graves, in the same sermon mentioned above, further stated, "Christ himself taught that Satan, as a strong man, would reign in peaceful possession of his house and palace until the stronger than he cometh; and he will first bind him and cast him out, and then spoil his house," Matthew 12:29.

If indeed the strong man referred to by Jesus is Satan, it seems evident that he is not yet bound, neither is he cast out, nor have his goods been spoiled. He was not bound nor cast out by the coming into the world of the Christ. His deception of the nations was displayed for all to see. He certainly was not bound nor cast out by the crucifixion, the resurrection, nor the ascension of our Lord. Rather than being bound and cast out by these events, he has been very active in the world since these events. To say that Satan did not deceive the nations during the days of the Apostles would surely be to misspeak. Who was it but Satan that filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit? Acts 5:3. If it was not Satan that deceived

the nations then, and if it is not Satan who is deceiving the nations now, the logical question would be: "Who is it then that is deceiving the nations?" Surely none would be so bold as to say that the nations are not being deceived on every hand in our generation. If this is not the working of Satan, then whose work is it?

The Bible categorically states that the binding of Satan is for the express purpose "that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled." The burden of proof lies squarely upon those who contend that Satan is already bound to produce one period of time, since the fall of man unto the present time, when Satan has not deceived the nations. That the nations will be deceived by Satan, up to and until the binding of Satan, is clear from the words of Revelation 20:3. What else could the words "no more" possibly mean? John wrote; "And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations **no more**, til the thousand years should be fulfilled..." Until this binding of Satan takes place, the nations will be deceived. During the time of his binding, he will "no more" be free and able to deceive the nations. Therefore as long as nations are being deceived, we can be certain that Satan is not yet bound.

**As long as nations are being deceived, we can be certain that Satan is not yet bound.**

It is the binding of Satan that will cause the nations not to be deceived "till the thousand years should be fulfilled". Then, when these years, the number of them being given by the Holy Spirit as "the thousand years," are fulfilled, Satan "must be loosed a little season." As he is "loosed out of his prison," verse 7, he will "go out to deceive the nations," verse 8. But it is clear from the text that Satan's ability to deceive the nations will be halted for the duration of his binding and incarceration. For the duration of this time he will be both bound and confined in what is called in verse 7, "his prison."

Questions are asked many times, and many times they are asked in attempts to divert our attention: "Is this a literal prison? Is this a literal chain? Some even mockingly ask of what material this chain will be made? My answer is simply that all we know is

what is revealed. There are many secret things that belong unto the Lord our God. This being true, we do not speculate concerning things that are not revealed. But neither will we spiritualize nor seek to change the meaning of what is revealed.

It is plainly revealed that the angel appears "having a great chain in his hand." I personally do not have any difficulty in simply believing what is written. Whether I can explain it or define it to the satisfaction of others has nothing at all to do with the plainness, nor the truthfulness, of the language that is employed here. This angel that comes down from heaven will lay hold upon Satan and bind him a thousand years. Again, the language that is used here to define the duration of Satan's binding is plain and simple enough for any to understand.

I have no problem at all in believing that the group of men that Jesus especially called as His disciples, and named as Apostles, consisted of twelve men. They are spoken of in the Bible as "the twelve," Matthew 26:20. We all know and understand that this number of the Apostles was not an indefinite or vague number, but it was an exact and specific number. We can read in the Scriptures of "the twelve" and know that twelve means twelve. We can equally know, with the same assurance, that one thousand means one thousand, and that "the thousand years" means "the thousand years." Consistency itself, coupled with simple logic, would tell us that if we can spiritualize and change the meaning of one number, in the same manner we could spiritualize and change the meaning of all numbers. But when we do this, all numbers lose their meaning, resulting in all words losing specific meanings. The "prison" in which Satan will be confined, the chain with which Satan will be bound, and the thousand years in which he will be bound, are as literal and real as Satan is literal and real. I have no doubt that it will be literal enough to keep him confined and inactive in the deceiving of the nations until his sentence has been served.

The term of his confinement, having both a beginning and an ending, is not only real, but it is also exact. This time period begins with Satan being bound and shut up and it will expire when the thou-

sand years are finished. This time will run parallel to the time between the first resurrection and the second resurrection, when the rest of the dead shall be raised, verse 5.

There are those who maintain that this binding of Satan is no more than he being bound and/or controlled by the sovereignty of God. While I would never deny that Satan is both bound and controlled by the sovereignty of God, I must deny that this is the sense of the binding of Satan recorded in Revelation 20.

Satan, along with all of God's creation, has always been bound and controlled by God's sovereignty. There never has been, and never shall be, any creature that existed or operated beyond the ultimate rule of our God. Surely there is none who could honestly deny God's sovereign rule over all of His creation. But this in no wise diminishes or alters

the teaching of Revelation 20 concerning the binding and the confinement of Satan. Nor should God's sovereign rule over all of His creation be equated with the binding of Satan in Revelation 20. For while it is certain that in divine sovereignty the binding of Satan will take place, it is equally certain that this binding will be of a different nature.

The binding of Satan mentioned in Revelation 20 will render him incapable of deceiving the nations. This binding will cease his going to and fro in the earth. This binding, unlike any binding, simply by the sovereignty of God, will have a beginning and an ending. It is not an indefinite period of time. The time of this binding and confinement will "expire". It will reach a finish.

In order to be consistent, those who believe that this binding of Satan is no more than he being bound by the sovereignty of God will have to believe that there will be a time when this binding will end. To be consistent, those who hold to this view must also believe that when this binding does end, that Satan will be free to operate outside of the sovereignty of God. But, as is the case many times in these matters, consistency is in short supply.

The key to my understanding of these matters lies in the fact that during the binding of Satan, he will be

**The language that is used here to define the duration of Satan's binding is plain and simple enough for any to understand.**

## The Binding of Satan

John F. Walvoord



Revelation 20:1-3: The next phase of the prophetic program is introduced by another vision of an angel (cf. 7:2; 8:1; 10:1; 14:6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18; 17:1; 18:1; 19:17). Though some have understood the angel of 20:1 to be Christ Himself, in lieu of specific proof it is better to assume that this is another great angel operating at the command and in the authority of God. As John witnesses the scene, he observes the angel coming down from heaven possessing the key of "the bottomless pit," that is, "the abyss" (cf. 9:1, 2, 11; also "the deep," Luke 8:31; Rom. 10:7). This is the home of demons and unclean spirits. The angel is also observed to have a great chain in his hands. In verse 2 the angel is seen laying hold of Satan and binding him for 1,000 years after which, in verse 3, Satan is cast into the abyss and its door is shut. A seal is placed upon Satan himself making it impossible for him to deceive the nations until a thousand years have elapsed, after which, the angel declares, Satan must be loosed for a little while.

The dramatic prophecy contained in these three verses has been the subject of endless dispute because to some extent the whole controversy between premillenarians and amillenarians hangs upon it. The passage yields to patient exegesis, and there is no solid reason for taking it in other than its ordinary sense. According to the prediction the angel is empowered for six functions. (1) to lay hold on the dragon, (2) to bind him for 1,000 years (3) to cast him into the abyss, (4) to shut him up, that is, to use the key which will lock up the abyss, (5) to set a seal upon Satan which will render him inactive in his work of deceiving the nations, (6) to loose him after the thousand years. At every point, however, the prediction has been disputed.

J. G. Encell, in keeping with his historical interpretation of Revelation, finds the chain with which Satan

was bound a symbol of "the chain of evidence that has been coming to life for nearly a hundred years past, but mostly within the last half century, and is still coming to life, corroborating the truths of the Bible." By this he means archaeological evidence confirming the Bible record. He continues:

We are living in the time when the many lengths of this chain are being brought forward for which to bind Satan; when he is securely bound a happy state of things will prevail, as for a long period of time, is indicated by the expression "a thousand years." How long a period of time is symbolized no mortal knows. J.G. Encell, *The Exiled Prophet*, pp. 231-32.

The difficulty with this symbolic interpretation is that it fails to satisfy the passage. The mounting evidence for Christianity does not seem to have bound Satan in the twentieth century.

The question has been raised as to how an angel who is an immaterial being can lay hold on Satan who is also an immaterial being. Such a query is born of unbelief. Certainly the qualities belonging to a physical body are frequently attributed to angels and to Satan; and God, the Creator of angels, can also deal with them in a physical way. Particular objection has been raised to the idea of binding Satan with a chain, again on the grounds that an immaterial being such as an angel or Satan cannot be bound with a physical chain.

In considering this problem, we must bear in mind that we have here the language of appearance, that is, that John saw the angel with a chain in his hands. The word *chain* here (GR., *halysis*) is the same as found in Mark 5:3 relating to the man possessed of demons who had been bound with chains. It is also used for the chains which fell off Peter (Acts 12:7) and for Paul's chains (Acts 28:20; 2 Tim. 1:16). Different words, however, are used in 2 Peter 2:4 referring to the chains of darkness binding the wicked angels, and for the everlasting chains of Jude 6. These are more general terms for being bound. The

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four instances in Scripture of the word for "chain" in Revelation 20:1 give no reason for interpreting the word in other than its ordinary sense.

Whatever the physical character of the chain, the obvious teaching of the passage is that the action is so designed as to render Satan inactive. The intention is not to represent Satan as merely restricted but as rendered completely inactive. In confirmation of this, verse 3 states that he is cast into the abyss, which by its character is a place of confinement. The angel uses the key and shuts him up in the abyss. If God wanted to show that Satan was totally inactive and out of touch with the world, how could He have rendered it more specifically than He has done in this passage? The fact that Satan is bound for a thousand years is confirmed by the multitude of passages dealing with the kingdom period in which Satan is never found working in the world.

Of major importance, however, is the decision whether this scene refers to the future millennium or to the present age as is taught by the amillenarians. It should be made clear from this passage that if the millennium is the interadvent period between the first and second comings of Christ, as held by amillenarians (the common Augustinian viewpoint of the interadvent age), then Satan must be bound during the present age. There are few theories of Scripture which are less warranted than the idea that Satan was bound at the first coming of Christ. Amillenarians often refer to Luke 10:18, as does Augustine, where Christ said to the seventy witnesses returning in triumph from their period of witness and miracles, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." From this it has been inferred that the fall of Satan occurred at the first coming of Christ instead of in relationship to the second coming.

Opposed to the amillennial interpretation, however, is the uniform revelation of the New Testament, which shows that Satan in the present age is a very active person. If anything, he is more active than in preceding ages and is continuing an unrelenting opposition to all that God purposes to do in the present age.

**...Satan...is continuing an unrelenting opposition to all that God purposes to do in the present age.**

In Luke 22:3, Satan is said to have entered "into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve" with the result that he went out to betray Christ. Satan is revealed to have attempted to dominate Simon Peter as recorded in the Lord's saying in Luke 22:31: "The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." It was only the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, not the binding of Satan, which prevented the defeat of Peter.

Throughout the rest of the New Testament similar references are found. In Acts 5:3 Ananias and Sapphira are said to be filled with Satan and motivated to lie to the Holy Spirit regarding the extent of their gift to the church. In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Paul records that Satan is active in blinding the minds of those who hear the gospel: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

In 2 Corinthians 11:14 Satan is declared to be transformed into an angel of light thereby deceiving the church through false teachers. The unsaved, according to Ephesians 2:2, live "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 that Satan had hindered his coming to them. More dramatically, in 2 Timothy 2:26, unsaved people are declared to be taken captive by the devil at his will and are rescued only by the grace of God. The capstone to this series of references to the activity of Satan is found in 1 Peter 5:8 which should settle the matter beyond dispute. In this passage Christians are told, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." This passage, instead of saying that Satan is bound and unable to deceive the nations, pictures him as a lion which has been loosed, walking about, roaring, seeking someone to devour. That Satan is hindered by the protective power of God is evident throughout the Scriptures as in the case of Job. There is no evidence whatever that Satan is bound

today, but rather the mounting evil in the world and in the church would seem to demonstrate that he is more active than ever. The nations of the world are being deceived today and saints are being opposed by the ceaseless activity and deceptive power of Satan.

Much has been made of the fact that these verses are found in a book largely given to symbolic presentation and visions. It is true that John is seeing a vision in these early verses of chapter 20. The passage reveals, however, something more than what he saw. John visually saw the angel bind Satan and cast him into the pit. John could not see visually how long Satan was to be in the pit nor could he see the purpose, namely, that the devil should deceive the nations no more and that he should be loosed again after the thousand years. This purpose had to be given to John by divine revelation which constituted an interpretation of the vision. If the record had given only what he saw without any indication as to the meaning of the passage, it might have lent itself to diverse interpretation. But with the vision recorded as it is, accompanied by the divine interpretation, expositors are not free to inject their own preconceived ideas but must accept the plain statements and interpretations of the passage as given.

It is most important to observe that while the thousand years are mentioned in verses 4 & 5 in the vision of John, they are also mentioned in verse 6 in the interpretation. The expositor is not free to spiritualize the interpretation of the vision but must accept the interpretation in its ordinary and literal meaning. If this is done, there is no other alternative than the premillennial interpretation which holds that at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound for a thousand years. This will constitute one of the major features of Christ's righteous rule upon the earth and in fact will make possible the peace and tranquility and absence of spiritual warfare predicted for the millennial kingdom. The period before Satan is bound, that is, the great tribulation, and the period at the close of the millennium, when Satan is again loosed, stand in sharp contrast to the tranquility of the thousand years in between. The fact is that the only period in all human history in which Satan will not execute his work of deception

will be the thousand years in which Christ will reign.

This passage also introduces, for the first time in Scripture, the exact length of the millennial kingdom of Christ. Six times in this passage the fact is stated that the period is a thousand years or a millennium...

**There is no good reason for taking the thousand years in other than their literal sense.**

...Much of the opposition to the futurist interpretation has been leveled at this concept of a literal thousand years. Barnes, more than a century ago, in commenting on the phrase "a thousand years," stated that it should be understood "either (a) literally; or (b) in the prophetic use of the term, where a day would stand for a year, thus making a period of three hundred and sixty thousand years; or (c) figuratively, supposing that it refers to a long but indefinite period of time." Barnes seems to prefer the interpretation that the millennium is 360,000 years in duration. He further holds that Revelation 20 should not be

taken literally, and interposes the words "as if" before the judgment and resurrection of 20:4 as well as with the binding of Satan. This would seem to be adding to the book, so strongly forbidden in 22:18. (Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, pp 260-61).

Baldinger, like many others, rejects completely the prophetic character of Revelation and dismisses the thousand-year reign of Christ in these words:

This mooted passage is, therefore, nothing more than a word of encouragement to those Christians who are facing martyrdom for refusing to bow before the image of the beast or burn incense to Caesar. ...a man who brings an unprejudiced mind to this passage will find not a scintilla of evidence for two resurrections... We believe it [the millennium] refers merely to a great period of time of unknown length, in which evil will be more and more restrained and the gospel increasingly triumphant (Albert H. Baldinger, *Sermons on Revelation*, pp. 240-41).

There is no good reason for taking the thousand years in other than their literal sense. ✪

*From The Revelation of Jesus Christ.*  
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## Is Satan Now Bound?

W.E. Dalling

The answer to this question must radically affect the believer's life and witness. It is no trivial matter, but one with far-reaching results. Whether or not a declared and powerful enemy is bound or free, determines whether one has to be on guard against him, or whether one may safely ignore him.

According to amillennialists the thousand years (Rev. 20:2-7) is to be taken neither as a literal period, nor as wholly future; but it is understood as a symbol of a period beginning at Calvary and ending at the Lord's second coming. In consequence of this view it is stated that Satan was cast out of Heaven (Rev. 12:9) and then bound (Rev. 20:2) at Calvary.

Millennialists understand the six-time repeated "thousand years" to be a literal measure of time, and not symbolic of either a shorter or a longer time.

One writer lodges an emphatic protest against these exegetes who find both literal and symbolic terms in Revelation 20:1-3. But his own exegesis demonstrates the weakness of this protest; for he, himself, finds both literal and symbolic terms in these verses. Thus in verse 2, "He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years," the protester takes "Devil" and "Satan" as literal and "thousand years" as symbolical. If he is justified in taking "Satan" as literal, how can he logically sustain his objection to the taking of "thousand years" as also literal? Indeed, according to his protest, the taking of "thousand years" as literal is more in keeping with the arbitrary axiom of interpretation that he lays down, than his own. He may reply that he knows that Satan is a literal person; and in answer I submit that years, even a "thousand years" can be just as literal. There is no inherent or compelling reason why this period must not be taken as meaning exactly what it says.

**There is no inherent or compelling reason why this period must not be taken as meaning exactly what it says.**

In order to prove millenarians wrong, sweeping statements have been made as if they take every passage literally and deny the use of symbols and metaphors in the Bible. But all who read the writings of millenarians in *Watching and Waiting* at once know the value of such sweeping statements. It is very evident that at least "key" and "chain" are symbols of "authority" on the one hand, and of "restraint" on the other.

One writer, an amillennial, shows the weakness of his case by the following statement:

"There have been those, like Dr. Seiss, who insist on taking a grossly literal view. The book bears on the very face of it, a warning against such treatment. It speaks, for example, of 'a woman sitting on seven mountains,' but no female ever had such sitting capacity! It speaks also of a wonder in heaven, a woman in birth-pangs, 'clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,' and goes on to speak of this same woman as having 'the two wings of a great eagle.' Do not the very terms of description warn us against taking these statements literally?"

Frankly, this is a passage unworthy of the writer. Dr. Seiss is accused of "taking a grossly literal view." The doctor cannot defend himself, but we can quote his words on this matter; words he uses when considering one of the symbolic passages referred to by the writer just quoted—that of Revelation 12. "This, the apostle tells us is a sign (Dr. Seiss gives the Greek word), a word which he here uses for the first time in the Apocalypse, and which serves to show that the apparition is not simply a 'wonder,' as our version has it, but a wonder intended to bring before us something beyond itself. I have repeatedly remarked, that when the Scriptures use figures or symbols, or speak in a way not intended to be taken literally,

like all serious writings they always give some intimation of it, in one way or another. The text is a case in point. What is described, is said to be a sign, a representation or picture of something else—a symbol. And the fact that we are here told that this is a sign, goes far to prove that the Apocalypse in general is to be taken literally, except where indication to the contrary is given. It would be quite superfluous to tell us that this thing is a sign, and that certain other things, except upon the assumption that whatever is not to be so labeled is to be taken just as it reads, a woman for a woman, a star for a star, a mountain for a mountain, and so on.”

As for the “mountains” in Revelation 17:9 Dr. Seiss writes, “These mountains, then, are royal or imperial powers.” In neither of the instances to which the amillennialist refers does Dr. Seiss exercise gross literalism. Did the writer who charged him with “a grossly literal view” read what Dr. Seiss wrote on Revelation 12 and 17? Let us hope not. For the charge of deliberately misrepresenting a writer’s view is, I judge, even worse than neglecting to give adequate attention to his views. Whichever is the explanation of the amillennialist’s charge, it gravely detracts from the reliability of his writings.

It has been necessary to meet this extravagant charge of gross literalism, for it has been put forward in an endeavor to persuade readers that all who take the “thousand years” in Revelation 20 are gross literalists who readily swallow such a preposterous idea as a woman with a sitting capacity to cover seven mountains! The setting up of an Aunt Sally for the pleasure of knocking her over, is the old dodge of those who find their opponents’ views too difficult to refute. But few who trouble to think will be thus deceived.

For those who believe in the true inspiration of God’s Word, an axiom to be observed in biblical exegesis is that no passage is to be explained in such a way as to make it conflict with any other. Our subject demands an examination of passages in the New Testament which refer to Satan’s condition and activities (if any) since Calvary, the reputed time of his binding. Considering these passages ob-

jectively and in an unbiased manner (for it is more important rightly to understand God’s Word than it is to maintain one’s own views) we must determine whether they describe one who at Calvary was (a) bound, (b) cast into the bottomless pit, (c) shut up, and (d) sealed that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled.

We read - Satan caused Ananias to lie (Acts 5:3); Satan had authority over the unregenerate (Acts 26:18); Satan was working in the church at Rome (Romans 16:20); Satan had power over the human body (I Cor. 5:5); Satan tempts (I Cor. 7:5); Satan can gain advantage over sinning believers; Satan exercises devices (II Cor. 2:11); Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14); Satan sent Paul a thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:7); Satan seeks to make believers yield to him (Eph. 4:27); The wiles of the devil are to be resisted (Eph. 6:11,12); Satan assaults believers (Eph. 6:16); Satan hindered Paul (I Thess. 2:18); Satan will energize the wicked one (II Thess. 2:9); Paul delivered two persons to Satan for discipline (I Tim. 1:20); Satan sets snares (I Tim. 3:7); Satan is to be resisted (James 4:7); Satan as a lion seeks his prey; he is to be resisted (I Pet. 5:8,9); Satan had a synagogue (Rev. 2:9); the devil caused persecution (Rev. 2:10); Satan had a throne on earth (Rev. 2:13); woe to humanity, because Satan cast into the earth comes with great wrath (Rev. 12:12).

...it is more important rightly to understand God’s Word than it is to maintain one’s own views.

These passages clearly show the activities of Satan between Pentecost and Christ’s second coming. In them we see Satan’s activity over the unregenerate and the regenerate. He deceives, ensnares, attacks, tempts, hinders, persecutes and destroys. Is this a description of one who at Calvary was (a) bound, (b) cast into the bottomless pit, (c) shut up, (d) sealed that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled? If so, then language has no meaning.

It is evident that this exponent of amillennialism finds some difficulty in reconciling this testimony of Scripture, as to the devil’s present activities, with his view that he has been bound, imprisoned, shut up, and sealed since Calvary. He says “the binding of Satan, therefore, does not mean the complete ces-

It is evident that this exponent of amillennialism finds some difficulty in reconciling this testimony of Scripture, as to the devil’s present activities, with his view that he has been bound, imprisoned, shut up, and sealed since Calvary. He says “the binding of Satan, therefore, does not mean the complete ces-

sation of his activities. His case is like that of Al Capone, the captured gangster, of whom it was said that he ruled Chicago from Chicago jail." But Revelation 20:1-3 knows nothing of Satanic influence going forth during the thousand years, nor does it know anything of Satanic activities in operation through ready and obedient messengers. We are distinctly told in Revelation 20:3 "he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." This is unambiguous language, and leaves no room for the amillennialist's conception of Satan in captivity ruling the world. Let us accept the inspired Word rather than human theories.

Appeal has been made to Luke 10:18, the words of our Lord, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." It is stated that Satan's fall to earth actually then took place. But the fall of Satan and his angels from Heaven to earth is prophesied in Revelation 12:7-12, and John stated (Rev. 1:1) that he was writing about future events. More, if Satan was cast down to the earth when our Lord made His declaration (Luke 10:18) and so, according to the theory advanced, this passage Revelation 12:7-12 began to be fulfilled, when did the increased Satanic activity depicted here take place? Note all the intense activity stated in these verses. According to the amillennial theory all this activity must have taken place between our Lord's statement of Luke 10:18 and Calvary, for the theory demands that at Calvary Satan was bound, imprisoned, shut up and sealed. If this is denied we are driven to the preposterous alternative that this activity is taking place while Satan is bound, imprisoned, shut up and sealed.

In II Peter 2:4 we read God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. Among the angels that sinned was Satan, and he is here described as cast down and delivered into chains. Yet the same Peter says, Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8). So it is perfectly clear that a fall and an incarceration of Satan may be quite consistent with his continuing restless activity among men. The statement that Satan

was cast down to Tartarus (Hell) is unadulterated imagination. The passage does not make such declaration. Indeed, in view of Peter's further reference to the activity of Satan, who as a roaring lion walketh about, such an assumption is utterly inconsistent.

But let us, for a moment, accept this hypothesis that Satan was included in the phrase "the angels that sinned." When were the angels cast into Tartarus?

Was it when our Lord made His statement of Luke 10:18? Was it at Calvary? The passage suggests the answer. The reading of II Peter 2:4-7 shows that Peter's statements have a chronological sequence. The angels that sinned; Noah and the flood; the destruction of the cities of the plain, and the deliverance of Lot. This is a chronological list of divine acts. Were not the sinning angels cast down to Tartarus at the time of their rebellion? At least it is put in order as having happened before the flood. But Satan

had sinned before the creation of man; was that when the angels were imprisoned? Was he in Tartarus when he tempted man in Eden? Was he in Tartarus when gross sin brought divine judgment on Sodom? Is he spoken of as in Tartarus throughout the references to him in the Old Testament? Was he in Tartarus during the life of Job? Such questions show the emptiness of the claim that Satan was numbered amongst the angels that were imprisoned in Tartarus. And rejecting this view lays upon us no hopeless task of having to reconcile Satan's imprisonment in Tartarus with his walking about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; amillennialists face that problem.

A summary of the views that have led to the preposterous idea that Satan has been bound since Calvary will be helpful. They are:

- 1) That the casting of Satan out of Heaven was an historical event that took place during our Lord's ministry.
- 2) That "thousand years" must be taken symbolically.
- 3) A failure to differentiate between believer's appropriation, by faith, of Christ's victory over Satan, and the future binding of Satan, resulting in the wrong exegesis of Luke 10:18 and Matthew 12:28-29.

**Let us accept  
the inspired  
Word rather  
than human  
theories.**

## The Removal of Satan

John MacArthur, Jr.



Revelation 20:1-3. The first matter for the King's attention as He sets up His kingdom is the confinement of the chief rebel. The removal of "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), "the prince of the power of the air...the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2), will dramatically change the world. By this time, God will have destroyed all human rebels. Those who survived the Tribulation judgment will have been executed at Armageddon (19:11-21) or the goat judgment (Matt. 25:41-46). The ringleaders of the worldwide rebellion, the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet, will have been thrown into the lake of fire (19:20). The final step in preparation for the kingdom will be the removal of Satan and his demon hosts, so that Christ reigns without the opposition of supernatural enemies.

As it frequently does in Revelation (cf. Vv. 4, 11; 6:1, 2, 5, 8, 12; 7:2; 8:2, 13; 9:1; 10:1; 13:1, 11; 14:1, 6, 14; 15:1; 16:13; 17:3; 19:11, 17, 19; 21:1), the phrase *kai eidon* (**And I saw**) indicates chronological progression. The location of this passage in the chronological flow of Revelation is consistent with a premillennial view of the kingdom. After the Tribulation (chaps. 6-19) Christ will return (19:11-21) and set up His kingdom (20:1-10), which will be followed by the new heavens and the new earth (21:1). Thus the millennial kingdom comes after Christ's second coming but before the establishing of the new heavens and the new earth. Amillennialist Anthony Hoekema has to acknowledge that, taken at face value, the chronology of Revelation supports premillennialism. He writes:

Let us assume, for example, that the book of Revelation is to be interpreted in an exclusively futuristic sense...Let us further assume that what is presented in Revelation 20 must necessarily fol-

low, in chronological order, what was described in chapter 19. We are then virtually compelled to believe that the thousand-year reign depicted in 20:4 must come after the return of Christ described in 19:11. ("Amillennialism," in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Clouse 156)

The passage clearly teaches that Christ's return precedes the millennial kingdom—a scenario incompatible with postmillennialism and amillennialism, but exactly what premillennialism teaches. To get around the difficulty the chronology of Revelation poses for their views, postmillennialists and amillennialists must deny that chapter 20 follows chapter 19 chronologically. But such a denial ignores the chronological significance of the phrase *kai eidon*, as noted above. It also ignores the continuity of the context: having dealt with Antichrist and the false prophet in chapter 19, Christ deals with their evil master, Satan, in chapter 20. Why reject such an obvious chronology? It is apparently done for no other reason than to eliminate premillennialism, not because there is any justification in Scripture.

The identity of the **angel** whom John saw **coming down from heaven** to bind Satan is not disclosed, but he may be Michael the archangel, the great adversary of Satan (12:7; cf. Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9). Whoever the angel is, he possesses great power. He is sent to earth with a specific agenda: to seize Satan for the thousand-year duration of the kingdom, bind him, cast him into the abyss and seal it, and then release him at the end of the thousand years.

*Abussos* (**abyss**) appears seven times in Revelation (cf. 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8), always in reference to the temporary place of incarceration for certain demons. The abyss is not their final place of punishment; the lake of fire is (Matt. 25:41). Nevertheless it is a place of torment to which the demons fear to be sent (Luke 8:31). The prisoners in the abyss are among the most vile and evil of all demons and include the "spirits

John F. MacArthur pastors in Sun Valley, California, and is also an author, conference speaker, and president of The Master's College and Seminary

now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah" (1 Pet. 3:19-20). Those demons, who attempted to corrupt the human race by cohabiting with human women (Gen. 6:1-4), will never be released (Jude 6). They will be transferred directly from their temporary incarceration in the **abyss** to their permanent place of punishment, the lake of fire (cf. Isa. 24:21-22). Other demons sentenced to the **abyss** will be released at the fifth trumpet judgment to torment sinners (9:1-12). (For further information on the abyss, see *Revelation 1-11*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago:Moody, 1999], 257-58).

The **key** given to the angel by God signifies his delegated authority (cf. 9:1); he has the power to open the **abyss**, and then to shut it after casting Satan inside. The metaphor of binding demons with a chain also appears in Jude 6. This **chain** is a **great** one, because of Satan's greatness and power as the highest created being (cf. Ezek. 28:14). The **angel laid hold of Satan**, who is unmistakably identified by the same four titles given him in 12:9. First, he is called **the dragon**, a title given him twelve times in Revelation (cf. 12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:1, 2, 4; 16:13). It emphasizes his bestial nature, ferociousness, and oppressive cruelty. The title **serpent of old** harkens back to the Garden of Eden and Satan's temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1-6; 2 Cor. 11:3). *Diabolos* (**devil**) means "slanderer," or "malicious gossip" (1 Tim 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Titus 2:3)—an appropriate title for the "accuser of our brethren" (12:10). Satan is a malignant liar; in fact, he is "the father of lies" (John 8:44). *Satanas* (**Satan**) and its Hebrew root *satan* are used fifty-three times in Scripture. Both words mean "adversary," since Satan opposes God, Christ, and all believers.

The length of the period for which Satan will be **bound** is defined as a **thousand years**, the first of six precise and important references to the duration of the Millennium (cf. vv. 3-7). Satan's binding poses a serious difficulty for both postmillennialist and amillennialists. Amillennialists argue that Satan is already **bound**, since, as noted above, they believe we are in the Millennium now (though they do

not view it as one thousand literal years in length). Many postmillennialists also believe that Satan is presently **bound**, because otherwise it is difficult to see how the church could usher in the Millennium. Yet the biblical description of Satan's activity in this present age makes it impossible to believe he has already been **bound**. Satan plants lying hypocrites in the church (Acts 5:3), schemes against believers (2 Cor. 2:11); Eph. 6:11), disguises himself as an angel of light to deceive people (2 Cor. 11:14), attacks believers (2 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:27) and must be resisted (James 4:7), hinders those in the ministry (1 Thess. 2:18), and leads believers astray (1 Tim. 5:15). Amillennialists and postmillennialists generally argue that Satan was bound at the Cross, and that his binding simply means that he can no longer deceive the nations and keep them from learning God's truth (e.g., Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 228).

But Satan did not keep the Gentile nations from the knowledge of the truth before his alleged binding at the Cross. The Egyptians heard about the true God from Joseph, and from the Israelites during the four hundred years they lived in Egypt. The Assyrians of Nineveh not only heard the truth from Jonah, but also repented (Matt. 12:41). The Queen of Sheba heard about the true God from Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-9); the Babylonians from Daniel and his Jewish friends; and the Persians from Esther, Mordecai, and Nehemiah. Further, in what sense is Satan restrained from deceiving the nations in the present age, since he blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4), "is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2), and holds unbelievers captive (2 Tim. 2:26) in his kingdom (Col. 1:13)?

The testimony of Scripture is that Satan is anything but bound in this present age, but will be during the coming earthly kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only then that he will be incarcerated in **the abyss**, which will be **shut...and sealed...so that he cannot deceive the nations any longer**. His activity in the world will not be merely restricted or restrained, but totally curtailed; he will not be permitted to influence the world in any way. As will be explained later, that does not mean that the living people in the Millennium will be incapable of sin-

**The testimony of Scripture is that Satan is anything but bound in this present age...**

ning. Amazingly, a vast part of the population, born of the believers who alone entered the kingdom, will in that perfect environment love their sin and reject the King. They will be judged with a rod of iron (2:27; 12:5; Ps. 2:9), and those who engage in open rebellion under Satan's leadership when **the thousand years are completed** and Satan **must be released for a short time** will be utterly destroyed. ✪

From *The MacArthur NT Commentary*, Revelation 12-22.

(See continued from page 5)

restrained from deceiving the nations. Since there has never been, in the history of nations upon this earth, a time when nations were not deceived, I must view this binding of Satan as yet future. I cannot accept the notion that Satan is now bound, as he will be bound in our text in Revelation 20, because the nations are still being deceived. All one has to do to see this is to look at the condition and state of the nations of the world. And it does not really matter how you interpret the word "nations," and I am aware that there are many interpretations; the nations are still being deceived. And again, I would raise these questions: 1. Has there ever been a time in the history of the nations, when the nations of this world were not being deceived? 2. If there has been such a time, when was this time? 3. If the nations are not being deceived today by Satan, then by whom are they being deceived?

We must never lose sight of who is our adversary. Peter instructed the saints to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking who he may devour," I Peter 5:8. Satan would actually like for all of us to believe that he does not exist. And some in the world have fallen for this snare of the devil. Many believe that Satan is simply a myth. But there still remains some who believe in the reality of the devil. The devil's "plan B" for those who still believe in the reality of the devil seems to be to get them to believe that, even though he is real, he is no longer active; that he is already bound. But Peter's words ring loud and long to our generation; "Be sober, be vigilant, your adversary the devil walketh about...." These words do not sound as if Peter believed, or taught, that the devil was already bound. It seems as if Peter believed that Satan was loose and very active. The Apostle went on say in verse 9 that we are to resist our adversary the devil. The idea of resisting one who is already bound is foreign

**If the nations are not being deceived today by Satan, then by whom are they being deceived?**

to me. If Satan is now bound, as he will be bound according to Revelation 20, why is there a need to resist him? For if he is truly bound, shut up in his prison, with a seal placed upon him, what possible danger could he pose for the saints of God? The words of James, recorded in James 4:7, echo those of Peter regarding the necessity of the saints resisting the devil. James wrote; "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This statement of James raises at least three questions in my mind. First, as we have already stated, if the devil is already bound, where is the need to resist him? Secondly, if the devil is already bound, how is it possible for him to flee? Thirdly, if the devil has the freedom and mobility to "walk about," going "to and fro in the earth," and to even to "flee," how could he possibly be already bound and shut up in his prison?

Revelation 20, I suppose, will remain a passage of Scripture with which some will wrestle. But the Scriptures seem to be very clear and plain when dealing with this matter. The devil will be bound for a period of time called "the thousand years." This binding of Satan, which is yet future, is both real and certain. This binding will be real and literal enough, and so confining, that the devil will not be able to deceive the nations "till the thousand years should be fulfilled." It will be only after the devil has served this sentence of "a thousand years" in "his prison," that he will be loosed for "a little season." During this "little season" he will once again "go out to deceive the nations." There is no reason at all for us to believe that this binding of Satan has already taken place. As long as the nations are being deceived, Satan is not bound! But when nations are "no more" deceived by the devil, then we can be certain that the binding of Satan has taken place. ✪

## The Removal of Satan

Lehman Strauss



Revelation 20:1-3. In these verses we have God's final answer to the puny excuses of men as to the cause of evil in the world. One sociologist insists that environment is the cause of man's moral ills. Another blames evil on our educational system. For these and other reasons men have concentrated their efforts on improving these areas of life. But changing a man's environment does not change the man. In fact, while environmental change has characterized recent generations, the world has been growing increasingly worse just as the Word of God predicts (2 Timothy 3:1-7, 13).

From the very beginning of man's history the existence of a personal enemy of God and man is in evidence. That enemy is referred to first as "The serpent" (Genesis 3:1), and finally as "the great dragon...called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). Between Genesis and Revelation there are repeated references to his nature and nefarious practices. Jesus said that he is a "murderer" and a "liar" (John 8:44). The name "devil" means a slanderer, a malignant liar. This foe of God and man is the great power behind the whole antichristian system. He it is who controls the beast, the false prophet, and the harlot, and by whose instigation wars are undertaken.

In order that righteousness and peace might rule on earth, this evil one must be removed. But what man has been unable to do, and never can do, God does. At the close of the Great Tribulation, and just before Christ appears on the earth to bring in His kingdom, which is characterized by spiritual, moral, and physical perfection, God sends an angel from Heaven to bind Satan.

Who this angel is we are not told. Some teachers believe He is Christ Himself. Others are satisfied that he is a created angel. He could be the Lord Jesus Christ, for He has appeared at other times in the character of the Angel of Jehovah, and He does have "the keys of hell and of death" (1:19). But the point

is of no importance either way. Whether the angel is Michael (see 12:7), or another created being, or Christ, the fact is that he does his job well.

He comes with a "great chain in his hand" with which he binds Satan for one thousand years. This may or may not be a literal chain, as we know a chain, but whatever its nature, it is a literal chain of God's making, capable of binding a spirit. It is called "a great chain" since it is to bind "the great dragon" (12:9). With similar chains evil angels are kept bound even now awaiting the day of judgment (Jude 6). Satan and his demons can break the chains and fetters that men may fashion (Mark 5:1-5), but the "great chain" of God's making not even Satan himself can resist or shake off. It is adequate for the purpose of binding him a helpless prisoner.

The place where Satan is incarcerated during the millennium is called in the Authorized Version "the bottomless pit." It is a noun denoting the abyss, the immeasurable depth of the underworld, the lower regions, the intermediate abode of evil demons which are doomed forever. This word appears seven times in the Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3). The bottomless pit, or abyss, is not the lake of fire which is the final hell. It is a sort of prison-house in which evil spirits are confined, awaiting final judgment. These have no share in Christ's redemption.

That old serpent, the devil, who has been responsible for the evil in the world, will be imprisoned then during the millennium. The object of his imprisonment is not to render his due punishment, but rather to remove him from the earth and thereby restrain his evil machinations. So long as he is at liberty to act he will not rest from deluding men with lies, and seeking

(Strauss: continued on page 16)

Lehman Strauss (1911-1997) was a well known pastor, Bible teacher and writer in the USA. He was the teacher on the national weekly broadcast, "Bible Study Time."

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### Theme of next issue: Old Testament Prophecies of The Millennium

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*(Strauss: continued from page 15)*

their destruction. And let each one of us be reminded that Satan is not bound now. He would have us believe that he is, but the Word of God says, "Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

The duration of Satan's imprisonment in the abyss is said to be "a thousand years" (20:2). This covers the entire period of the millennium. This period when Satan is cast into the abyss, and the abyss closed, locked, and sealed, is prophesied in the Old Testa-

ment. Isaiah wrote, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited" (Isaiah 24:21-22). We may be certain that this prophecy is yet future by reading verse 23, for that verse describes the golden age that follows immediately after the shutting up in prison of the hosts of the high ones on high. These hosts are none other than the devil and his demons. ✪

*From The Book of the Revelation, pg 331-33.*

*(Dalling: continued from page 11)*

4) The assumption that Satan was one of the angels imprisoned in Tartarus.

When we accept the clear statements of Scripture concerning the future restraint that will be put upon Satan for the period of the Millennium, we find no conflict with Scripture. Hence there is no problem as to how a bound, imprisoned, shut up and sealed Satan can actively corrupt man, mislead the nations, and persecute the church.

It is clear that action predicted of Satan in Holy Writ makes it impossible logically to declare that he has been bound since Calvary.

A right appreciation of Satanic activity will not lull us into a sense of false security, but we shall pay necessary heed to the divine injunctions; we shall learn to recognize Satanic devices, wrestle against spiritual wickedness, and resist Satan in the Victorious Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. ✪

*From Watching and Waiting July/September, 1992 pp. 39-43.*



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Old Testament Prophecies of the Millennium

VOLUME III ISSUE I

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### Inside This Edition

- The Old Testament Prophecies of the Millennium, *Dean Robinson*..... p. 3
- The Coming & Reign of Christ, *David N. Lord*..... p. 6
- On the Literality of Prophecy, *C.H. Spurgeon*..... p.10
- The Nature of the Reign, *G.E. Jones*..... p.12
- The Fifth Kingdom From Heaven, *John F. Wolvaard*..... p.14

### Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith

**We**, the undersigned, banded together in Fraternal Union, observing with growing pain and sorrow the loosening hold of many upon the Truths of Revelation, are constrained to avow our firmest belief in the Verbal Inspiration of all Holy Scripture as originally given. To us, the Bible does not merely *contain* the Word of God, but *is* the Word of God. From beginning to end, we accept it, believe it, and continue to preach it. To us, the Old Testament is no less inspired than the New. The Book is an organic whole. Reverence for the NEW Testament accompanied by scepticism as to the OLD appears to us absurd. The two must stand or fall together. We accept Christ's own verdict concerning "Moses and all the prophets" in preference to any of the supposed discoveries of so-called higher criticism.

We hold and maintain the truths generally known as "the doctrines of grace." The Electing Love of God the Father, the Propitiatory and Substitutionary Sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, the Justification of the sinner (once for all) by faith, his walk in newness of life and growth in grace by the active indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the Priestly Intercession of our Lord Jesus, as also the hopeless perdition of all who reject the Savior, according to the words of the Lord in Matthew 25:46, "These shall go away into eternal punishment,"—are, in our judgment, revealed and fundamental truths.

Our hope is the Personal Pre-millennial Return of the Lord Jesus in glory.

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From *Sword & Trowel*, pg.85 August 1891

### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks very much to all the many readers of the Premillennial Baptist Journal for your response to our recent appeal for financial support. A number of individuals and churches have sent checks for generous amounts. Some churches who had pledged to send monthly support have now begun doing so. We urge all our readers to consider sending regular support for the continuation of this work of spreading the premillennial truth of God's Word. I am grateful for the wonderful promise of God in Isaiah 55:11, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void but it shall accomplish that which I please..."

### Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism



## Old Testament Prophecies of the Millennium

Dean Robinson

It has been said that the only place where man can find peace in our world today is in the dictionary. From time immemorial man has looked for and longed after peace. He has joined peace movements, marched for peace, given awards for peace, and has even gone to war for peace. Even though people long for it, pray for it, fight and die for it, the golden age of peace and tranquility never seems to come. Some day, however, that will all change. There is coming a period of time when there will be perfect peace brought in by the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, when He sits upon His throne to rule and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. This period of time that is taught in the Scriptures and made reference to by many of its writers is what we call the millennium. The millennium will be the time when Christ will return to this earth to establish His earthly kingdom and set up His throne in the city of Jerusalem. We are assured from Scripture that the duration of this earthly kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ will be for a literal one thousand years. This will be a time of unprecedented peace as never seen or experienced by man upon this earth.

If the importance of a doctrine is to be judged by the place assigned to it and the emphasis given to it in the Holy Scriptures, then certainly the millennium is one of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith. This prominence is especially noticeable in the writings by the prophets of the Old Testament. There are multiple places in the Old Testament that prophesy and make direct, specific reference to this millennial kingdom on earth. The Old Testament prophets have provided descriptive pictures and explanations of this millennial kingdom that give us a better understanding and appreciation for this important truth which has been the abiding hope and expectation of God's people over the centuries of time.

### Old Testament Prophecy and Israel

According to the teaching of the Old Testament, the millennium will have a particularly special reference to the Jewish nation. In the millennium the Jewish people will return from among the nations of the

world where they have been scattered and they will be permanently established in their land of promise. "Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God." (Ez. 28:25-26) Here we see that the millennium will be that time of the fulfillment of Israel's national covenant blessings, during which time God will make a divine display of the absolute authority of divine government through the rule of the Messiah.

The regathering of historic Israel is one of the major themes of prophetic scripture, beginning in the writings of Moses and reaching its climax in the minor prophets. The following passages are just a small example of the Old Testament prophecies pointing towards the day of the regathering of Israel – Deut. 30:1-5; Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 12:15; 31:10; 32:37; Ez. 20:34,42; 36:24; 37:21-28; Amos 9:14-15; Zeph. 3:20. The same inspired Word of God which correctly predicted that the nation of Israel would be scattered throughout the world has also prophesied that the nation of Israel shall again be assembled. While there is no historical uncertainty about their dispersion being literal, neither should there be any question about their regathering being literal and certain as well.

There are numerous passages in the Old Testament which speak of a great spiritual change that is yet to

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be wrought in the nation of Israel during the millennial kingdom. The regathering of Israel and restoration to their own land will be accompanied with a great spiritual revival among the Jewish people which Deuteronomy 30:6 describes as God circumcising their hearts so that they will love the Jehovah God with all their heart and soul. Jeremiah 24:7 talks about them returning to God "with their whole heart." Jeremiah 31:33 says God will put His law in their hearts and that He "will be their God, and they shall be my people." In the millennium God's chosen people will acknowledge their salvation in the Lord (Joel 2:32), they will recognize His mercy and tender compassion (Micah 7:18-19), and they will look upon their Messiah (Zech. 12:10) and call upon His holy name (Zech. 13:9). "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (Isa. 25:9)

According to dozens of prophetic passages, the city of Jerusalem will become the center of worship during the millennium (Isa. 2:3; Micah 4:2; Zech. 14:16). Jerusalem will be made the religious center of the world where it will be called "the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isa. 1:26). The nations of the world that once despised Jerusalem will one day call her "the city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 60:14) and her walls will be called "Salvation" and her gates "Praise." (Isa. 60:18) This very city is to be "a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD" (Isa. 62:3) and according to Zechariah 8:3, the covenant God of Israel will be present in the person of the Messiah and King and "Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth." All religious activity will be centered in one city and under one King during the millennium (Jer. 3:17; 31:6; Joel 3:17; Zech. 2:10-11; 8:8, 20-23). The city of Jerusalem will once again be a place of great glory, "the city of our God...the joy of the whole earth...the city of the great King" (Ps. 48:1-2).

#### **Characteristics of the Millennium According to Old Testament Prophecies**

Many prophets in the Old Testament wrote about the many and various characteristics of the millennium. This helps us to have a better understanding

of the nature of the millennium and what will prevail during this period of time.

According to Jeremiah 23:5 the government during the millennium will be a theocracy where Jesus Christ Himself is King and He "shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Christ will be God's King and He will be established upon His "holy hill of Zion" (Ps. 2:6). The God of heaven will establish His kingdom (Dan. 2:44) and it will be a universal kingdom where Jesus Christ will personally and visibly reign over all the affairs of mankind (Dan. 7:14, 27; Zech. 9:10) There will be no part of the earth that will not be under the reign and authority of the King. There will be a wide-spread submission to the authority of Christ. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations." (Ps. 22:27-28) All functions of government will be placed upon His shoulder (Isa. 9:6-7) and He shall reign with perfect righteousness and complete justice for all (Ps. 45:6; 67:4; 89:14; 96:10; 97:2; 98:9; Isa. 11:4; 32:1; Zeph. 3:15). Righteousness will be the "girdle of his loins" (Isa. 11:5). The millennium will be that period of time when "the LORD shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9) and "all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (Ps. 72:11).

**Worldwide  
peace will be  
the fruit of the  
Messiah's reign  
during the  
millennium.**

Jesus Christ is coming again to sit upon the throne of David, to rule and reign over the house of Israel and over the whole earth and when He does, He will usher in an era of perfect and universal peace. When the Messiah sits upon the throne of David, Isaiah 9:7 tells us "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." There are prophecies which describe a scene when the whole earth will be at peace (Isa. 14:7; 32:17-18; 54:13-14). There are other prophecies which talk about how all military warfare will be abolished during the millennium (Ps. 46:9; Hosea 2:18; Zech. 9:10) and how instruments of warfare will be turned into implements of farming (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3). Worldwide peace will be the fruit of the Messiah's reign during the millennium.

The millennium will not only be a time character-

ized by peace, but it will also be a prosperous time. It would appear that during the millennium the curse which has so long rested upon the earth will be lifted, making it once again a fruitful place. What was once a desolate wilderness will become useful and increasingly productive (Isa. 35:1-2, 6-7; 41:18; 51:3). The waste places will become fruitful with the promise of abundant rainfall necessary for the production of abundant crops (Ez. 34:26; Joel 2:21-26; Zech. 10:1). Mountain sides will be covered with vineyards, pasture lands will be rich and productive, and harvests will be great and plentiful (Isa. 55:13; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13-14). This will be a special time of the "showers of blessing" of the Lord (Ez. 34:26).

**The millennium will be a period of holiness when Christ will reign over the nations of the earth from His throne of holiness.**

There are many other aspects of the millennium to consider that are prophesied in the Old Testament that help to describe the nature of this time period. For example, there seems to be a drastic change in the animal world (Hosea 2:18). In his prophecy, Isaiah pictures a beautiful harmony in nature, not only between man and the animals, but also between the various animals themselves (Isa. 11:6-8; 65:25). It would appear that human life will be prolonged (Isa. 33:24; 65:20; Zech. 8:4). From the standpoint of this being a time period of renewed spirituality throughout the world, we are told that the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 11:9). The world will unite in its worship of God and His Messiah (Ps. 72:15, 17; Isa. 45:23; Dan. 7:14). God's presence will be fully recognized and fellowship with Him will be experienced (Zech. 2:11). The millennium will be a period of holiness (Isa. 4:3; Joel 3:17) when Christ will reign over the nations of the earth from His throne of holiness (Ps. 47:8). The Messiah, being a God of truth and righteousness (Zech. 8:8), will bring forth all judgment unto truth (Isa. 42:3) and He will reveal an abundance of peace and truth (Jer. 33:6) while He sits upon His throne in truth (Isa. 16:5). The fullness of joy will be evident during this time period (Isa. 12:3-4; 25:9; 35:10; 52:9; 61:3, 7) and unrestrained glory of the Lord will permeate the earth (Ps. 72:19; Isa. 24:23; 40:5).

### Conclusion

The one thousand years during which Christ is to

rule the world is known as the millennium. This will be earth's "golden age" when all of God's promises concerning His future earthly kingdom will be fulfilled. Christ will reign over the earth with perfect peace and absolute righteousness. This will be a time when Christ will put down the forces of evil, when Satan will no longer have power and control over the kingdoms of this world, and when the Lord of glory will set up His own triumphant rule over the earth. When Christ comes to establish His own righteous rule, it will be a reign of flawless justice and equity. It will be a glorious experience for all of the people of God when "a king shall reign in righteousness" (Isa. 32:1).

The millennium has been a Bible doctrine precious to the hopes and aspirations of God's people down through the centuries of time. It is that longed-for time period when God's peace and righteousness will be made manifest on a universal scale. Man has tried many times over to bring about this age of widespread, worldwide peace but always to no avail. Man has tried, through the conquest of war, to establish peace by force but has failed miserably. Man has tried socialism, marxism, communism and humanism to set up a new world order but there is still no peace. Man has tried through worldwide political bodies, such as the United Nations, to bring in peace but this organization along with others has consistently failed. Man has tried international religious groups such as the World Council of Churches to establish peace for all the world but this, too, has been unsuccessful. Man has an unbroken chain of dismal failures and he will continue to fail to bring in an utopian age of perfect bliss be-

*(Robinson: continued on page 15)*

**Jesus shall reign where're the sun  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.**

## The Coming and Reign of Christ

David N. Lord



Where now lies the reason of the deduction by these parties from the Scriptures, of these different views of the divine purposes? Such diverse and opposite constructions of the same revelations would plainly be impossible, were the rules of interpretation on which they proceed the same. The same laws applied to the same revelations could not yield results so utterly dissimilar. Their belief, accordingly, that the views they severally entertain, are taught in the Scriptures, is the result of a difference in the principles on which they make their expositions. Their modes of interpretation are as unlike as the views are in which they terminate.

Thus, the anti-millenarian obtains his system by disregarding the established laws of language and of symbols, and ascribing to the predictions a wholly imaginary and arbitrary signification by a process called spiritualization. He has no specific and unequivocal proofs of any one of the elements of his peculiar system of views. He rejects that which is directly taught, and substitutes in its place, as a sort of parallelism to it, an artificial scheme which his fancy has wrought.

The Millenarian, on the contrary, obtains his views by interpreting the language and symbols through which the divine purposes are revealed, by their legitimate and established laws, and has the direct and express authority of the sacred word for every point that he maintains. He takes that which the prophecies mean, interpreted according to the established laws of language, and the principles on which symbols are used, as expressing the purposes they are employed to foreshow. This statement we may verify by a multitude of exemplifications.

**FIRST.** The Anti-millenarians do not allege any positive and explicit proof from the Scriptures of any of

the great elements of their system. 1. Thus, they do not allege any passage that directly teaches that Christ is not to come until after the Millennium has passed. There is no such passage in the sacred volume. 2. They do not allege any direct statement that the holy dead are not to be raised from the grave, till after the close of the Millennium. There is no such representation in the word of God. 3. They do not produce any direct testimony from the prophecies that Christ is not to reign in person on the earth during the thousand years. No trace of such an intimation exists on the sacred page. 4. They have no proofs of their doctrine that the risen saints are not to reign with Christ in person during that period. 5. They have no direct testimonies to sustain their doctrine that the nations are to be converted before Christ's second coming. No hint to that effect is found in any of the prophets. 6. They have no direct proofs of their doctrine that the Israelites are never to be restored to their ancient land, and reorganized as a nation. 7. They have no express proof that the race is to complete its numbers, and the work of redemption cease, at Christ's second coming. 8. Nor is there any express revelation, that the earth is then to be annihilated by a conflagration. Of these great elements of their system, they have not a particle of direct and explicit proof. They are all the work of mere assumption, inference, or fancy.

**SECONDLY.** Instead of relying on the direct testimony of the word of God to support their system, they deliberately and systematically set it aside, that they may substitute in its place what they regard as a parallel or analogous set of truths. The principle on which they proceed is, that the literal is a mere vehicle of the spiritual; that predictions therefore of Christ's coming in person at the period of the overthrow of the powers denoted by the fourth beast, Daniel 7:13-14, are mere predictions of his spiritual coming; predictions that he is then to raise the holy dead, are only predictions that he will impart spiritual life to the penitent living; the revelation that he is then to reign in person and glory on the earth, is

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only a revelation that he is to reign by influences, providences, and a moral administration, as he now rules the world; promises that the Israelites are then to be restored to their land, converted, and distinguished by favors, as God's chosen people, are only promises of the conversion of the Gentiles; and so of other prophecies. The specific events that are foreshown, the blessings that are expressly promised, are rejected as mere representatives of a totally different class of events and gifts which they fancy are parallels or counterparts of those which the language and other media of the revelations directly denote. It will be enough to exemplify this system by a single specimen.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say: Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2:2-4.

This according to the grammatical meaning of the language, is an explicit prediction that in the last days, the mountain on which Jehovah's temple stands is to be established above the neighboring mountains; that all nations shall go to it for instruction respecting his will, because his word is there to be promulgated; that he shall judge and rebuke many people, and that they shall universally discontinue their wars on each other, and convert their weapons into implements of agriculture. It is a specific and clear prediction therefore, that in the last days Jehovah is to have a temple on mount Zion at Jerusalem; that he is there to make known his will; that all nations are to go there for instruction; and that they are thereafter forever to live in peace with each other. It implies accordingly the restoration and conversion of the Israel-

...in the last days Jehovah is to have a temple on mount Zion at Jerusalem; that he is there to make known his will...

ites. It is indeed defined by the prophet as a "word that Isaiah saw concerning Jerusalem and Judah," and it closes with a direct appeal to "the house of Jacob to come and walk in the light of Jehovah." vs. 5. Now those parts of this prophecy which are at war with their theory of God's purposes, Antimillenarians reject, and maintain that they are mere vehicles of a wholly different sense, or representatives of a wholly different class of objects and occurrences. Thus they assume that the Lord's house, instead of a temple, denotes the Christian church, without any reference to the Israelites; that the flowing of all nations to his house signifies their entering the church; that the desire of many people to receive instruction there, means that they are to desire instruction in the church; and that the going forth of the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem, is simply the proclamation of the gospel in the church. Now—

In the first place, This construction is wholly arbitrary. There is no mention of the Christian church in the passage. There is no object or word in it that stands for the church. Jehovah's temple on the top of the mountain, is not the name of the church, any more than a temple on any other site is. The fancy is altogether groundless and absurd.

In the next place, There is no principle or law of language by which the passage can have such a meaning. They do not indeed affect to found their construction on the *language* of the prediction; but on the things which it denotes; and especially the Lord's house, Zion, and Jerusalem. But there is no law by which in the connexion in which they stand, they can denote the church. They cannot by virtue of any thing that is affirmed of them in the passage; for the imputed meaning is not derived from the language, but from the things named by the nouns house, Zion and Jerusalem. But Jehovah's temple, mount Zion, and Jerusalem, do not stand for the church. They are not any where in the sacred volume declared to stand for it. And they are not used in the prediction as representatives of it. Places and material objects are never used by a figure as representatives of something differing from themselves, except it be by the allegory. But this prediction is

not allegorical. It is not claimed to be such by those who treat it as representative; and it cannot be, because there is no analogy between Jehovah's temple, mount Zion, and Jerusalem, and the Christian church. The temple is a structure in which worship is to be offered to Jehovah; Zion is the mountain or hill on or near which that temple is to stand; and Jerusalem is the city which is to surround that mount. What can be more incongruous, therefore, than to fancy that the structure, the mount, and the city that surrounds it, are representatives of the body of believers that are scattered through the various regions of the globe, who belong to the Christian church? If they were used as representatives on the principles of analogy, the temple would stand for sacred edifices in other places in which worship is to be offered to Jehovah; mount Zion for the sites on which those edifices are erected; and Jerusalem for the cities or inhabited neighborhoods which are to surround those sites and edifices; while the Christian assemblies who are to worship in those structures, would be represented by the Israelites who are to worship in Jehovah's temple on mount Zion. The construction placed by these interpreters on the prediction is therefore directly against analogy, and confutes itself. Their error is much such as he would make, who disregarding the fact that the Senate and House at Washington are the representatives of the people

of the United States, should maintain first that the Capitol in that city; next, the area in which it stands; and thirdly the city, or the District of Columbia, that surrounds it, are representatives of the population of the United States; and should therefore hold, that they fill that office exclusively in all the enactments of the national legislature in which the capitol, the grounds that surround it, and the city or district in which it is situated happen to be named. Can any thing exceed the error and absurdity of such a theory? What expositors of law such interpreters would make!

In the third place, There is nothing in the usages of society that gives any authority to such constructions of the Scriptures. The principle is absolutely unknown in every other sphere of life, and if introduced into laws, titles of property, history, or any other records of human transactions, or opinions, would make their meaning wholly uncertain, and render them worthless. What would title-deeds be worth, if the persons, places, and property named in them, were treated as mere representatives of other persons, places, and things; and it were left to the caprice or fancy of the judge, whose office it is to expound them, to determine who the represented persons, the real owners of the property are; and what the lands, the edifices, or other things are, the

**A** few words concerning THE MILLENNIAL PERIOD. We have scarcely ventured to land upon the rock of Patmos, or to peer into the dark recesses of Daniel and Ezekiel. Yet this much we have ever learned most clearly, that on this earth, where sin and Satan gained victory over God through the fall of man, Christ is to achieve a complete triumph over all his foes—not on another battlefield, but on this...

We believe, then, that in this very earth, where superstition has set up its idols, Jesus Christ shall be adored... Let us rejoice that Scripture is so clear, and so explicit upon this great doctrine of the future triumph of Christ over the whole world!...

We are not bound to enter into any particulars concerning what form that triumph shall assume. We believe that the Jews will be converted, and that they will be restored to their own land. We believe that Jerusalem will be the central metropolis of Christ's kingdom; we also believe that all the nations shall walk in the light of the glorious city which shall be built at Jerusalem. We expect that the glory which shall have its centre there, shall spread over the whole world, covering it as with a sea of holiness, happiness, and delight. For this we look with joyful expectation... Come then, Christian, contemplate for a moment thy beloved Lord Jesus, in a millennial age, shall be the light and the glory of the city of the new Jerusalem. Observe then, that Jesus makes the light of the millennium, because his presence will be that which distinguishes that age from the present. That age is to be akin to paradise, paradise God first made upon earth, and paradise God will last make...

That very man who once died upon Calvary is to live here. He—that same Jesus—who was taken up from us, shall come in like manner as he was taken up from the gazers of Galilee. Rejoice, rejoice, beloved, that he comes, actually



ownership of which the documents convey? What would certificates of stock be worth, if the persons named in them as the owners were not really so, but only representatives of the owner, of whose names no trace appeared in the certificates, nor any means of determining, or conjecturing who they are? Yet such a principle of interpreting deeds and certificates of property, charters, compacts, and other similar documents, would be precisely like that on which these interpreters proceed in the spiritualization of this and the other prophecies.

In the fourth place, This method of construction, renders different parts of the Scriptures contradictory to each other, and involves them in infinite confusion and uncertainty. If "The Lord's house" stands for the Christian church, it plainly does, not because of its name, but solely by virtue of its being his temple; the structure at Jerusalem consecrated to his worship. But if it stands for the church simply by virtue of its being what it is, his temple in Jerusalem, then it is clear that his temple there in past times, must for the same reason have stood for, and been a representative of the church. If the mere fact that the structure called the Lord's house, which is to be erected on or near mount Zion in the last days, is to be his temple, proves that it stands for and means in this prophecy the church; then the fact that the structure erected by

Solomon near that mount, and called the Lord's house, was his temple; and the fact that the edifice erected by Zerubbabel, on that site, and enlarged and beautified by Herod, and called his house, was his temple, proves that they also stood for and meant the church in all the passages of the Scriptures in which they are mentioned; and accordingly the catastrophes that are predicted of them, are representatives of catastrophes that were or are to befall the Christian church. The prophecies of Jeremiah and the other prophets of the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, of the temple erected by Solomon, are prophecies therefore of a like overthrow and annihilation of the church; and Christ's prediction (Matt. 24) of the dissolution, by the Romans, of the temple erected by Herod, so that not one stone should remain on another, is a prediction of a like subversion and extinction of the Christian church. And as neither Solomon's, nor Herod's temple is ever to be rebuilt; not a particle of the matter indeed of which they consisted being now identifiable by man, it follows that the church, after the annihilation which their destruction represents, is never again to be called into existence. The supposed prophecy in this passage that all the nations are to enter the church; and the express prediction (Eph. 3:31) that it is to continue *εἰς πάντα τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος των αἰῶνων*, through all the

*(Lord: continued on page 16)*

and really comes; and this shall be the joy of that age, that he is among his saints, and dwelleth in them, with them, and talketh and walketh in their midst.

The presence of Christ it is which will be the means of the peace of the age. In that sense Christ will be the light of it, for he is our peace. It will be through his presence that the lion shall eat straw like an ox, that the leopard shall lie down with the kid. It will not be because men have had more enlightenment, and have learned better through advancing civilization, that they shall beat their swords into ploughshares...men and women, at the sight of Christ, and at the knowledge that he is reigning gloriously upon earth, will give up their unbelief. The Jew will recognise the Son of David, and the Gentile will rejoice to worship him who was once slain as the King of the Jews.

Once again, Christ will be the light of that period in the sense of being its glory. Oh! It is the glory of the Christian now to think that Christ reigns in heaven. In this we boast in every season of depression and of downcasting, that he is exalted and sits at the right hand of the Father. But the glory of that age shall be that Christ is come, that he sits upon the throne of David as well as upon the throne of God; that his enemies bow before him and lick the dust. Think, my brethren, of the splendour of that time, when from every nation and land they shall bring him tribute, when praises shall ascend from every land, when the streets of that city shall be thronged every day with adoring worshippers; when he shall ride forth conquering and to conquer, and his saints shall follow him upon white horses!

## On the Literality of Prophecy

Zechariah 2:1-5

C.H. Spurgeon



It is evident that this vision and prophecy graciously reveal the future history of Jerusalem. You may spiritualize, if you will, and say that Jerusalem signifies the Church: but I pray you not to forget the literal meaning of such words as these in the twelfth verse – “The Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.” Jerusalem is spoken of, and Jerusalem is meant. A man with a measuring line is about to measure the length and breadth of the city; he appears to be interrupted in his work by another angel, who foretells that so greatly shall Jerusalem extend, that she will be as a town without walls, for the number of men and cattle that shall be therein.

The prophecy has not as yet been fulfilled: it may have had some partial fulfillment in those times of peace before the coming of the Saviour, but even then Jerusalem was surrounded by a triple wall; and though it is true that there was a large suburban population, yet the city was not even then “as towns without walls,” nor was the glory of God in the midst of her in any eminent degree. I believe this passage refers to a happy and glorious future yet to come, when the city of Jerusalem shall have no walls, except the protection of the Lord, but shall be extended far and wide. The Jewish people and their royal city shall remain the center of the manifestations of divine glory, just as the city of London still remains the center of the metropolis; but the nations of the earth shall be joined unto the Lord; so that while Jerusalem remains the city of the Great King, the faithful among the people of all nations shall be, as it were, a suburban population to the chosen city, and the kingdom of Messiah shall extend far and wide. Jerusalem will be rebuilt in more than her former splendor; the Jews will be restored to their own land; and Messiah will reign as a prince of the house of David. **We cannot understand many portions of Scripture except upon this belief.** If it be so, it appears according to this prophecy that God shall be the protection of this great city, and the glory in the midst of her. All her sons shall be gathered from

their distant wandering places; and where they have associated themselves with Antichrist, they shall hear the voice which saith, “Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.” Christ Himself shall fulfil His promise, “Lo, I come;” the nations shall be judged; God shall shake His hand over all lands and give them as a spoil unto His people; Zion shall sing and rejoice; her Lord and King shall dwell in the midst of her; many nations shall join themselves unto Jehovah, and *He*, from shore to shore shall reign, while all flesh is silent before Him, because He is raised up out of His holy habitation.

I am not given to prophesying, and I fear that the fixing of dates and periods has been exceedingly injurious to the whole system of premillennial teaching; but I think I clearly see in Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ will come—so far I go, and take my stand—that He will come personally to reign upon this earth. At His coming it appears clear to me that He will gather together the Jewish people, that Jerusalem shall become the metropolis of the new empire which shall then extend from pole to pole, from the river even to the ends of the earth. If this be a correct interpretation of prophecy, you may read the whole of this chapter through and understand it; you have the key to every sentence: *without such a belief, I see not how to interpret the prophet's meaning.*

Dear friends, we may sometimes refresh our minds with a prospect of the kingdom which is soon to cover all lands, and make the sun and moon ashamed by its superior glory. We are not to indulge in prophesyings as some do, making them our spiritual food, our meat and drink; but still we may take them as choice morsels, and special delicacies set upon the table; they are condiments which may often give a sweeter taste, or if you will, a greater pungency and savor to other doctrines; prophetic views light up the crown of Jesus with a superior splendor; they make His manhood appear illustrious as we see Him still in connection with the earth: to have a kingdom here as well as there; to sit upon a throne here as well as in

yonder skies; to subdue His adversaries even upon this Aceldama, as in the realm of spirits; to make even this poor earth upon which the trail of the serpent is so manifest, a place where the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

If our view of prophecy be the correct one, it seems to be in perfect harmony with all the doctrines of the gospel. God certainly did elect His people the Jews; He made a covenant with His servant Abraham, and albeit you will remind us that this was only a temporal covenant, I would remind you that it was the type of the spiritual one, and it would be an unhappy reflection for us if the typical covenant should prove to be only temporary as well as temporal; if that came to an end, and if God cast away, in any sense, the people whom He did foreknow, it might augur to us the ill foreboding that mayhap He might cast away His spiritual seed also, and that those who were chosen as the spiritual seed of Abraham, might yet be cut off from the olive into which they had been grafted. If the natural branches are cast away for ever, why not the grafted branches too? But here is our joy, the God Who swore unto His servant Abraham that to him and to his seed would He give the land for ever, hath not gone back on His word; they shall possess the land; their feet shall joyously

**If our view of prophecy be the correct one, it seems to be in perfect harmony with all the doctrines of the gospel.**

tread its fruitful acres yet again; they shall sit every man under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; and so the spiritual seed to whom the spiritual heritage is given as by a covenant of salt, they also shall possess their heritage for ever and of their rightful portion no robber shall despoil them.

Now, I think it cannot be said that I have avoided the immediate meaning of the passage before us, and that I have selected the vision as a text merely to accommodate it to my own purpose. You have now before you the intention and mind of the Spirit of God, so far as I am able to perceive it; and having spoken thus far upon it, I now feel at liberty to interpret the vision in what is commonly called a more spiritual sense, begging you, however not to think that I make the spiritual sense override the sense I have already given, for the mind of the Spirit in the passage is ever to be respected far beyond any human accommodation; and though the accommodation may seem to be less historical and more suitable for Sabbath food to the people of God, yet remember God's sense stand first, and our sense is only to be regarded and respected as it stands in harmony with other portions of Holy Writ. ✠

*From The Man With the Measuring Line*  
MTP Vol. 10



The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.  
Isaiah 11:6-9

## The Nature of the Reign

G. E. Jones



### It Shall Be a Reign of Peace.

The reign of Christ and His saints on the earth will bring to the earth a time of universal PEACE. There are many passages which teach this very thing. The only hope of peace and safety on this earth is the coming of Christ, the Prince of peace, and the establishment of the reign of Himself and His saints here.

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become an heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. BUT IN THE LAST DAYS it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow into it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it," Micah 3:12 to 4:4.

Brother, it is the mouth of the Lord that has spoken these things. Do you believe what he has said? If not, then why not? What influence has turned you away from believing this?

Let us see just what the Lord has spoken in this passage.

First, in the last verse of the third chapter of Micah the Lord said Zion would be plowed as a field, and

Jerusalem would become heaps, and the mountain of the house, the place where the temple stood, should be as the places of the forest. This has already been fulfilled in a literal war in which Jerusalem was laid waste, and the temple was destroyed.

Next, after foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem in a literal war, He changes the picture. He foretells the time coming when the city should be reestablished, and the mountain of the Lord's house, the place where the temple of the Lord shall be, will be established in the top of the mountains. One translation reads, "Shall be established as the highest mountain," (Smith-Godspeed translation). This idea is strengthened by Zechariah 14:10, "And the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be LIFTED UP, and inhabited in her place." The mountain of the house (temple) of the Lord shall be LIFTED UP above the surrounding country and made the HIGHEST mountain round about. It shall be raised above the surrounding hills.

There will be a radical change in the contour of the country. The mount of Olives on the east will divide, half of it moving north, and half moving south. This will form a valley running east and west where the mountain now stands. The land at Jerusalem and north and south of the city will be lifted up and turned into a high plain. The temple site, the mountain of the Lord's house, will be made higher than the hills and mountains about.

Next, the Lord says in the above passage we are studying, the nations of the earth shall come up to Jerusalem to be judged of the Lord, and taught of His ways.

Next, as the result of the Lord's judging and teaching, the nations of the earth will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and wars will cease. In Ps. 46:9 we read, "He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." In contrast to Jerusalem being made an heap by war, and the

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temple site being desolated, the city and the temple will be rebuilt and there will be a cessation of wars. Just as surely as a literal war is under consideration in the first verse in the quotation, which is the last verse in chapter three of Micah, the end of literal wars is under consideration in the verses that follow. The word "BUT" with which the next verse commences shows that a picture different from that in the verse above is going to be given. There is no excuse for this passage to be taken in any other way than referring to a time when war will be brought to an end.

Next, we read that the law shall go forth out of Zion. This is not the law of Moses, but the law of the kingdom at that time. Since the Lord will be reigning in Mount Zion, as we read in Isa. 24:23, then it follows that the law of the kingdom shall go out from that place. This will be the time when the righteous Branch shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth, as we read in Jer. 23:5. It will be the time when the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the ABUNDANCE of peace as we read in Ps. 37:11 and Ps. 72:7. Because wars have ceased then Israel shall dwell safely as we read in connection with the Branch executing judgment and justice in the earth, Jer. 23:5-6.

Last, the prophet Micah goes on to say that every man shall sit under his vine and his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid. They will not be afraid of wars any longer. The implements of warfare will have been converted into implements of agriculture. They will not sit trembling in some bomb raid shelter, or in some foxhole or dugout, but

they will sit unafraid under their vine and fig trees. Neither will they have to flee from their homes through fear of invading armies. When this writer read about the people of Holland and Belgium fleeing from their homes before Hitler's invading hordes, and the fleeing women, children and old people being pushed aside in the ditches or run down by the ruthless heels of the invaders, his heart was made to bleed, and he was made to long for the time which was foretold through Micah when nations would beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks and cease from their wars. Day by day as the war progressed and things looked darker and darker he read the newspapers and listened to the radio with a trembling heart. He was made to long for the earth's great jubilee, and to pray with John, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." Then when his own son lost his life in the war his cup of bitterness was filled to the brim. The sorrow which he suffered millions of others were suffering and much more. When we stop to think of the horrors of wars, and the untold misery and heartaches which they have brought, then who would not long for the time of the great jubilee on this earth? That will be a glorious age.

Is not this what the nations of the earth have long desired: Is it not what they want brought about? The Bible calls it the desire of all nations.

Is not this what the nations of the earth have long desired: Is it not what they want brought about? The Bible calls it the desire of all nations.

"I will shake all nations, and the DESIRE of all nations SHALL COME: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts—The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I GIVE PEACE, saith the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2:7-9 ☆

*From The Earth's Great Jubilee*

**Because wars  
have ceased  
then Israel  
shall dwell  
safely...with  
the Branch exe-  
cuting judgment  
and justice in  
the earth.**



**And** he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Micah 4:3

## The Fifth Kingdom From Heaven

John F. Walvoord



The prophecy of the destruction of the image is embraced in Daniel 2:44-45:

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

It is clear that the stone cut out of the mountain without hands smites the image on the feet – that is, its last stage – with the result that the entire image is completely destroyed. The destruction cannot be properly compared to the advance of Christianity within the bounds of the ancient Roman Empire; that action was a gradual permeation which never assumed catastrophic character and never vitally changed the political aspect of the Roman Empire. History is clear that the Roman Empire was destroyed not by Christianity, but by its own inherent weaknesses and immorality.

What is demanded in fulfillment of this prophetic interpretation is a sudden catastrophic event which destroys all vestige of Gentile power and replaces it with the kingdom which God Himself establishes. The stone represents a divine agency rather than human, indicated in the fact that it is cut out without hands and is a proper representation of Jesus Christ as the crushing stone of judgment at His second advent. The Christian Gospel to the present hour has never had power to destroy Gentile government in

the world and replace it with spiritual government, and there is no prospect that it will. Only divine intervention in the human scene and a display of the omnipotence of God could possibly break up the power of this world and convert it into the kingdom of heaven.

The prophetic foreview of world history afforded in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar was remarkably fulfilled except for the consummation. The kingdom of Babylon was indeed the first of the great world empires. Although not the most extensive or powerful in many respects, it was the most glorious. This is anticipated in the gold which represents the Babylonian Empire. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 B.C., it rapidly deteriorated until, on the fateful night described in Daniel 5 on October 13, 539 B.C., Babylon was conquered and the decline of the great city began. The rule of the Medes and the Persians, though less glorious than that of Babylon, was much longer in duration and continued for over two hundred years to 332 B.C. when Alexander the Great conquered Babylon without a battle.

After Alexander's death, the Seleucidae controlled Babylon from 312 to 171 B.C. and were succeeded by the Parthian Empire which successfully resisted Rome and controlled Babylon from 171 B.C. to A.D. 226. Babylon continued to be inhabited in some form or other as late as A.D. 1000. In control of the Holy Land, however, Alexander was succeeded by the Roman Empire. The deterioration in the value of the metals depicted in the image had the compensation of increase in strength, and Rome until the time of the Barbarian invasion was truly characterized by the strength of iron.

As is frequently the case in the Old Testament, the prophecy of Daniel takes no notice of the many years separating the first and second advent of Christ. It anticipates a future empire in the Mediterranean area which will correspond to the ancient Roman Empire and which, from the divine viewpoint, will be a con-

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tinuation of it. This fourth empire will be succeeded by the kingdom of heaven, begun with a sudden judgment upon Gentile power.

The final world power described in Daniel 2:44, 45 is obviously different in character than the preceding four empires. It is subsequent to these four empires and cannot be brought in until their total destruction. It is a kingdom which is established by the God of heaven rather than by human agency. In contrast to the other empires which had their rise and fall, the kingdom which God establishes will never be destroyed. It shall break in pieces and consume all other powers and shall stand forever.

That the dream was interpreted properly and that the interpretation should be considered factual is brought out in Daniel 2:45 where it is stated: "The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." In the light of the literal and graphic fulfillment of prophecy relating to the first four kingdoms, except for the portion of the fourth which is yet future, it is natural to conclude that the fifth kingdom is also to be literally and factually fulfilled in God's future program.

The grandeur of this panorama of human history and the important place that it assigned the kingdom of Babylon as the first of the succession of world empires so impressed King Nebuchadnezzar that in spite of his high office and absolute rule it is recorded in Daniel 2:46, "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel,

**It is a kingdom  
which is estab-  
lished by the  
God of heaven  
rather than  
by human  
agency.**

and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him." King Nebuchadnezzar also gave testimony that the God of Daniel is "a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret." The elevation of Daniel to a prominent place in the government of the Babylonian Empire testifies to the profound impression made upon King Nebuchadnezzar. The experience of Nebuchadnezzar ultimately resulted in his turning to the God of Israel in faith (Daniel 4).

The revelation given in Daniel 2 of world history in its panoramic form constitutes the essential framework for all prophecy related to the nations. Subsequent details in Daniel and elsewhere in Scripture are amplification and added details and explanations. The Scriptures give special emphasis to the latter stage of the fourth empire and concerning this a great body of prophetic Scripture fills in the total picture.

The guidelines, however, for future fulfillment are found in the past. A study of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece, as prophecies relating to them have been fulfilled, provides an important background for that which is yet future. The geographic area of these kingdoms is involved in the final chapters of world history. Babylon has perpetuated itself religiously and to some extent is reproduced politically in the last stage of the fourth kingdom. A study of prophecy relating to these kingdoms as well as historic fulfillment is, then, the Biblical introduction to the nations in the end of the age. ✪

*From The Nations in Prophecy*

*(Robinson: continued from page 5)*

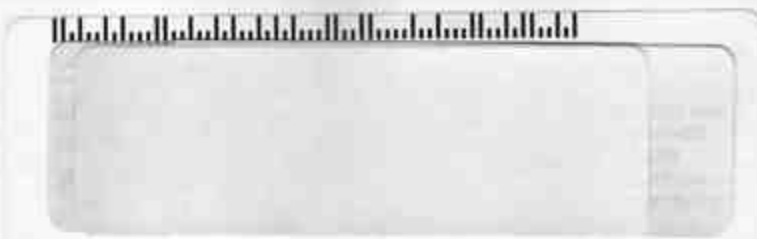
cause there can be no true, lasting peace without the Prince of Peace.

The Old Testament is full of prophecies concerning a coming age of peace and righteousness wherein Christ will reign on His throne as King of kings and Lord of lords. As you study these prophecies there is scarcely a prophet which did not look forward to the time when Shiloh would come and "unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). Even

though we have not yet seen the Righteous Branch (Jer. 23:5) come to sit upon the throne of David as "a rod out of the stem of Jesse" (Isa. 11:1), we nevertheless believe that the promise of God will be fulfilled one glorious day when "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" and then "the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zech. 14:4, 9). ✪

## Premillennial Baptist Journal

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Theme of next issue:  
Errors Concerning the Millennium

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*(Lord: continued from page 9)*

generations of the age of ages, are accordingly directly contradicted and convicted of error! Such are the issues to which this theory of spiritualization leads.

In the fifth place, It empties the word of God of all certainty of meaning, and enables the interpreter to erase from its pages any truth, and insert in its place any error he pleases. The question whether the persons, places, acts, or occurrences expressed in the prophecies are to be regarded simply as representatives, and what the persons, objects, or events are which they represent, is to be decided wholly by the fancy or caprice of the interpreter. The nature of the spiritualization; that is, of the things that are to be considered as foreshown, and the extent to which it is to be carried, are at his arbitrament entirely. It depends on no principle, it is regulated by no law. It may be applied to one class of predictions as properly as another, and may strike from us therefore every futurity that is revealed to us in the word of God. If Christ's coming in person in the clouds of heaven, receiving the dominion of the earth, and

reigning on mount Zion forever, are to be spiritualized, and made to signify only what is called a figurative coming and reigning, *i.e.*, a positive *no*-coming and *not*-reigning, then his raising and judging the dead, the reigning of the risen saints, the conversion of the nations, the new creation of the earth and air, and all the other events that are foreshown must be; and the whole revelation that is made of the future is an unmeaning pageant, a mockery of shows, that only tantalize and disappoint our faith and hope.

This method of construction by which they set aside the purposes God has revealed, and substitute others in their place, is thus altogether groundless, arbitrary, and subversive of the truth. If attempted to be introduced into legislation, jurisprudence, or any other sphere, it would be rejected as an outrage fatal to truth and right and would consign its advocates to universal scorn. Yet it is to this system entirely that Anti-millenarians are indebted for their belief that their theory of his purposes is taught in the word of God. Let them abandon it, and interpret the prophecies by their proper laws, and their notions of his designs will vanish. ☆

Chapter II of *The Coming and Reign of Christ*



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Errors Concerning the Millennium

VOLUME III ISSUE II

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### Inside This Edition

- Amillennial Errors, *J.C. Settlemoir* ..... p. 2
- Errors Of Dispensationalism, *William L. Brown* ..... p. 8
- Some Errors of Postmillennialism, *Michael McCoskey* ..... p. 11
- Errors of Preterism, *Royce Smith* ..... p. 14

## Amillennial Errors

J. C. Settlemoir



First, it will be necessary for me to indicate this article is not written *against* those who hold to Amillennialism. I have many friends who embrace this view. I expect them to present their view when they write or preach on this subject and they do! I do not think they are attacking me when they teach their position! In this article let it be clearly understood that it is their *position* which I oppose—not they themselves!

Nor can I make it a rule to fellowship only those who agree with me in every aspect of eschatology. This would exclude many who are dear to me and who are faithful servants of the Lord. I cannot do this. It has always seemed to me inconsistent to embrace those in history, such as Tertullian, Menno Simons or Hubmaier when we will not walk across the street to shake hands with an Amill who differs with us only on the millennium! (1 Jn. 4:20,21).

I should be able to differ with a brother and not count him an enemy nor make myself an enemy to him. The disciples in the very shadow of Christ's personal ministry had a difference. Some held that Jesus specifically stated John would not die until the Lord returned and they, no doubt, were preaching that Christ would return very shortly because John was then an aged man. But John writing near the end of the century corrected this mistake. He did so by pointing out that Jesus did not say he, John, would not die, but "What if..." (Jn. 21:20,23). John did not count these men as heretics but as *brethren*! He did not write them off his list. He did not refuse to fellowship with them even though they were wrong. Thus, in the same vein, I will not refuse to fellowship any brother because he differs with me on the millennium.

That this is the correct position is confirmed by the fact that our forefathers did not separate and condemn each other for differences on this subject. Keach was Premill and suffered for it but some of those who signed the 1688 confession with him were not Premill. In later times we find men like Graves and Pendleton associated together but on different sides of the millennial question.

The next introductory point I wish to emphasize which compels me to this position is that I am aware I could be

wrong! Many great and good men who towered far above my poor abilities have thought so. Thus I present my own position with this in mind.

We all want unity but we can never come to unity before the Lord comes unless we discuss the issues on which we differ. Thus there is a need, a pressing need, to study, to write and to debate this subject. We can and should learn from such discussions and I do not see how we can help making progress, if such exchanges are conducted in the right spirit. It is for this end that I write. What I perceive to be some of the errors of our Amill friends follow. Not all Amills will agree with every proposition examined.

The articles, books, and so forth referred to internally are listed on page 7.

### AMILLENNIALISM DEFINED

In discussions of this kind definitions are essential. The following definition of Amillennialism is brief and expressive.

Amillennialism is that view of the Last Things which holds that the Bible does not predict a 'millennium' or period of worldwide peace and righteousness on this earth before the end of the world. [Vos quoted by Boettner. 109].

### AMILLENNIALISM A NEGATIVE SYSTEM

No disrespect is intended by this statement. I am only saying what their own writers admit:

There are very large numbers who do not believe that the Bible warrants the expectation of a millennium, and it has become customary of late to speak of them as *Amillennialists*. The Amillennial view is, as the name indicates, purely negative. [Berkhof. 708].

In practical terms the Amill denies the future millennium altogether believing that the age now present is all the millennium there ever shall be and when Christ returns, the eternal aspect of the Kingdom begins and hence the millennium is, for all practical purposes, excluded. They teach the millennium is almost over whereas we believe it is yet to begin.

### FIGURATIVE INTERPRETATION

The first error pertains to the method Amillennialists use in the interpretation of Scripture which is the figurative. By this means the ordinary words of a passage are denuded of any real meaning. *William Tyndale* was the translator of the first English Bible from the Greek and Hebrew in the early 1500s and was put to death by Rome

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for his noble work and he represented the correct method of interpretation. He said:

Thou shalt understand, therefore, that the Scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way. Nevertheless, the Scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the proverbs, similitude, riddle, or allegory signifieth, is over the literal sense, which thou must seek out diligently... [Briggs, 457-58].

This draws attention to the method which I believe must be used in Eschatology as well as Theology. The Amillennialist frequently says "Revelation is a highly figurative book," and we admit it. He also says that we take Rev. 20 literally but this is only partly true. We recognize both literal and figurative terms in this book and in this passage in particular but we believe the figurative terms have a literal meaning.

Our Amill friends cannot object to this procedure because they do the same with some things in this passage. For example: The Lake of Fire. Is this a mere figure? The JW says it is! The SDA says it is! What do the Amills say? They say it is literal, a real place! In this chapter we have Satan mentioned. Is he a real character or just an idea? The liberals say Satan is not a real character at all but abstract evil. What do the Amills say? They say he is a real person. In this chapter we have the great White Throne Judgment. Is this literal or figurative? The Amill says it is literal. This means the Amill recognizes some things in Rev. 20 are literal just as we do.

Thus when we come to the thousand years we believe this means real time. When we come to the binding of Satan and his being cast into the Abyss, we believe these are literal things. We believe the Amill fails to rightly divide here.

#### BINDING OF SATAN

We believe it is an error to think of the binding of Satan in Rev. 20:1-3 as a mere curtailment of some of his activities. Why should the casting of the Beast and False Prophet into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20) signify the total cessation of their activities, and the casting of Satan into the Lake of Fire signify a total cessation of his activities for eternity, but the casting of Satan into the Abyss for a thousand years is merely a very slight restriction of his activities? (Cf. 1 Pet. 5:8,9; 1 Tim. 2:26; 2 Cor. 2:11). We believe this is an error.

The binding of Satan in Rev. 20:1-3 will close out all his activities for a thousand years. He will be as demobilized during the millennium as he will be when cast into the Lake of Fire! The only difference will be in the duration, and possibly the degree of torment. To claim that Satan is

now bound but that he is able to go right on, business as usual, does not seem to be what Rev. 20:1-6 describes. And if this binding and incarceration in the Abyss is nothing but a reduction of his activities, then how is it that the casting into the Lake of Fire ends all his activities? If Satan can do all the things Scripture describes him as now doing, while bound and cast into the Abyss, shut up there, sealed there—there in this place of torment, then why can he not do the same thing when in the Lake of Fire? What makes the difference?

If the casting into the Abyss is not a real thing, then how is it that the casting of the beast and false prophet into the Lake of Fire is a real and literal event? (Rev. 19:20). And how is it that the casting of Satan into the Lake of Fire (20:10) is a real event? If the casting into the Lake of Fire in Rev. 19:20 is real and the casting into the Lake of Fire in Rev. 20:10 is real, then why is it that the casting into the Abyss in Rev. 20:3 is figurative? If the first internment is real and the third internment is literal why not the second? How can one determine that the second internment is a thing of no consequence while the first and third are absolute and allow of no activity at all when they are all mentioned in the same book, in the same section and with the same terms? If this does not indicate an error in interpretation, then what would?

#### THE ABYSS NOT A REAL PLACE

In a copy of a book given me by a friend I find these words by an Amillennial author: "...it is unwise to think of Satan's confinement in the bottomless pit as a literal incarceration..." [Binding, 11].

The demons of Jesus' day could not be induced to embrace this error. They certainly thought the Abyss was a real place and they feared to go there and begged to be allowed to enter into hogs instead! (Lk.8: 30-31). They thought there was torment in the Abyss. (Mk. 4:7). Furthermore, they knew they were going into the Abyss at some specific time:

And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? (Mt. 8:29).

They asked the Lord if He had come to torment them **before the time!** To what time did they refer? We know the Devil and his angels are going into Hell eventually, (Mt. 25:41). But the Abyss and Hell are not the same thing. The Abyss is a temporal place of torment whereas Hell is an eternal abode. When will the demons be sent into the Abyss if not at the same time Satan is put there? (cf. Isa. 24:21-23).

#### THE LENGTH OF THE 1000 YEARS

Amillennialists do not know what to do with the thousand years. They do not wish to leave this term as given by John but constantly seek to *change* it. Some say it does

not mean *anything*. Others claim it goes on for *thousands* of years. For example:

- This reign cannot be a period of time but simply describes in terms of completeness or ecumenicity the blessed state of the saints in heaven. [Klieforth. Q. Tulga. 55].
- "Symbolical numbers don't count," and that "the 1000 years" mean only "ecumenical potentiality," "potentiated ecumenicity," and "spatial victory!" [West. 382].
- If to this we add the supposition.... that it is intended in the description of the millennium in this chapter, that the world will continue under a reign of peace and righteousness for the long period of three hundred and sixty thousand years... [Barnes. Loco].
- The symbolic expression 'a thousand years' covers the entire period between the First Advent of Christ to shortly before the Second Advent of Christ in power and great glory. [Fletcher. 57].
- "It expresses no period of time." [Cairns. 16].

The basic idea in Amillennialism is that the time period of the thousand years does not measure time. Is this true? My conviction is that Scripture gives this period of time so we as saints can know what the Lord has purposed to do. This is much better than making the term a sliding scale which can mean anything or nothing at the whim of man! According to the Amill theory the millennium can range from zero to 360,000 years! And what is the authority for such ideas? Simply what some man guesses it might possibly be or what he chooses to put in the blank—not what the Scripture says it is. If a man says the millennium may be 2000 years that is acceptable. If one says it means 500 years, that is acceptable. Or if one says it is 365,000 years that is acceptable. But when the Bible says it is *one thousand years* that is *unacceptable*! I believe it is an error to attempt to correct the number God has revealed in His Word! This error also leads some Amills to attempt to alter the thousand years in another way.

### THOUSANDS NOT THOUSAND

This attempt is based upon the fact the Greek word for *thousand* (*chilioi*) in Rev. 20 is plural. Because this word is plural some Amills say it should be translated *thousands* not *thousand* in Rev. 20:1-7! Two examples are given:

- First, the phrase 'one thousand' years' nowhere appears in the Greek; it is always 'thousands (of) years.' [Whitelaw. 20].
- We must remember that the Greek Text states thousands, not thousand. [Pound. Danvers].

If I understand these writers, they mean to say because *chilioi* is plural it should be translated *thousands*! We wonder why these men give no references. No Greek grammar, Greek word book, expository dictionary or lexicon that I have seen supports this idea. [Cf. Greek References].

Of course, *chilioi* is a plural and so are all cardinal Greek

numbers above one. My Greek concordance has this note: *chilioi*. Obs.—This word is only used for 'one thousand' but *chiliades* signifies 'thousands'. [GE. 801].

The very phrase which Whitelaw says *nowhere appears in the Greek* (unless he means to say *heis* (one) is not used with *chilioi*) actually occurs eight times in the Greek NT! [2 Pet 3:8 (twice); Rev. 20:2, 3,4,5,6,7]. Vine says:

1. *chilioi*... 'a thousand,' ....
2. *chilias*... 'one thousand,' is always used in the plural, *chiliades*, but translated in the sing. everywhere, except in the phrase 'thousands of thousands,' Rev. 5:11.

Vine says *chilias* (distinguished from *chilioi*) is properly translated *thousand* in all NT occurrences, except Rev. 5:11.

A&G has this:

*Chilias*... (a group of) a thousand pl.  
*chilioi*, αι,α ... a thousand 2 Pt 3:8 a,b... The millennium Rev. 20:2-7...

Greek has indefinite numbers as in Heb. 12:22; cardinals, as *heis*, *duo*, *treis*, (one, two, three, etc.); the ordinals, as *protos*, etc.; numeral adverbs *hapax*, (once) and so on. All the cardinals except *one* are plural as *fifty*, *hundred*, *thousand*, or any other number above one. Some of these are declinable others are not. If John had meant to give merely a large indefinite number instead of the specific *thousand*, he could have used (*chiliades*) *thousands*, as Ex. 20:6; 34:7; Deu. 5:10; Ps 68:17; Dan. 7:10, LXX), as he did in Rev. 5:11 – *chiliades chiliadon, thousands of thousands*! Then the meaning would have been *thousands*, not *thousand*. But instead the Holy Spirit in Rev. 20 selected the term which expresses *a thousand years* and repeated it six times! Schaff, a non-millennialist, says the Greek "*chilia etee*" is, "a thousand years, Rev. 20:2,3..." [Schaff. II, 614].

If you owe your bank a thousand dollars and go in to pay it off and as you count out the money, the teller says "You have misunderstood the amount owed sir." She goes on to explain that *thousand* is a *plural*, and consequently you actually owe *thousands* of dollars—not *a thousand* dollars! What would you say? Would you accept that idea? Now why is it men can see the error of such in monetary matters but when it comes to the far more important statements of the Word of God, they violate every principle to assert *chilioi* means *thousands*?

Those who say *chilioi* must mean *thousands* do not arrive at this position by grammar, syntax nor any rule I can discover but by their system! This notion is not a case of exegesis. If indeed the *thousand* of Rev. 20 is a figurative expression, and designates an indefinite period of time the conclusion must be reached outside the grammar.

If, as these brethren apparently contend, there is an ambiguity in the Greek, then what of other numbers in Greek

which have precisely the same grammatical construction? For if one may transpose *chilioi* into *thousands* then of course, it naturally follows that he can do the same thing to ten, twenty, fifty, hundred or any plural number!

For example. Test their idea with these examples:

*Graphon penteekonta*, write *fifties*? Lk. 16:6.  
*Hekaton probata*, *hundreds* of sheep? Mt. 18:13  
*Hekaton batous*, *hundreds* of measures? Lk. 16:6  
*Triakonta arguria*, *thirties* of silver pieces? Mt. 26:16.  
*Chiliokomos*, a *thousand* villages must become *thousands* of villages!  
*Chiliombe*, sacrifice of a *thousand* victims must be made into the sacrifice of *thousands* of victims!  
*Chilio omai*, to be fined a *thousand* drachmae is extrapolated into *thousands* of drachmae!  
*Chiliotalantos*, weighing a *thousand* talents must be increased to *thousands* of talents!  
*Kai chilia stadia*, and a *thousand* stadia must mean *thousands* of stadia!

These few examples demonstrate the error. *Chilioi* is found six times in Rev. 20 and Gill says in four of these it is designated with the article, "the thousand years," or "these thousand years." [Gill. Loco. See note.].

I have consulted 31 versions, among these are *Tyndale's*, *The Great Bible*, *The Geneva*, *The Bishops' Bible*, including interlinears, expanded translations and literal translations on Rev. 20. Not one of these gave *thousands* for *chilioi* in a single instance! I know of no other example in which the translators are any more consistent than in their rendering *chilioi*, *thousand*! It is remarkable that Tyndale's Translation has in Rev. 20 for four of the references to *chilioi* the Roman Numeral *M*, which of course means *thousand*, never *thousands*. One or two of the translations inserted the numeral *1000* for *chilioi* which certainly excludes *thousands*.

Is this not an Amillennial error?

### CURSES BELONG TO ISRAEL—BLESSINGS TO THE CHURCH

Amillennialists teach this doctrine known as Replacement Theology. Basically what this means is that all the OT prophecies of blessing concerning Israel are diverted to the church. But strangely and conversely, all the curses still belong to Israel! Israel is reprobated! God is through with the Jews! They exhausted His patience! Effectual grace is made ineffectual by the obstinacy of the Jews! By this error the OT is robbed of any real meaning. For example, Jer. 31:35-37:

"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the

seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

One need only consult any Amill commentary (and most commentaries fall into this category) on this passage and he will immediately find that these promises though expressly declared for Israel are forcefully taken from Israel and given to the Church! [Cf. Calvin]. Any and every blessing promised to Israel is conveniently swept under the Replacement rug! This system seeks to remove Israel from the purpose and plan of God contrary to Scripture and it runs head-long into such passages as Judges 2:1; Rom. 11:25-29.

### THE AMILL ERROR OF GRAFTING

Israel is the good olive tree (Ro. 11:24). If Israel was cut off and thus reprobated and forever severed from the covenant and promises God made to them in the OT, then the question instantly comes to mind—into what were the Gentiles grafted? According to this view, which most Amills ascribe to, the root was dead. A dead tree is like a fence post. Men do not graft shoots into dead stock! The teaching of the apostle Paul is that the Gentiles were grafted into the root or the *living stock* of Israel (Rom. 11:17). But this makes no sense if Israel was reprobated—dead! Note carefully that the root bears the Gentiles—that is the root of Israel! (Rom. 11:18). Then Paul goes on to argue Israel can be and will be grafted back into their own stock (Rom. 11:23-28). It is therefore an error to say God is through with Israel!

### A QUESTION

In the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, Crusoe's man Friday asked this question:

"Well," says Friday, "but you say, God is so strong, so great; is He not much strong, much might as the Devil?" "Yes, yes," says I, "Friday, God is stronger than the Devil, God is above the Devil, and therefore we pray to God to tread him down under our feet and enable us to resist his temptations and quench his fiery darts." "But," says he again, "if God much strong, much might as the Devil, why God no kill the Devil, so make him no more do wicked." [Defoe. 211].

This is the same question which troubles us! Why should God allow Satan to continue? Why was he allowed to slither into Eden? After he did, why did the Lord not put him in the Lake of Fire right then? Why did He not at least put him in the Abyss then? Why was he not bound from the beginning so that he could not even touch a single person? [Lk. 22:31; 2 Tim. 2:26]. It is here that we must bow our knees to the secret things of God. His sovereignty, power and glory have never been in question. His saints walk by faith not sight, [2 Cor. 5:7]. He has done whatsoever He pleased at all times. Satan's career

continues to this day and will continue until Christ comes in glory. Then Satan will be cast into the Abyss for a thousand years. But even after the thousand years, he is to be loosed for a little season.

Why should Satan be loose for these thousands of years to sift, afflict, torment, bind, captivate, hound and tempt men? Why loosed after the thousand years? The *why* we do not know! (Deu. 32:32). But as for the *fact* there is no doubt! (1 Pet. 5:8).

### NO PREMILLENNIAL CONFESSION

We often hear and read this objection to premillennialism. *There is no Baptist Premillennial confession of faith.* This is put forth as the anaconda argument, squeezing the life out of the Premillennialist! First, let it be clearly understood that what we believe is not derived from the confessions but from Scripture! If there is no such confession of faith in the world, it proves nothing! If premillennialism is the teaching of Scripture, and we believe it is, then every confession should include it. Secondly, the statement is not true. The Somerset Confession of 1656 is Premill! Article XXXIX says:

THAT it is our assured expectation, grounded upon promises, that the Lord Jesus Christ shall the second time appear without sin unto salvation, unto his people, to raise and change the vile bodies of all his saints, to fashion them like unto his glorious body, and so to reign with him, and judge over all nations on the earth in power and glory (Phil. 3:20,21; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:19,20,21; Mt. 19:28; Rev. 2:26,27; 1 Cor. 6:2; Ps. 72:8,11; Dan. 7:27; Zech. 14:9; Ps. 2:8,9; Jer. 23:5,6; Ez. 21:26,27; Isa. 32:1; Rev. 11:15; Ps. 82:8; Rev. 5:9,10; 20:6.) [Lumpkin 214].

### NO TIME FOR THE MILLENNIUM

Amills argue that 1 Cor. 15:22-25 leaves no time for the millennium. They say the Greek word translated *then* means immediately, instantly, and therefore there is no time between *the coming of the Lord*, vs. 23, and *the end*, vs. 24.

In this passage there are two words translated, *then*, [*epēita* and *eita*] which are contrasted with *tote* which speaks of events at the same time. *Tote* is not used here. *Eita* is translated *then* in vs. 24. According to Liddell-Scott, it is: "...used to denote the Sequence of one act or state upon another; ....frequently repeated, sts. alternating with *epēita*, then..., next..., then, after that..., etc." This is exactly what we have in this passage. [Cf. A&G on *eita* where they reference 1 Cor. 15:24; also Thayer].

As an example of temporal sequence, if someone should say "After WW II then came the Korean War." What child would think this meant the Korean War immediately followed WW II without any lapse of time?

Another example is in Mk. 4:28. Here the Lord speaks of the kingdom of God in its various developments and compares it to wheat. He says the earth first bears greenery

(the blade) then (*eita*) the ear; then (*eita*) the full grain in the ear. Would anyone assert that wheat comes up one day and the harvest starts the same day?

This idea of an interval is well known:

The idea of a messianic interregnum was adopted by Christians. In the NT we find an implicit reference to an interregnum in 1 Cor. 15:23-28 where Christ will rule until the cosmic powers, including death, have been conquered and then he will hand over the kingdom of God... [Anchor. IV. 853].

Instead of this passage leaving no time for the millennium it seems to require such an interval.

### MILLENNIUM MENTIONED ONLY ONCE

The Amillennialist often says, "The millennium is mentioned only once in the Bible!" Our response is simple. The statement is totally false. The Latin word *millennium* is not found in the Bible at all! Of course what they are referring to is that the specific length of the reign of Christ on earth is found in only *one book* of the Bible. This is true. But is that not sufficient? Actually the term *a thousand years* is found *six times* in Rev. 20! Why minimize these God-breathed words which are found six times in Scripture and attempt to make six equal one?

We believe the revelation of God is progressive. A great number of doctrines were not fully revealed in the OT. Take for example the state of departed saints. Was that fully revealed in the OT? Or was this a progressive revelation? Take the coming of the Messiah. Was this fully revealed in the OT? Take the doctrine of the resurrection. Was that fully revealed in the OT? Is this doctrine not much clearer in the NT than in the OT? Is this not exactly what we would expect? Thus the duration of the millennium is not spelled out in the OT as it is in the NT.

Numbers of things are mentioned only once in Scripture but are true none the less. A few examples follow:

An endless life, Heb. 7:16.

Elect angels, 1 Tim. 5:21.

Seventy weeks, Dan. 9:24.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, 1 Cor. 15:52

The restitution of all things, Acts 3:21.

The regeneration, Mt. 19:28.

When the Son of man sits on His throne the Apostles will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Mt. 19:28

The Lord's day, Rev. 1:10.

This list could easily be multiplied but the principle is manifest.

### PREMILLENNIALISM IS TAKEN FROM JEWISH APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Another Amillennial claim is that early Christians adopted their idea of the millennium from apocalyptic

Jewish books that were lying around. But it is interesting that when we ask for an example, the Amill is usually very quiet. As a matter of fact there are very few Jewish documents from the pre NT era which had any kind of a literal millennial period, much less one of a thousand years.

In this sense, [temporal earthly kingdom] it cannot be said that chiliastic views were widely disseminated in the early church by Jewish apocalypses, for the doctrine of a *millennium*, strictly speaking, is practically non-existent in Jewish literature known to antedate the New Testament, and the concept of a *temporal* earthly kingdom of any sort is found in only a few places. [Ladd, 159].

But to say that early Christians were led to adopt the teachings of such uninspired books and that they then read this idea of a thousand year millennium into John's Revelation which they had picked up elsewhere is about as likely as our views of Election and Predestination being derived from reading *Oedipus the King* or *Bartleby the Scrivener*!

#### CHRIST IS NOW UPON HIS THRONE

If a proposition became true by the frequency with which it is published, then this would come close to being true! It is a cliché repeated with all the authority of an oracle. Is it true? It does not seem to be so from the following considerations. First, when Christ specifically spoke of His kingdom, His coming and His sitting upon His throne—he tied these three together! Christ tells us *when* he shall sit upon His throne:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. Mt. 25:31.

1. He will sit on the His throne of glory **when** He comes in glory—not before! (Mt. 24:30).
2. This coming is that coming in which He shall have all the holy angels as His attendants (Mt. 25:41; Deu. 33:2; Jude 14).

Again our Lord emphasizes certain things which are concomitants of His enthronement:

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

1. His coronation will be at a time called **The Regeneration**, and this we believe is the same as the beginning of the millennium.
2. His enthronement occurs at a time when the Apostles will also sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, (Mt. 19:28).
3. This means the enthronement of the Son must be commensurate with the restoration of Israel, Rom. 11:26-29.
4. His enthronement takes place at the **times of refreshing** and at the **times of restitution of all things**, Acts 3:19,20,21.
5. **The heavens must receive Him** until the times of refreshing, the times of restitution, the restoration of Israel and His enthronement and these all coincide with the second coming, (Acts 3:19).
6. Christ's throne will therefore be **here on earth** because it is as the **Son of Man** (Mt. 19:28) that he is to be enthroned and He shall reign *here*—here on this earth.

Remember Christ was born *here*. He grew up *here*. He lived *here*. He preached *here*. He wrought His miracles *here*. He was rejected *here*. He was falsely accused *here*. He suffered *here*. He was crucified *here*. He died *here*. He arose from the dead *here*. He appeared after His resurrection *here*. He ascended to heaven from *here*. He is coming again *here*. And He will reign *here*!

These are only a few of the many propositions of Amillennialism which I believe to be in error. May the Lord help us to reject every error and to embrace all truth. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Rev. 22:20). ✪

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## Errors of Dispensationalism

William L. Brown



Dispensational premillennialism is more than an eschatological position concerned with the timing and events surrounding the coming of Christ. If the fact of the millennial reign of Christ were our only consideration most premillennialists would have little with which to disagree. It is the agreement of the coming of Christ with the millennial reign that has drawn many to learn at the feet of men who, I believe, confuse and have great difficulty with the biblical identities of the kingdom of God, the law of God, and the church of God. It is that aspect alone that has caused some to fall into antinomianism (American Heritage Dictionary – “The doctrine or belief that the Gospel frees Christians from required obedience to any law, whether scriptural, civil, or moral, and that salvation is attained solely through faith and the gift of divine grace.”) or certainly be accused of being antinomian, as does Robert Churchill regarding dispensational influences as quoted by Ernest C. Reisinger in his “History of Dispensationalism in America.”

It is the overall agreement with dispensationalism’s presentation of the premillennial coming of Christ that has caused some to believe in a diversity in the manner of salvation, if not the method of salvation, in the differing dispensations. (*Old Scofield reference notes from John 1:17, section 2.*) One purpose for the modifications made to the old Scofield notes was to address this very confusing area and was used as proof by Ryrie that this is not the “official” position of the dispensationalists. (*Does Dispensationalism Teach Multiple Ways of Salvation? Michael J. Vlach, Ph.D.*) An old “circular” or advertisement for the Scofield reference Bible touted that one could have “no adequate understanding or rightly dividing of the Word of God except from the standpoint of dispensational truth.” That is a rather bold claim.

Dispensationalism then, as a systematic method of interpretation, needs to be examined more thoroughly. As I approach this study, it is not as an opponent of a system that embraces a premillennial coming of Christ. One must go beyond simply being an advocate of the agreements as to the literal coming of Christ and the literal reign of Christ upon the earth. To dissect and disagree with dispensationalism does not mean we must then embrace reformed or covenant theology, or that we will automati-

cally come to an Amillennial or Postmillennial view of the coming of Christ.

Defining the dispensational system or dispensational hermeneutic is sort of like trying to hit a moving target. While there still would be argument by some, most would probably agree that as a “systematized” method of study or as a complete systematic presentation, dispensationalism would find its roots somewhere in the Brethren movement and J. N. Darby and his multi-volume set of published writings. There is no doubt that others clearly preceded Darby in having some form of Dispensational teaching but we would do well to not confuse all millennial teaching with the present established Dispensational millennialism.

C. I. Scofield could be noted as one who greatly popularized dispensationalism by using it as the basis for his notes in the original and very popular Scofield Reference Bible (1909). His booklet entitled “Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth,” published in 1888, was popular and sold well. There were also men like Clarence Larkin, who became a Baptist in 1882 and was ordained a Baptist minister in 1884, who wrote and drew charts that became the published work: “God’s Plan and Purpose in the Ages.” Then we have J. R. Graves who wrote “The Work of Christ in the Covenant of Redemption: Developed in Seven Dispensations” in 1883. These men were certainly not Plymouth Brethren and Graves did not fall into the same errors as did his Protestant contemporaries.

More contemporary men such as Charles Ryrie continue to promote dispensationalism in his popular and well outlined study Bible and Lewis Sperry Chafer in his Systematic Theology. You will also discover that dispensationalism has been classed into a number of positions like ultra-dispensationalism such as E. W. Bullinger and his notes in the “Companion Bible,” and “Progressive Dispensationalism” which expresses itself in its attempts to resolve the major problems with traditional dispensationalism. Progressive Dispensationalism is assessed by some, like Robert L. Thomas in his “Evangelical Hermeneutics,” to be a different system of hermeneutics entirely.

Tracking Dispensationalism’s differences and history, and then noting its changes, modifications, disagreements, and the actual morphing of it as a system are not easy tasks; and this is certainly not what I am attempting to do in this brief article. But I do want to examine three primary advocated positions of dispensationalism from what I would consider a more historic premillennial viewpoint and His-

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toric Particular Baptist position rather than a viewpoint that rests in a complete adversarial role to dispensationalism. I want to focus on the Law of God, the Church of God and the Kingdom of God as three of the areas dispensationalists have a slightly faulty exegesis of the scripture.

First, we need to look at the law of God. One of the Apostle Paul's arguments in dealing with the Judiasers' heretical teaching among the churches of Galatia was their own practical experience of salvation (Gal. 3:1-4). In defending salvation by grace through faith as opposed to salvation by works or through obedience to the law, Paul wrote of the faith of Abraham. He quoted from Old Testament scripture, using an individual under "the dispensation of promise" to show them how Abraham was saved and accounted righteous before God. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Gal. 3:6).

Neither the manner nor the method of salvation was any different here than in Paul's time, nor will it be any different during the time of great tribulation or the millennial reign of Christ. Paul used Old Testament scripture in Galatians 3:6, 8, 10, and 11 to teach a proper understanding of the Spirit's work in regeneration and the process of maturation in the life of a believer. If Paul were advancing the idea of breaking down periods of time, judgments, or dispensations of divine rule, it would seem rather strange for him to write that the true children of Abraham were those of faith and not those who obeyed the law. Paul declared the giving of the law was to aid in the restraint of man's wickedness among Israel and to further reveal and declare man's need of God's grace and mercy. It was never given as a means of salvation. The law was not given as a different administration and thereby teaching a different gospel. It was not given to succeed the promise given to Abraham or to annul it. There can be no annulling of the promise. In other words, there is no new dispensation or divine rule being instituted. Scofield's notes on Exodus 19:3 state "that the law is not proposed as a means of life, but as a means by which Israel might become 'a peculiar treasure' and a 'kingdom of priests.'" The notes go on to comment on this same subject from I Peter 2:9 by stating that Israel failed to achieve this distinction by works.

The gospel was preached to Abraham by God just as God preached it to Adam and Eve after the fall. The revelation to us of all that has taken place is certainly progressive within the entire Bible. But Adam and Eve had the full gospel preached to them about a coming Savior who was depicted in the death of the animal that was slain when God provided them clothing to cover their nakedness. The lamb slain in Exodus chapter twelve was a type of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. John's exhortation to the disciples to "behold, the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" goes beyond the Law to Abraham and even to Adam and Eve.

Now I assume that dispensationalists would agree with most of what I have written, but what I have written does not come from an exegesis dependent upon the rules of dispensational interpretation. It is because of the fact that we were "in Christ," who is the seed of Abraham, that we have any promise of inheritance or are made a kingdom of priests and a peculiar treasure. It has been and always will be that a man must be "in Christ" (having part in the eternal covenant, having Christ as our federal head) as the means of the removal of our sin and having Christ's imputed righteousness. It is God's sovereign choice that places us "in Christ" (I Cor. 1:30).

The previous statement is not dispensational hermeneutics, but it is a proper exegesis of scripture: seeing the redemption of man outside of either covenant theology or a dispensational interpretation. I will agree with Chafer that "the law was never intended to provide for man's salvation" (Major Bible Themes Sixth printing, L. S. Chafer, page 134) and that it did not extend to the Gentiles, (Ibid, page 133). It was not the law and Israel's obedience to the law that brought them into relationship with God; it is grace, only grace, and always has been grace. Did not Christ himself say to the Jews "...had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me." While dispensational teaching agrees with this in the most part, it is built upon a faulty presupposition in their distinction between Israel and the church. There is a distinction, but not the one drawn by dispensationalism. The distinction drawn by dispensationalism leads some to adopt an antinomian position or at the least allows others to label dispensationalists as antinomians. Dispensationalism, not unlike reformed covenant theology, teaches that the Holy Spirit formed or forms the church in regeneration. (Scofield Reference Bible, Acts 2:4, note #5, page 1150) Scofield's reference notes teach that the true church is composed "of the whole number of regenerate persons from Pentecost to the first resurrection." He, along with all dispensational teaching, marks the fifth dispensation from the Exodus to the cross (some teach from Exodus to Pentecost). This would place John the Baptist and his preparation of the materials from which Jesus Christ would build his church in the Age of Law. It would place the gospels and nearly every activity within those gospels in a dispensation that has passed from the scene. It would make the teaching of the gospels not binding or regulatory for a gospel church. Reformed theology primarily sees the church throughout the entire Old Testament and concludes that many of the prophecies dealing with Israel's future pertain to the "church" rather than any future restoration. Scofield goes on to teach that the church "is not an organization, but an organism, the body of Christ." (Scofield Reference Bible, The Epistles of Paul, page 1189)

Historic Particular Baptists taught and still teach that the church is a local and visible body of baptized believers as opposed to the Protestant view that the church is universal and invisible. Baptists, who hold to the local visible con-

cept of the church, willingly accept the dispensational aspect of separating Israel from the church, but for differing theological reasons. Dispensational teaching defines the church as exclusively a spiritual body, or heavenly, while maintaining Israel to be an earthly institution. Historical Baptists have defined the church as a qualified "earthly" institution: regenerate, scripturally baptized individuals, who have covenanted together to fulfill the great commission. Most have also understood there will be a future assembly made up of all the elect, but this is not a "gospel" or New Testament church. These points are easily established through the London Baptist Confessions, the Philadelphia Baptist Confession of 1742, and the New Hampshire Baptist Confession of 1833.

It is the failure of dispensational hermeneutics to recognize the word church when it is used in the local, institutional, or future sense (the latter only one time in the New Testament) but confuse it with the family of God. This confusion has resulted in some rejecting the literal and biblical teaching of the millennial reign of Christ. The word "church" used in the New Testament means assembly. Defining the word used in the New Testament is critical so as to not confuse this body with the "family of God." The very fact that we have morphed this word is displayed in any English dictionary by its various and contradictory definitions. Historically the word had a distinct meaning of a local, lawful, authorized body within the Greek State. Christ's use of the same word did not change the meaning of its common classical use, but did redefine the object and terms of membership. It was after all His assembly. Biblical use, classical use, and historical use of the word all point to the church being a local visible body, belonging to Christ, made up of regenerate, scripturally baptized individuals who have covenanted together to fulfill the great commission. The claim of "rightly dividing" the word of God is a mantra of dispensational teaching. That refrain is sung mainly in reference to the divisions of the dispensations, but falls short of true harmony with a proper and biblical interpretation of a gospel church. Dispensational teaching leads one to a universal and invisible concept of a gospel church or at a minimum a confused definition of the assembly of Christ making it local and universal at the same time, as well as invisible and visible. It can't be both at the same time.

Dispensational advocates speak of the "kingdom of heaven" that Christ said was "at hand" and portray it solely as the millennial kingdom. Whether we use the phrase "kingdom of heaven" or "kingdom of God," I do not believe there is a difference as is advocated by the teaching of dispensationalism. Scofield's notes in Matthew 6:33 teach that the kingdom of heaven is Messianic or the future millennial reign of Christ and the kingdom of God includes "all moral intelligences willingly subject to the will of God." The failure of the hermeneutical approach of dispensational teaching to see the kingdom as being present as well as past has caused many to reject

the biblical teaching of a future kingdom because they see the inconsistencies of a dispensational interpretation.

When Christ spoke of the kingdom of heaven being at hand, He was not referring to the future millennial reign. In Luke 16:16, we find "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Not only was the kingdom of God preached, but it was also "pressed into" or seized. The same truth is taught in Matthew 11:12 where we find the kingdom having suffered violence. The failure to see a present spiritual kingdom, as well as a future kingdom, that are literal and earthly leaves many confused as they study and read the word of God and see such clear teaching that is not adequately explained by the advocates of dispensationalism. The kingdom of heaven that is at hand is real; it is spiritual, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom is to instruct men to repent and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:20, 25).

If you have a Scofield reference Bible look up the notes on the verses referring to the kingdom and see what you find. What do we do with the "gospel of the kingdom" or praying for "thy kingdom come" if we relegate it strictly to a future kingdom based upon the rules of interpretation of dispensationalism? Look what Paul did in Rome when he gathered the "chief of the Jews together" in Acts 28:17-24. He expounded unto them "and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening." Instead of trying to make the scriptures, regarding the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, fit into a constraining theological system that in fact does not rightly divide the scriptures, interpret scripture using scripture. You are certainly not rejecting premillennialism by doing so, but you are rejecting a forced interpretation in matters that are eternally important and spiritually profitable.

The moral law of God has always condemned the sinfulness of man and the Decalogue was not a vehicle by which Israel could attain what only the power of the Holy Spirit can produce. The church of God is indeed a distinct body separate from Israel, but it is not to be defined as all the saved from Pentecost to the first resurrection as Scofield, Ryrie, Walvoord, Chafer or others have done. There is coming a literal kingdom upon this earth, but there currently is and has been a spiritual kingdom as John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the Apostle Paul declared. While there is agreement with some of the conclusions of dispensational teaching, there is much to disagree with on how those conclusions are reached. Dispensational teaching as a system of theology and interpretation needs to be placed under the spotlight despite the agreements in the literal and soon coming millennial reign of Christ. ✨



## Some Errors of Postmillennialism

Michael McCoskey

Throughout the history of the church three major views concerning the way in which the Kingdom of Christ will be manifested on this earth have developed. Amillennialism advocates that the Gospel Age, from the time of Christ's death until the end of time, is indeed the only earthly manifestation of the Kingdom. These scholars see Christ's Kingdom as operating now alongside of the wicked kingdoms of the world through the church. We are in the millennium at the present time and there is no Golden Millennial Age yet to come. Premillennialist scholars take exception with the interpretation that the Gospel Age is the only manifestation of the Kingdom of Christ. While they agree that Christ now is seated at the right hand of God, they maintain that the scriptures teach that He will return and establish a visible Kingdom upon the earth. Postmillennialism teaches that there is a Millennial Age coming, and that Christ will return after this age. It is the purpose of this brief article to define postmillennialism, and show the major areas where it differs from premillennialism.

### POSTMILLENNIALISM DEFINED

As the name suggests, postmillennialists hold that Christ will return after the millennial age. Many postmillennialists see John Calvin as an advocate of this view, and without doubt there are many references in Calvin's writings which would so indicate. In his commentary on II Thessalonians 2:8, Calvin wrote: "Paul, however, intimates Christ will in the meantime, by the rays which he will emit previously to his advent, put to flight the darkness in which antichrist will reign, just as the sun, before he is seen by us, chases away the darkness of the night by the pouring forth of his rays." (*Volume*; XXI, p. 335). Loraine Boettner, a well known Reformed writer and postmillennialist, states the position more directly: "the world eventually is to be Christianized, and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the 'millennium' (*The Millennium*, Boettner, chapter 3, page 14). So a prominent tenet of this view is that Christ's return will follow the Millennial Age on this earth.

A second tenet of postmillennialism is the viewing of the length of the millennium as figurative and not a literal 1000 years. John Calvin attacked those who viewed the thousand years as literal when he wrote: "shortly after the Chiliasts arose, who limited the reign of Christ to a thousand years. This fiction is too puerile to need or deserve refutation" (*Institutes*; book III, chapter 25, section 5). Likewise, Dr. B.B. Warfield, Reformed professor and

pastor, says of the thousand years: "It is quite certain that the number 1000 represents in Biblical symbolism absolute perfection and completeness...When the saints are said to live, and reign with Christ a thousand years the idea intended is that of inconceivable exaltation, security and blessedness beyond expression of ordinary language" (*Biblical Doctrines*, p. 654). In a similar manner, Boettner says of the 1000 years: "It is an indefinitely long period of time, perhaps longer than a literal one thousand years" (*Ibid.*, p. 14).

A third important tenet of postmillennialism is what Greg Bahnsen calls "the success of the great commission in this age of the church" (*The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Vol. III, No. 2, Winter, 1976-77). The postmillennialist believes that through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit "the world eventually is to be Christianized," and "thus a golden age of spiritual prosperity" will come to this earth (*Ibid.*, p. 14). The return of Christ is to occur at the end of this period of prosperity, peace, and righteousness as the church rules in triumph over darkness during this millennium.

Many scholars of the past and present hold this position. According to Calvin: "The Church shall not be limited to any corner of the world, but shall be extended as far and wide as there shall be space throughout the whole world" (*Commentary*; on Isaiah 60:4). During the great missionary expansion of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, many wrote of the soon coming Golden Age to be brought about by the preaching of the gospel. Thomas Shepherd authored such a tract in 1648 in which he saw the Millennial Age approaching when "the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea" (J. D. De Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640-1810*; p. 52). Quotes could be multiplied to support postmillennialism from such esteemed writers as: David Brainerd, John Owen, Matthew Henry, Isaac Watts, Robert Haldane, Robert M'Cheyne, Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, B.B. Warfield, and B. H. Carroll. A position is not, however, determined to be correct by the reputation of the men who advocate it, but by the scripture that declares it.

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### WHERE WE DIFFER?

The most obvious point of difference between postmillennialism and premillennialism is when Christ will return in relation to the millennium.

Is Christ going to initiate the age by his return and rule over it with his saints, or will he return at its close? Scripture clearly advocates His return to the earth to establish His kingdom and to be presented as its king.

Daniel received a vision of the destruction of the kingdoms of this earth under the Antichrist and the establishment of the millennial kingdom. In this vision, Antichrist prevailed against the saints until "the Ancient of days came" (Daniel 7:22). When Christ came, "the saints possessed, the kingdom" and "kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven were given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Daniel 7:22,27). Daniel presents the establishment of the kingdom as a result of the Ancient of days coming in judgment; furthermore, all nations according to Daniel will "serve and obey" the present and reigning King.

In similar manner, Ezekiel pictures an earthly kingdom established in Israel with Christ reigning. Ezekiel records, "I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all" and then he says, "And David my servant shall be king over them;" (Ezekiel 37:22, 24). The purpose for this is given to us by the prophet. It is so that the nations shall see that Christ is the King and so that they will know him in his glory. When Christ came the first time, his majesty, glory, and divine authority to rule were hidden in a body of flesh. This was done in God's sovereign purpose and plan to redeem his elect from the bondage of sin by his own sacrificial death. When he returns the second time, however, it will be to "magnify myself, and sanctify myself" (Ezekiel 38:23). He says, "I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezekiel 38:23). He will come so that the people of this earth where he was crucified shall clearly see him as king: "the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel" (Ezekiel 39:7) and "Neither will I hide my face any more from them" (Ezekiel 39:29).

Likewise, the prophet Zechariah says very clearly that Christ is coming again to rule over this earth as its rightful King. He is coming to destroy the worldly kingdom of Antichrist: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle...Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zechariah 14:2,3). When he comes, "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east," and he will be "king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:4, 9).

This is also the picture that John presents as he unveils Christ in the book of Revelation. John pictures Christ coming with the armies of heaven to take up the defense of his people and to destroy the enemies of God marshaled in strength under the Antichrist (Revelation 19). He is revealed as the "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (19:16). As he comes with his army, he comes to "destroy them which destroy the earth" (11:18). We clearly see this destruction pictured in chapter 19 as the Antichrist and the false prophet are "cast alive into" the lake of fire, and the armies with them are "slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse" (19:20,21). Destroying the army of the Antichrist, however, is not the only reason for his coming from heaven, for we are told that "he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron;" (19:15). Ruling indicates the establishment of his kingdom in the place of those defeated. As Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah had prophesied of him reigning, so John pictures his millennial reign. Satan is bound for a thousand years to no longer deceive the nations (20:3). The saints of God are given the kingdom and "reigned with Christ a thousand years" (20:4). This is an earthly kingdom and an earthly reign, for we are clearly told by John, "we shall reign on the earth" (5:10).

The understanding of the 1000 years is a second place where premillennialists part company with most postmillennialists. We do not agree with the postmillennialists' making the 1000 years figurative. When John prophesies six times in Revelation 20 that the length of this period is 1000 years, we believe that he was giving the length of time of the earthly aspect of his reign. Often the citing of Psalm 50:10 is used to supposedly refute the literal interpretation of the 1000 years in Revelation. In that passage, the psalmist is exalting God as creator and owner of his creation. He uses the term a thousand as a figurative or representative number, "for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." No one would argue in this case that the number is used in this Old Testament poetic literature in a figurative way, but does that mean that the 1000 years of Revelation is figurative? If we are to be consistent in our interpretation of prophecy, then we should let Old Testament prophecy guide us in interpreting the 1000 years not Old Testament poetry. We should look at Old Testament prophecy where a number is used, and we should determine if God meant it figuratively or literally.

One such passage occurs very early in the Old Testament. God gave Abraham a prophecy that the nation of Israel would be afflicted in Egyptian bondage "four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13). In this case, we find that the time period in the prophecy was literal. After four hundred years Israel came forth. Likewise, when God gave Jeremiah the length of time that Israel would be in Babylonian captivity he said: "after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you in causing you to return to this

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place" (Jeremiah 29:10). Israel went into captivity in 606 B.C. and was in captivity until 536 B.C. Once again the time period was literal and not figurative. In fact, every Old Testament prophecy where there is a specific time period given, it is fulfilled literally. It would seem that it would be natural then to interpret New Testament prophecy in the same manner.

Finally, premillennialists have a problem with the post-millennial concept that the world will experience a Golden Millennial Age without the King present. We like the idea of the Gospel conquering the nations of the earth, and the vast majority of the world's people coming to Christ in great revivals. A Golden Age where the Church is preeminent in society is extremely appealing, but we do not see the scriptures teaching such an age until the Prince of Peace comes and brings it to the earth. In fact, Paul in writing to Timothy speaks of the last days as "perilous

times" (II Timothy 3:1). According to his description, mankind will be "lovers of their own selves" and "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:2,4). Paul says people will be, "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7). This does not fit the postmillennial concept of a period of extraordinary righteousness.

There is a Golden Age coming in which the knowledge of the Lord will be universal, the law of the Lord the standard of conduct for the world, and the word of the Lord universally accepted. This age will be ushered in not by the Church, but by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. He will rule from his throne for a glorious thousand years, and his saints will rule and reign with him. ✨

The setting loose of Satan is only the prelude to his total destruction, Rev. 20:10. Then follows the last, highest and grandest revelation of God. The earth now becomes what it ought originally to have been, but which it was hindered from being by sin, viz., the common dwelling-place of God and of men. The heavenly Jerusalem, the tabernacle in which God dwells with men (Rev. 21:3) descends upon the renovated earth. This is the Jerusalem in which according to v. 23, Jehovah Zebaoth reigns as King. This city needs no sun and no moon any more—for the Lord Himself is its light (Rev. 21:23;22:5).

Nagelsbach. *Lange's Com.* Isa. 24:21-23.

## Errors of Preterism

Royce Smith



What is preterism? The Wikipedia Encyclopedia defines preterism as "a variant Christian eschatology which holds that some or all of the Biblical prophecies concerning the *Last Days* (or End Times) refer to events which actually happened in the first century after Christ's birth. The term **preterism** comes from the Latin, *praeter*, meaning 'past.'" Advocates of preterism are known as preterists.

Preterism is an old heresy that has experienced a resurgence in recent years among all evangelical denominations including Sovereign Grace Baptists. That preterism is not considered an orthodox eschatological view is evident from its not even being mentioned in older Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. This writer searched in vain through many well-known books dealing with eschatology or Bible Prophecy for information on preterism. The sparsity of references to preterism in books written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries suggests it is a novel concept to this generation.

As it is with other schools of thought in eschatology, preterists are not in full agreement among themselves. Some consider themselves *partial* or classical preterists; others call themselves *full* or consistent preterists. Partial preterists believe that prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the antichrist, the great tribulation, and the day of the Lord were fulfilled in AD 70. They distinguish, however, between "the last days" and the "the last day." Therefore, the last coming of Christ, the resurrection, and the final judgment are still considered future by partial preterists. The full preterists believe all these events are historical, having occurred in AD 70.

Nearly all partial preterists are either amillennialists or post-millennialists. Obviously, preterists and futurists (those who believe these Biblical prophecies are yet future) differ on their interpretations of the Scriptures in which these prophecies appear. While this article will examine some of these passages, it will especially seek to expose the false premises or pre-suppositions on which this heresy is founded.

### THE EARLY DATE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

In order to sustain their view that either most or all major prophecies were fulfilled in AD 70, the preterists are

forced to presume the Book of Revelation was written before AD 70. The traditional date of the writing of the Book of Revelation by the Apostle John is AD 96. This late date is based on the testimony of Irenaeus who wrote about AD 180 of the Revelation: "For it was seen, not a long time ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian." Clement of Alexandria confirmed the testimony of Irenaeus. In the Fourth Century Epiphanius wrote that John's exile to the Isle of Patmos occurred between AD 41-53 in the reign of Claudius, but he strangely claimed John was 90 years of age at the time. Thus, Epiphanius seems to have been the first to advocate that Revelation was written before AD 96.

In modern times, such "stalwarts of truth" as Westcott and Hort have advocated the early date of the Revelation, suggesting it was written under Nero's reign about AD 68 or 69. This writer puts very little credence in these corrupters of the Word of God, for it was Westcott and Hort who undermined the credibility of the Received Text with all their theories about the sacred text of the Greek New Testament.

The preterists must prove that Revelation was written before AD 70, else the first premise of the preterists falls. If this premise falls, it causes their whole system to collapse. That this system of eschatology is unstable is thus evident from the fact it is partially built upon the rotten foundation of a pre-supposition that is not well-founded in church history.

### THE END OF THE MOSIAC COVENANT

Another of the weak premises on which preterism is built is the belief that the Mosaic Covenant did not cease until Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. This is indeed a strange view to this writer. What saith the Scriptures to this assertion? Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16). The beginning of the end of the Mosaic Covenant started with John the Baptist. There was a transition period between the beginning of John's ministry and its final fulfillment in the death of Christ. That it officially ended when Christ died is argued by the Apostle Paul, writing of Christ, said, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath

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days" (Col. 2:14-16). If the law were still in effect at this time (about AD 61), then men certainly could have judged what the Colossians ate and drank, what days they observed, and how they kept the sabbath days. But the law having been done away when Christ died, they were not to permit anyone to judge them in any of these matters.

The law was fulfilled when Christ died, not when divine judgment fell on Jerusalem in AD 70. Speaking of the cessation of the law in 2 Corinthians 3:6-11, Paul specifically declared "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious" (2 Cor. 3:11). The Apostle thus maintained the law had been done away when he wrote the second letter to the Corinthians about AD 57. Therefore, if the law was done away when it was fulfilled in Christ's death and was said to be done away when Paul wrote Second Corinthians, then the law was not in effect until Jerusalem fell in AD 70, when it finally ended according to preterists. Thus, another of the flimsy premises on which Preterism is built has given way to the clear teachings of Scripture and simple logic concerning those teachings.

#### THE USE OF THE TERM *QUICKLY*

Another premise on which preterism is founded is the term "quickly" used often by our Lord with reference to His Second coming (Rev. 22:7, 12, 22). The Greek word *tachu*, translated "quickly" in these passages is from the same stem as *tachos* which is translated "speedily" in Luke 18:8, and "shortly" in Romans 16:20; Revelation 1:1; 22:16. Both of these terms are relative, not absolute. Is coming in two years coming "quickly" or "speedily"? If Revelation was written in AD 68 and Christ came in AD 70, then He came "quickly" according to the Preterists. But to many people, two years would not be coming quickly. For this reason, we have to view these terms relatively, not absolutely.

The promise in Romans 16:20 asserts that "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Will the preterists argue that this promise has been fulfilled? If so, when was it fulfilled? How was it fulfilled? What did the destruction of Jerusalem have to do with Satan's being bruised under the feet of the Roman saints? Surely any thinking person would not be so credulous as to believe that "shortly" in this case meant but a few years. Would any right-thinking person build an entire system of eschatology on a term that is obviously used relatively, not absolutely?

#### THE END OF THE AGE VERSUS THE END OF THE WORLD

Another of the faulty premises on which preterism is built is the substitution of the word *age* for the word *world* in the phrase *the end of the world*. Following the Westcott-Hort text and all modern translations which have replaced *the end of the world* with *the end of the age* in Matthew

24:3, the preterists argue that the *age* referenced in this passage is that of the law which ended in AD 70.

If *age* is the correct translation in Matthew 24:3, then it must also be correct in Matthew 28:20. Indeed, all modern translations render the last part of this passage, "and lo, I am with you always, even to *the end of the age*" (NASB, NKJV). Now the Sovereign Grace Baptist preterist has painted himself in a corner here: according to his belief that *age* refers to the period which ended in AD 70, the Lord would then have only promised to be with His churches until AD 70 in Matthew 28:20, for if *aión* means *age* in Matthew 24:3, then it also must mean *age* in Matthew 28:20. Another problem in Matthew 28:20 for the preterist is the term *always*. Why would the Lord have promised to be with His churches *always* when He would actually only be with them until AD 70? If *quickly* must be interpreted absolutely, then so must *always*. As a matter of fact, *always* is a much more absolute term than *quickly*.

There was a reason the translators of the King James Version translated *aión* as *world* rather than *age*. *Aión* speaks of the world under the aspect of time whereas *kosmos* which is also translated *world* views the world under the aspect of space, according to Trench in his *Synonyms of the New Testament*. The translation *age* fits the philosophy of spiritists and other *new-age* advocates. Accordingly, there is no *world to come* in Mark 10:30; it is only another *age to come* as the new-agers advocated in the hit song of the 1960's entitled *Age of Aquarius*. If there are only *ends of ages* and no *end of the world*, then one would have to conclude that the world will last forever. Indeed, it seems preterism, especially full preterism, offers no clear teaching on how this world will ever end.

#### THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE RESURRECTION

Partial preterists and full preterists differ on this point, as has been mentioned. Full preterists deny the future bodily resurrection of the saints who have died since AD 70. They are in agreement with Hymenaeus and Philetus of whom Paul wrote saying, "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:18). Modern preterism is overthrowing the faith of many today. The future bodily resurrection of the saints is one tenant of the faith, which they are seeking to overthrow.

This is an egregious heresy. According to the Apostle Paul, if there is no bodily resurrection of the saints, then Christ is not raised (1 Cor. 15:12-44). Some preterists contend our Lord does not now have the physical body, which He had following His resurrection. If that be the case, then how could the angels have declared to the disciples who watched the Lord ascend into heaven, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall

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### Theme of next issue: The Abrahamic Covenant

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so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). While the saints will not be resurrected with their mortal bodies of flesh and blood, they will nevertheless have immortal bodies of flesh and bone like our Lord has, which bodies are sustained by spirit, not blood (1 Cor. 15:50-54). According to the Apostle John, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance given to the Lord's churches until He comes again (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Those who consider themselves full or consistent preterists have a real problem here. If Christ has already come, then there is no reason for the churches to observe the Lord's Supper. According to the Apostle Paul, the Lord's Supper is to be observed to show His death only until He comes. This writer knows of one church which has ceased to observe the Lord's Supper since it has embraced the full preterist view of Biblical prophecy.

#### THE INTERPRETATION OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

A major difference between preterists and futurists is their interpretations of the Olivet Discourse of our Lord as recorded in Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21. This discourse occurred in response to the disciples' question to the Lord's statement concerning the buildings of the temple being destroyed. They came to Him and said, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of

thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3).

Most futurists or pure Biblicists will acknowledge that much of this discourse was fulfilled in AD 70. Certainly the temple was destroyed, as was the city of Jerusalem. But there are many events yet to occur, as a close examination of this discourse will reveal. Luke's account of this discourse points out this fact. Luke 21:8-23 deal with the events leading up to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in AD 70. Luke 21:24 is the transitional verse, foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews among the nations until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled, an event alluded to by Paul in Romans 11:25. Then Luke 21:25-28 describes those events, which are yet future and will occur following the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles. Thus, Luke's account of the Olivet Discourse gives the chronological exposition of this important teaching. The accounts of Matthew and Mark must be interpreted in light of Luke's chronology of prophesied events.

The more one studies preterism, the more he marvels that so many have believed its precepts. Preterism takes away the *Blessed Hope* of our Lord's return. It denies we shall ever be bodily resurrected to stand before the Lord as even Job of old anticipated (Job 19:24-27). This system of eschatology has no answers for how this evil world will ever end. Consequently, preterism has nothing in it to commend itself to this writer or to edify his soul. ✪



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## The Abrahamic Covenant

VOLUME III ISSUE III

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A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

### Inside This Edition

- ◆ The Abrahamic Covenant, *Dan Cozart* ..... p. 3
- ◆ The Promise of the Land to Israel, *John F. Walvoord* ..... p. 6
- ◆ God's Dealings With Israel—By Grace or Law?, *Barry E. Homer* ..... p. 12

## Purpose

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## God's Inviolable Promises to Abraham

It is God who has pledged Himself that there will always be an Israel. Thus it is absolutely impossible for Israel to cease to exist as a nation. A certain theological position, which holds that now the church is the true Israel, is embarrassed by the continued existence of the nation Israel into New Testament times. Better that they be found at fault and in embarrassment than that the least promise of God should fall to the ground. Jeremiah introduces the eternal existence of Israel as a kind of refrain throughout his prophecy. In Jeremiah 5:18 we read: "But even in those days, saith the Lord, I will not make a full end with you." Then, again the prophet declared, "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered

thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jeremiah 30:11). Yet again the word is clear: "Fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord; for I am with thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jeremiah 46:28). If ever a nation had irreversible promises and solemn pledges to guarantee its continued existence, that nation is Israel. It is the first element in the Abrahamic Covenant and must be given its rightful emphasis, if the plan of God for the world is to be properly understood.

From Focus on Prophecy, Charles L. Feinberg,  
Fleming H. Revell, 1964

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## The Abrahamic Covenant

Dan W. Cozart

Acts 7:1-8 "Then said the high priest, Are these things so? And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran; and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet, he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God; and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs."

The contents of Acts 7 have to do with a defense made by Stephen before he was stoned to death. In this chapter he introduces to us a covenant that God made with Abraham in the Old Testament. It is called the "Covenant of Circumcision" in verse 8. This covenant is set forth in Genesis 12:1-7; Genesis 13:14-18; Genesis 15:1-18; and Genesis 17:1-21.

There were many covenants which God made with men in the Old Testament. They were basically of two kinds. Some covenants were conditional while others were unconditional. A conditional covenant was reciprocal and bilateral in nature. God would do certain things if man would do certain things. In other words, they were stipulatory in nature. An unconditional covenant was quite the opposite. It was unilateral only. It simply stated what God would do without man's cooperation and response. There were no stipulations and requirements. The Noahic Covenant was unconditional, and was ratified by the sign of a rainbow. The Mosaic Covenant was conditional, and was ratified by the sign of the Sabbath. The Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional, and was ratified by the sign of circumcision. It is this important covenant to which I would draw your attention.

A hermeneutical nightmare occurs when words lose their meaning. The Bible is a book of words, and those words

mean something. If not, then we cannot understand or communicate. J. R. Graves was correct when he said:

*"The Bible was made for man in the language of men, and must be interpreted by the rules that govern human language. The literal, which is the received meaning of a word, is to be in all cases retained, unless weighty and necessary reasons require that it should be abandoned where a figurative or a secondary be employed. If the Bible is not to be translated and interpreted by these rules, then it is not a revelation to man, unless the author of it gave the race a lexicon to translate and a commentary to interpret it. Touching rhetoric, this is an inflexible rule, viz: No passage is figurative unless it contains a figure. A disregard of these fundamental principles by commentators has made wild havoc of many of even the most literal portions of the Word."*

I believe this to be a very true statement. If "Abraham" does not mean "Abraham", and "Israel" does not mean "Israel", and "Canaan" does not mean "Canaan", then how can we be sure that "Jehovah" means "Jehovah", or "Heaven" means "Heaven", or "Hell" means "Hell", or "Salvation" means "Salvation"? Therefore, it is with the literal approach to Scripture that I approach this tremendous subject of the Abrahamic Covenant.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE COVENANT—ACTS 7:2-3

When did it originate? When was it set forth in motion? It did not begin when Abraham believed, but before that when he lived in heathen darkness. It was established before Abram ever left Mesopotamia for Canaan. This perfectly agrees with Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee; And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

The covenant was later renewed after Abram came into Canaan and stopped at Shechem in Genesis 12:6-7: "And

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Abram passed through the land, unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land; And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said: Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him."

#### THE RECIPIENTS OF THE COVENANT – ACTS 7:8

It would extend through Abraham to Isaac; through Isaac to Jacob; through Jacob to the twelve patriarchs, who were his twelve sons. Jacob's name would later be changed to "Israel"; thus his offspring became known as "Israelites." This would involve a multitude of people known as "the seed of Abraham" in Genesis 13:16 and Genesis 17:10: "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered... This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man child among you shall be circumcised."

Abram's son born of Hagar, whose name was Ishmael, was not included in the covenant according to Genesis 17:18-21: "And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; And thou shalt call his name Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee. Behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."

The Israelites, who are the initial recipients of the Abrahamic Covenant, are clearly defined as the twelve sons of Jacob in Genesis 49. In this chapter we see Jacob, after arriving in Egypt at Joseph's request, having a meeting with his sons. Each of the twelve sons are listed. This is followed by the clear statement in verse 28: "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is that their father spake unto them; everyone according to the blessing he blessed them." The term "twelve tribes" is mentioned throughout the Word of God, however, this is the first place that it is to be found. They were the initial recipients of the Abrahamic Covenant.

#### THE INDUCTION OF THE COVENANT - GENESIS 15:9-12,17-18

"And He said unto him, take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he

took unto Him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another, but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces. In the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

Abraham was asleep during the entire ceremony. There is no responsibility laid upon Abraham. The covenant is to be unilateral, unconditional, unchangeable, and irrevocable. Even 400 years in Egyptian bondage will not nullify it. Those who believe the church has replaced Israel in the covenant, have a hard time putting the church in slavery in Egypt. It seems the "smoking furnace" speaks of Egyptian bondage, while the "burning lamp" speaks of God's presence and promise during their suffering. The bush may burn with persecution for 400 years, yet it will not be consumed by the fire. God was in the bush then, and He is still in that same bush today. God made a covenant with Abraham and his seed.

#### THE PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT

First of all, *It Provided A Seed of Promise* – Genesis 15:1-6. "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and lo, one born in mine house is mine heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This shalt not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."

As previously stated, Abraham's son, Ishmael, would not be the seed. Neither would Eliezer of Damascus qualify. Genesis 17:19 identifies the seed to be Isaac. "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name, Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." Isaac was the miracle child born to Abraham when he was one hundred, and to Sarah when

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she was ninety. The covenant promises would flow through Isaac to his seed according to Genesis 26:1-4. That seed would then extend to Jacob, the father of the Israelites according to Genesis 28:1-4. This is the physical seed of Abraham which God promised. All of the physical blessings of the covenant are directed toward Israel.

However, there are spiritual blessings of salvation in the covenant that only Christ can fulfill. Abraham thus became the progenitor of the Redeemer in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, as in Romans 9:1-5.

Galatians 3:7-8, 14,16 says: "Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. That the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as to many, but as of one. And to thy seed which is Christ."

Next, the covenant *Provided A Blessing of Preservation* - Genesis 22:17. "...I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore." This Scripture speaks of this seed as "the sand which is upon the sea shore." This refers to the Nation of Israel. It is the physical aspect of the covenant. When two million Israelites left Egypt for Canaan, they probably looked like an army of ants crossing the Red Sea. God preserved them time and time again, and He preserves them today. Go to the land of Palestine and you will not find the Kenites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Amorites, the Cannanites, or the Jebusites. You will, however, find the Israelites. God has preserved them miraculously.

The seed is also spoken of as "the stars of the heaven." This is the spiritual aspect of the covenant. It refers to all, who like Abraham, have had God's righteousness imputed to their account through faith in Christ. The believers, Jew and Gentile alike, have become the spiritual children of Abraham according to Galatians 3:29, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." We are preserved forever!

Finally, the covenant *Provided A Land Of Possession* - Genesis 13:14-17. "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, south-

ward, eastward, and westward. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall also thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." Genesis 15:18 says: "In the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land. From the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Again in Genesis 50:24: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die. And God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

**The Covenant which God made with Abraham and Israel is... unilateral, unconditional, unchangeable, and irrevocable.**

God promised the land of Palestine to the Jews (Israelites). That promise has never been changed nor rescinded. Our God did not promise it to the church. He did not promise it to the Arabs. He did not promise it to the Muslims. The seed of Ishmael has nothing to do with this land. It was given specifically to Abraham and his seed as an everlasting possession. "Replacement Theology" is not Biblical theology. The Scriptures are full of this promise and grant of land to Israel.

The Covenant which God made with Abraham and Israel is still in force today. It is unilateral, unconditional, unchangeable, and irrevocable. The Jews have never had the land promise fulfilled for them. They have come into their land, only to be driven out time after time. In May of 1948, Palestine became a Jewish state for the first time in 2500 years. They have established their own government there, with thousands of exile Jews moving there from all over the world. Yet, they do not have all the land that God promised them. They even have to share it with others today. Yet, there is a time coming in Bible prophecy when Palestine will be theirs.

Amos 9:14-15 says "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them. And they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."

Ezekiel 37 is a chapter telling about Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones. One does not have to guess what the interpretation is. It has nothing to do with the church. It has to do with Israel in Bible Prophecy. The Scriptures are the best commentary on the Bible. Let me close with Ezekiel 37:11-14...

(Cazart: continued on page 14)

## The Promise of the Land to Israel

John F. Walvoord



In the broad program of prophecy relating to Israel, few factors are more important than the promise to Abraham of the perpetual possession of the land. It is not only constantly reiterated in prophecies relating to the hope of Israel, but it is an integral part of the call to Abraham which begins the program. According to Genesis 12:1 God had said to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee." It is almost impossible to avoid the plain implication that the term *the land* was a geographic designation and that Abraham understood it in this way.

Practically all conservative expositors agree that Abraham was instructed in his original call to leave his native country, Ur of the Chaldees, and proceed to the land of Canaan. The historical record of his journey is recorded in Genesis 11:31: "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there." After delay in Haran, still outside the land of Canaan, they finally entered the land itself after the death of Terah as recorded in Genesis 12:5: "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." The original call to Abraham, therefore, involved a geographic understanding and that to Abraham the expression *the land* meant the land of Canaan promised to him and his seed.

I would seem redundant to cite these proofs if it were not for the fact that the term *the land* and its related promises are frequently spiritualized as if they had no geographic implications whatever. As has been pointed out in previous discussion, amillenarians usually follow one of two routes in evading the premillennial interpretations of this passage, namely (1) that the promises of the land are to be spiritualized and relate to heaven; or (2) that the promises are to be interpreted literally but are conditional and will never be fulfilled. In order to consider the amillennial argument, it is necessary to examine first the promise of

the land to the seed of Abraham as unfolded in the Old Testament; second, to study the dispossessions of the land involved in the three dispersions of Israel; third, to ascertain whether these promises have in some sense already been fulfilled or whether they are subject to future fulfillment; and, fourth, whether taking the evidence as a whole there is good ground for belief in the future fulfillment of these promises. Certain conclusions may then be drawn concerning Israel's prophetic hopes.

### The Promise of the Land to Abraham's Seed

In examining the promise of the land, it may be observed first that Abraham understood the promises of God as relating to the literal land of Canaan. This is demonstrated by his movement from Ur to Canaan as has already been pointed out. It is further confirmed by the promise in Genesis 12:7 given after his entrance into the land: "unto thy seed will I give this land." Certainly Abraham understood it to refer to the physical land of Canaan. This is reinforced by his experience in Genesis 13 where after being separated from Lot he is urged to look northward, southward, eastward, and westward (Genesis 13:14). At that time God assured him: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Genesis 13:15). Further, he is instructed: "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it: for unto thee will I give it" (Genesis 13:17). It is practically impossible to evade understanding these verses as referring to the literal land.

In Genesis 15:18-21 the exact dimensions of the land are given and the territory is described as running from the river of Egypt, which was the borderline between Egypt and Canaan, and the great river, the river Euphrates, hundreds of miles to the east. It becomes clear from the description which follows which itemizes the heathen tribes occupying this territory that God had in mind more than just the small area occupied by the Canaanite himself, but rather the entire area between these two boundaries. Here again it is obvious Abraham understood that a large geographic area was involved.

The New Testament comments on this expectation of Abraham in Hebrews 11:8-9 where it is written: "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs

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with him of the same promise." So far, all must agree that a literal land is in view. Amillenarians are quick to point out, however, that verse 10 goes on to say: "For he looked for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Also, in Hebrews 11:16 it adds: "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."

Do these allusions to a heavenly city nullify the idea of a literal land? A careful study of this passage will demonstrate that the subject is Abraham's faith. His faith first of all was in regard to the land, and his faith was indicated by his obedience and his sojourning in the land in tents. The same faith which he manifested in God's promise concerning the land is also manifested in Abraham's faith concerning the heavenly city. The land represented God's promise in relation to time, more specifically, the future kingdom of Christ on earth, while the heavenly has to do with eternity, the New Jerusalem and the new earth. In the case of both, Abraham never possessed in life the fulfillment of the promises and like others he died in faith before the promises were fulfilled. The fact that Abraham believed both the temporal promises of God and the eternal promises of God does not lead to the conclusion that the earthly promise and the heavenly promise are one and the same. It is rather that they require the same attitude of faith. The major emphasis of Scripture, however, is on Abraham's belief in the temporal promises of God and to this the Scriptures constantly refer. The allusions to the eternal state and Abraham's expectation and faith are in fact rare, while the promises relating to possession of the land are one of the major themes of the Old Testament.

In presenting the Messianic hope, Isaiah, in the major passage of Isaiah 11:1-12, after describing the justice which will characterize the land when the Messiah reigns, prophesies the regathering of the children of Israel "from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea." He goes on to state that He is going to "gather together the dispersion of Judah from the four corners of the earth." The whole context makes clear that they are being brought back to the land.

Similar passages abound in Isaiah. For instance, in Isaiah 14:1 it is declared: "For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land." According to Isaiah 27:13 the children of Israel are going to be gathered from Assyria and Egypt and "they shall worship Jehovah in the holy

mountain at Jerusalem." This of course involves a return to the land.

In Isaiah 43:5-7 the regathering of Israel to the land is described: "Fear not; for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the end of the earth; every one that is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory, who I have formed, yea, whom I have made." It is stated categorically in Isaiah 60:21: "Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever."

The book of Isaiah concludes with a great prophecy concerning the regathering of Israel as it will be consummated when they are brought from the ends of the earth to the Promised Land in the beginning of the millennium. According to Isaiah 66:20: "And they shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an oblation unto heaven, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Jehovah, as the children of Israel bring their oblation in a clean vessel into the house of Jehovah."

This theme of Israel is continued in Jeremiah 16:14-16: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that it shall no more be said, As Jehovah liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, As Jehovah liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the countries whither he had driven them. And I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith Jehovah, and they shall fish them up; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks." It should be noted that the regathering of Israel to their ancient land is here described as being a regathering to the last man, something that was not remotely approached in any previous return.

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In describing the time of the great tribulation in Jeremiah 30:1-7, it is declared in verse 3: "For, lo, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will turn again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their father, and they shall possess it." It is further stated in Jeremiah 30:10-11: "Therefore fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith Jehovah; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet

and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished." In Jeremiah 31 the return of Israel to the land is predicted in verse 5: "Again shalt thou plant vineyards upon the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy the fruit thereof." The regathering is described in Jeremiah 31:8: "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the uttermost parts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall they return hither."

In the description of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-40 it is predicted that Israel will return to the land and that Jerusalem will be built in a certain area which had formerly never been used for building purposes. It is remarkable that this precise area has been built into a portion of the modern city of Jerusalem in fulfillment of this prophecy.

Another clear reference to the regathering of Israel and their being planted in their land is found in Jeremiah 32:37-44. In verse 37 it is stated: "Behold, I will gather them out of all the countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my wrath, and in great indignation; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely." Again, in verse 41 it is declared: "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." Jeremiah promises that they will again possess the fields in and about Jerusalem and that God will cause their captivity to return. In Jeremiah 33, God solemnly swears that He will cause their captivity to return, that justice and righteousness will be executed in the land, and that the seed of David will reign on the throne. Such passages could be multiplied, such as Ezekiel 11:14-21 where in verse 17 God says plainly: "I will give you the land of Israel."

Ezekiel 20:33-38 describes the judgment upon Israel at the beginning of the millennial kingdom, when the rebels are prohibited from entering the land in contrast to the righteous who do. In Ezekiel 20:42 it is written: "And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country which I swear to give unto your fathers." Again in Ezekiel 34:13 God promises: "And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the

inhabited places of the country."

In the great prophecy concerning the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37 the significant statement is given in verses 21-22: "And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them in to their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Ezekiel adds in verses 24-25 that David is going to reign over them. In verse 25 he writes: "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever: and David my servant shall be their prince for ever."

... they will be gathered to their land and ... God will not allow a single Israelite to remain in dispersion.

The process of the regathering of Israel is declared in Ezekiel 39:25-29 to extend to the whole house of Israel and indicates that they will be brought back into their land to the last man, as stated in verse 28: "And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, in that I caused them to go into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them unto their own land; and I will leave none of them any more there." The meaning of this passage is that they will be gathered to their land and that God will not allow a single Israelite to remain in dispersion. This has never been fulfilled by any previous regathering.

Most of the minor prophets continue this prophetic strain, so prominent in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The undying love of God for Israel is declared in Hosea, and, though according to 3:4 the children of Israel will be without a king and a priesthood, they are assured in verse 5: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days." The Prophet Joel, after declaring the judgment of God upon Israel, closes his book by declaring: "But Judah shall abide for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation" (3:20).

The Prophet Amos, after an almost unrelieved indictment on Israel for their sin, closes his book with five verses in chapter 9 beginning in verse 11, where it is affirmed that the tent of David which is fallen will be raised up again. The abundance of crops is described and Amos declares God's intention in verses 14 and 15: "And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine



thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant then upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God." This major passage on the regathering of Israel is significant because it pictures the revival of Israel after divine judgment upon them, the abundant crops that will characterize Israel in those days, and closes with the assurance that they will no more be scattered once they are brought back to the land. Here again is a prophecy which was not fulfilled in previous regatherings and demands a future regathering in which this prophecy will be completely fulfilled. It is to this prophecy that James alludes in Acts 15:15-18 when he declared at the council of Jerusalem that it was the divine order that there should be blessing on the Gentiles first and that this was to be followed by the restoration of Israel and the rebuilding of the tent of David.

Obadiah continues this strain on the regathering of Israel when he writes in verse 17: "But in mount Zion there shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." In that day according to verse 21: "the kingdom shall be Jehovah's."

Micah gives a comprehensive picture of the future Messianic kingdom in 4:1-8. Israel is pictured in their ancient land in peace and security, regathered from their former scattered position and sitting under their vines and fig trees in safety. The book concludes with these words: "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the lovingkindness to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old" (7:20).

The remaining minor prophets continue this theme. Zephaniah closes chapter 3 with the picture of Israel regathered and rejoicing in the Lord in their ancient land. Zechariah speaks at length on the future blessings of Israel, describing the streets full of happy children in Zechariah 8:5 and Israel is being regathered from the east and from the west in chapter 8:7-8. Jerusalem is pictured as the capitol of the earth in 8:22. The regathering of Israel is mentioned specifically in Zechariah 10:10 where Israel is described as gathered out of Assyria and Egypt. The concluding chapter of Zechariah, beginning as it does with the second coming of Christ, pictures the changes in the land in the millennial kingdom and the wealth and prosperity and spiritual blessing of Israel. All of these prophecies imply that the promises of the land are going to be fulfilled and Israel will once again be established in the area promised to the seed of Abraham.

The careful analysis of these many promises relative to

Israel's possession of the land and their regathering from the ends of the earth makes clear certain important principles. First, as intimated in previous discussion, the land, though subject to delay and Israel's temporary dispossession, is promised unconditionally to the seed of Abraham. Its ultimate possession is therefore based on the grace principle rather than the law principle. Second, it should be evident that the promise of the land is not given to Gentiles, but to the physical seed of Abraham; to be sure, not all the seed, but nevertheless to be fulfilled literally by the future generation of Israelites on earth at the time of the second coming of Christ. Third, the title of the land is declared to be unending in its character. By this we should understand that the land belongs to Israel as long as the present earth endures. Fourth, not only is the title to be given forever, but the land is actually to be possessed as long as the earth endures, once it is given to Israel at the beginning of the millennial kingdom. Fifth, it is clear that the promises are geographic and that the boundaries announced in Genesis 15 will have specific application when Israel is finally installed in their land in the millennial period. Only by indiscriminate spiritualization of all the terms and promises relating to the land can these prophecies be nullified. The fact that they are stated and restated so many times in so many different periods of Israel's history, even in times of apostasy and departure from God as in the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and by so many of the minor prophets makes clear that God intended them to be taken at their face value.

#### The Dispossession of the Land

Though only premillennarians insist that Israel is eventually to possess the Promised Land and fulfill literally the promises pertaining thereto, it is agreed by all that Israel in the course of its past history has suffered three major dispossessions. Jacob and his family voluntarily went to Egypt at Joseph's invitation to avoid the famine and thereby left the land promised to Abraham's seed. In Egypt they sojourned for many generations until the time of the Exodus. After the return to the land under Moses and Joshua, the children of Israel lived for hundreds of years

within the general area promised to Abraham, but never possessing it in its entirety even in the most extended period of the kingdom under Solomon. The moral disintegration which followed Solomon and the division of the kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms ultimately resulted in the second dispersion, first, in the captivity of Assyria beginning in 721 B.C. and then in the later captivity of the two remaining tribes following the invasion by Babylon beginning in 606 B.C. The second dispersion is the subject of prophecy by Moses in Deut. 28:62-65 and is mentioned in Deut. 30:1-3. At the same time there

**Israel will once again be established in the area promised to the seed of Abraham.**

were frequent promises of restoration from this dispersion as indicated in the prophecies already cited in Jeremiah. The return after the second dispersion is indicated specifically by Jeremiah in chapter 29:10-11 where the prediction is given that after seventy years they would be able to return to Jerusalem.

The third and final dispersion began in A.D. 70, with the destruction of Jerusalem and the desecration of the entire land which followed in the next century. From this dispersion, Israel has begun to return in the twentieth century as witnessed in the establishment of the nation Israel. Two million of these people are now established in their ancient land. The present regathering being witnessed by our generation is the largest movement of the people of Israel since the days of Moses, and may be understood to be the beginning of that which will be completed subsequent to the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

The principles involved in the dispersion and regathering of Israel are sometimes called the Palestinian covenant. This is outlined in particular in the final message of Moses in Deut, chapters 28-30. According to Deut. 28:63-68, Israel was warned that they would be scattered over the face of the earth if they departed from God. Along with this, however, it was anticipated that there would be a future return in which a godly remnant of Israel would repent. This is stated explicitly in Deut. 30:1-3: "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither Jehovah thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou, and thy children, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee."

This regathering is connected with the return of Christ mentioned in Deut. 30:3 and involves the restoration and regathering of all the children of Israel scattered over the face of the earth including righteous Israelites who have died and gone to heaven. As stated in Deut. 30:4: "If any of thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee." According to Deut. 30:5-9, they are promised that they will be regathered to their land, restored spiritually, delivered from their enemies, and abundantly blessed. Though the prophecy is given in a context which conditions fulfillment on the future re-

pentance of Israel, both this Scripture and many others relating to the regathering of Israel predict that Israel will repent and will therefore be restored and regathered.

The dispossessions of the land, therefore, are temporary judgments upon the generations of Israel who turned from God. While they lost possession of the land in the captivities and suffered as the Scriptures prophesied, at the same time God abundantly declares in His Word that their dispersion was temporary and their regathering is the ultimate purpose of God. Confirming this judgment is the dramatic fact of Israel's return to the land in our day after many centuries of dispersion, persecution, and affliction.

... their dispersion was temporary and their regathering is the ultimate purpose of God.

#### Has the Promise of the Land Already Been Fulfilled?

Generally speaking, amillenarians who deny that Israel will possess the Promised Land in the future tend to ignore the promises to the contrary in the Major and Minor Prophets and in many cases do not even attempt to offer evidence that these promises are conditional or are to be interpreted in a nonliteral way. Occasionally, however, some arguments are offered in the attempt to sustain the thesis that the promises have already been fulfilled in historic possessions of the land. George L. Murray for instance, in his book *Millennial Studies*, page 27, offers I Kings 4:21-24 as evidence. It is stated in verse 21: "And Solomon ruled over all of the kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought tribute, and served Solomon all the days of his life." In I Kings 4:24 this same thought is continued: "For he had dominion over all the region on this side the River, from Tiphshah even to Gaza over all the kings on this side the River: and he had peace on all sides round about him."

A careful study of this passage in the light of its context, however, will demonstrate that, while Solomon ruled over all this area, he did not possess it, inasmuch as the kings are indicated as continuing their rule even though they paid tribute and served Solomon. The area was therefore not incorporated in the kingdom of Solomon, but rather came under his sway in the sense that the nations paid tribute and were at peace with Solomon. If this portion had been incorporated into the kingdom of Solomon, it would not have involved the kings' remaining on their thrones and paying tribute to him.

A similar argument is offered by Murray in reference to Joshua 21:43-45 where it is stated: "So Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein." On the face of it this would seem to be a plain declaration that

they did possess all the land. This promise, however, has to be limited by subsequent Scriptures. According to Judges 1:21 the Benjamites did not conquer the Jebusites. According to Judges 1:27, the children of Manasseh did not conquer all of their territory, and in verse 28 it is stated: "And it came to pass when Israel was waxed strong, that they put the Canaanites to taskwork, and did not utterly drive them out." In the verses which follow are itemized the areas which Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali did not possess. In other words, the statement of Joshua 21:43-45 must be understood as teaching that God on His part was faithful, but that the children of Israel did not enter into their possession.

Much later in Israel's history Murray notes that Nehemiah refers to the promise given to Abraham relative to the land and states, "Thou... hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous" (9:8). This must be understood in the same sense as Joshua in that indeed God did "give them the land," but they never possessed it historically in the Old Testament period.

The passages already cited relative to Israel's regathering and possession of the land are in themselves a complete refutation of this idea that Israel has already possessed the land in the past in its entirety. If the promise of the land was fulfilled in Joshua's time or in Solomon's, why do the many Scriptures later appeal to a future possession? Even though it may be conceded that the reference in Nehemiah is late in Israel's history, it by no means proves that the promises pertaining to the last regathering and establishment of Israel in the land have been fulfilled. In fact, it is quite to the contrary as we examine the context of Nehemiah.

There are three essentials to the fulfillment of the original promises given to Abraham regarding the possession of the land. First, the land must be actually possessed, that is, occupied, not simply controlled. Second, the possession must continue as long as the earth lasts, i.e., forever. Third, the land during this period of possession must be under the rule of the Messiah in a time of peace, tranquility, and blessing. Nothing in history fulfills the many promises given to the prophets and, if it be judged that these promises must be fulfilled literally and surely, there remains only one possible conclusion — that is, that Israel in some future time will possess their promised land, including the entire area described in Genesis 15.

#### Arguments for Future Fulfillment of the Promise

In reviewing the material already presented relative to Israel's future possession of the land, it may be seen that this is integral in the whole prophetic scheme involving

the millennial kingdom, the return of Christ, and the consummation of the ages. The ground for fulfillment lies first in the nature of the promises themselves rooted as they are in the original proposition made to Abraham to leave his father's land and to go to a land that God would show him. The promises originally given to Abraham are reiterated again and again and form the backbone of Old Testament prophetic revelation. The promise of the land sustained Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as they contemplated the future of their seed. The promise of the land was that which dominated Moses and Joshua as they brought the children of Israel from Egypt to the land. The hope of regathering was that which sustained Jeremiah and Ezekiel at the time of the captivities and Israel's moral apostasy. It formed the basis of their hope in future restoration both spiritually and politically. It has been further noticed that the very statement of the promises, though linked with a future repentance of Israel, is stated as certain and sure. It is linked with the perpetuity of the seed of Abraham which is promised continuance as long as the sun and moon endure.

The strongest kind of promises are related to the possession of the land in that not only the nation Israel is promised eternal continuity, but the land is promised as an everlasting possession. The emphatic description of the land given in Genesis 15:18-21 almost defies spiritualization, including as it does the heathen tribes which possessed it at the time the promise was given. The fact that Israel has been dispossessed of the land in three periods of its history is by no means an argument against ultimate possession, for imbedded in the very promises of dispossession are the promises that Israel will return and repossess the land.

It has been demonstrated that these promises were not fulfilled in the past. Though Solomon temporarily controlled the area described by Abraham, he did not possess it and he did not occupy it. The prophets following Solomon certainly did not understand that Solomon had fulfilled the promise of the land and therefore promised future fulfillment. While God had been faithful, as witnessed by Nehemiah, it should be obvious to all that in Nehemiah's day the promises of possession of all the land were not fulfilled.

On every hand, therefore, an examination of the promises of the land of Israel supports the eschatology of Israel as a whole and the premillennial interpretation of the Scriptures. By so much also any spiritualization of Israel which would require fulfillment to the church in the present age or which would look to fulfillment in the eternal state would undermine not only the eschatology of Israel, but the program of eschatology as a whole. It is therefore

(Walvoord; continued on page 16)

**The promise of the land was that which dominated Moses and Joshua as they brought the children of Israel from Egypt to the land.**

## God's Dealings With Israel – By Grace or Law?

Barry E. Horner



It is usual for those writers who declare that God has irrevocably abandoned national Israel to propose that the basis of this divine disenfranchisement was the Hebrews' violation of the Mosaic covenant. Philip Mauro, for example, maintained that according to Deut. 28:63-64 ("Just as the Lord was glad to cause you to prosper and to multiply you, so He will also be glad to cause you to perish and to destroy you. You will be deported from the land you are entering to possess. Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples from one end of the earth to the other, and there you will worship other gods, of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known"), the disobedience of this "odious kingdom", was to result in a destruction that would be "the end of their history as a nation." This national destruction, he wrote, came at the hands of the Romans in AD 70, from which, "there was to be no recovery".<sup>1</sup> Further, in classic Augustinian style we are told, "Romans 11 contains proof of the most conclusive sort that there is no future in the purposes of God for the natural seed of Jacob as a nation, but that there is the hope and promise of personal salvation for individual Israelites if they abide not still in unbelief" (see Rom. 11:23).<sup>2</sup>

Samuel Hinds Wilkinson, late director of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews, England, published a response to this ardent upholder of replacement theology.<sup>3</sup> Chapter 15, titled "Grace and the Rainbow," presents a moving apologetic for the sovereignty of grace toward national Israel, even as the church has likewise been a recipient.<sup>4</sup>

The root of the solemn consideration raised by Mr. Philip Mauro's book, in and by which he challenges the assurance to God's chosen people Israel of a national restoration, conversion and beneficent mission, will be exposed if we ask the question: Did Law pre-

cede Grace or Grace precede Law?

This is indeed a vital question: for indisputably the original promises to Abraham, recorded in Genesis 12, were given *unconditionally*. No one was bound by those promises but the One Who made them. No terms were imposed. No mediator was present (Gal. 3:20). Whatever those promises were, whatever kind of fulfillment they required, those promises and that Covenant which ratified them, in particular the grant of a specific territory as an everlasting possession, were unconditional and undeserved.<sup>5</sup> We are told that Israel was not thus chosen for Divine love and favor because they were more numerous than other peoples: for they were "the fewest of all peoples" (Deut. 7:7-8); nor was the territory granted to them because of their righteousness, for they were "a stiff-necked people" (Deut. 9:4-6). And this unconditional Covenant and all that it included and involved antedated the Covenant of the law by 430 years. And the legal Covenant "which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul it, that it should make the promise of none effect" (Gal. 3:17).

When "the God of glory" revealed Himself to Abram (Acts 7:2), it was due to no discovery by Abram. Rather it involved a divine "call" (Heb. 11:8) according to God's gracious, sovereign initiative, beginning only with "the Lord said to Abram" (Gen. 12:1) and "the Lord appeared to Abram" (Gen. 12:7). Abram was the first of the prospective elect nation, and through him, notwithstanding the preceding defilement of the human race, there was covenantally guaranteed the prospect of God's new Hebrew nation. To infer ultimate defeat because of unconquerable human rebellion is simply to deny the principle of Phil. 1:6 that God completes what He starts, and of Rom. 11:29 that "God's gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable.

Philip Mauro argued from Deut. 4:1 that Israel was to "hearken always to God's statutes and judgments: and upon that express condition, they were to go in and possess the land, Every blessing mentioned in this book is

<sup>5</sup>This is even more certainly established in Gen. 15:1-21 where the unilateral nature of the Abrahamic covenant is signified by God's passing between the severed portions of animals while Abraham was deep in a divinely imposed sleep. For this reason, God declared that Abraham would "know...for certain" that the covenant is sure (vv. 13-16).

<sup>6</sup>Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises and their Fulfilment*, 115-16.

<sup>1</sup> P. Mauro, *The Hope of Israel* (Boston: Hamilton Bros., 1929) 57, 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 238. The fallacy of this selective regard for the Israelites has been dealt with in chapters 2 and 3 (emphasis original).

<sup>3</sup> S.H. Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises and their Fulfilment* (London: John Bale, Sons, 1936).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-20.

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made to depend upon that same condition."<sup>7</sup> But Wilkinson responded,

Then in that case, Mr. Mauro, the original Covenant of grace could be disannulled by the terms of the legal Covenant, made 430 years after. In that case, temporary deprivation of privilege or delay in its realization connotes absolute and final cancellation of a Divine promise. In that case, the scriptures you quote (Deut. 4:1, 15-24, 26-30) are of private or individual or isolated (*idias*) interpretation [see 2 Pet. 1:20], and not to be understood as in harmony with the whole body of prophetic Scripture. In that case, the law was not "added because of transgressions till (*archi*) the seed should come to whom the promise was made" [Gal 3:19]; but it was introduced to impose new terms and conditions by means of which promises already freely given and confirmed might be annulled and superseded.<sup>8</sup>

Everything necessary for the redeemed nation of Israel was in the Abrahamic covenant, including the promise of the land and the Redeemer seed (Gal. 3:16). The law was an interim administrator "added" until that Redeemer seed should come (Gal 3:19, 25-29; see Jer. 11:7-8; Rom. 5:20). To suggest that the conditionality of the Mosaic covenant introduced conditionality into the Abrahamic covenant is ultimately to challenge the integrity of God.

Wilkinson continued to declare the priority and superiority of grace over law, especially in that grace will "outlast all legal enactments and all covenants based upon them." He then asked some probing questions:

Was not the Church, was not every member of it, whose standing is on the ground of grace alone, chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world? Were not the tables of the law shut within the ark and placed in the Holiest apartment of all in the temple of God and made thus to rest beneath the mercy seat? Is not judgment God's strange work? Does He not *delight* in mercy? Where sin abounds, does not grace *much more* abound? Does He forsake Israel for a small moment, will He not gather Israel with great mercies? If He hides His face in a little wrath for a moment on account of broken law, will He not have mercy with everlasting kindness on the same people who have been the subjects of His wrath? When God saved His people Israel over and over again from oppressive enemies was it not because He "remembered His covenant with

Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob (Exod. 2:24; cf. Ps. 115:8, 42; 116:45; & c.)"? Was He in such cases remembering the broken and unrenovable Covenant of Sinai or the everlasting covenant of grace made with Abraham 430 years earlier? If the law, even to the believer, was a schoolmaster, having done his work, to be for ever intruding? When faith is come are we longer under a schoolmaster? Is Israel as a nation always to be unbelieving? Is the new covenant not to be made with the same people as were under the old covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)? And if so, does it not guarantee individual and national repentance, faith and regeneration to the same people?<sup>9</sup> And if the legal Covenant of Sinai could not disannul the Covenant and promises made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, can it do so *now* or *ever*? Can grace be tied by conditions? Can out-and-out gifts be withdrawn? Can God repent of gifts or calling or grants or promises, unconditionally made? Is not God able to graft Israel again into its own olive tree? Shall they not be grafted in, if they abide not in unbelief? Will the time limit of Israel's blindness never be reached and passed?

This is the reason both Jewish and Gentile Christians should delight to sing,

Grace! 'tis a charming sound  
Harmonious to mine ear;  
Heav'n with the echo shall resound,  
And all the earth shall hear.  
Philip Doddridge, 1702-51

...does it [the new covenant] not guarantee individual and national repentance, faith and regeneration to the same people?

Wilkinson pointed out the contrasting conditionality that Mauro upheld because he imposed the Mosaic terms of blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience on the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant. Thus, as indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Mauro considered Deut. 28:63-64 to prophesy "the end of their [Israel's] history as a nation."<sup>10</sup> In other words, persistent disobedience supposedly resulted in the Jews being cast aside forever. Mauro's breathtaking finality is indicated when, with necessary qualification he pushed aside the plain understanding of subsequent prophets:

<sup>9</sup> It is simply astonishing that those who so fervently proclaim the sovereignty of God in this realm with regard to new covenant conversion should so adamantly deny this same effectual grace to the nation of God's old covenant people. In other words, during the church age there is belief in the sovereignty of grace by which the Church has been established never to finally fall, that is, from a Reformed perspective. But only conditionality of an Arminian style is permitted for Israel.

<sup>10</sup> Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises and their Fulfillment*, 116-18.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>7</sup> Mauro, *Hope of Israel*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises and their Fulfillment*, 116.

Nor is there any promise of God, by any later prophet [after Moses], of recovery for the earthly nation from this final destruction and dispersion at the hands of the Romans. For an attentive reading of the prophecies concerning "Israel," "Zion," and "Jerusalem," leads to the conclusions that such as are yet to be fulfilled relate to the heavenly people, country, and city, to which respectively those names properly belong; and that all prophecies of recovery intended for "Israel after the flesh" (1 Cor. 10:18) were completely fulfilled in and after the return from the Babylonian captivity.<sup>12</sup>

In itself this claim is sufficiently demeaning of God's gospel workings through the priority of sovereign grace and is open to serious challenge hermeneutically according to chapters 6 and 7. I am sorry to say that many of Reformed convictions also adhere to this same defective teaching that has resulted in tragic consequences throughout church history. Mauro's tart attitude in general toward the Jews throughout his writings is no exception. We have already seen the same conflict evident in modern scholars when the conditionality of the Mosaic order is imposed on the Abrahamic covenant, especially with regard to the land, even when there is the agreement concerning the unconditional nature of the new covenant.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, Wilkinson charges that Mauro's interpretation of Scripture at this point "causes him to divert the

<sup>12</sup> Mauro, *The Hope of Israel*, 57-58.

<sup>13</sup> See the discussion of Robertson and Burge in chapter 3, Chapman and Sizer in chapter 5, Fairbairn, Hoekema, Venema, and Waldron in chapter 6, and Davies, chapter 9.

(Cozart: continued from page 5)

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them; Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, AND I SHALL PLACE YOU IN YOUR OWN LAND. Then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it saith the Lord."

Were there only one verse in the Bible to teach the Jews would one day have their own land in Palestine as God

clear promises of God from the parties to whom they were given and to confine them to a new constitution." Such a diversion, he says, defames the divine character, "for it leaves no scope for grace, no credit for inviolability of oath, nor for continuity of purpose, nor for overcoming of set-backs and resistances and failures, no place for pardon, no delight in store for the Father's heart when the repentant prodigal returns (Jer. 31:18-20).<sup>14</sup> One wonders if Mauro's denial of the sovereignty of grace for national Israel could be the cause of his graceless attitude toward the Jews in general. In *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, Mauro wrote that

An  
impoverished  
eschatology...  
leads to...  
impoverished  
and inaccurate  
conclusions.

of all the as yet unfulfilled promises of God, whatsoever and how many soever they be, nothing remains for the natural Israel... The sober facts are that Zionism has been a pitiful failure almost from the beginning; and that in the period of its greatest success the volume of immigrants constituted by a trickling stream, and they were of the most undesirable sort. The movement reached its peak in 1926; and from that time to the present Zionism has been palpably a dying enterprise...

Subsequent reports show that conditions have not improved; that the state of the Jews in Palestine is wretched in the extreme; and that the attitude of the great mass of Jews throughout the world towards the Zionist project is that of complete apathy and indifference."<sup>15</sup>

Surely an impoverished eschatology, as reflected here,

(Horner: continued on page 15)

<sup>14</sup> Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises and their Fulfillment*, 118-19.

<sup>15</sup> P. Mauro, "The Hope of Israel," in *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, {cited July 2007}. Online: [http://preteitarchive.com/Books/1927\\_mauro\\_gsoek-kingdom.html](http://preteitarchive.com/Books/1927_mauro_gsoek-kingdom.html) (emphasis his).

promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, that would be enough. However, this great truth is set forth time and time again in book after book of the Word of God. There is not one verse of Scripture that teaches God has replaced the Israelites with the church, but just the contrary. Israel will have their own land. The books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Chronicles, Nehemiah, Ezekiel, and many others echo "Amen" to this great truth.

J. C. Ryle (1816-1900), the first Bishop of Liverpool was, according to Charles Spurgeon, the best man in the church of England. Concerning the future of National Israel, Ryle was emphatic about the eventual return of the Hebrew people to the Promised Land. I know of no one who could have said it better:

(Hoener: continued from page 14)

leads to such impoverished and inaccurate conclusions. So Wilkinson asked in conclusion,

Then if Mr. Mauro be right, what is grace and where is it? Better, far better, is the great vision of John the Divine while in the Isle that is called Patmos: "And immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on a throne, And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald: (Rev. 4:2-3).

Are the colors significant?...Surely then the encircling rainbow, enclosing all with its endless line of radiant green, speaks of grace and abiding. For was not the first exhibition of a rainbow the token of God's first Covenant with all flesh, "between Me and you and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations (Gen. 9:12)." Was not that Covenant made independently of all future human resistance and apostasy and guilt—was not the rainbow the token, "of a covenant between Me and the earth (Gen., 9:13)?" Surely the rainbow symbolizes and represents grace—the grace of benevolent purpose, the grace of changeless attitude, the grace of persistent long-

<sup>16</sup> John Gill commented concerning the rainbow around God's throne, "The rainbow is of various colors and fitly expresses the various promises and blessings, in the covenant of grace, and the various providences, both prosperous and adverse, with respect to soul and body; and as the rainbow was an emblem of mercy, peace, and reconciliation in God to man, after he had destroyed the world by a flood, so the covenant is a covenant of grace and mercy; it springs from it, and is full of it, and provides for the peace and reconciliation of the people of God, by the blood of Christ; whence it is called a covenant of peace: and as the rainbow is a security to the world, and the inhabitants of it, from a destruction by a flood any more, so the covenant is a security to those who are interested in it, from eternal destruc-

(Cozart: continued from page 14)

"Reader, however great the difficulties surrounding many parts of unfulfilled prophecy, two points appear to my own mind to stand out plainly as if written by a sunbeam. One of these points is the second personal advent of our Lord Jesus Christ before the Millennium. The other of these events is the future literal gathering of the Jewish nation, and their restoration to their own land. I tell no man that these two truths are essential to salvation, and that he cannot be saved except he sees them with my eyes. But I tell any man that these truths appear to me distinctly set down in Holy Scripture, and that the denial of them is as astonishing and incomprehensible to my own mind as the denial of the divinity of Christ." ☆

suffering and patience, the grace which is endless, all-inclusive, all conquering.<sup>16</sup> [Quotes Rom. 11:6 and Mal. 3:6] No other reason but that of changeless grace could have spared Israel the complete annihilation they deserved. And shall the original purpose fail, the original declaration be falsified or even modified, shall works be substituted for grace or any kind of transference of specific promise take place? Shall not the whole purpose come to final achievement as with Zerubbabel, who after gazing on the desolations of Jerusalem, desertion, rubbish, silence, defilement and ashes, after confronting opposition and apathy, yet saw in vision and by promise the work of the new temple completed and the headstone thereof brought forth with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. 4:7).<sup>17</sup> ☆

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tion, and wrath to come; herein lies all their salvation, and this is the security of it; to which may be added, that God calls it my bow, as he often calls the covenant of grace my covenant, in distinction from man's." J. Gill, "Exposition of the Old and New Testaments," *The Collected Writing of John Gill, Rev., 4:3* (Albany, Oregon: Ages Software, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises and their Fulfilment*, 119-20.

What is the relation of the state of Israel to this prophetic program? Have these prophecies already been fulfilled?

"And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God".  
Amos 9:14-15

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**Theme of next issue:  
Miscellaneous Matters**

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*(Walvoord: continued from page 11)*

not too much to say that the subject of the eschatology of Israel is a determinative one in the theology of future things, and as one decides these important questions he therefore decides the validity of eschatology in its broader scope. Inasmuch as the promises relating to Israel pervade the entire Scriptures, by so much a disclaiming of the promises given to Israel affects one's theology as a whole. It is for this reason that this subject is important, not only in the study of Israel itself, but in the establishment of premillennial theology.

The theological implications of the promise of the land to Israel have been shown to be central in God's eschatological purpose for His ancient people. The promise of the land was integral in the original covenant with Abraham and was understood by him in a literal way. This is demonstrated in the constant reiteration of the promise in which literal possession of the land is implied or stated. The countless promises of the Old Testament which relate to the promise of the land were considered seriatim in a representative way. Such major passages as Isaiah 11, 14, 43, 60, 66, Jeremiah 16, 30-33, Ezekiel 11, 20, 34, 37, 39, Hosea 3, Joel 3, Amos 9, Obadiah, Micah 4, Zechariah 8 & 10 were cited. Certainly this is an overwhelming proof that the entire Old Testament lends its confirmation to a promise of future possession of the land to Israel. These promises, though subject to delay and temporary dispos-

session, were never transferred to Gentiles but were declared to be unending in character, its title given forever with specific boundaries announced in Genesis 15 to Abraham himself.

The dispersions predicted when Israel was out of the land were prophesied, but it was demonstrated that not only were the dispersions fulfilled, but also the regathering. Evidence was adduced that the final regathering will include every Israelite to the last man, a promise which today has never been fulfilled.

The amillennial argument that the promise of the land was fulfilled in Solomon's day was refuted by the fact that Solomon never fulfilled the promise in any proper sense, and that subsequent Scriptures regarded the promise as subject to future fulfillment. Assertions of Joshua and Nehemiah to the fact that God had fulfilled all His promises to Israel were found to be limited by the context to the thought that God had kept His Word though Israel had failed to possess the land. The arguments for future fulfillment of the promise hang therefore on the certainty of the Word of God. Just as the prophecy concerning Israel has always had its fulfillment in the past, so it will also in the future. Israel's promise of the land is just as sure as the Christian's promise of heaven. ✪

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# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Miscellaneous Matters

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### Inside This Edition

- ◆ Spurgeon's Eschatology, *C.W.H. Griffiths* ..... p. 3
- ◆ Quotes from C.H. Spurgeon ..... p. 5
- ◆ The Purpose of God, *Horatius Bonar* ..... p. 6
- ◆ The Millennium—Literal or Spiritual?, *William Kiffin* ..... p. 11
- ◆ Index to Premillennial Baptist Journal ..... p. 12
- ◆ Bibliography of Premillennial Books ..... p. 14

## Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

### Help Us Continue Publishing the PBJ

When we began this magazine two years ago we vowed to publish only when we had the money in hand to pay for the next issue. Many of our readers have given generously to enable us to keep publishing. Because of this we have been able to publish every issue on time. At present we have just about depleted our funds. Some of our readers have yet to contribute. If you are one of these and you have profited from reading the magazine, now would be a good time to help by sending a check for \$25 or \$50 or \$100 or even \$500. Only as our readers support us financially will we be able to continue publication. Make checks payable to *Premillennial Baptist Journal* and send all donations to:

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**F**orgotten! No; that cannot be,  
All other names may pass away;  
But thine, My Israel, shall remain  
In everlasting memory.

Forgotten! No; that cannot be,  
The oath of Him who cannot lie

Is on thy city and thy land,  
An oath to all eternity.  
Forgotten of the Lord thy God!  
No, Israel, no, that cannot be,  
He chose thee in the days of old  
And still His favor rests on thee.

Horatius Bonar



## Spurgeon's Eschatology

C.W.H. Griffiths

*Editor's Note: It is greatly edifying to collect and record passages from the sermons of C.H. Spurgeon that reflect his eschatology. Some of these are reported by C.W.H. Griffiths in this article.*

Our faith and hope of the future rests not upon the testimonies or treatises of men, but upon the revealed will of God in the Scriptures. It is nevertheless understandable that we should take note of the conclusions of men, gifted and used by God, regarding key issues of doctrine. It is therefore of considerable interest to know what position 'the Prince of Preachers' took on prophecy. At first sight the issue appears to be clear cut. In the summer of 1891, at the end of his life (he died in January, 1892), he signed a Confession of Faith that stated 'Our hope is the Personal Pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.'

This has not, however, deterred those who have sought to present C.H. Spurgeon as a post-millennialist or an a-millennialist. Erroll Hulse in 'The Restoration of Israel' (1968) classified Mr. Spurgeon as a post-millennialist. He wrote in the first edition 'He is reputed to have put his signature to pre-millennial affirmations of faith. In spite of that Spurgeon is included here on the grounds of his puritanism and because of that magnificent sermon preached in 1864' (on the Restoration of the Jews). A more scholarly attempt was made by Iain Murray in 'The Puritan Hope' (1971). Here, labouring under the difficulty of Mr. Spurgeon's plain statement of his pre-millennialism, Mr. Murray sought to identify the common ground Mr. Spurgeon held with post-millennialists. He stated 'on some of the cardinal points that have usually divided interpreters of prophecy, Spurgeon was far from clear and cannot be said to have followed any previous school of thought consistently.' Unable to claim him as a post-millennialist, he was unwilling to concede him to be a pre-millennialist.

The current attempt to re-define C.H. Spurgeon's position on prophecy is by Dr. Peter Masters in the 'Sword & Trowel' (1989 #2). It is very different in

approach. He claims, and appears at first sight to show, a more thorough review of what C.H. Spurgeon said on prophetic matters, setting out 31 substantial quotations in chronological order. He emphasises (and we are grateful for this) the consistency of C.H. Spurgeon's views throughout his life. How then does he attempt to overcome the problem of Mr. Spurgeon's avowed pre-millennialism? His argument may be summarised as follows:

- 1) In the last century the term 'pre-millennial' was considerably broader than it is today.
- 2) As the term 'a-millennial' was unknown, many who were not post-millennialists called themselves pre-millennialists 'because they equated the millennium with the initial phase of the eternal glory.'
- 3) Mr. Spurgeon is silent on the 'little season' of rebellion at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:7-9) and regarding unregenerate people being alive during the millennium.
- 4) It is therefore said that Mr. Spurgeon's millennium may be regarded simply as 'the first part of the eternal glory.'
- 5) So, it is concluded, 'Certainly he would have stood much closer to a-millennialism than to either of the other scenarios recognised today.'

In replying to Dr. Masters' argument we must first of all emphasise that, as Mr. Spurgeon declared that he believed in 'the Personal Pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus in glory,' the whole onus of proof must fall upon those who assert otherwise. It must be shown beyond all reasonable doubt that his plain statement should not be taken at its face value.

Let us examine each of the above statements.

*1) That the Victorians (and by implication, Mr. Spurgeon) used 'pre-millennial' in a broader sense than it is used today.*

The article does not attempt to prove this statement. "Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith" arose from a fraternal which was formed early in 1890. It then

included Mr. Spurgeon himself, Adolph Saphir (who died in April, 1891), Archibald G. Brown, J. Douglas, William Fuller Gooch, G.D. Hooper, James Stephens and Frank H. White. It is clearly to the point to ask what these men understood by 'pre-millennial.' Dr. Adolph Saphir strongly contended for the same position as this Testimony (S.G.A.T.) in all his voluminous writings. Archibald Brown, who conducted C.H. Spurgeon's funeral, believed in a millennium after the Lord's return (and a final rebellion at its end!). William Fuller Gooch wrote 'Facts concerning the Second Coming of our Lord.' There is no doubt where he stood. The writings of Frank White have been circulated by this Testimony from the beginning. James Stephens was a founder member of the S.G.A.T. (Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony). These men were all powerful contenders for what we would understand as pre-millennialism. Of J. Douglas and G.D. Hooper we know little, but have no reason to doubt that they were kindred spirits with the others in their views. Here were the founders and leaders of the fraternal, opposing the duplicity of 'the downgrade,' and anxious to make a statement of their faith. These were all honest men. Would they have chosen a vague and general expression which hid serious differences between them on the interpretation of prophecy (as great as between present day pre-millennialists and a-millennialists)? We think that they were contending for more than different sorts of phased blessing after the Lord's return.

2) *That many so-called pre-millennialists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were in fact latent a-millennialists who merely lacked the label.*

This argument assumes that a-millennialism is a default position. We are asked to accept that if Mr. Spurgeon does not fit the 'scheme' of 'modern pre-millennialists' and if he opposed post-millennialism he must therefore have been a-millennialist. We were not aware that there were a-millennialists who believed in a phase of blessing after the return of the Lord which they call the millennium. The standard books on a-millennialism appear to discount this. For example, W.E. Cox in 'A-millennialism Today' declares 'Although beliefs vary among a-millennialists as to the exact time or

place of the millennium, all are agreed that the New Testament places it before the second advent.' Upon this point we conclude that Dr. Masters' argument depends upon an extremely broad definition of a-millennialism or an extremely narrow one of pre-millennialism.

3) *That Mr. Spurgeon did not believe that there would be a rebellion at the end of the millennium and unregenerate people alive during it.*

This is an argument from Mr. Spurgeon's apparent silence on these points. To base an argument upon too few of Mr. Spurgeon's statements is one thing (this is the charge the article makes against Iain Murray's 'The Puritan Hope'), to base an argument upon the absence of statements is quite another. We find it hard to believe how anyone (let alone the great opponent of the downgrade) who affirms a millennium on the basis of Revelation 20:1-6 could then be assumed to have denied Revelation 20:7-8—'And when the thousand years were expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations'—on the basis of his alleged silence.

4) *That Mr. Spurgeon's millennium can be regarded simply as the first part of the eternal glory.*

**We do not wish to enter into debate on what Mr. Spurgeon did or did not mean when he said this or that.**

The key to success of this part of Dr. Masters' argument is his analysis and selective quotation of Mr. Spurgeon's statements. Several times he inserts 'By this phrase Spurgeon does not mean...' 'the phrase most probably means...' 'the last phrase does not imply...' We do not wish to enter into debate on what Mr. Spurgeon did or did not mean when he said this or that. In our view it would be wrong to subject his voluminous writings to this sort of interpretation and re-interpretation. To us, most of the statements of Mr. Spurgeon are plain enough and one of our chief worries about the article is that Dr. Masters frequently distorts and reinterprets the plain meaning to fit the conjecture about his prophetic views. The following illustrations will demonstrate the weakness of Dr. Masters' analysis, but we could give many more examples for the article.



## Quotes from C.H. Spurgeon

### A VISION OF THE LATTER-DAY GLORIES:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Isaiah 2:2 & Micah 4:1. *...and when Christ shall come he will make short work of that which is so long a labour to his church. His appearance will immediately convert the Jews. They have looked for Messiah a king; there he is, in more than regal splendour. They shall see him; they shall believe on him; he will then tell them that he is the Messiah whom their fathers crucified. Then will they look on him whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for their sin, and gathering round their great Messiah in glorious march they shall enter and be settled in their own land.* NPSF, Vol V p 198.

### THE TWO ADVENTS OF CHRIST:

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:27-28. *Now we believe and hold that Christ shall come a second time suddenly, to raise his saints at the first resurrection; this shall be the commencement of the grand judgment, and they shall reign with him afterwards. The rest of the dead live not till after the thousand years are finished. Then shall they rise from their tombs at the sounding of the trumpet, and their judgment shall come and they shall receive the deeds which they have done in their bodies. Now, we believe that the Christ who shall sit on the throne of his father David, and whose feet shall stand upon Mount Olivet, is as much a personal Christ as the Christ who came to Bethlehem and wept in the manger.* MTP, Vol VIII p 39.

### JUSTIFICATION AND GLORY:

"Whom he justified, them he also glorified." Romans 8:30. *Some think that this descent of the Lord will be post-millennial—that is, after the thousand years of his reign. I cannot think so. I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial; that he will come first; and then will come the millennium as the result of his personal reign upon earth.* MTP, Vol XI p 249.

### THE KINGLY PRIESTHOOD OF THE SAINTS:

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:10. *I believe all the Bible says of a glorious future, but I cannot pretend to be a maker of charts for all time. Only this I gather as a positive fact, that the saints will one day reign on the earth. This truth appears to me clear enough, whatever may be the different views on the millennium. Now, the saints do not reign visibly; they are despised. They were driven, in old times, into dens and caves of the earth; but the time is coming when kings will be saints, and princes the called ones of God—when queens shall be the nursing mothers, and kings the nursing fathers of Christ's church. The hour is coming when the saint, instead of being dishonored, shall be honored; and monarchs, once the foes of truth, shall become its friends. The saints shall reign. They shall have the majority; the kingdom of Christ shall have the upper hand; it shall not be cast down—this shall not be Satan's world any longer—it shall again sing with all its sister stars, the never ceasing song of praise. Oh! I believe there is a day coming when Sabbath bells shall sprinkle music over the plains of Africa—when the deep thick jungle of India shall see the saints of God going up to the sanctuary; and, I am assured that the teeming multitudes of China shall gather together in temples built for prayer, and, as you and I have done, shall sing, to the ever glorious Jehovah, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Happy day! happy day! May it speedily come! NPSF, Vol I, p 76.*

# The Purpose of God

Horatius Bonar



The purpose of God is SELF-MANIFESTATION. This has been His design for eternity, and it has been shewing itself since the first creating word was spoken. Indeed, of necessity this always must be His purpose, and that just because He is God. It includes within it other purposes; but it is itself the chief and the ultimate, to which all others are pointing, and in which they shall find their completion. Let me explain what I mean.

I take that small seed which the winds are sporting with, and I bury it in the ground. I water it, and watch over it to mark its progress and see what it contains. Ere long it shoots above the soil, putting forth its fresh verdure to the sun. Then, in the progress of time, it strengthens itself and rises upwards, spreading out its branches into a waving tree. In other words, that particle of viral dust which we call seed, has opened itself out, and displayed the amazing treasures which were lying in it undeveloped and unknown. This is *self-manifestation*.

I take that unsightly root which is lying at my feet, and I carefully lodge it in the soil. Soon it springs up and opens out its treasures, disclosing the lily in its fragrance and beauty. Who could have imagined that hues so bright, and fragrance so rich, had all been wrapt up in that shapeless form? Yet it was so; and the lily, in all its loveliness, was but the unfolded root! This is *self-manifestation*.

These are but poor illustrations of the great truth we set out with announcing. They refer to objects of a lower scale; unconscious and involuntary in all their processes of self-development; yet still they are sufficiently exact to make our meaning known. For that which all creation is doing, according to its creature-laws, for the glory of the Creator, is that very thing

which Jehovah is doing in regard to Himself, and for His own glory.

God's purpose, then, is self-manifestation, or self-revelation. It is to bear testimony to His own character. Creation in every form, animate or inanimate, is God's *witness*; the utterance of His mind and heart. His design is not merely to make known *that He is*, but *what He is*; to exhibit Himself the I AM, the Being of beings, in whom all being is wrapped up, and from whom all forms of being spring; to unbosom and reveal Himself fully and perfectly; not partially and in glimpses, but completely and abidingly; by bringing forth into view and making visible all that is glorious, as well as all that is gracious, in the infinite and invisible Godhead. God does not create a world simply because He can do so, and wishes to put forth His power, but because He desires to bring out to view those riches of His own being and character which had otherwise been hidden. Again, God did not create this earth of ours a fair and happy world at first simply because He loved to see a fair world inhabited by happy creatures, but because, in that beauty and blessedness, His own character was most fully revealed, and His own glory most brightly reflected.

How He did this before man was created we know not, or at least we know but little. It was through the medium of another order of creatures, and in another region than this of ours. Angels were the creatures through whom He manifested Himself; and it was in heaven that this manifestation was given. They were the eldest-born of creation, and their abode the very palace of the Eternal One. From that centre the first ray of self-manifestation shot forth, and the Invisible and Incomprehensible began to make preparations for making Himself seen and known.

Whether He may be at this moment manifesting Himself by means of other races inhabiting those orbs that, like the dew-drops of the morning, lie scattered over infinite space, as if to catch and reflect at least the *material* glory of heaven; whether other

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) was a Scottish churchman and poet. He was a popular author, writing many books, tracts and hymns.

processes of self-manifestation may be going on in regions far beyond our vision or thought, we know not. He has given us no intimation that any such process is now in action; nor have we the slightest evidence to prove that as yet there are, in these starry regions, races of intelligent creatures existing, or that as yet there are any races in existence save those of angels and of men. That such will be the ultimate issue; that every atom of creation throughout the universe shall subserve the mighty purpose of Divine self-manifestation, we doubt not; but it would appear that, meanwhile, God is confining His operations to one special region of His dominions, concentrating His thoughts upon one particular process, out of which His one vast, original, all-comprehensive plan of a God-manifesting universe is to be evolved. It is on the soil of this small planet that He is sowing His seed, and raising, as in a nursery, those plants which are yet to clothe a glad universe with their everlasting verdure. It is out of the mountains of this planet that He is hewing the stones with which He is yet to build for Himself a temple in every star of the firmament. It is here that He is constructing the materials, and sketching the design for His palace. It is here that He is weaving and adorning His robes of royal state with materials furnished by this orb. It is of the gold of this earth that He is fashioning a sceptre for the hand, and a crown for the head of Him who is to be Sovereign of the universe. It is from among the lowly dwellers of this narrow region that He is choosing for that King a Bride to share His glory and His love; nay, it is out of this very earth that this King himself is to arise, or rather, we should say, has arisen; for He who is to have dominion hereafter as King of kings and Lord of lords, is an inhabitant of this planet, the native of a Judean village, Jesus of Nazareth, the woman's seed!

But, without entering further on the question as to the existence of other spheres and other processes of self-manifestation, there can be no doubt that this earth, in the meantime, is the special one. It is here that this process is going on just now, and it is here that preparations are making for larger and brighter scenes of manifestation than eye hath yet seen or ear hath heard. God has been carrying on this proc-

ess step by step for these last six thousand years. The work is still advancing; the plan is not yet consummated; but the rudiments of it lie all before us; the stones of the fabric lie scattered around; and prophecy unfolds to us much regarding the coming consummation, and presents to us in no faint colours the picture of the glorious reality which from the beginning God has had in view, and which shall, ere long, be given to the gaze of the universe, as God's own perfect representation of Himself. For, though storms and darkness must intervene, yet still it is a bright issue to which prophets point, and towards which all things are tending! Beyond that saddening gloom, beyond these dreary wastes, there presents itself, in the prophetic picture, an infinite ocean of unimagined splendour, over whose surface shall be spread out in all their various fulness the perfections of manifested Godhead in everlasting sunshine, for holy being to gaze upon, and for Jehovah himself to delight in, world without end! Then shall the wilderness and the solitary place be glad; and then shall the "primal eldest curse," which has sterilised the soil and covered every region with its blight, flow back from off earth's surface; the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and this world stand forth again a beautiful creation, more glorious than when it sprang from the fiat of God.

**The purpose of self-manifestation develops itself chiefly in connexion with two great events, the first and second advents of Christ.**

The purpose of self-manifestation develops itself chiefly in connexion with two great events, the first and second advents of Christ. Round these two points all other events cluster. From these two *foci* all light is radiating, and round them all events revolve. It is only by keeping our eye on these that we can understand the mighty scheme, and enter into the mind of God respecting it, giving to each event its proper place, order, connexion, and value. If we either overlook these or

choose other centres, we cannot fail to perplex ourselves and misunderstand the scheme. They are God's centres; and none which man may fix upon or deem more important can supersede them. They may not be those that man would naturally choose, but still they are those on which God has hung everything; and man can gain nothing but confusion and darkness by rejecting either, or elevating other points to their level.

Such questions as the following naturally occur: To what extent was this manifestation made at creation? What was the exact design of man's fall in connexion with it? How much has been brought out and displayed from the Fall to the first coming of Christ? How much was manifested at that advent? What have been the extent and mode of manifestation from the first to the second advent? What is that second advent to bring to light? What are the events subsequent to it to reveal? These are not queries of vain curiosity. They are weighty and solemn, demanding the most strenuous and prayerful thought; the most patient and profound study of the Word of God. They are questions pointing totally in a different direction from that which the efforts of philosophy have ever taken, questions which philosophy has never thought of putting, questions which philosophy cannot solve.

**And all the evil that has been brought to light in man has only been the means of bringing to light the good that is in God.**

Into the investigation of these points I do not mean to enter. They are wide and vast, needing treatises and volumes, not mere pages or chapters, for their elucidation. They may, however, suggest themes for the Bible student, which may lead to a fuller understanding of the mind and ways of God.

The object of the Scriptures is to tell us of God, His character and His doings; and, in declaring these, they introduce man the sinner, making known also his character, his doings, his connexion with God. All the recorded actions of man the sinner bring out his own character in various aspects. All God's actions and words in dealing with man display His character in its manifold aspects. At each step, something new of God is seen. And all the *evil* that has been brought to light in man has only been the means of bringing to light the *good* that is in God. At every point the evil has been met by the good, and overcome. The depths of the former are inconceivable; the resources of the later, which have been drawn forth to meet these, are still more so, being truly infinite and divine. The history of these past six thousand years is rich in these deep lessons. It is our wisdom to study them thus.

But the Bible discoveries of God and of the creature do not merely keep pace with the present moment

of our history. They go far beyond the present. To say that all the past is full of these displays; to say that each day's events are continuing to develop them more and more, is not to tell the whole truth. God has furnished us with hints as to the future developments which we are to expect, and into the meaning of which we may in some measure enter, though the wide compass of the visions, the glory, and the grace which they are intended to exhibit, can only be fully comprehended by those whose eyes shall look upon them.

We call them hints, for, in truth, they are no more. But they are not conjectures or dreams; they point to "scenes surpassing fable, and yet true." Man, in looking to the past, thinks he has uttered a profound apophthegm in saying that "truth is strange, stranger than fiction;" but the days to come will illustrate this in a way such as we have never yet imagined.

God has arrows in His quiver, sharper and more wasteful than those which for so many melancholy ages have been piercing the hearts of the King's enemies; the last still the sharpest and most destructive. He has "bright designs," deep-treasured up in His "unfathomable mines of never-failing skill;" the last still the brightest and most glorious! These prophetic hints are but glimpses of coming splendour; yet what a splendour! What a future do they disclose! What a universe! – bright all over with the effulgence of manifested Godhead! Perfection everywhere; perfection all the more perfect because coming forth from previous imperfection and ruin!

God has thus not only manifested Himself by telling us what He has done in this world of ours, but by making known what He yet *intends to do*. He has not hidden from us what He designs to accomplish, but, by admitting us into His counsels, has made us more fully know Himself, and see, even now, somewhat of those features of His character which shall yet come into visible development in the ages to come. How much more shall we learn hereafter, when we shall see these things as they are, and Him as He is!

The history of the past is not written with great minuteness of detail. It did not seem fit to the wisdom



of God to do so; neither would this have been practicable or profitable. What is given us in Scripture is not a full narrative, neither is it an abridgement; it is what has been called *selective* history. It is entirely episodic; but then the episodes are of God's own selection. The events and characters singled out, and recorded as worthy of memorial, are such as God saw to be most expressive of His purpose; most fitted to carry out the original design He had in view. God is the selector of these, and He is at the same time the Being for the illustration of whose character these fragments have been chosen and preserved. Now, what is true of the historical record, is equally so of the prophetic. It is even more strictly selective and episodic; and it is so for the same reasons and upon the same principles as in the former case. It is God himself, the self-manifesting, self-revealing Jehovah, that we also there behold. \*

As both history and prophecy are written upon this principle, we mean that of selection, there is peculiar care required for their right understanding. There are so many chasms everywhere, so many links wanting, that the tracing of a complete and correct outline becomes a matter of extreme difficulty, and calls for minute and patient scrutiny.

There are various plans for connecting these links which God has seen fit to leave thus separate. It is plain that man's reason can help us but little, for it cannot enter into the mind of God: "the world by wisdom knew not God." Nor will the completest theological system carry us over the difficulty; for systems are, at the best, imperfect, and at so many points leave us helpless, running us up at once to the purpose of a sovereign God. Besides, we are too apt to stretch systems beyond their legitimate end, and, instead of bringing *them* into contact with the Word, to be moulded into more accurate and perfect form, we bring the Word into contact with them, that *it* may be interpreted according to their laws, instead of fashioning the human according to the form of the divine, we too often cast the divine into the mould of the human making texts to bend to systems, instead of systems to texts.

**The true way of getting at the connected view of God's purposes, ... is to keep our eye upon His design to get hold of His idea.**

The true way of getting at the connected view of God's purposes, as spread out before us in these prophetic selections, is to keep our eye upon His design to get hold of His idea. What is it that makes the vast and intricate machinery of the manufactory intelligible? It is being acquainted with its principle and object. The knowledge of God's leading purpose is the real key to all the apparent discordances of His Word. Keeping that purpose before us, we shall be able to see the unity and connexion of events which otherwise seem hopelessly perplexed and corrupt. Man's systems are strait, awkward, angular, sure, in many cases, not exactly to *fit* many texts, if too rigidly applied. But THE IDEA which they contain, in so far as it is really God's, will admit of a much more perfect application, without violence done to any portion of His Word. Even with reference to the past, schemes and systems will often be found at fault; much more in reference to the future. They are often insufficient measuring rods for Genesis, and much more for Ezekiel or the Apocalypse.

We do not dislike system. Far from it. We count it right and useful. And could we get hold of Jehovah's system, all would be well. In so far as our systems approach to this, they are good and helpful.

But then, in so far as they fall aside from it, in so far as they are dissimilar to it, to that extent they not only obscure our views of it, but prevent our understanding of Scripture, nay, pervert our interpretations. A perfect system would harmonise with every jot and tittle of the Word of God, but an imperfect one will necessarily be found at variance with many portions of it. In proportion as our system approximates towards God's, in that proportion will such dissonances cease, and the whole system be in unison with the whole Word. But unless we are prepared to maintain that our system is complete in every joint and ligature, as well as entirely accurate in the symmetry of its structure, we shall find how perilous it is to set it up as our infallible standard, by which we are to weigh or measure the meaning of each passage, pronouncing interpretations sound or unsound according to their agreement with or opposition to our scheme.

Begin at the lowest in the scale of systems, the Socinian. It fits in to so few passages of Scripture, is at variance with so many, that its meagerness and unscriptural nature soon become apparent. Whatever man's reason may think of it as a system, still it is at war with such a mass of Scripture that either it or the Bible must give way. The only idea in it that is worth, is that God is ONE. This is what it *professes* to maintain. And the unity of God is a scriptural truth. But there Socinianism halts. That idea will carry us a certain way; but what light does it cast upon those passages which speak of the Son being God, and the Holy Spirit being God? None. There it gives way. And the moment we begin to apply the system to such passages as those alluded to, its lameness is felt. It is palpably and grossly defective.

**From the beginning to the end of God's workings...the same purpose is unfolding itself—self-manifestation.**

Ascend a higher level. Take Arminianism. It will fit in to a far wider range of passages than Socinianism, but then it is still at war with many. It has purged itself of the grosser blasphemies of the other, but still it has retained so many imperfections that, when brought into contact with a numerous class of texts, either *it* must be greatly modified, or *they* must be explained away. Its range is too narrow for the infinite compass of Scripture. It has not a little of truth in it; some of its ideas are scriptural; but it is so sadly imperfect in many points, that it gives way when brought to expound Scripture. It is not the mere shape and mould of the system that is defective. That would be of less importance. But some of the ideas which it embodies are inconsistent, not only with special texts, but with God's great pervading idea and purpose, self-manifestation. It fails to express this mighty idea. It stammers grievously and incurably in attempting to utter this grand, original, eternal purpose of the Triune Jehovah.

But rise to a loftier level still. Look at Calvinism. It is, in its connected shape, man's system; yet we believe it to be a system containing and giving utterance to more of the great ideas of the Bible than any other that has ever been chiselled out by the hand of man. In its leading ideas it is divine; in its formula for expressing these, it is human. In the former respect we may call it complete; in the latter we may

safely admit its imperfection, and imperfection necessarily arising from man's efforts to express in his own words and develop in his intellectual forms the thoughts and purposes of the eternal Jehovah. With the former, we believe no text will ever really be found at variance; with the latter, not a few, peradventure, may be so found. The former we would carry with us everywhere in our researches into Scripture, assured that thus there will be light shed upon our path; the latter we require to apply more cautiously. For we may with all confidence say, that while no passage of the Bible will be found at strife with Calvinism, some passages may be discovered not perfectly harmonising with Calvinistic formula.

There is no system that gives so free and rich an utterance to that grand purpose, that mighty idea of God, self-manifestation, as what is called Calvinism. Every part of it is built upon this, and brings forth this into conspicuous view. And it is just because this system never loses sight of God's great original idea, that it is so useful and so invaluable as our guide to the exposition of the Word of God. Whatever part of Scripture you are seeking to expound; historical, preceptive, doctrinal, or prophetic; take it with you, and you will find the steady, accurate light which it casts even upon hard passages, as well as the satisfactory way in which it furnishes us with links for connecting together what appears sometimes isolated and disordered.

Prophecy no less than doctrine receives light from this system. The future as well as the past bears its impress in every part. From the beginning to the end of God's workings in His universe, the same principles are acted on, the same idea is developed, the same purpose is unfolding itself—self-manifestation. In the ages to come, God is the same ALL AND IN ALL, and man the same nothing, that they have been in the generations that are past. ✧

\*See, on some of the above points, the able "Lectures on Prophecy," by the Rev. James Kelly.

From *Prophetical Landmarks*, Ch. 3





## The Millennium – Literal or Spiritual?

William Kiffin

They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son. It is usually understood either of a spiritual looking by the eye of Faith, or beholding Christ at the Day of Judgment: but why should we take it for a spiritually looking, and looking at the day of Judgment? That place doth not hold out, that is not the thing intended: They shall mourn every one apart; this is not like the setting forth of the mourning at the day of judgement: And take but this one Rule, that all tests are to be understood literally, except they make against some other scripture, or except the very Coherence and Dependence of the Scripture shows it otherwise, or it makes against the analogy of Faith; now there is nothing against this, but I may be so. A second Scripture that seems to hold out somewhat is that in Matt. 26:19, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. It is true, this is likewise interpreted in a mystical sense; but there is no reason, why we may not take it literally. Not in the Kingdom of his Father in Heaven; but in that

Kingdom that he shall come in here to drink the fruit of the vine, to have communion with his Saints in this world, 2 Thes. 2:8, Antichrist shall be destroyed with the brightness of Christ's coming: the brightness of his personal coming: And that place in Rev. 20 where it is said, The saints shall reign with him a thousand years, which cannot be meant reigning with him in Heaven. It is made as a proper peculiar benefit unto such as had refused Antichrists government, especially to the Christian Church: It is likely divers of the prophets and patriarchs may come in; but especially it belongs to the Christian Church; now the reigning with Christ a thousand years is not meant reigning with Him in Heaven, for after these thousand years, there shall be many enemies raised against the Church, Gog and Magog shall gather themselves together, if it were meant of Heaven, that could not be; and therefore it must be meant of Jesus Christ coming and reigning here glorious for a thousand years. And although this may seem to be strange; yet heretofore it hath not been accounted so, it hath been a truth received in the primitive times. Justin Martyr that lived presently after John, he spake of this as a thing that all Christians acknowledged; and likewise Lactantius hath such expressions in divers places of his seventh book. That there are glorious times coming, wherein shall be plenty and fruitfulness in the Church, yet first, Rome must be burnt, and Babylon first downed, and this brings the sybills, the heathen oracles for it, and after a little time there shall be stirring up of enemies against them: thus far they go; if they did not believe that Christ himself should come personally to reign, yet he shall with his Saints reign in a Glorious manner, and the Church shall be so raised up in the world outwardly, as to be above all the men of the world in outward Glory. ☆

*Glimpse of Zion's Glory*, 1641. Preached at the organization of a Particular Baptist Church.  
[Original spelling retained]

We are to expect the literal advent of Jesus Christ, for he himself by his angel told us, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," which must mean literally and in person. We expect a reigning Christ on earth; that seems to us to be very plain, and to be put so literally that we dare not spiritualize it. We anticipate a first and a second resurrection; a first resurrection of the righteous, and a second resurrection of the ungodly, who shall be judged, condemned, and punished forever by the sentence of the great King.

C.H. Spurgeon, *Things to Come*, MTP, Vol 15, p.329-330.

William Kiffin (1616-1701) was known as the father of Particular Baptists. He pastored Devonshire Square Baptist Church of London England for 61 years.

# INDEX TO PREMILLENNIAL BAPTIST JOURNAL

By Title

Volume 1, Issue 1 – Volume 3, Issue 3  
2006-2008

- "First Resurrection. The", A.J. Gordon. Vol II Issue II Apr.-June, 2007: p 12.
- "Abrahamic Covenant. The", Dan Cozart. Vol III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 3.
- "Amillennial Errors." J.C. Settlemoir. Vol III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 2.
- "Binding of Satan. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol II Issue IV Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 6.
- "Binding of Satan. The", Bill Lee. Vol II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 3.
- "Budding of the Fig Tree. The", S.P. Tregelles. Vol 1 Issue 1 July-Sept., 2006: p 5.
- "Coming & Reign of Christ. The", David N. Lord. Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 6.
- "Errors of Preterism." Royce Smith. Vol III Issue II Apr.-June, 2008: p 14.
- "Errors of Dispensationalism." William L. Brown. Vol III Issue II Apr.-June, 2008: p 8.
- "Fifth Kingdom From Heaven. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 14.
- "First Resurrection. The", G.E. Jones. Vol II Issue II Apr.-June, 2007: p 7.
- "God's Dealings With Israel-By Grace or Law?" Barry E. Horner. Vol III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 12.
- "First Resurrection. The", Horatius Bonar. Vol II Issue II Apr.-June, 2007: p 10.
- "Image (Daniel 11). The", S.P. Tregelles. Vol II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 6.
- "Is God Finished With Israel." Royce Smith. Vol; II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 5.
- "Is Satan Now Bound?" W.E. Dalling. Vol II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007:p 9.
- "Israel Means Israel." Stephen A. Toms. Vol II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 8.
- "Kingdom of Stone. The", Wayne Camp. Vol II Issue III July-Sept., 2007: p 3.
- "Literal Grammatical Interpretation." George N.H. Peters. Vol 1 Issue 1 July-Sept., 2006: p 6.
- "Literality of Prophecy. On the", Charles Spurgeon. Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 10.
- "Millennium: Distinctions Which Make Difficulties Disappear." B.W. Newton. Vol 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 15.
- "Nature of the Reign. The", G.E. Jones. Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 12.
- "Old Testament Prophecies of the Millennium. The," Dean Robinson. Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 3.
- "Promise of the Land to Israel. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 6.
- "Proofs of the Millennium." John Gill. Vol 1 Issue 1 July-Sept, 2006: p 4.
- "Removal of Satan. The", John MacArthur. Vol II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 12.
- "Removal of Satan. The", Lehman Strauss. Vol II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 15.
- "Restoration and Conversion of the Jews. The", Charles Spurgeon. Vol II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 3.
- "Should Bible Prophecy Be Interpreted Literally?" Laurence A. Justice. Vol 1 Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 3.
- "Some Errors of Postmillennialism." Michael McCoskey. Vol III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 11.
- "Study of Revelation 20:4-6. A", J.C. Settlemoir. Vol II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 3.
- "Times of the Gentiles. The", Rene Pache. Vol II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 15.
- "What is Taught About the Reign of Christ." G.E. Jones. Vol 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 6.
- "What is the Kingdom of Heaven?" Dan Cozart. Vol 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 3.
- "When Daniel Saw the Kingdom." Oswald J. Smith. Vol II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 13.

# INDEX TO PREMILLENNIAL BAPTIST JOURNAL

By Author

Volume 1, Issue 1 – Volume 3, Issue 3  
2006-2008

- Bonar, Horatius. "Horatius Bonar on The First Resurrection." Vol II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 10.
- Brown, William L. "Errors of Dispensationalism." Vol III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 8.
- Camp, Wayne. "The Kingdom of Stone." Vol II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 3.
- Cozart, Dan. "The Abrahamic Covenant." Vol III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 3.  
"What is the Kingdom of Heaven?" Vol I Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 3.
- Dalling, W.E. "Is Satan Now Bound?" Vol II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007: p 9.
- Gill, John. "Proofs of the Millennium." Vol I Issue 1, July-Sept, 2006: p 4.
- Gordon, A.J. "A.J. Gordon on The First Resurrection." Vol II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 12.
- Horner, Barry E. "God's Dealings With Israel-By Grace or Law?" Vol III Issue III, July-Sept: 2008 p 12.
- Jones, G.E "What is Taught About the Reign of Christ." Vol 1 Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 6.  
"The First Resurrection." Vol II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 7.  
"The Nature of the Reign." Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 12.
- Justice, Laurence A. "Should Bible Prophecy Be Interpreted Literally?" Vol 1 Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 3.
- Lee, Bill. "The Binding of Satan." Vol II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 3.
- Lord, David N. "The Coming & Reign of Christ." Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 6.
- MacArthur, John. "The Removal of Satan." Vol II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 12.
- McCoskey, Michael. "Some Errors of Postmillennialism." Vol III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 11.
- Newton, B.W. "Millennium: Distinctions Which Make Difficulties Disappear." Vol I Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 15.
- Pache, Rene. "The Times of the Gentiles." Vol II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 15.
- Peters, George N.H. "Literal Grammatical Interpretation." Vol 1 Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 6.
- Robinson, Dean. "The Old Testament Prophecies of the Millennium." Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 3.
- Settlemoir, J.C. "A Study of Revelation 2:-4-6." Vol II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 3.  
"Amillennial Errors." Vol III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 2.
- Smith, Oswald J. "When Daniel Saw the Kingdom." Vol II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 13
- Smith, Royce. "Errors of Preterism." Vol III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 14.  
"Is God Finished With Israel." Vol; II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 5.
- Spurgeon, Charles. "On the Literality of Prophecy." Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 10.  
"The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews." Vol II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 3.
- Strauss, Lehman. "The Removal of Satan." Vol II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 15.
- Toms, Stephen A. "Israel Means Israel." Vol II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 8.
- Tregelles, S.P. "The Budding of the Fig Tree." Vol 1 Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 5.  
"The Image (Daniel 11)." Vol II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 6.
- Walvoord, John F. "The Binding of Satan." Vol II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 6.  
"The Fifth Kingdom From Heaven." Vol III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 14.  
"The Promise of the Land to Israel." Vol III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008 p 6.

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"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Timothy 3:5. *Apart from the second Advent of our Lord, the world is more likely to sink into a pandemonium than to rise into a millennium. A divine interposition seems to me the hope set before us in Scripture, and, indeed, to be the only hope adequate to the occasion.*

C. H. Spurgeon, *The Form of Godliness Without the Power*, MTP, Vol XXXV p. 301

(Griffiths: continued from page 4)

**Spurgeon aged 43:** 'There is moreover to be a reign of Christ. I cannot read the Scriptures without perceiving that there is to be a pre-millennial reign, as I believe, upon the earth **and** that there shall be new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness...' (heavy ours).

This becomes in Dr. Masters' analysis. 'The millennial reign of Christ will be in the new heavens and the new earth'!

**Spurgeon aged 49:** 'Then all His people who are alive at the time of His coming shall be suddenly transformed, so as to be delivered from all the frailties and imperfections of their mortal bodies: *The dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.* Then we shall be presented spirit, soul, and body *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;* in the clear and absolute perfection of our sanctified manhood, presented unto Christ Himself.'

This becomes unrecognisable in Dr. Masters' analysis: 'The saints shall then be perfected to live eternally with the Lord of the transformed "heavenly" earth'.

**Spurgeon aged 50:** 'When the Lord comes there will be no more death; we who are alive and remain (as some of us may be—we cannot tell) will undergo a sudden transformation—for flesh and blood, as they are, cannot inherit the kingdom of God—and by that transformation our bodies shall be made meet to be *partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*'

This becomes 'unglorified people—flesh and blood—cannot survive into the kingdom of Christ at His coming.' Plainly, Mr. Spurgeon does not say this.

**Spurgeon aged 52:** 'His coming will cause great sorrow. What does the text say about his coming? All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Then this sorrow will be very general.'

In Dr. Masters' analysis, this becomes 'The inevitable destruction of ungodly people will cause them

great sorrow (They cannot survive into the millennial glory.)'

Time and again, Mr. Spurgeon is alleged to say what he clearly does not say and upon this reinterpretation the conclusion is reached that 'the kind of earthly reign envisaged by Spurgeon was exactly that expected by most a-millennialists.'

Yet more seriously, Dr. Masters omits statements from the sections he has quoted which contradict his analysis of Mr. Spurgeon's views. Frequently sentences and paragraphs are deleted without any indication that they have been removed. In some cases, this may have been for the sake of brevity although even here we feel readers should always have been told where editing has taken place in such a controversial article. We will give two instances where there appears to have been a deliberate suppression of Mr. Spurgeon's view:

**Time and again, Mr. Spurgeon is alleged to say what he clearly does not say and upon this reinterpretation the conclusion is reached...**

Firstly, **Spurgeon aged 30** (MTP Vol 10 p 430): The sermon says 'All these promises certainly imply that the people of Israel are to be converted to God, and that this conversion is to be permanent, for the tabernacle of God is to be with them, the Most High is, in an especial manner, to have His sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore; **so that whatever nations may apostatize and turn from the Lord in these latter days,** the nation of Israel never can, for she shall be effectually and permanently converted, the hearts of the father shall be turned with the hearts of the children unto the Lord their God, and they shall be the people of God, world without end... We take this for our joy and our comfort, that this thing shall be, and that both in the spiritual and in the temporal throne, the King Messiah shall sit, and reign among His people gloriously.' (heavy ours).

Dr. Masters quotes this passage, but suppresses the section which raises a possibility of an apostasy among the nations after the conversion of the Jews, when 'both in the spiritual and in the temporal throne, the King Messiah shall sit and reign among His people gloriously.' According to Dr. Masters, Mr. Spurgeon did not believe there could be any defection in the millennium.

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Theme of next issue:  
**Is the Church Israel?**

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Then again, Dr. Masters' second citation from volume 10 p 439. Mr. Spurgeon says of the millennial earth, 'They shall not say one to another, "Know the Lord: for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest." **There may be even in that period certain solemn assemblies and Sabbath days, but they will not be of the same kind as we have now;** for the whole earth will be a temple, every day shall be a Sabbath...' (heavy ours).

Dr. Masters deletes the sentence in heavy type without indicating he has done so and then his analysis of this quotation declares that Mr. Spurgeon says, 'There will be no Jewish worship' (in the millennium).

It appears that Dr. Masters has been over zealous in his attempt to identify the character of Mr. Spurgeon's millennium with that of the a-millennialists and that this has led to manipulation of the quotations for this end.

In our judgment, Dr. Masters has failed to prove his case on any point of his argument. We appreciate his stand on separation from apostasy, against the charismatic movement, his rescue of the Metropolitan Tabernacle from Baptist Unionism, and the valued Tabernacle Bookshop (with all its blemishes). We are saddened at the vociferous a-millennialism that the Tabernacle has come to represent under his ministry. We do not feel that this particular article has brought any credit to a-millennialism. We continue to read all aspects of Mr. Spurgeon's works with great profit and have no difficulty in affirming our full and unqualified acceptance of the Confession of Faith that Mr. Spurgeon signed. He was a valued standard bearer for historic pre-millennialism.

It would indeed be surprising if, in all his 3000 published sermons and the many books and articles he penned, there were not some statements that we wish had not been made. Mr. Spurgeon was human and no doubt would have preferred some things had remained unsaid (it is reputed, for example, that he did not wish the New Park Street Pulpit to be republished). Such aberrations do not, however, affect the general tenor of his works, which are, as he repeatedly declared himself to be, decidedly pre-millennial. ✧

*Watching and Waiting*, July/September 1990  
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# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Is the Church Israel?

VOLUME IV ISSUE I

JAN-MAR 2009

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

### Inside This Edition

- Did the Church Replace Israel? *J.C. Settlemaier*..... p. 3
- Israel and Christian Anti-Judaism In Contrast, *Barry E. Horner*..... p. 9

## Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

We urgently request that all readers of the Premillennial Baptist Journal include the magazine in your daily prayers. Please pray that by means of this journal God may be glorified and his truth promoted. Pray that the magazine may be both produced and read in both faith and love with spiritual discernment. Pray that neither editor nor writers nor readers will be carried away into error or into unbrotherly disputation.

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When we began this magazine three years ago we vowed to publish only when we had the money in hand to pay for the next issue. Some of our readers have given generously to enable us to keep publishing. Because of this we have been able to publish every issue on time. At present we have just about depleted our funds. Many of our readers have yet to contribute. If you are one of these and you have profited from reading the magazine, now would be a good time to help by sending a check for \$25 or \$50 or \$100 or even \$500. Only as our readers support us financially will we be able to continue publication. Make checks payable to *Premillennial Baptist Journal* and send all donations to:

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## Did the Church Replace Israel?

J. C. Settlemoir

There is a theory which teaches the church took the place of Israel or that it replaced this nation. This raises questions: Is the church Israel? Did the church *replace* Israel? Did the church become Israel? Does the church now stand in the place of Israel? Did the Lord *reprobate* the nation of Israel and put the church in Israel's place? Or to put it another way, did the Lord snuff out the light of Israel and give that light to the church? Did the church *succeed* Israel? Did Israel cease to be a nation? Will the Lord ever deal with this nation again? If the church is now Israel is this the only Israel there ever shall be? The questions are fair. We seek the Spirit of the Lord as we attempt to answer them. Sources will be given in full at the end of the article.

We recognize there are extremes on both sides of this issue. Some dispensationalists go too far. We have Scofield and Chafer on one side and the Protestants, Catholics and Reformed Baptists on the other. We will attempt to steer our vessel carefully between this Charybdis on one hand and Scylla on the other.

The blending of Israel and the church in glory (for which see Matthew 8:10-11) is no easy matter and I have more questions than answers. It is not my intent to be wise above what is written. Nor is it necessary for me to know all the answers but I am, however, to believe what is revealed and leave the Lord to solve all apparent problems and remove all apparent difficulties. Throughout this article the term *church* is used in its generic sense. (Cf. BHC).

### Various Terms Used For The Idea

There are now several terms which are used to express the idea that the church is Israel or that it succeeded Israel. These terms are used to describe this transaction which many Amillennialists say eliminated Israel from God's program and put the church in the place of Israel. Some of these are:

...replacement theology, supersessionism, fulfillment theology, transference theology and absorptionism .... (Horner, 3).

These terms generally mean the permanent casting away of Israel and the church's stepping into Israel's shoes. Yet there is no Scripture which says the church is Israel. Nor

do we find any term to signify this idea. The term sometimes used to describe this is *spiritual Israel* but it is not found in Scripture. In practical terms what this position demands is that when they introduce the church they totally ignore Israel! It is the classic example of a brush-off. In this snide snub they pretend Israel is not present even though it is obvious to everyone else that Israel is there!

An example of this replacement is found in the *Oxford Dictionary*:

In a theological sense, the word (Israel) was used of the nation, esp. in its covenant-relation to Jehovah. In the NT it was transferred to the Christian Church, considered as the new 'Israel of God' (Galatians 6:16), which now inherits the privileges of ancient Israel. p. 718.

This great leap from the nation which is in covenantal relation with Jehovah to the church is Roman Catholic theology which Protestants and many Baptists have adopted without considering the source.

The term *Israel* is found seventy times in the New Testament. In every single case the regular meaning of the term makes good sense. This is strong pervasive evidence that it has this same meaning in every case. But in spite of this the predisposition to make the church Israel is seen everywhere in books, commentaries, study Bibles, articles, web sites and is put before us like Jacob's peeled rods so we will bring forth after this kind. Even the annotators of our Bibles have done this! Take for example in the Old Testament KJV you will find notes pertaining to Israel put to the church's account which are contextually absurd. There are twenty such absolutely erroneous references in the Old Testament of my Cambridge Bible. For example. Psalm 89, "God's care for his church and for David's kingdom." Isaiah 49 "The restoration of church." (See notes). But observe there are none of these in those books which are heavy with the curses of Israel such as Jeremiah, Lamentations, Hosea or Amos. The reason is transparent!

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How are these mutations of Israel to the church supposedly made? It is really quite simple. Those who do so have their Bibles wired up with a unique connection which allows them to flip the switch and *Israel* becomes the *church*! As Premillennialists we have no need for this switch. We very simply believe *Israel* is *Israel* and the church is the *church*.

### Scripture Makes Changes Known

When the Scripture presents something new, something which is not before revealed or something which the reader may not know, it usually makes this clear. Some of the terms for clarification are *which is, this is, that is, the same as, was before* and so on, so that we would expect some passage to say "Israel which is the church!" But no such text has been produced. For example when Paul mentions the *house of God* as the church of God, an idea which the reader might not know, he spells it out to make sure he knows this term is the same thing and means *the church of the living God*!

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).

When the Gentiles were to be admitted into the church, the Lord made this manifest in letting down a sheet for Peter. This was repeated three times! (Acts 10:16). It was just at this moment that the men from Cornelius arrived and we have the account immediately following of the Gentiles receiving the same blessings. This great change (of Gentiles being received into the church) was abundantly manifested. But as far as the Lord making the church to be Israel, when did this take place? Why do we have no revelation of such a great transaction?

Just the change of Jacob's name to Israel was accentuated with a considerable display of the purpose of God and the publication of the change (Genesis 32:24-32) including a life-long limp and a no-sinew diet for the whole nation! But the replacement of Israel with the church, a much greater change, was so quiet and smooth the disciples themselves knew nothing about it! Where is the declaration of this great change? The answer is, *We have no such declaration!* There is no smoking lamp, no answer by fire, no sheet let down, no thunder, no trumpet waxing louder and louder, only silence and more silence!

***If Israel is the church then why were the Apostles ignorant of the fact?***

We would then expect that if the name *Israel* is to be used with a new meaning in Scripture, in a sense contrary to what it had in all other instances for over a thousand years, that new meaning would be specified so that there could be no question about it. How could such a disclosure, if true, be left unstated, unannounced, unrevealed? We would expect the writers of the New Testament to make this abundantly clear. But we nowhere have such an explanation. Without such that silence is strong presumptive evidence that the meaning of *Israel* has not changed. It is not the same thing as the church but it is the same as it had been all along!

### The Apostles Did Not Know Israel Was the Church

If *Israel* is the church then why were the Apostles ignorant of the fact? If this great translation of one thing into another was done by the Lord himself, how could the Apostles be so ignorant of the fact? (Cf. Acts 1:6-8). Were they not taught by the Lord himself? Were they not his inspired representatives? But in this text we have them indicating that they thought the Lord would restore the Kingdom again unto *Israel*—not to the church! Nor does the Lord even suggest to them that *Israel* had been replaced! Rather, he reminds them that the times and seasons (when these things to which they allude will be accomplished) the Father has in his own hand and these we believe are connected to the time when all *Israel* shall be saved and the restitution of all things (Romans 11:25-26; Acts 3:19-21).

### Israel Is Israel

The reason for the apostles' ignorance of *Israel* becoming the church is found in the fact that *Israel* never became the church! *Israel* was *Israel* in the Old Testament for 1500 years. *Israel* was *Israel* during the 400 Silent years. *Israel* was *Israel* under the gospel. *Israel* was *Israel* in the ministry of Christ. *Israel* was *Israel* in their rejection and crucifixion of Christ. *Israel* was *Israel* after the resurrection of Christ. *Israel* was *Israel* in the great commission. *Israel* was *Israel* on the day of Pentecost. *Israel* was *Israel* in the presence of the church. *Israel* was *Israel* in their apostasy. *Israel* was *Israel* in their stumbling. *Israel* was *Israel* in their unbelief. *Israel* was *Israel* when their branches were broken off. *Israel* was *Israel* under the severity of God. *Israel* was *Israel* in their hardness. *Israel* was *Israel* in their blindness.

And shall *Israel* not be *Israel* when they are again grafted into their own olive tree? Is not *Israel* now *Israel* during

this present time of the Gentiles? Will not Israel still be Israel when they are brought to Christ? Will Israel not be Israel when their ungodliness is turned away? Israel was Israel in the covenant. Israel was Israel in the election. Israel remains Israel because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance! Israel cannot be anything but Israel! (Romans 11. All verses).

Israel therefore remains *Israel*. Israel never metamorphoses into the church. No words can produce this transubstantiation and turn Israel into the church! There is no transformation of Israel into something else. Some see Israel as merely the pupal stage and say it changed into the church as the wooly worm transposes into the butterfly or the doodle bug into the dragon fly. But this turning of Israel into the church is a doomed effort! All attempts at this have left Israel as it is and the church as it is! J.C. Ryle said:

Where, I would venture to ask, in the whole New Testament, shall we find any plain authority for applying the word 'Israel' to anyone but the nation of Israel? On the contrary, I observe that when the Apostle Paul quotes Old Testament prophecies about the privileges of the Gentiles in gospel times, he is careful to quote texts which specifically mention the 'Gentiles' by name. The fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a striking illustration of what I mean. We are often told in the New Testament that, under the gospel, believing Gentiles are 'fellow heirs and partakers of the same hope' with believing Jews (Ephesians 3:6). But that believing Gentiles may be called 'Israelites', I cannot see anywhere at all. (Ryle. Quoted by Homer. 345).

### The Church Was a Mystery

Furthermore the church was a mystery. This distinguishes Israel from the church. Israel was not a mystery but was revealed time and again in the Old Testament. It is mentioned in the Old Testament about 2,400 times! Not so the church. The church, because it was a mystery, something which men could not discover without Divine revelation, was unknown. No man knew, no man could know, of the church before it was revealed and that revelation had to wait until Christ revealed it! (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 3:8-10). The Lord Jesus Christ established his church during his early ministry. But if the church is Israel, then the church was not a mystery! But Scripture teaches it was.

**No words can produce this transubstantiation and turn Israel into the church!**

### The Church—An Entirely New Thing

The church is a new institution. Therefore Israel is not the church and cannot be the church because even God Himself cannot establish what is already in existence! What those do who attempt to make Israel the church is to put the new wine of the church into the old bottle of Israel. If done, the damage is complete. Both are destroyed. (Luke 5:37).

Because the church was an entirely new thing and had no existence prior to Christ's founding it in his earthly ministry it is a New Testament institution. Therefore the church of Christ could not be Israel. After the church was founded both Israel and the church were in existence side by side, hence they must be two different things.

Christ's words in Matthew 16:18, *my church*, distinguishes it from all organizations which went before it. There was no such assembly in the world before he set up his church! This assembly had never existed before, much less for 1500 years (or for 4000 years as Hassel claims). At no time in prior history had this assembly existed. *My church* means it was one that was specifically his. He was the founder, the foundation, and the first person in it. It did not consist of Israelites as Israelites for relatively few of them ever became members of it. No one had or ever could have been a member of it before Christ instituted it in the early part of his ministry. Thousands of assemblies had been set up before his was.

But this assembly began with him and it could have no existence before it was set up by him! No other assembly like this one had ever existed before. It had a new foundation, a new membership, new ordinances, new authority, a new commission, a new constitution, new service with new promises, new membership, new status and new officers. Therefore it was an entirely new thing.

### The Foundation of the Church Is Not Israel

If Christ had said, "Upon *Israel* I will build my church," then the replacement idea would have had a foundation. But contrary to this idea Christ said, "Upon *this Rock* I will build my church," in distinction to Israel and every other institution then in existence or that ever would exist! This means his church was built upon a new foundation, a better foundation and a different foundation and that foundation was himself. Therefore it was not an add-on to the nation of Israel!



### Entrance Into Israel and the Church Different

Members of Israel become such by physical birth. All the ordinances appointed of God for Israel followed their citizenship. Nor was there any requirement for an Israelite to be born again to be a member of that nation! Nicodemus was an Israelite but unregenerate. To enter into the church, however, men must be born of the Spirit first. Only after they are regenerated are they qualified to become members of the church and that by a confession of faith and baptism. This indicates a marked difference between Israel and the church.

Many Baptists in history recognized this distinction between Israel and the church. They were praying for and looking for the call of Israel to faith in Christ. In February 1656 we have recorded in the associational record of the Particular Baptists of England and Ireland this statement:

After two days spent in fasting and prayer, we came to consider what promises we might be under at this day and by a precious hand of the Lord we came to consider that word in Ps. 102 from verse 13 to 22 and some hours was spent in considering of it. The Lord made it of much use to us for raising and strengthening our faith about Zion's building. We desire you may consider if this be not the set time and, if it be, it much concerns us all to be up and be doing, to put our hands to the work, not only in this nation, but also to pray that it may be carried on in other parts of the world as the Lord may open a way.

It is in our hearts to wait for the call of poor dispersed Israel after the flesh which is the great concernment in this building ... And we do earnestly entreat you, both in congregations, families and closets, to make it your business to cry mightily to the Lord, even night and day, to give the Lord no rest, unless he makes Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth, Isaiah 62.7.

Thomas Collier

John Pendarvis

Nathaniel Strange

[White, 78,79. Original spelling retained. ]

But why were these Baptists fasting and praying for what was not to be, and given the replacement theory, could not be? As the Lord could not forget Israel, neither could these Particular Baptists. Concerning this Bonar said:

Forgotten! No; that cannot be,  
All other names may pass away;

But thine, My Israel, shall remain  
In everlasting memory.  
Forgotten! No; that cannot be,  
The oath of Him who cannot lie  
Is on thy city and thy land  
An oath to all eternity.  
Forgotten of the Lord thy God!  
No, Israel, no, that cannot be,  
He chose thee in the days of old  
And still His favor rests on thee.

### The Promises God Made To the Forefathers Preclude Israel's Replacement

Romans 11:28 announces this fact: "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." Yet there was no merit actual or implied in the Patriarchs.

Paul means that the promises which God made to the patriarchs when he called them are secured to their descendants, not on the ground of merit, but on the ground of God's fidelity to his word of grace, as verse 29 emphasizes. (Bruce, 210).

Nor could those promises ever be fulfilled unless fulfilled to that nation to which they were originally made. Moses was greatly concerned that the nations round about would discredit the name of the Lord when he suggested he would *disinherit them* (which is the precise idea in replacement theology), and destroy them and make of Moses a new and a greater nation! (Numbers 14:12-20). Of course the Lord never intended to do this (John 6:6). He was testing Moses. But the replacement theory seems to have no fear to put upon the name of the Lord a *failure* in not bringing Israel as a nation to Christ!

### Did the Lord Ever Purpose To Do Anything Which He Did Not Do?

Of course even the Arminian will agree (up to a point) that no such ever happened. So how do men come up with the idea that God set out to deal with Israel but gave up on them and started something else, and called it the same thing? They do so by saying that the Lord never did take the whole nation but only the saved in the nation! This is to make their calling depend on what they did for him and not what he did for them! But when he dealt with them in bringing them up out of the land of Egypt, did he not speak to them as a nation? Were they not then a wayward nation? (Exodus 32 & 33). Did he not

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after their great sin with Aaron yet purpose that they would be a nation before him and that he would give them the land? Did he not call them to faith time and time again? Was he not calling them as the Nation he had called into existence? Did he not say this nation was beloved for the father's sakes? When did he give up on his original purpose? To what prophet was this announcement made? Did he give up because the case was too hard?

Is any thing too hard for the Lord? (Genesis 18:14).

Did the Lord give up because he underestimated their depravity? Was it because he could not bring them to faith? Was it because effectual grace was ineffectual with such a wayward people? We believe the Lord never changed his purpose! "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Malachi 3:6; Isaiah. 46:10, 11).

We believe nothing is too hard for the Lord! We believe he dealt with the whole nation in the beginning. We believe he is dealing with the whole nation now. And we believe that he will deal with the whole nation when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in! We believe that all Israel—the nation as a nation, but not all who were in the nation—will then look on him whom they pierced and will mourn for him (Zechariah 12:10-14)! Israel then is not the church. The Lord never gave up on the this nation and he will eventually graft them back into their own stock, (Romans 11:24) in faith! This was his purpose and he never fails to accomplish what he sets out to do!

### There Is a Remnant Of Israel

This indicates that Israel is not reprobated for then you would not have a remnant, for a remnant is a part of the whole. But if the whole is gone, how can you have a remnant of what no longer exists! This remnant continues to exist within the church until the time of Israel's restoration, when as Paul puts it, all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:26). It is obvious that the church is not Israel. Murray says:

According to the argument there is a necessity for a remnant, however widespread may be Israel's unbelief and apostasy. The necessity resides in the fact that Israel God had loved and elected. For that reason they are 'his people which he foreknew'. That he should utterly cast them off is incompatible with electing love. The guarantee that this abandonment had not occurred is no denial of the widespread apostasy with its resultant rejection on God's part but the existence of a remnant. Therefore, since God's 'foreknowledge' cannot fail of

its purpose, there is always a remnant (Romans 11:5).

Israel then has not been cast off as his chosen people.

This example is adduced to prove that God had not cast off Israel as his chosen and beloved people. The import, therefore, is that the salvation of a small remnant from the total mass is sufficient proof that the people as a nation had not been cast off. (Murray. Romans II. 69).

### The Church Is Israel Theory Does Not Go Back Far Enough

One standard which writes error over a doctrine is when that doctrine does not go back to the Bible. This replacement doctrine goes back quite a ways but it dries up before it reaches the apostolic age.

... there is no historical evidence that the term *Israel* was identified with the church before A.D. 160. Further, at that date there was no characterization of the church as "the Israel of God." In other words, for more than a century after Paul there was no evidence of the identification (Johnson. 191).

### The Principal Text For Replacement Theology Fails

Galatians 6:16 is the main text for this theory (some others are alluded to such as Romans 2: 28-29; 9:6 ) but the Galatian text is the only one which seems to say Israel is applied to the church.



Jesus shall reign where're the sun

Does his successive journeys run;

His kingdom spread from shore to shore,

Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

It is claimed that the *and* here (*kai*) is explicative. This simply means that the term Israel of God is just another term for "as many as walk according to this rule" and that there is but one group mentioned in this text, that is the church. But the objection to this idea is that Israel is never used in the New Testament in this manner.

From the standpoint of biblical usage this view stands condemned. There is no instance in biblical literature of the term *Israel* being used in the sense of the church, or the people of God as composed of both believing ethnic Jews and Gentiles. Nor, on the other hand, as one might expect if there were such usage, does the phrase *to ethne* (KJV, "the Gentiles") ever mean the non-Christian world specifically, but only the non-Jewish peoples, although such are generally non-Christians. Thus, the usage of the term *Israel* stands overwhelmingly opposed to the first view.

The usage of the terms *Israel* and *the church* in the early chapters of the book of Acts is in complete harmony, for Israel exists there alongside the newly formed church, and the two entities are kept separate in terminology (Johnson. 189).

### Has God Cast Away His People Israel?

Paul asks this question in Romans 11:1 with great emphasis. What answer does he give? He gives as strong a negative as possible! Yet replacement theology claims God has cast away his people and this idea

...is associated with the allegorizing, spiritualizing, and idealizing, exposition of the prophecies

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 Notes: Cf. also Ps. 44. p. 760; Ps. 47. p. 762; Ps. 75. p. 779; Ps. 79. p. 783; Ps. 87. p. 787; Ps. 89. p. 789, where the heading is: God's care for his church and for David's kingdom. Also, Ps. 123. p. 814; SS. 3. p. 868; SS. 4, 5. p. 869; SS. 6. p. 870; SS. 7, 8 p. 871; Isa. 9. p. 881; Isa. 30. p. 902; Isa. 34. p. 906; Isa. 44. p. 918; Isa. 45. p. 920. God calleth Cyrus for his church's sake; Isa. 49. p. 925. Restoration of the church (cf. vss. 13-15, 23); Isa. 54. p. 930 vss. 5-10; Isa. 60. p. 935. Glorious access of the Gentiles into the church; Isa. 64. p. 939: the church prayeth for the presence of God. Micah 7. p. 1157: The church's complaint, and her confidence in God. *Cambridge Bible*.

West. *Thousand Years*.

White. *Associational Records of the Particular Baptists*.

concerning Israel and the Advent; a theory which taught the Church to say that, when Paul tells the Romans "All Israel shall be saved,"—i. e., the Israel to whom "blindness" had happened,—and who were nationally "cast away,"—it means "the whole Christian Church;" and that, when he repeats Israel's prediction that "the Redeemer shall come to Zion," for Israel's deliverance from the last Antichrist, and Israel's Redemption from Gentile power, it means "a great spiritual revival," but not the Second Coming of the Lord! (West. 274).

If the Jews as such are never to be engrafted again into their own root (the root of Israel) then indeed in a marked way God has cast away his people which he foreknew or foreloved and this the Apostle denies with abhorrence! When Nathan was sent to David, the Lord would make the promise to Israel sure and so he had the prophet to double the promise:

"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." (2 Samuel 6:16)

But this promise would fall to the ground if Israel is no longer in the purpose and plan of God.

The church is not Israel and did not replace Israel. From the Scripture we believe the nation of Israel is now in unbelief and consequently cast off. But this rejection by the Lord is neither total nor final. In the Lord's own time he will manifest himself to Israel and they will look on him whom they have pierced and will inquire of the wounds in his hands and will mourn for him. This will be that time of restitution, refreshing and regeneration which the prophets have prophesied from the foundation of the world. May our Lord haste the day! ✪

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## Israel and Christian Anti-Judaism In Contrast

Barry E. Horner

That Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was decidedly pro-Israel in his ministry is often neglected. This should not surprise us since the Lord declared to Ananias that Paul would be "My chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Furthermore, it is clear from Romans 9-11 that the present status and future destiny of unbelieving national Israel in general, apart from a remnant of Jewish Christians, was a matter of passionate, unrelenting, even primary concern for Paul (Rom. 1:16). He especially seems to have considered it necessary that Gentile Christians at Rome should be addressed, not simply on account of their predominance, but more particularly because of their tendency to be arrogant toward Jewish believers (Romans 11:18-20). Paul's concerns included the need to clarify whether the promises of God to national Israel have now been nullified. In other words, has national Israel sinned away the grace of God so that it is, now and forever, *persona non grata* in his sight? Hence, is there a future destiny for national Israel, as perhaps a minority of Jewish believers at Rome might talk about with persistence? Or is Jewishness now a matter of receding concern in the present since it will certainly have no future validity? Do believing Gentiles have any ongoing responsibilities toward unbelieving national Israel that include acknowledgement of a distinct covenantal future? To these questions the apostle responds that "the promises" still "belong" to Israel (9:4), that "the Word of God" has not "failed" to the promised seed of Abraham (9:6-9), that "God has not rejected his people" (11:1-2), that Israel has not "stumbled so as to fall" (i.e., to be beyond divine recovery, 11:11), that Gentile Christians are to humbly and respectfully regard unbelieving Jews with fear (11:20), so that, as a consequence, eventually "all Israel will be saved" (11:26).

It is unfortunately true that over 1900 years of church history have not witnessed the eventual resolution of these problems as proposed by Paul, and especially at a practical level, however clarifying he may have intended to be. In the same vein then, it might well be asked, "Has the Christian Church learned anything in this regard, but especially in ethical terms, concerning its treatment of unbelieving Jews over many centuries according to Paul's injunction (Romans 11:18-20)?" In spite of voluminous Christian study of these questions, the evidence culled from past centuries would tend to indicate abysmal failure, particularly in terms of the shameful record of Chris-

tianity's consistently disgraceful treatment of the Jews. And further, this well attested reputation cannot possibly be divorced from the horrific record of anti-Judaism that erupted during the twentieth century.

However, even in this twenty-first century, the controversy still rages, seemingly afresh. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, as well as the reclamation of Old Jerusalem by the Jews in 1967, has only appeared to exacerbate the conflict whereby such terms as "Zionism" and "a Palestinian State" have become highly emotive epithets for fiercely opposing causes. While there has been substantial support for the nation of Israel within conservative evangelical Christendom, according to biblical presuppositions and identification as Christian Zionism, nevertheless a vociferous segment has opposed any acknowledgment whereby God continues to have present covenantal interest in his ancient people, especially in a national and territorial sense. Along with this reaction there has usually been the expression of sympathy for the beleaguered Palestinian people, particularly in terms of their being deprived of land and respect by the rapacious Israelis. As a result, a growing literary response from some Christians has challenged the very legitimacy of Israel's existence, but particularly at a biblical and societal level. Much of this has suggested that the complex issues revolve around the need of justice for the Palestinians on account of their suffering at the hands of Jewish injustice. Allied to this belief has been the conviction that a compromise resolution must be brokered for the parties in conflict. Thus a Palestinian State must be established alongside or within Israel (perhaps by means of a "Road Map" proposal), that would establish the relative social peace that has so far eluded the Middle East over the centuries.

As a result, opposition to Christian Zionism in biblical and covenantal terms has elicited the counter-charge of "theological anti-Judaism" from those who support the cause of national Israel, even though the Jews remain in general unbelief. Hence, the polarizing result has been a defensive loyalty expressed by Christian Zionists in the face of harsh criticism of national Israel by Christian sym-

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pathizers with the Palestinian and Arab cause. These anti-Zionist Christians usually espouse an Augustinian, homogenous eschatology that would absorb and supplant all former Jewish distinctions. Furthermore, this conflict has particularly manifested itself within much of conservative evangelical Christendom. Thus, some Christians maintain that Israel has a national and territorial eschatological future according to God's covenantal purposes, and in particular a mass conversion at the end of this age. However, many others hold to an anti-Judaic belief denying that modern Israel has any eschatological future in national and territorial terms. This book proposes that the former of these two theses is the more biblically and morally correct. Further, I believe that such a difference is not merely a theological one that we can calmly agree to disagree over, as if divorced from any behavioral accountability. The reason is that the pro-Judaic perspective involves a vital ethical element, sharply contrasting with unethical anti-Judaism throughout church history, which is inextricably bound to the theological construct that we hope to demonstrate both exegetically and historically. However, we will first consider these two opposing eschatological perspectives from the viewpoint of specific historic examples concerning biblical interpretation.

#### National Israel with No Distinctive Eschatological Hope

I offer here two examples of at best a cool toleration of the Jews and certainly an absence of that Pauline passion that the apostle maintained throughout his missionary endeavors. Whatever the terminology that is used concerning this perspective, whether replacement theology, supercessionism, fulfillment theology, transference theology, or absorptionism, they all amount to the same basic denigration of the Jews and ultimately of national Israel in the present Christian dispensation. More evidence in this regard will follow in subsequent chapters.

*Aurelius Augustine:* The monumental contribution of this fourth-century church father of North Africa in the realm of eschatology cannot be exaggerated. It is not simply a question of his prevailing dominance over millennialism whereby the church in this present world was esteemed as the true earthly representation of the heavenly city of God in anticipation of heavenly consummation; it is the fact that his teaching concerning the future of the Jews, in relation to the church triumphant on earth, both saved them from total decimation and preserved them for intentional humiliation. This was a major feature of Augustine's famous, yet obviously mistaken, interpretation

of Psalm 59:11, "Do not kill them (the Jews); otherwise, my people will forget. By your power, make them homeless wanderers." So he concluded,

Therefore God has shown the Church in her enemies the Jews the grace of his compassion, since, as saith the apostle, "their offence is the salvation of the Gentiles." And therefore he has not slain them, that is, he has not let the knowledge that they are Jews be lost in them, although they have been conquered by the Romans, lest they should forget the law of God, and their testimony should be of no avail in this matter of which we treat. But it was not enough that he (God) should say, "Slay them not, lest they should at last forget Thy law," unless he had also added, "Disperse them;" because if they had only been in their own land with that testimony of the Scriptures, and not everywhere, certainly the Church which is everywhere could not have had them as witnesses among all nations to the prophecies which were sent before concerning Christ.<sup>1</sup>

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So by way of imposition upon the text, David's enemies are interpreted as the Jews, being enemies of the church. Unlike the ferocity of some earlier church fathers, Augustine's influential attitude appears more temperate so that, with enforced humiliation, the vagabond Jews might be a testimony of God's dealings in judgment on them according to Scripture. However, the result of his seeming tolerant exposition here was what James Carroll described as a double-edge sword:

On one side, against Chrysostom and even Ambrose, it requires an end to all violent assaults against synagogues, Jewish property, and Jewish persons... On the other side, Augustine's relatively benign attitude toward Jews is rooted still in assumptions of supercessionism that would prove to be deadly. The "Witness" prescription attributed to him—Let them survive but not thrive!—would underlie the destructive ambivalence that marked Catholic attitudes toward Jews from then on. Ultimately history would show that such double-edged ambivalence is impossible to maintain without disastrous consequences. For a thousand years, the compulsively repeated pattern of that ambivalence would show in bishops and popes protecting Jews—but from expressly Christian mobs that

<sup>1</sup>Augustine, *The City of God*, 18.46. It is tragic that such obvious misinterpretation of this passage should have become so influential over the centuries that followed. Plainly, in Ps. 59:11, David the Jew is interceding for his enemies, and not especially the Jews, when he declares, "Do not kill them:...By your power, make them homeless wanderers."

wanted to kill Jews because of what bishops and popes had taught about Jews. Such a teaching which wants it both ways was bound to fail, as would become evident at every point in history when Jews presumed, whether economically or culturally or both, to even think of thriving. This is the legacy that haunts the Catholic Church into the twenty-first century, a perverse legacy from which, despite the twentieth century's jolts, the Church is not yet free.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, the Augustinian legacy kept the Jews dispersed, disgraced, and depressed—except for the hope of their individual conversion, or until their national conversion at the end of this age when they would then become absorbed into the one true, holy, catholic, apostolic church. Hence, such a scattered preservation in no way anticipated any distinctive eschatological hope for the Jews. Rather for Augustine, in Romans 11,

Some Jews have believed in Christ, and they are the remnant of the natural olive and fulfillment of the divine promises to historical Israel...The "Israel" that will ultimately be saved are the predestined elect, drawn into a unity out of Jews and Gentiles...Judaism is simply relegated the latter [non-elect] category, and its status in salvation-history assigned to the pre-Christian past.<sup>3</sup>

So the Christian can take to himself the name of Israelite since it has been forfeited by the Jews who, having lost their birthright, are now to be named Esau. Augustine commented on Psalm 114:3,

For if we hold with a firm heart the grace of God which hath been given us, we are Israel, the seed of Abraham...Let therefore no Christian consider himself alien to the name of Israel...The Christian people then is rather Israel...But that multitude of Jews, which was deservedly reprobated for its perfidy, for the pleasures of the flesh sold their birthright, so that they belonged not to Jacob, but rather to Esau.<sup>4</sup>

...the  
Augustinian  
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and  
depressed...

The effect then of this supercessionist teaching upon subsequent centuries was profound, as Carroll has pointed out. So Jeremy Cohen confirmed,

Augustine of Hippo bequeathed so much to western civilization that one need hardly wonder if this bequest included his ideas on Jews and Judaism. Indeed, modern students of Jewish-Christian relations typically attributed the theological foundations of the medieval church's Jewish policy to Augustine, referring as a matter of course to the legacies and principles of Augustinian anti-Judaism.<sup>5</sup>

Hence, Augustine's eschatology regarding Israel, as having played out over centuries of church history, is not something that any Christian ought to boast in thoughtlessly. This legacy is certainly unbiblical in its exegetical, theological and ethical outworking, and thus is un-Pauline. Consequently, it rightly justifies repudiating that basic supercessionist theology which has flowed from these historic beginnings. A better and more pro-Judaic eschatology is needed, and this we believe to be rooted in the full canvas of Scripture when rightly exegeted.

*John Calvin:* The contribution of this sixteenth-century reformer of Geneva to the emergence of western civilization in Europe, as well as the Reformed movement within Christianity, was truly monumental. His indebtedness to Augustine, like that of Luther, was substantial, as the abundance of almost adoring references in his Institutes of the Christian Religion indicates. According to the editor of the Battles edition of this work, "Calvin may be said to stand at the culmination of the later Augustinianism. He actually incorporates in his treatment of man and of salvation so many typical passages from Augustine that his doctrine seems here entirely continuous with that of his great African predecessor."<sup>6</sup>

With regard to the Jews and Israel, there is an attitude of tolerance, similar to Augustine's that is void of any distinctive, covenantal, passionate eschatological acknowledgment. As Paul Johnson explained,

*Jean Calvin...* was more well disposed towards Jews [than Luther], partly because he tended to agree with them on the question of lending at interest; he reported Jewish arguments objectively in his writ-

<sup>2</sup>J. Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews: A History* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 2001), 218-19

<sup>3</sup>Peter Gorday, *Principles Of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, Augustine* (New York: E. Mellen Press, 1983), 171, 333.

<sup>4</sup>Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms by Saint Augustine*, Vol. 5 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1853), 114.3.

<sup>5</sup>Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 19. This is a significant study of not only Augustine's foundational contribution toward theological anti-Judaism, but also the widespread embrace in varying degrees of this legacy, through to the thirteenth century, by means of Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, Agobard of Lyon, Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>6</sup>J. Calvin, *Institutes Of The Christian Religion* (ed. J.T. McNeill; trans. F.L. Battles; Philadelphia, Westminster, 1960). I.lviii.

ings and was even accused by his Lutheran enemies of being a Judaizer. Nonetheless, Jews were expelled from Calvinist cities and the Calvinist Palatinate.<sup>7</sup>

Like Augustine, Calvin taught that the Christian Church had become the new spiritual Israel, the amalgam of Jew and Gentile whereby past ethnic identity had become null and void. He commented on Romans 11:26, where Paul declares, "And in this way all Israel will be saved":

Many understand this of the Jewish people, as though Paul had said, that religion would again be restored among them as before: but I extend the word Israel to all the people of God, according to this meaning. "When the Gentiles shall come in, the Jews also shall return [as an accumulating remnant] from their defection to the obedience of faith; and thus shall be completed the salvation of the whole Israel of God, which must be gathered from both; and yet in such a way that the Jews shall obtain the first place [at the commencement of the church], being as it were the first-born in God's family." This interpretation seems to me the most suitable, because Paul intended here to set forth the completion of the kingdom of Christ, which is by no means to be confined to the Jews, but is to include the whole world. The same manner of speaking we find in Galatians 6:16. The Israel of God is what he calls the Church, gathered alike from Jews and Gentiles.<sup>8</sup>

Calvin's understanding of the future of national Israel can also be observed in his comments on Hosea 1:10-11:

For so long a time has passed away since their [the sons of Israel's] exile, and...since there has been no restoration of this people, it is certain that this prophecy ought not to be restricted to seed according to the flesh. For there was a prescribed time for the Jews, when the Lord purposed to restore them to their country; and, at the end of seventy years, a free return was granted them by Cyrus. Then Hosea speaks not here of the kingdom of Israel, but of the Church, which was to be restored by a return, composed both of Jews and of Gentiles.<sup>9</sup>

Also consider Calvin's explanation of the Lord's promise in Jeremiah 32:37-41 of an "everlasting covenant" with those whom he would "gather...from all the lands where I have banished them" and "plant them faithfully in this land":

We now then understand what the Prophet means when he compares to a plantation the restoration of the people after their return from exile. We know, indeed, that the people from that time had not been banished, and that the Temple had ever stood, though the faithful had been pressed down with many troubles; but this was only a type of a plantation. We must therefore necessarily pass on to Christ, in order to have a complex fulfillment of this promise...Let us then know that the Church was planted in Judea, for it remained to the time of Christ. And as Christ has pulled down the wall of partition, so that there is now no difference between Jews and Gentiles. God plants us now in the holy land, when he grafts us into the body of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

...hermeneutic that appears to be more presuppositionally than exegetically driven.

These instances clearly display the fruit of a subjective, impositional hermeneutic that appears to be more presuppositionally than exegetically driven. It is as if Calvin leapt from the plain meaning of the text right into Augustine's supercessionist lap. Our chief concern in this regard is that concerning the treatment of the Jews. This being the case according to history and exegesis, we seriously question the validity of the eschatology that undergirds this legacy.

#### National Israel with a Distinctive Eschatological Hope

Both individuals discussed here exhibit a passionate concern for the Jews much more after the manner of the apostle Paul's. Here is warm-hearted, Judeo-centric eschatology at its best. More evidence in this regard will follow in subsequent chapters.

*Horatius Bonar:* While Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) is better known today as a nineteenth-century hymn writer, his overall ministry in Scotland was of far greater dimensions, both practically and scholarly, especially with regard to his preaching and writing. He participated in a remarkable moving of the Spirit of God in Scotland that involved Thomas Chalmers, William C. Burns and Robert Murray M'Cheyne. He also joined a Mission of Enquiry to the Jews in 1839 in which he, along with his brother Andrew and M'Cheyne, toured the Holy Land

<sup>10</sup>J. Calvin, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1854), 220-21.

<sup>7</sup>P. Johnson, *A History Of The Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 242-43. Also refer to M.J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel, An Analysis of Supercessionism* (Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 56-59.

<sup>8</sup>J. Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1849), 437.

<sup>9</sup>J. Calvin, *The Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), 64.

for the purpose of reporting their findings back to the Church of Scotland.<sup>11</sup> Another related concern of Bonar, which is also reflected in his prolific hymn writing, was a considerable interest in prophetic events, particularly from a premillennial perspective. He founded and edited *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* from 1849 to 1873. In 1847 he published *Prophetical Landmarks, Containing Data for Helping to Determine the Question of Christ's Premillennial Advent*, which went to at least five editions. Here then are some pertinent comments from his Judeo-centric writings that concern such a heartfelt love for the Jewish people.

To begin with Bonar declared:

Let us speak reverently of the Jew. Let us not misjudge him by present appearances. He is not what he once was, nor what he yet shall be.

Let us speak reverently of the Jew. We have much cause to do so. What, though all Christendom, both of the East and West, has for nearly eighteen centuries treated him as the offscouring of the race? What though Mohammad has taught his followers to revile and persecute the sons of Abraham?....

Nay, what though he [the Jew] may have a grasping hand, and a soul shut up against the world, a world that has done nothing but wrong and revile him? What though he may inherit the crookedness of his father Jacob, instead of the nobility of Abraham, or the simple gentleness of Isaac?

Still let us speak reverently of the Jew, if not for what he is, at least for what he was, and what he shall be, when the Redeemer shall come to Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Isaiah 59:20; see. Romans 11:26).

In him we see the development of God's great purpose as to the woman's seed, the representative of a long line of kings and prophets, the kinsmen of him who is the Word made flesh. It was a Jew who sat on one of the most exalted thrones of the earth; it is a Jew who now sits upon the throne of heaven. It was a Jew who wrought such miracles once on our earth, who spoke such gracious words. It was a Jew who said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest;" and a Jew who said,

...the  
Redeemer  
shall come  
to Zion and  
turn away  
ungodliness  
from Jacob.

"Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me." It was Jewish blood that was shed on Calvary; it was a Jew who bore our sins in his own body on the tree. It was a Jew who died, and was buried, and rose again. It is a Jew who liveth to intercede for us, who is to come in glory and majesty as earthly judge and monarch. It is a Jew who is our Prophet, our Priest, our King.

Let us, then, speak reverently of the Jew, whatever his present degradation may be. Just as we tread reverently the level platform of Moriah, where once stood the holy house where Jehovah was worshipped; so let us tread the ground where they dwell whose are the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came. That temple hill is not what it was. The beautiful house is gone, and not one stone is left upon another. The seventeen sieges of Jerusalem, like so many storms rolling the waves of every sea over it, have left few memorials of the old magnificence. The Mosque of the Moslems covers the spot of the altar of burnt-offering; the foot of the Moslem defiles the sacred courts....But still the ground is felt to be sacred; the bare rock on which you tread is not common rock; the massive stones built here and there into the wall are witnesses of other days; and the whole scene gathers round it such associations as, in spite of the rubbish, and desolation, and ruin, and pollution, fill you irresistibly with awe....

So it is with the Jew, I mean the whole Jewish nation. There are indelible memories connected with them, which will ever, to anyone who believes in the Bible, prevent them from being contemned; nay, will cast around them a nobility and a dignity which no other nation has possessed or can attain to. To him in whose purposes they occupy so large a space, they are still "beloved for their fathers' sake" (Romans 11:28). Of them as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever.<sup>12</sup>

Later Bonar boldly confessed:

I am one of those who believe in Israel's restoration and conversion; who receive it as a future certainty, that all Israel shall be gathered, and that all Israel shall be saved. As I believe in Israel's present degradation, so do I believe in Israel's coming glory and preeminence. I believe that God's purpose regarding our world can only be understood

<sup>11</sup>See A.A. Bonar and R.M. McCheyne, *Narrative of a mission of inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839* (Presbyterian Board of Publication, n.d.; repr. Ed. A.M. Harman, *Mission of Discovery: the Beginnings of Modern Jewish Evangelism*, Christian Focus, 1996).

<sup>12</sup>H. Bonar, "The Jew," *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* (July, 1870): 209-11.

by understanding God's purpose as to Israel. I believe that all human calculations as to the earth's future, whether political or scientific, or philosophical or religious, must be failures, if not talking for their data or basis God's great purpose regarding the latter-day standing of Israel. I believe that it is not possible to enter God's mind regarding the destiny of man, without taking as our key or our guide his mind regarding the ancient nation—that nation whose history, so far from being ended, or nearly ended, is only about to begin. And if any one may superciliously ask, What can the Jews have to do with the world's history?—may we not correctly philosophize on that coming history, and take the bearing of the world's course, leaving Israel out of the consideration altogether? We say, nay; but O man, who are thou that replies against God? Art thou the framer of the earth's strange annals, or the producer of those latent springs or seeds of which these arise?

He only to whom the future belongs can reveal it. He only can announce the principles on which that future is to be developed. And if he set Israel as the great nation of the future, and Jerusalem as the great metropolis of the earth, who are we, that, with our philosophy of science, we should set aside the divine arrangements, and substitute for them a theory of man?...

I believe that the sons of Abraham are to re-inherit Palestine, and that the forfeited fertility will yet return to that land; that the wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad for them, and the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose. I believe that, meanwhile, Israel shall not only be wanderers, but that everywhere only a remnant, a small remnant, shall be saved; and that it is for the gathering in of this remnant that our missionaries go forth, I believe that these times of ours (as also all the times of the four monarchies [Daniel 2]) are the times of the Gentiles; and that Jerusalem and Israel shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. I believe that, with the filling up of these times of the Gentile pre-eminence, and the completion of what the apostle calls the fullness of the Gentiles, will be the signal for the judgments which are to usher in the crisis of earth's history, and the deliverance of Israel, and the long-expected kingdom.

...How Jewish history shall once more emerge into its old place of grandeur and miracle, and how it shall unwind from itself the bright future of all nations, I know not. But so it is fore-written, "What shall be the reconciling of them be, but life

from the dead? (Romans 11:15). "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" [Isaiah 27:6].<sup>13</sup>

How refreshingly different is the attitude here from that of Augustine and Calvin. Undergirding this teaching is not the eschatological blending of national Israel into mere shadowy insignificance and obscurity, but rather the acknowledgment that while grace has blessed the Gentiles in a grand manner, so too will that same grace of God, according to the same sovereign purpose, ultimately bless the Jewish people in a most climactic and triumphant sense. This is something to rejoice about, and not surprisingly Bonar has penned a hymn in this vein.

Forgotten! No; that cannot be,  
All other names may pass away;  
But thine, My Israel, shall remain  
In everlasting memory.  
Forgotten! No; that cannot be,  
The oath of Him who cannot lie  
Is on thy city and thy land,  
An oath to all eternity.  
Forgotten of the Lord thy God!  
No, Israel, no, that cannot be,  
He chose thee in the days of old  
And still His favor rests on thee.<sup>14</sup>

*C.H. Spurgeon:* Although like Bonar, his contemporary, he held Augustine and Calvin in high esteem, this pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London did not embrace their essentially Catholic eschatology. Rather, Spurgeon maintained a fervent interest in the Jewish people and particularly their being reached with the gospel. Preaching on Ezekiel 24:26 in 1855, just prior to the rise of Modern Zionism, he plainly declared,

Not long shall it be ere they [(he Jews) shall come—shall come from distant lands, where'er they rest or roam' and she who has been the off-scouring of all things, whose name has been a proverb and a bye-word, shall become the glory of all lands. Dejected Zion shall raise her head, shaking herself from dust, and darkness, and the dead. Then shall the Lord feed his people, and make them and the places round about his hill a blessing. I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. We do not think enough of it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this. I imagine that you

*C.H.  
Spurgeon...  
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embrace their  
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Catholic  
eschatology.*

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 214-15

<sup>14</sup>*Lamp & Light Hymns* (Hitchin, Hertfordshire, England: The Society for Distributing Hebrew Scriptures, 2000), 64.

cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that there is to be an actual restoration of the children of Israel. "Thither they shall go up, they shall come with weeping unto Zion, and with supplications unto Jerusalem." May that happy day soon come! For when the Jews are restored, then the fullness of the Gentiles shall be gathered in; and as soon as they return, then Jesus will come upon Mount Zion to reign with his ancients gloriously, and the halcyon days of the Millennium shall then dawn; we shall then know every man to be a brother and a friend; Christ shall rule with universal sway.<sup>15</sup>

Speaking on Ezekiel 37:1-10 in 1864 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, in aid of funds for the British Society for the propagation of the Gospel amongst the Jews, Spurgeon declared,

This vision has been used, from the time of Jerome onwards, as a description of the resurrection, and certainly it may be so accommodated with much effect...But while this interpretation of the vision may be very proper as an accommodation, it must be quite evident to any thinking person that this is not the meaning of the passage. There is no illusion made by Ezekiel to the resurrection, and such topic would have been quite apart from the design of the prophet's speech. I believe he was no more thinking of the resurrection of the dead than of the building of St. Peter's at Rome, or the emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers....

The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel....Her sons, though they can never forget the sacred dust of Palestine, yet die at a hopeless distance from her consecrated shores. But it shall not be so forever...They shall again walk upon her mountains, shall once more sit under her vines and rejoice under her fig-trees. And they are also to be re-united. There shall not be two, nor ten, nor twelve, but one—one Israel praising one God, serving one king, and that one king the Son of David, the descended Messiah. They are to have a national prosperity which shall make them fa-

*...that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel...*

mous; nay, so glorious shall they be that Egypt, and Tyre, and Greece, and Rome, shall all forget their glory in the greater splendor of the throne of David....

If there be meaning in words this must be the meaning of this chapter. I wish never to learn the art of tearing God's meaning out of his own words. If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage, a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away, must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a king is to rule over them.<sup>16</sup>

Spurgeon derived a very different meaning from the Old Testament with regard to national Israel than that of Augustine and Calvin. Indeed, when we return to Jeremiah 32:41, it is obvious that Spurgeon's understanding of this passage is fundamentally different from that of Calvin which we previously referenced. So in 1887 he declared,

We cannot help looking for the restoration of the scattered Israelites to the land which God has given to them by a covenant of salt: we also look for the time when they shall believe in the Messiah whom they have rejected, and shall rejoice in Jesus of Nazareth, whom today they despise. There is great encouragement in prophecy to those who work among the seed of Israel; and it is greatly needed, for of all mission fields it has been commonly represented to be one of the most barren, and upon the work the utmost ridicule has been poured. God has, therefore, supplied our faith with encouragements larger than we have in almost any other direction of service. Let those who believe work on! Those who believe not may give it up. They shall not have the honor of having helped to gather together the ancient nation to which our Lord himself belonged; for be it never forgotten that Jesus was a Jew.<sup>17</sup>

Here then we especially draw attention to the more literal interpretation by Bonar and Spurgeon when compared with Augustine and Calvin. But also, with the aid of centuries of hindsight along with the present state of the Middle East at our fingertips, we frankly declare the approach of Bonar and Spurgeon toward the sacred text to be much closer to the truth, that this is the intended meaning of God's inspired Word. Augustine's renowned allegorical hermeneutic

<sup>15</sup>C.H. Spurgeon, *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, I, no.28, 1855* (Albany, Oregon: Ages Software, 1998), 382.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, X, 1864, no. 582:533, 536-37.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, XXXIV, 1887, no. 2036: 545.

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*Theme of next issue:*  
**The Problem of Preterism**

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was not entirely followed by Calvin, and in this eschatological scenario Calvin did far more consistently and accurately exegete the sacred text as a whole than did his mentor.

I reiterate, however, that the doctrines deduced by these opposing schools of eschatology, the one being Judeo-centric, the other Judeo-eccentric, have profound ethical consequences. On the one hand, Judeo-centricity, as represented by Bonar and Spurgeon, exults in the national seed of Abraham and its promised, fulfilled, territorial glory through sovereign covenant grace. Consequently, it esteems that seed, according to Paul's exhortation in Romans 11:18-20, because it remains "loved because of their ancestors" (Romans 11:28). On the other hand,

Judeo-eccentricity, as represented by Augustine and Calvin, dismisses the national seed of Abraham beyond the perimeter of the kingdom of God, except for the condescending inclusion of "a remnant chosen by grace" (Romans 11:5), that has no ultimate divine, national, territorial validity. Augustine and Calvin were at best tolerant of the Jews; Bonar and Spurgeon were deeply affectionate toward the Jews. Which of these parties approximates the attitude of Paul toward his "kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3, ESV), and what is it about the doctrine they embrace that produces their kindly disposition? The answers to these questions are abundantly clear and are especially significant with regard to the prosperity of Jewish evangelism in this present age. ✪

From *Future Israel*

"I believe the promise of the Father concerning the return of Israel and Judah, and the coming of the Lord to raise up the dead in Christ, and to change them that are alive that they may reign with him a thousand years, according to the Scriptures."

*Baptist Piety: The Last Will and Testimony of Obadiah Holmes.* p. 91. Edwin S. Gaustad.



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## The Problem of Preterism

VOLUME IV ISSUE II

APRIL-JUNE 2009

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

### Inside This Edition

- Preposterous Preterism? *Laurence A. Justice* ..... p. 3
- Preterist Or Futurist? *Wayne Camp* ..... p. 6
- A.D. 70: Preterism's Prophetic Dead End, *Randall Price* ..... p.10
- Preterit, *Gary G. Cohen* ..... p.13

## Purpose

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

## To One Who Believes Christ Returned in 70 A.D.

Dear, D.W.

May 12, 1987

...You maintain that Christ returned "in power" in 70 A.D. In Zechariah 14:4, we read, "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south." D., when did this happen? If you know anyone who has visited the region, ask them if the mount of Olives has such a cleavage. It is clearly a prophecy yet unfulfilled.

In the New Testament, in Revelation 16:3, we read, "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea." D., when did this happen? Check the annals of history, and you will find nothing of the kind has happened...yet.

In Revelation 16:12, we read, "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." D., has the river Euphrates dried up? History records no such event. It is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled.

D., look at the world news, and tell me again that you believe Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and Prince of Peace has returned to earth!

From *Letters* by Timothy D. Fellows

## How Does the PBJ Survive?

A number of readers have written and called over the years, testifying to how the Premillennial Baptist Journal has helped their understanding of biblical eschatology. In order to continue publishing what several have described as a quality magazine, we have an ongoing need for money. The cost of each issue is now about \$2000. Since we do not sell subscriptions, we are dependent on the generous donations of our readers. Will you consider donating a one-time large gift or doing as several churches are doing and contribute \$50, \$100 or \$200 per month? We are now into the fourth year of publication. Will you help enable us to continue? Make checks payable to *Premillennial Baptist Journal* and send all donations to:

**Premillennial Baptist Journal 9601 Blue Ridge Extension Kansas City, MO 64134.**



## Preposterous Preterism

Laurence A. Justice

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

I have in my possession a postcard I recently received in the mail. Superimposed on a background of a beautiful sunset are the words "The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ Already Happened." My first reaction to this card was "What? What wacko sent this and who would even print such a thing?" After looking into the matter I found that the person who sent this card is no isolated loony with too much time on his hands. Instead he is one who has been caught up in an error that is having increasing influence on modern Christians. This error is called Preterism, and those who believe this way are called preterists. Some time ago I preached a message which I called "Bible Prophecy And The Year 2,000" in which I pointed out that as the new millennium approaches there will be a tremendous upsurge of emphasis on and interest in Bible prophecy. The first ripples of this surge came in 1987 with publication of the book *Eighty Eight Reasons Why The Rapture Will Come In 1988*. Now larger waves of this interest and emphasis are beginning to swell and Preterism is part of these larger waves. In this study we shall consider Preterism and measure it by the word of God.

### What Is Preterism?

The word *preterist* and its relative *preterit* means simply, past or by-gone. When this word is used as a verb tense it refers to an action as being perfectly past or finished. When used to refer to a person, a *Preterist* is a person who is primarily concerned with the past. According to the *Random House Dictionary Of The English Language* when this term is used of a person's view of biblical prophecy, a Preterist is "he who maintains that the prophecies in the Apocalypse have already been fulfilled." Preterism includes one's views, not only of the book of Revelation, but of all other biblical prophecy as well. Preterism is the opposite of and contrasts with futurism which sees the books of Daniel and Revelation and much other biblical prophecy as having its fulfillment still in the future rather than in the past. The options available in looking at Bible

prophecy are that prophecy is either basically predictive or basically descriptive. The Preterist relegates that which is to be future to the past.

It is very important to understand that there are different kinds and degrees of preterists. There are what are sometimes called full preterists and there are what are called partial preterists. Full preterists believe that all prophecy in scripture has already been fulfilled. Partial preterists believe that only some of the prophecy in scripture has already been fulfilled. This matter becomes confusing when we realize that there are partial preterists among premillennials, among amillennials and among post-millennials. Hal Lindsay and Jack Van Impe, who call themselves premillennials, make good money mixing Preterism and futurism in their books on prophecy.

Where did this type of thinking come from? Well, preterists base many of their theories on the non-biblical apocryphal book of I Maccabees. This book claims to be a history of the Maccabean wars in which Israel struggled to be free from the successors of Alexander the Great who were called the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. I Maccabees 1:54 declares that Antiochus Epiphanes, a Seleucid king, was the little horn of Daniel and was the one who actually set up the abomination of desolation of which Daniel 12 speaks. Preterists also love to quote Josephus as an authority for their thinking. Flavius Josephus was a Jewish army general and historian who wrote an eyewitness history of the Roman conquest of Jerusalem between 66 and 70 AD. Josephus, an unregenerate, unbelieving Jew, who was not in sympathy with the cause of Jesus Christ, declared that Daniel's writings were fulfilled in the Roman general Titus's conquest of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Eusebius, the so-called father of church history, who lived in the fourth century AD also bought Josephus' interpretation of Daniel's prophecy as being fulfilled by the Romans. Because of its heavy reliance on the views of First Maccabees and Josephus, Preterism may prop-

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erly be called Maccabeanism or Josephusism.

Most Bible historians today recognize the Jesuit priest Alcasar who died in 1613 AD as being the originator of modern Preterism. Other fairly well known preterists include F.W. Farrar, an Anglican clergyman who lived from 1831 to 1903 and was chaplain to Queen Victoria and who in 1879 wrote *The Life & Works Of St. Paul* which is still studied today. Philip Mauro who worked and wrote in the early years of the twentieth century has been very influential among preterists. Leading contemporary preterists include Max King and Ed Stevens who are both Campbellites. Alarming to me is the fact that the present day upsurge of the twisted thinking of Preterism is taking place largely, though not exclusively, among those who call themselves Baptists. Probably the most visible and vocal Preterist today is John L. Bray of Lakeland, Florida who is a Southern Baptist evangelist. Bray's book *The Rapture of the Christian* is being mailed free of charge to Southern Baptist pastors around the country. Somehow a copy of it has fallen into my hands and I have recently finished reading it. By the way, the post card which I mentioned at the outset was actually an advertisement for something called the *Sovereign Grace Preterist Seminar* in San Diego, California, July 31-August 1, 1998 and the address for those with questions is *Kingdom of Sovereign Grace* in Sacramento, California.

### What Preterism Teaches

There are three major things preterists teach at which we shall look here. First, preterists teach that the prophecies of the book of Daniel have already been fulfilled. Preterism views Daniel 11 as being a history of Alexander the Great's successors up to and including the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes in verses 21-32. Preterism says that Antiochus Epiphanes was the little horn of Daniel's visions. Whenever anyone says Antiochus was the fulfillment of any part of the book of Daniel, that person is either a Preterist or has been influenced by Preterism. Preterism rejects the application of Daniel's writings to the second coming of Christ. Preterists find fulfillments of Daniel's prophecies in persons and events which preceded even Christ's first coming. Preterists would close the book of Daniel for good and keep it closed.

Secondly, preterists believe that the prophecies of the

book of Revelation have already been fulfilled. They don't see any prophecies in the book having to do with a future coming of Jesus Christ. Instead these people hold that the book of Revelation is a record of the conflicts of the early churches with Judaism and paganism. F.W. Farrar believed that Revelation was written in the summer of 68 AD and he actually said that the third section of the book, the "things which shall be hereafter," all took place between 68 and 70 AD surrounding the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans. According to Farrar everything in chapters 4 through 19 of Revelation took place in the troublous times when Nero began to persecute Christians in 64 AD.

**Preterists believe that the prophecies of the book of Revelation have already been fulfilled.**

John L. Bray says in his book *The Rapture of the Christian* that the tragic holocaust of 67 to 70 AD when the Romans crucified thousands of rebellious Jews was the great tribulation. Farrar saw the beast of Revelation 13 as being the emperor Nero and most shocking of all he said that "... the fall of Jerusalem (in 70 AD) was in the fullest sense, the Second Advent of the Son of Man..." Farrar and other preterists say that the reason we know that Revelation has already been fulfilled is because of the word "quickly" which is used in Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:11; 11:14 and 22:20. Let's look at two of these uses of the word "quickly" just to see what these preterists are talking about. Look at Rev. 11:14. John is writing about the great woes of the tribulation here when he says, "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." Now look at Revelation 22:20. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Preterists reason that if the Lord said he would come *quickly* he certainly would not have waited 2,000 years to come back.

A third thing that preterists teach is that Jesus Christ has already returned. Joe V. Thomas, pastor of the Orthodox Baptist Church of Pensacola, Florida, said in a 1998 letter to pastors on his mailing list, "The great deception in the religious world today is . . . that the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the events associated with it are yet to occur in the future."

Preterists teach that Jesus Christ returned in the year 70 AD when the Roman army conquered and destroyed Jerusalem. Here's what John L. Bray in his book, *The Rapture of Christians* says: "I have come to the conclusion that the event which we have termed 'the Second Coming of Christ' actually took place in

the first century during that generation of people who lived in the time of Christ, according to the prophecy and predictions of both Jesus and the writers of the New Testament. All teaching, therefore, concerning the resurrection and judgment connected with the second coming of Christ must be studied and understood in the light of this context." Here's another quote from the same book: "When Christ came in 70 AD he raised all the Old Testament saints (from the dead) . . . the dead were raised then and the living Christians did not precede them. The living Christians also would be resurrected but at the time of their death, not at some long, distant, future time. . . dead Christians were resurrected when Christ came in AD 70 . . ." "What happens to a Christian when he dies? He leaves his old body and receives his resurrection body at that time . . . Christians no longer have to wait until a future second coming of Christ to obtain their new bodies." The main point of all of John L. Bray's writings seems to be that Jesus Christ returned as the Roman army to destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD. Joe V. Thomas said in the above quoted letter to pastors that "The judgment day occurred at the Second Coming in 70 AD."

Preterists try to make Matthew 16:28 mean that Christ was predicting the time of his second coming to be in 70 AD. Note this verse. "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." In his book *Matthew 24 Fulfilled* John L. Bray says that the Lord Jesus was saying here in Matthew 16:28 that he would come back before some of his disciples died. Matthew 24:34 is a favorite proof text of preterists for teaching that Christ himself said that he would return in 70 AD. The Lord is speaking of his Second Coming here and he says, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Preterists reason that a generation is a period of forty years and since the Lord said that that generation would not pass away until all the things he had been saying about his return should be fulfilled, and since a generation was a period of forty years, forty years from the time the Lord made this statement would put the time at about 70 AD. Therefore preterists conclude that the Lord Jesus was predicting that his return would be in 70 AD. Along these lines John L. Bray says in the above quoted book, "Where do we get it from that there is yet in our future to be a Second Coming of Christ? Why would God

put off for thousands of years into the future that which he promised would take place in that generation? It doesn't really make sense does it? . . . Jesus and the writers of the New Testament clearly taught that the Second Coming of Christ would occur in their generation in that century."

Finally and most importantly let us consider

### What God's Word Teaches

Let us consider what the Word of God teaches about the book of Daniel. Prophetic events in this book have most definitely not all been fulfilled. As can be seen in studying the book of Daniel, especially chapters 7, 8 and 10-12, these prophecies pertain to "the end" climaxing in the Second Coming of Christ, the destruction of the little horn or Antichrist, the restoration and conversion of Israel, the resurrection of the dead, the rewarding of the righteous and the reign of Christ on the earth. Events in Daniel 10-12 are specifically stated to be yet in the future. They are said in Daniel 11:40 to be "at the time of the end." This is decisive in denying Preterist attempts to find Antiochus Epiphanes in this part of Daniel because Antiochus died 163 years before Christ came the first time. Also the Lord Jesus specifically states in Matthew 24:15 that the setting up of the abomination of desolation was still future when he (Christ) was living on earth.

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)". Antiochus could not possibly have set up the abomination of desolation in 164 BC because Jesus Christ, 194 years later, spoke of this event as still being future. No, the Lord Jesus Christ rejected the Preterist view concerning the book of Daniel and nowhere do those who try to make Daniel entirely history fail more miserably than here in Daniel 10-12.

**Events in Daniel 10-12 are specifically stated to be yet in the future.**

Now let us consider what the word of God teaches about the book of Revelation. As I have pointed out, preterists teach that the prophecies in this book have all or mostly been fulfilled already. Revelation is a book of prophecy! Seven times the word prophecy is used to describe the contents of this book. Rev. 1:3 is one example. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." The

*(Justice: continued on page 15)*



## Preterist or Futurist?

Wayne Camp

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19).

I am not a Preterist, I am a Futurist. My *Wehster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* gives the following definition of a "futurist" when the word is used in theological matters: It is "a person who maintains that the prophecies in the Apocalypse (Revelation) will be fulfilled in the future." Notice that the definition specifically refers to the "prophecies in the Apocalypse." Sometimes one, who does not consider himself to be a futurist, even if he is not a Preterist, will include all things in Revelation. One prominent writer after whom I read who was a strong Post-millennialist said that a futurist believes that all the things in the book of Revelation are yet to be fulfilled. It is clear from our text that all things in the book of Revelation were not future at the time that it was written, much less are they all yet future today.

A kingdom speaks of rule. I cannot believe that God is Sovereign and not believe that he has a kingdom in this world at this time (Dan. 4:34-35). From the time that God spoke this world into existence he has been its sovereign ruler and King. "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. 115:3). Now the fact that God has always had a kingdom and has always sovereignly ruled on this earth does not preclude or prevent his having a future, visible kingdom over which Christ will rule for a golden thousand years. Now, we must deal with the subject before us.

### What Is a Preterist?

As in any area of biblical interpretation, there are variations in the Preterist doctrine. I will set forth some of the major tenets of the Preterists without going into all their differences. A Preterist believes that all the prophecies of the word of God have been fulfilled. This

quote is taken from the Preterist Homepage. According to Webster's *Unabridged Universal Dictionary*, a Preterist is "a theologian who believes that the prophecies of the Apocalypse have already been fulfilled" (Source: WordNet ® 1.6, ©1997 Princeton University). Yes, a Preterist believes that all Bible prophecy has been fulfilled.

A Preterist believes that at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the prophecies surrounding end-time events were all fulfilled. According to the Preterists the second coming of Jesus Christ was secretly fulfilled in 70 AD and we should not be watching for the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

According to the Preterists, Rev. 1:7 could not be true. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen". According to the Preterists the resurrection of the saints and the unsaved took place in 70 AD and I guess we need to quit using Paul's comforting words to the Thessalonians in our preaching (1 Thes. 4:13-18). According to the Preterists the judgment took place in 70 AD so there is no future judgment of the righteous or the wicked so throw away your sermons on the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). And look around you folks, because, according to the Preterists, we are now living in the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21:1-5). According to the Preterists, God has wiped away all tears from our eyes. According to the Preterists, there is no more death. According to the Preterists, there is no more sorrow. According to the Preterists, there is no more crying. According to the Preterists, there is no more pain. (I wish I had known there was no more pain and I would not have had double knee replacement surgery on June 8, 2004.) Preterists have also hotly contested the time of the writing of the book of Revelation placing that time before 70 AD while writers much closer to that time, such as Irenaeus, said that John's exile to Patmos took place near the end of the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian which would have placed John's exile to Patmos

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around 90 AD since Domitian reigned from 81 AD until 96 AD.

### What Is a Futurist?

A futurist believes the prophecies of the second coming of Christ found in the New Testament and especially in the book of Revelation are yet future. A futurist believes the declarations of Jesus during his personal ministry concerning his coming again are yet future (Jn. 14:1-4). A futurist believes the declaration of Paul found in I Corinthians 15 is yet future (1 Cor. 15:51-58). A futurist believes the declaration of Paul found in the fourth chapter of I Thessalonians is future (1 Thess. 4:13-18). A futurist believes those words of John concerning our glorification to be yet future (1 Jn. 3:1-3). Jesus declared in the book of Revelation that he would come again. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). I do not believe that was fulfilled at any point in history before now. I do not believe it has been fulfilled presently. Since I believe it is yet future, and since it is prophesied in the book of Revelation, I confess to being a futurist who is still looking for its fulfillment. A little after the verse just considered Jesus again prophesied his second coming. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22:20). The futurist believes it is evident that this prophecy has not been fulfilled at this point in time; that makes its fulfillment yet in the future. The futurist can still say with the apostle John, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The futurist believes the prophecy of the resurrection of the saved, the prophecy of the 1000 year reign of Christ and his saints, and the resurrection of the unsaved, found in the Revelation to be in the future. The futurist holds that there is to be a resurrection of the saved that is called the first resurrection. "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ."

The futurist believes that these shall rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years according to this prophecy found in the book of Revelation. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the

beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The futurist believes that when the thousand years are finished, the rest of the dead, the unsaved dead will be raised for judgment at the Great White Throne. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

**A futurist believes the prophecies of the second coming of Christ found in the New Testament are yet future.**

The futurist holds that there is a time when all the unsaved will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ and then cast into the lake of fire. The prophecy of this judgment is found in the book of Revelation. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Rev. 20:11). The futurist believes that this judgment is yet future for it does not occur until after the resurrection of the damned and the lost are not resurrected until after the 1000 year reign. Even if we were now in the 1000 years of

Revelation 20:4-6, and since it is apparently not over yet, the judgment that follows the resurrection of the damned that follows the ending of the 1000 years must be future.

The futurist eagerly looks forward to the glorification of the bodies of all the children of God. This glorification takes place at the first resurrection which is before the 1000 year reign of Christ and is set forth in Revelation 20. This glorification at the first resurrection is given in more detail in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. "Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:51-58). This mortal has not yet put on immortality but one day it will! This corruptible has not yet put on

incorruption; but, thanks be to God, one day in the future it will. This glorification is also spoken of in Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13).

This resurrection and translation of the saints is to take place as the first resurrection of Revelation 20:4-6. It certainly has not taken place yet for the bodies of many of the saints yet lie in the grave and the living saints are not in a glorified state. Paul also mentions this resurrection of the saints at the second coming of Christ prophesied in Revelation in his epistle to the Philippians. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). My vile body is still a vile body. My vile body is not yet fashioned like unto his glorious body. Since this will not occur until Christ comes again I know it is yet future.

Futurists hold as future that prophecy found in Revelation that teaches that Satan will one day be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet will have already been cast. The prophecy of this event is found in the book of Revelation. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

The devil is not now in the lake of fire as several things will attest. Satan still had a seat in Pergamos when John penned Christ's message to that assembly. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (Rev. 2:13). He could not have had a seat there if he was in the lake of fire and brimstone. He still had children around in the days of Paul. "And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10). And, he had children around when John wrote his first epistle. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil:

whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 Jn. 3:10). If he had already been cast into the lake of fire at this time, how was he still begetting children from his torments in hell? Strange! He still had a synagogue when John penned the letter to the persecuted church at Smyrna. "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9).

And, at this time the Lord was warning the church at Smyrna that in the "future" some of them would endure more suffering at the hands of the devil. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). If I understand this prophecy of the devil casting some of them into prison it was yet future at that time. In order for the devil to do it in the future, even if it were the near future, he could not have been yet cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

He was still walking about as a roaring lion in the days when Peter wrote his first epistle. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). How could he walk around seeking out people to devour if he were already in the torments of hell? If he were still loose and walking about when John penned the book of Revelation, when, since that time, was he cast down into eternal torments in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone?

When Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy, he referred to some who had already turned aside after Satan. "For some are already turned aside after Satan" (1 Tim. 5:15). How could this be if Satan were already in the flames and torments of the lake of fire and brimstone? Or, did Paul simply mean they had gone to hell as had Satan? Or, if Satan were still walking about and causing people to turn aside after him at the time Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy, when was he cast down to hell?

The futurist believes that Satan's being cast into hell is yet future. Even if we are in the thousand year reign of Christ, Satan could not already be in the lake of fire and brimstone in his eternal punishment for he is yet

**The futurist believes that Satan's being cast into hell is yet future.**



to go forth and deceive the nations again when the thousand years are expired. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:7-10). If I understand the English language at all, I perceive that Satan will not be cast down into the lake of fire and brimstone until after the thousand years are finished. Even if you spiritualize the first resurrection and make it regeneration, and even if you spiritualize the 1000 years and make them a long period of time, and even if we are in the millennium now, or if it is yet future, this incarceration of Satan in the lake of fire and brimstone does not take place until after the 1000 years are expired. Supposing that we are now in the glorious millennial reign of Christ, does that not make the casting of Satan into hell yet future? This futurist believes that the 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth, the chaining and loosing of Satan, and the final casting of Satan into the lake of fire is yet future. If Satan is in the lake of fire and brimstone now, why do I still have trouble with the rascal? We know from the words of Jesus that once one is cast down into hell, there is no escape and no furloughs (See Lk. 16:19-31) from that awful place. If Satan still has any influence in this world, he cannot be in the torments of his final and eternal place of suffering. Once there, he can bother none of us anymore.

This futurist believes that in the future, after the one thousand year reign of Christ, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1). There are other prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled on which I have not touched. But these should be sufficient to show the vast gulf that exists between the Preterists and the Futurists.

My sympathy goes out to those who have no hope for the future! I am deeply sorry for those who believe

this is what the new heaven and the new earth are like. Paul said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." It must be sad to live one's life without a future to look forward to. No happy expectations! No blessed hope! All the prophecies of Revelation already fulfilled! Sad!

I am still "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ". Being a "futurist" I rest on the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Do you realize that no Christian on earth today can rejoice in these words if the Preterists are right?

I believe "our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." If the Preterist is right, I am now living in my glorified body and it will never be better than it is right now.

I still rejoice in those words of John when he wrote, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." If the Preterist is right I have no hope that will cause me to lead a pure life. If the Preterist is right I am already in a body like Christ's. May God deliver us from such nonsensical error. ✪

**My sympathy goes out to those who have no hope for the future!**

**We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. II Peter 1:19-21**



## A.D. 70: Preterism's Prophetic Dead End

Randall Price

In recent years a system of interpreting biblical prophecy known as Preterism has invaded the church, bringing confusion and division to many congregations that have historically held to the future return of Jesus Christ.

Promoted by popular radio teachers, such as Reformed scholar R.C. Sproul, whose book *The Last Days According to Jesus* advances the moderate Preterist position, Preterism has made inroads into evangelical seminaries and stimulated public debates on Bible college campuses. Although most Christians have never heard of the teachings of Preterism, its approach to prophecy diminishes the prophetic hope of the church while undermining the basis of the prophetic promises for Israel.

### What Is Preterism?

Derived from the Latin word *preter* ("past"), Preterism holds that most, if not all, of the prophetic events of the Old and New Testaments have already been fulfilled. Like historicism, which interprets the book of Revelation as symbolic of church history, Preterism spiritualizes prophecy to make it fit historical events in the Church Age. However, unlike historicism, Preterism seeks to fit certain, if not all, prophecies relating to Christ's Second Coming and Israel's restoration into a specific historical event in the past.

As moderate Preterist Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., explains, "Matthew 24:1-34 (and parallels) in the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled in the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In Revelation, most of the prophecies before Revelation 20 find fulfillment in the fall of Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup>

Preterists contend that Jesus' use of the phrase *this generation* in his Olivet Discourse requires fulfillment in the first century. R.C. Sproul, in particular, argues

that Christ's words failed unless this interpretation is adopted.

By contrast, Futurism (what we believe) maintains that the literal fulfillment of Messianic prophecy in Christ's First Advent confirms that his prophetic teaching must also be interpreted literally. Thus the Olivet Discourse and the Revelation will find fulfillment in the future, particularly during the Tribulation and Christ's Millennial reign.

Two types of Preterism today contend with each other for primacy: Partial, or Moderate, Preterism is the most popular version. Although it argues that most prophecy (such as the events of the Tribulation) was fulfilled in A.D. 70, it still understands that some prophetic teachings, like Christ's Second Coming and the bodily resurrection, have a future fulfillment.

Partial Preterism, therefore, holds to two Second Comings: one that occurred in A.D. 70 as a *parousia* (Greek, "coming" or "advent") and Day of the Lord for the purpose of judging the Jewish nation and one that will occur universally at the climax of human history as the final and ultimate Day of the Lord.

Leading advocates of Partial Preterism who have published popular defenses of their position include R.C. Sproul, Gary DeMar, and Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., as well as the late David Chilton, who changed to Full Preterism after his books were published.

Full, or Extreme Preterism contends that all prophecy (including Christ's Second Coming and bodily resurrection) was fulfilled by A.D. 70.

Full Preterism maintains that believers have been spiritually resurrected and the creation spiritually restored, so the church presently exists in the eternal state of the new heavens and new earth.

According to Thomas Ice, executive director of the Pre-Trib Research Center and one of the foremost experts on Preterism, there is no evidence of any Preterist interpretation in the history of the early church through the Reformation.<sup>2</sup>

Randall Price is an archaeologist, author, and president of World of the Bible Ministries, Inc., an organization dedicated to exploring and explaining the past, present, and prophetic world of the Bible.

### Preterism's View of Israel

Preterism teaches that Christ came in A.D. 70 to judge Israel and end the Jewish age.

Like historicists, preterists argue that the promises made to Israel were misunderstood as national promises. Therefore, when Israel rejected Christ, these "spiritual" promises passed to the church, the "true Israel."

Preterism, however, which forces the fulfillment of most prophetic texts, particularly the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple, into the events of the First Jewish Revolt, views the destruction of the Jewish people as the central focus of prophecy.

As Preterist David Chilton stated, "The Book of Revelation is not about the second coming of Christ. It is about the destruction of Israel and Christ's victory over his enemies in the establishment of the New Covenant Temple . . . Revelation prophesies the judgment of God on apostate Israel; and while it does briefly point to events beyond its immediate concerns, that is done merely as a "wrap up," to show that the ungodly will never prevail against Christ's Kingdom."<sup>3</sup>

For preterists, the Jewish people are the true enemies of Christ; and their overthrow by the Roman army, sent by Christ to do his bidding, is the triumph of Christ over Antichrist. In fact, they say, Christ came spiritually in the judgment by the Roman army (hence, a judgment-coming), fulfilling his promise "to come quickly."

The Jewish Temple is likewise seen as the center of spiritual apostasy and its destruction as the fulfillment of the abomination of desolation, which was God's holy judgment for the wicked crucifixion of Christ by the Jews.

Preterists, therefore, reject any aspect of a future for ethnic Israel (apart from the church) and contend that any eschatological system that looks for a restoration of Israel and its Temple is heretical, for such would be tantamount to rejecting Christ and restoring blasphemy.

Preterist Gary DeMar explains: "There is nothing in Jesus' teaching in this Gospel [Matthew] which sug-

gests that after this period of judgment there will be a restoration . . . The Apocalyptic Discourse (ch. 24) moves away from Jerusalem. . . Does the Bible, especially the New Testament, predict that the temple will be rebuilt? It does not . . . To make the temple of stone a permanent structure in the light of Jesus' atoning work would be a denial of the Messiah and his redemptive mission."<sup>4</sup>

### Preterism's Problems

#### (1) *The Date of the Book of Revelation*

For the prophecies of Revelation to fit into the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, it is necessary to date the composition of the book before A.D. 70.

Preterists understand the necessity of dating the book early in Nero's reign (A.D. 64-67), confessing, "If the book was written after A.D. 70, then its contents manifestly do not refer to events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem."<sup>5</sup>

However, if dating the book was so crucial to its interpretation, why did not the apostle John clearly indicate somewhere in its 404 verses the time of its writing? However, as Mark Hitchcock, who wrote a doctoral dissertation on the subject, concluded, "I do believe that the case for the late date (A.D. 95) can be proven at least by a preponderance of the evidence, if not beyond a reasonable doubt."<sup>6</sup>

This evidence includes the external testimony of the most reliable early church fathers, such as Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202), who made the unambiguous declaration, "For if it were necessary that the name of him [Antichrist] should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been told by him who saw the apocalyptic vision. For it [the Revelation] was seen no long time ago, but almost in our generation, toward the end of Domitian's reign."<sup>7</sup>

In addition, the internal evidence favors the late date in the time of Domitian. This support includes (1) the condition and description of the seven churches in Revelation 1-3, which make no mention of Paul's missionary journeys; (2) John's banishment to Patmos, rather than execution, as with Peter and Paul under Nero; and (3) the prophecy of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9-22:5), which implies that the old Jerusalem has already been destroyed.

**Preterists . . . contend that any eschatological system that looks for a restoration of Israel and its Temple is heretical.**

## (2) Lack of Historical Agreement With First-Century Fulfillment

If Preterism's interpretation of prophecy were correct, the historical record should support details. However, the opposite is the case.

For example, the direction of Christ's advent to Jerusalem (Mt. 24:27) is compared with lightning flashing from *east to west*. But the Roman army, which preterists interpret as fulfilling this prophecy, advanced on Jerusalem from *west to east*. Even if we take this simply to mean the Roman army advanced "like lightning" (i.e., quickly), history reveals a very slow assault on Jerusalem; the war lasted several years before Jerusalem was even besieged!

In many cases a "correlation" can only be made through the eschatologically biased interpretation of first-century historian Flavius Josephus, such as (1) associating divine signs with the Roman army's impending conquest; (2) reinterpreting the text to fit the preferred historical date, such as taking "the clouds of heaven" as the dust kicked up by the Roman army's advance; or (3) taking statements that do not fit the historical events, such as the unprecedented and unsurpassed nature of the Tribulation, as hyperbole in order to claim first-century fulfillment.

Even the central concept of Preterism—that Christ's judgment-coming was to end the Jewish nation—cannot stand in light of Judaism's continued vitality and the modern State of Israel.

The historical consequences for Israel in the aftermath of A.D. 70 were indeed critical. But the Jewish people and Jewish nationalism not only survived, but hope for the restoration promised by the prophets increased. Moreover, the "Temple consciousness," perpetuated through rabbinic Judaism's spiritual transference to the synagogue, also expressed itself in tangible ways.

Whenever circumstances favored rebuilding the Temple, there were Jewish activists who returned to Jerusalem to attempt it. Today the Roman Empire is long vanished; but the Jewish people are again in the Promised Land, in control of the Holy City and its Temple Mount, and making plans to rebuild the Temple.

Is it reasonable to accept the events of A.D. 70 as a

fulfillment of God's program for the Jews but not accept these subsequent events as also part of his ongoing divine plan? A futurist interpretation agrees much better with Jesus' statement in the Olivet Discourse, that, when he comes, the Jewish people are to "look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Lk. 21:28). Clearly this text teaches that Christ's Second Coming involves Israel's redemption, not destruction.

As a result of such historical and textual incongruities, Robert Gundry commented concerning the Preterist interpretation of a first-century fulfillment:

"Whether writing just before, right at, or just after 70 C.E., Mark (or any of the other gospel writers) is not liable to have suffered from very much ignorance of what went on. From beginning to end, then the events and circumstances of the Jewish war disagree with the text of Mark [also Matthew and, in part, Luke] too widely to allow that text to reflect those events and circumstances."<sup>8</sup>

If the historical correlation with an A.D. 70 fulfillment for the Olivet Discourse fails, and Preterism depends on such a fulfillment for the maintenance of its eschatological system, then Preterism itself fails as a viable eschatological interpretation.

### The Dangers of Preterism

Every teaching has consequences for the spiritual life. Therefore, the teachings of Preterism must be considered for their practical dangers.

Preterism teaches that Christ has already returned (spiritually) and, in its extreme form, that he will never return again bodily. However, the divine declaration in Acts 1:11, "This same Jesus . . . will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven," contradicts both Partial and Full Preterism.

The teaching then is false. It not only distorts the prophetic program and denies the blessed hope (Ti. 2:13) but promotes the deception that there will be no end to history, that evil has been eradicated from the world (Full Preterism), and that believers now live in the eternal state.

(Price: continued on page 14)

Clearly this text teaches that Christ's Second Coming involves Israel's redemption, not destruction.



## Preterit

Gary G. Cohen

The preterit (i.e., "past") approach, first, advanced in modern times by the Jesuit Aleazar in 1614,<sup>1</sup> looks upon the content of the book as factual, but believes that everything in it, except for the visions of the eternal state in Revelation 21:22 and perhaps chapter 20, was already fulfilled at the time of John's writing.

F.W. Farrar, who advances this view, says that, "...the Apocalypse is what it professes to be—an inspired outline of contemporary history, and of the events to which the sixth decade of the first century gave immediate rise."<sup>2</sup>

To his mind, the second division of the book according to Revelation 1:19, "the things which are" refers to the historical scene 64-68 A.D. and embraces the preponderance of the account. The third division, "the things which are about to come to pass after these things," Farrar takes to encompass the events in the Roman-Palestinian world of 68-70 A.D. such as the burning of the Temple of the Capitoline Jupiter and the Fall of Jerusalem. In this way he assigns Revelation 2:19 entirely to the vicinity of the tumultuous times from the beginning of the Neronian persecution in 64 A.D. However, he sees the Beast, Nero, come alive again in Domitian (81-96 A.D., Rev. 13:3, 14). Farrar argues that the book must deal primarily with events contemporary to John and those which occur immediately after on the ground that in Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:20 the word "speedily" (*en tachei*) is used and this cannot refer to any protracted period of centuries. To buttress this assertion he cited the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. to be a "Second Advent" and "the second advent contemplated in many of the New Testament prophecies.

Concerning these representative assertions made by certainly one of the most learned and able of the Preterit school, several things may be noted. First, the repeated usage of the word "quickly" (*en tachei*) in the Apocalypse does not prove that all things which are so promised such as the Lord's second coming must occur within a limit of two or three years as Farrar demands. Just such an accusing exaction is answered by 2 Peter 3:8-9 when it says,

"But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is long suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Second, such statements as, "... the Fall of Jerusalem was, in the fullest sense, the Second Advent of the Son of Man . . .," show to what extremes the Preterit theory may take even the most able expositor. If the events relating to the Beast and the False Prophet of Revelation 13 are assigned to Nero and Vespasian, such as Farrar assigns them, then the logical outcome makes the coming of Christ on the white horse with his armies in Revelation 19 to occur in the lifetime of these men since at the time Christ casts both of these fiends alive into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20). How the Fall of Jerusalem can be thought to fit the description of Revelation 19 is a wonder. How it can be put forth as that which John prayed for in Revelation 22:20 is more than a marvel. Only by here using the false allegorizing or so-called "spiritual" method of interpretation can such an exegesis be brought forward: and Farrar, as Preterit champion, is not unfriendly to this school when expounding the Revelation.

Third, the Preterit, like the allegorical approach, comes into conflict with the avowed purpose of the Revelation as it is expressed in Revelation 1:1, *viz.*,

A Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him *in order to show* to his servants *the things which are necessary shortly to come to pass.* (Translation mine; emphasis mine.)

If the date of John's writing this work is in fact c. 95-96 A.D. as has been advocated as almost a certainty in the

(Cohen: continued on page 14)

Gary G. Cohen was brought up in an Orthodox Jewish home. Since his salvation he has authored many books and taught in many colleges and seminaries.

(Cohen: continued from page 13)

Introduction (q.v.), then how can this purpose be accomplished according to the Preterite view which places its exposition of Revelation 2-19 and possibly 20 into the bounds of the years 64-70 or 64-96 A.D.? Even if the early date advocated by Farrar for the writing of the Apocalypse was correct, since there have been relatively few followers of the preterite scheme through the Christian centuries out of the ranks of orthodox Bible believing Christians, how yet could this purpose have been accomplished? It is presumed that if Christ's purpose was "to show" the future, then at least a goodly number of his true servants must see it. Humanly speaking, if the preterite view is the true one, the pur-

pose of the book has not been accomplished. The preterite view simply does not harmonize with the accomplishment of this decreed purpose of God as it is stated in Revelation 1:1, and the time has long since passed for it to ever have been achieved under the Preterite scheme.

Fourth, the lack of harmony among the preterists themselves; fifth, their abysmal failure to sustain their case that the body of the Apocalypse can be made to harmonize with the history of the first century of the Church; and sixth, the fact that Revelation 4-19 refers to a period in the world's history that is yet future—which

(Cohen: continued on page 15)

(Price: continued from page 12)

Such false doctrine also prevents Christians from obeying the manifold commands of Scripture directed to those awaiting Christ's coming (1 Th. 1:10). Practical admonitions given in light of Christ's return—such as "awake...walk [behave] properly" (Rom. 13:11-13; cf. 1 Th. 5:4-10); "live soberly [sensibly], righteously, and godly" (Ti. 2:12); and live in purity (1 Jn. 3:3)—have no meaning to those who believe his coming is past.

Preterism also corrupts the understanding of the present work of Satan and his demons by teaching Satan was crushed and bound at the cross and that apostasy is a thing of the past. Yet Scripture states that our struggle is "against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12); "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 Jn. 5:19); and "in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1).

How then can Christians obey such commands as "Resist the devil" (Jas. 4:7; cf. 1 Pet. 5:9) and "from such people [apostates] turn away!" (2 Tim. 3:5)?

Moreover, the Preterist approach to prophecy affects the way Christians understand God's purpose for the Jewish nation and their political views toward the existence of the modern Jewish state. Preterism replaces Israel with the church, teaching that "ethnic Israel was excommunicated for its apostasy and will never again

be God's Kingdom."<sup>9</sup>

If Israel's future salvation and restoration (Rom. 11:25-27) in God's program is abrogated, so, too, is God's promised blessing for the world (Rom. 11:12) in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:3).

The apostle Peter summed up the divine verdict toward Preterism when he wrote, "Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming?'" (2 Pet. 3:3-4). Even so, come, Lord Jesus. ✠

From *Israel My Glory*, Jan/Feb 2005

**The Preterist approach to prophecy affects the way Christians understand God's purpose for the Jewish nation.**

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992), 159.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Ice, "The History of Preterism," *The End Times Controversy*, ed. Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2003), 42-46.

<sup>3</sup> David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: An Eschatology of Dominion* (Tyler, TX: Reconstruction Press, 1985), 43.

<sup>4</sup> R. Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Atlanta: American Vision, 1999), 52, 61.

<sup>5</sup> R.C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 140.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Hitchcock, "The Stake in the Heart—The A.D. 95 Date of Revelation," *The End Times Controversy*, 125.

<sup>7</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.30.3.

<sup>8</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 755.

<sup>9</sup> Chilton, 224

(Cohen: continued from page 14)

proposition will be later demonstrated—all combine to discredit this approach. It is therefore not strange that few believers today, if any, champion this theory which robs the Church of her comfort and encouragement in knowing God's detailed plan of how evil shall be destroyed and the Kingdom inaugurated. ✧

(Justice: continued from page 5)

other six instances are in Rev. 11:6, 19:10, 22:7,10, 18, 19.

Prophecy means two things: 1. it means forthtelling or proclaiming God's message and 2. it means foretelling. Much prophecy is purely predictive. Chapters 4-19 of Revelation refer to the same seven-year period as does the seventieth week of Daniel 9:20-27, the tribulation. This part of Revelation had not been fulfilled as of the writing of the book of Revelation because Revelation still speaks of the tribulation as being future at the time when Revelation was written.

The Lord's great prophetic discourse in Matthew 24-25 which has much to say about the coming tribulation is also mostly still future as far as its fulfillment and thus is in harmony with the book of Revelation. Everything from the fourth chapter to the end of the book of Revelation is still future but Preterism renders both Daniel and Revelation meaningless to us because it makes both of these books speak only of events which took place in the far distant past either in the Inter-Testamental period or in the first century after Christ.

Lastly, let us consider here what God's word says about the Second Coming of Christ. The book of Revelation is all about the Second Coming of Christ, his personal appearing. Seven times Revelation states that Christ will come again. Rev. 1:7, 2:25, 3:3, 3:11, 22:7, 12, and 20. The book of Revelation opens with "he cometh" in 1:7 and closes in 22:20 with "Even so, come Lord Jesus." The apostle John actually wrote the Revelation in 95 or 96 AD, 25 years after the preterists say that Christ returned in 70 AD. Something is wrong with their dates, fatally wrong as far as their system is concerned.

"Behold, he cometh (or is yet to come - future tense) with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lenski, R.C.H. *The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation*. Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> Farrar, F.W. *The Early Days of Christianity*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883.

*From Understanding Revelation, A Chronology of the Apocalypse, 1968*

also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen". Acts 1:11 says that when the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven after his resurrection his disciples saw him as he went and the angel told them that the Lord would come back the very same way as they had seen him go. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Rev. 1:7). If Christ came back in 70 AD, why did no one see Him? If some did see Him why did they not say that they had seen Him? Why didn't anyone see him come back if he came in the same manner in which he went away? Revelation 1:7 says that when Christ comes back every eye shall see him but nothing like this happened in 70 AD nor at any other time from that day till this. How will we know when the Lord Jesus comes back? God's word says that we shall see Him and if we see Him we won't have to be told that he has come back. How in the world can preterists expect us to see the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD as the Second Coming of Christ?

Several verses promise that Christ's coming will be "quickly." For example the Lord Jesus says in Revelation 22:7, "Behold, I come quickly . . ." Because of such statements preterists say that this just adds to the evidence that Christ came back within forty years from the time he said this. Well, it may not appear to us that the Lord is coming quickly or shortly because 2,000 years have elapsed since these words were spoken and still they have not been fulfilled. But II Peter 3:8-9 answers these "quickly" arguments. Here the scripture says, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should

(Justice: continued on page 16)

**Prophecy means two things:  
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*(Justice: continued from page 15)*

come to repentance." Peter says here that God measures time differently than we do and time means nothing to Him. What seems like an eternity to us is but the blink of an eye with Him.

In Matthew 24:34 where the Lord was talking about his return and events surrounding that return he says, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." The word *generation* does not, as the preterists claim, refer to a period of forty years time. Instead it refers to what we call a progeny or offspring or issue. Often in his earthly ministry the Lord Jesus spoke of a wicked, perverse, crooked, adulterous generation or progeny meaning people with the same attributes and character. "Generation" in Matthew 24:34 does not mean forty years of time but *progeny*. This progeny, this wicked offspring with these wicked characteristics, shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.

Now look at Mark 13:32. Here the Lord Jesus says in speaking of his return, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Here the Lord

says that during his earthly ministry not even he himself knew the date of his return. But the preterists contradict the Lord Jesus and say that he actually did know when he would return and that he actually predicted what they call the "time frame" of his coming. Listen, a forty year "time frame" is still a time. It is still a date so the preterists have the Lord predicting the time of his return even though he had said that he did not know that time.

In conclusion, Preterism tends to destroy any future significance of Bible prophecy and reduces that prophecy to little more than a literary or historical curiosity with little if any meaning for today. Worst of all, Preterism takes away the blessed hope from God's people and thus robs God's people of their comfort and encouragement as they face the difficulties and trials and troubles of this life. ✪



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Israel's Future

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### Inside This Edition

- ♦ Israel, *Arthur Mercer, Jr.* ..... p. 2
- ♦ Israel's Hope, *Laurence A. Justice* ..... p. 3
- ♦ The Mystery of the Jew, *Charles Halff* ..... p. 7
- ♦ The Seven Sevens of Prophetic Wonders, *Fred J. Meldau* ..... p. 11
- ♦ The Prospect for Israel, *Charles Lee Feinberg* ..... p. 14

# Israel

Arthur Mercer, Jr.

## Eternal Guarantees

**E**zekiel 36:34. "And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by."

Before returning to our study of Israel's history in their land during the time of the judges, it would be profitable to review the essentials of the great covenants which we have been considering during the last few studies. First, these covenants are unconditional, dependent for their ultimate fulfillment on God's faithfulness, not man's (Ps. 94:14). Second, the most important aspects of each of the covenants is eschatological, having primarily to do with the last days and the setting up of the millennial kingdom on earth to be the place of Messiah's rule and the initial stages of His eternal reign (Rev. 20:4; Dan. 2:44).

Third, the promised Canaan, is the eternal possession of the nation Israel and will one day be theirs without dispute, Messiah having returned to bring them out of the nations into which they have been scattered for centuries (Ez. 36:24-28). The present state of Israel with all its recent magnificent development and growth must not be confused with the biblically anticipated future millennial land of promise to be populated by a redeemed people miraculously restored to the land. Fourth, the Jewish people remain a marvel anthropologically. Their preservation through the ages, though they have been scattered among all peoples of earth, is testimony to the sovereignty of God who keeps His promises regardless of obstacles (Gen. 17:7-8).

Fifth, although any individual or generation that refused to obey God did not experience the blessing of the covenants, nevertheless the ultimate fulfillment with the nation Israel was not jeopardized one iota (II Sam. 7:14-15). Sixth, there is always preserved "a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5) through whom God will in His time bring the full blessing covenanted to "all Israel" (Rom. 11:26).

Seventh, the great promises of the covenants include the forgiveness of sins and personal salvation, which even we now enjoy. These spiritual blessings come through Christ and the merits of His shed blood, which is the divine basis for pouring out God's blessings on all nations (Mt. 26:28; Lk. 24:46-47).

## A Glorious Future

Hosea 1:11. "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel."

It is wonderful to be able to face the future with confidence. Not for one moment do we pretend to know everything the future holds. And happy are we that all of its details are not revealed. Only what God desires us to know is revealed and the rest is withheld for purposes known only to the only wise God (Deut. 29:29). But one of the most clearly disclosed truths in the Word of God pertains to Israel's glorious future as a nation. We know beyond question that earth's history will climax in a blaze of glory with Israel reestablished as a mighty nation under Christ, her rightful Messiah. There are several reasons for this conclusion which we invite you to consider now and in following lessons.

First, definite statements in the Old Testament in particular establish the indisputable fact that there will be in the future, at the coming of Messiah, a reuniting of the two kingdoms which were divided after the reign of Solomon (Ez. 37:15-24; Jer. 3:18; Zech. 10:6). Notice particularly that the prophecy in Ezekiel makes it clear that the people will be reunited, represented by the two sticks, symbolizing the two kingdoms, separated after Solomon and never again reunited until the Messiah's return (read carefully Ez. 37: 15-28).

Second, the prophets testify that in the time of Messiah Israel will again inhabit the land of their fathers (Jer. 16:15; Ez. 28:25; Jer. 32:41). The context of the last verse makes clear that this is not a return from the Babylonian exile. It is the time when Israel will be gathered from many peoples among whom they have been scattered. No amount of interpretive gymnastics could make this a reference to the present spiritual blessings which the Church enjoys in Christ. What a wonderful day that will be for Israel and for the whole world. We should not forget, however, that Jews who die without Christ today perish like any Gentile without Him. We should share Christ with them now, so that they may enter into the joy of salvation as we know it in Him. ✪

*From Israel #21, Part I & II, Moody Bible Institute, 1967.*



## Israel's Hope

Laurence A. Justice

Zechariah 14:1-4b "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley..."

The national anthem of Israel is called Hatikvah meaning The Hope and it says in part, "Our hope is not yet lost, the hope of two thousand years, to be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem." In the darkness that Israel experiences in this present world, is there any hope for her in the future? God's word tells us that there is hope for Israel in the future!

What does hope mean? Hope concerns the future. It can only relate to the future. There is no use hoping for anything that has taken place in the past. Hope pertains only to something that we see as good in the future, something to which we look forward with joy and eagerness. The doctor may tell us we need to go to the hospital and have surgery soon but we don't hope for this! When we are told in God's word about hope it means we know about something good and glorious and liberating and triumphant that lies ahead even though it is dark and terrible now. God's word teaches that there is a bright side for Israel, that a glorious future lies ahead for her. Hope is for something that is possible to be attained or realized. Hope that is not a Christian hope usually involves an element of uncertainty. A mother whose son is in Afghanistan fighting in the war says every morning, I hope son Joe is safe today and will come home to us soon. The difference between such hope and Christian or biblical hope is the uncertainty of that mother's hope and the certainty of the Christian hope. God's word clearly and unmistakably teaches that Israel has a hope.

### What Is Israel's Hope?

Israel's hope is not in the United Nations. The UN has betrayed Israel again and again through the years and is not going to change. Israel's hope is not in the United States although we should always help Israel all we can in things in which Israel is right. The hope of Israel is not in some great statesman or some superman. The Antichrist will prove this with his final betrayal of Israel.

Israel's hope is in Jesus Christ and the certainty of his return to this earth! The sufferings and miseries of Israel will finally be ended when the Almighty Christ returns to this earth! Israel's hope when realized will be the result of many promises of God written down in His holy word. Israel had definite promises of Christ's coming at last. Jude 14-15 for example quotes Enoch of old as saying, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints; To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

God's word teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, is coming back to this earth literally, visibly and bodily some day. When the Lord Jesus left this earth 2000 years ago the angel who stood by said in Acts 1:11 that he would come back in like manner as the disciples had seen him go into heaven.

In Revelation 19:11-16, we have a description of the return of Christ to this earth. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies

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which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.”

Try to visualize that scene: The clouds will break apart and the Lord himself will come riding on a white horse. He will come to judge and make war. His eyes will be as a flame of fire and on his head will be many crowns and his vesture will be dipped in blood. With him will be the armies of heaven also riding white horses and clothed in fine linen.

Our text says that the place of the Lord's return will be Jerusalem, specifically the Mount of Olives on the East of Jerusalem. Look at verse 4. “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east...” This is not a promise to be spiritually interpreted. God's word means just what it says here! Israel's hope is the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

But what will happen when Israel's hope is realized? At the coming of Jesus Christ the Messiah, Israel as a nation will be back in the land but her condition will be most desperate. Antichrist will have broken his covenant of security with Israel. He will have gathered the armies of earth against Israel in Jerusalem, will have them surrounded and under siege and will have their final destruction within his grasp.

Then, just when Israel's situation will have become most desperate, Israel's brightest hour will begin! Our text tells us that suddenly in the midst of the sack of Jerusalem Christ Himself will return from heaven with all his saints and Christ will fight the battle for Israel and will triumph. Victory over the Antichrist will be due to the Lord's coming and the subsequent Battle of Armageddon. As he comes and descends towards Olivet his word that is sharper than any two edged sword goes forth out of his mouth against his enemies and in a moment of time the returning Christ will horribly wipe out the armies of Antichrist that have Jerusalem surrounded. He will annihilate the armies of Antichrist! Then the Antichrist, the man of sin, Israel's false Messiah will

be cast alive into hell and the birds will eat the flesh of his armies and the Jews will be saved from their enemies.

Matthew 24:29-30 speaks of this glorious coming of Israel's Messiah. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” “Immediately after the tribulation” is a clear and definite pinpointing of time. The Lord Jesus says here that the visible and glorious appearing of Christ will be right after the tribulation. The “sign of the Son of man” mentioned in verse 30 here will be the Son of man Himself coming in the clouds of the air.

The Lord Jesus came to this earth the first time in humiliation and weakness and suffering but He's coming back the second time in power and in great glory! He will come to destroy his enemies and to establish his kingdom.

### Some Important Things That Will Be Interconnected With Israel's Hope

The first event interconnected with the return of Jesus Christ will be the salvation of all Israel. Romans 11:26 relates the promise that “all Israel shall be saved” when her Messiah comes. Every Jew living at that time will come to faith in Jesus Christ! Zechariah 12:10 speaks of this same matter of the salvation of all Israel. “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” When Christ comes again God will pour out the Spirit of grace and supplication on Israel and Israel will mourn in repentance and all Israel shall be saved.

**The Lord Jesus came the first time in humiliation and suffering but He's coming back the second time in power and in great glory!**

Israel shall look on Christ, the one whom they pierced in the crucifixion and this will be a look of recognition that shall cause them to mourn for him. The spiritual blindness that now plagues the Jews will give way to light and sight and when they see him whom they

pierced they will weep bitterly over their great sin. At this time Israel will recognize the long-time error of all their people, they will understand their crime with regard to Christ and they will realize all of their lost blessings. All this will be extremely grievous for them.

A second event interconnected with the hope of Israel will be that Israel will recognize Jesus Christ as her Messiah/King.

In Luke 1:32-33, the angel Gabriel announced that God would give Jesus Christ the throne of his father David and that he would reign over the house of Jacob forever. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Jesus Christ is the King of the Jews and this title, King of the Jews, is no empty title! It is full of meaning and importance. The Old Testament scriptures clearly declare that Jesus Christ will be the supreme ruler over Israel and all men during the millennial age in such passages as Jeremiah 23:5-6. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness."

Isaiah 9:6-7 prophesied in 750 BC that Christ would be the King of Israel when God's word said there, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

Genesis 49:10 prophesied that the Messiah, Shiloh, would come to the throne of Israel before the royal bloodline ceased. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

A second event interconnected with the hope of Israel will be that Israel will recognize Jesus Christ as her Messiah/King.

Israel has had no king since Zedekiah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC but Jesus Christ has impeccable royal lineage preserved for us in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. There we read that his stepfather Joseph was of the royal bloodline of David through King Coniah and that his mother was of the royal bloodline of David through David's son Nathan. When Jesus Christ was born the wise men who had come from the East asked in Matthew 2:2, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

Nathaniel recognized the royalty of Christ when he said to Him in John 1:49, "...Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." Pilate asked the Jews concerning Christ in John 19:15, "...Shall I crucify your King?" to which "The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar." John 19:19 tells us that Pilate wrote on a sign placed on the cross over the head of the Savior when he crucified Him, "...Jesus Of Nazareth The King of the Jews." Jesus Christ was born the King of Israel, he died the King of Israel, therefore he has the right to the throne of his father David!

So, when was Jesus Christ King of the Jews or when will he be the King of the Jews? When did Jesus Christ reign over Israel? It was certainly not during his own lifetime here on the earth! It is necessary that Jesus Christ return to this earth to make good his claims to be King of Israel. Israel has never yet recognized Him as such! It is to the time after the destruction of the Antichrist and his armies at Armageddon that Zechariah 14:9 has reference when it says that "...the Lord shall be king over all the earth..." Hosea 3:5 says, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; (who are one and the same) and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." In Matthew 23:39, the Lord Jesus says that he will be fully recognized and accepted by the Jews at this time when he says, "For I say unto you, Ye (Israel) shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." All of God's dealings with the Jews in history have one ultimate purpose and that is to lead them at last to recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah!

A third thing interconnected with the hope of Israel is the reign of Christ on earth from Jerusalem. Israel's hope involves a literal return of Jesus Christ to the earth and a literal reign by him over the nation of Israel. Isaiah 24:23 says, "Then the moon shall be con-

...

founded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

In Ezekiel 37:24-25 God promised his ancient people Israel this wonderful, glorious future. Here Christ is called David because He is David's greater son. “And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.” Psalms 47-48 are known as millennial Psalms. Psalm 47 is a Psalm of triumphant praise when Christ shall reign over Israel.

The word kingdom comes from two words; king and dominion. King - dom. The word means the king's jurisdiction and the main idea is kingly authority. The stone cut out without hands that smote the great image, breaking it into pieces like the dust of the earth and itself becoming a great mountain that filled the whole earth in Daniel 2:34-35 describes the coming kingdom of Christ on this earth. Jeremiah 23:5-6 speaks of the same reign of Christ over Israel when it says, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.”

Luke 1:33 that we read earlier says that David's throne shall be given to Christ who should be born of Mary. The question here is, Is David's throne in heaven or on earth? The answer of these and other scriptures is that Jesus Christ will reign over Israel and not only will he reign over Israel, he will reign over all the earth!

Revelation 19:15 describes Christ when he shall rule the nations of earth. “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron...” The first time the Lord Jesus came he came through a lowly birth at Bethlehem where he was laid in a manger. When he comes back he will be the triumphant King

of Kings and Lord of Lords coming to rule and to reign in person over Israel and all the earth!

A fourth thing that will be interconnected with the hope of Israel which is Christ's return is that Israel will then be the head nation on this earth rather than the tail as she is today. Deuteronomy 28:13 says, “And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them,” Israel will be established as a mighty nation under Christ her rightful Messiah. Israel will rule the world and Christ will be her King. In Isaiah 14:1-2, God says that Israel will someday rule over her oppressors. “For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.” Isaiah 60:14 says, “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” Israel will rule the world with Christ as her King!

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is today.

One other thing that is interconnected with the hope of Israel is the fact that the nation of Israel will be characterized by peace and joy and rejoicing in that day. Isaiah 40:1-2 speaks of the time when Israel's warfare has been accomplished and her sin forgiven and removed. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.” Isaiah 32:18 speaks of this same time when it says, “And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” Israel's hope is in the coming of the peace bringer, the Prince of peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah. True and lasting peace for Israel can only come when the Messiah appears! The individual Jew who will trust in Jesus Christ today can have personal peace and security.

*(Justice: continued on page 13)*



## The Mystery of the Jew

Charles Halff

The history of the Jews dates back to more than 4,000 years ago. The great nations of the world that are making history today are young, very young indeed, when compared to this ancient race of people. No other nation has had such a remarkable and ancient history. They had a literature of their own before most other nations even had letters.

Their literature, as contained in the Scripture is more widely diffused than any other. They were an organized race long before the days of Greek culture or Roman power. Strange as it may seem, while Assyria has perished, Babylon is in heaps, Rome has tottered and fallen, and ancient Egypt has become a base kingdom among the nations, yet the Jewish people have outlived all their conquerors, and still remain with us today. This is all the more wonderful when we realize that the Jews for nearly 2,000 years had no national home, no rallying point and no government of their own. It's only since May 15, 1948 that Israel has had a land to call her own. Yet without these things they have retained their racial identity and their national characteristics. Just as the great fish was unable to digest and to assimilate Jonah of old and spewed him out again on his own land, so the Gentile nations swallowed the Jews more than 2,000 years ago; but they have been unable to digest or to assimilate them. This, we shall see, is in keeping with God's plans and purposes.

No nation on earth has had such tokens of the divine presence as the Jewish race has had. Theirs has been a history of the miraculous. They witnessed the plagues in Egypt. For them, the Red Sea was driven back and the Jordan River parted so that they might cross over. They were fed with manna in the wilderness for 40 years. They followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. When Sennacherib, with his mighty army, surrounded Jerusalem and boasted against the Jew, 185,000 men were slain in the night by the angel of the Lord. II Kings 19:35.

Yes, the Jew is truly the mystery of the ages. Other nations have come and gone, but the Jew lives on.

And that brings us to the very heart of these messages and the big question—why has God preserved the

Jews? Why are the Jews back in their own land? Why has God preserved them? Why? Why? Why?

Now listen and I'll show you some of the greatest truths in the Bible. In Romans 11:29 we are told, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Among those gifts and callings of God is a covenant which He made with Abraham concerning the land of Palestine. In Genesis 13:14-15 we have this covenant stated:

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

Then God promised to make the seed of Abraham as the dust of the earth in number, and in verse 17 of the same chapter He said: "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."

The land of Palestine is to be an everlasting possession of Abraham and his seed. The same thing is stated again in Genesis 17:7-8:

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

So God has to preserve the Jews in order to make good His promise to Abraham. God said to Abraham, "I will give unto thee and to thy seed all the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession."

Charles Halff, as a Jewish teenager, was called by God to preach to both Jews & Gentiles. He established the work of *The Christian Jew Foundation*. His radio broadcasts continue since his death in 2000.

You see, God has a reason for everything He does. God isn't an idiot. You know they put people in insane asylums because they can't give a reason for what they are doing. But God has a reason for everything He does. And the reason why God has preserved the Jews is to make good His promise to father Abraham.

Let's look at the present condition of the Jews in the light of God's prophetic Word. The very events that we see in Palestine today, the trouble that the Jews and the Arabs are having, all of that was prophesied thousands of years ago in God's prophetic Word.

Turn with me please to Genesis 13:14-17 and let's notice again the great prophecy and promise which God made to Abraham. Notice: "and the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."

Now here you have the promise that God made to Abraham regarding the land of Palestine. God said He would give Abraham all the land, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates, as an everlasting possession. But, much of this land today is occupied by the Arab nations. Why? Why doesn't Israel have this land that God promised to Abraham and his seed?

Beloved, Palestine has been a trouble spot for thousands of years. Today Israel is the hottest thing in the world! Even the United Nations Organization doesn't know what to do with her. Well, God isn't going to let them do anything to her.

Israel is just like the old Ark of the Covenant that was in the Philistine's camp. Every time anyone would touch it God would knock the fire out of him! You know why God is not going to let anyone hurt Israel? Because God has given a promise in His Word that has been literally fulfilled. God says in Genesis 12:3, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that

curseth thee..." And every country that has persecuted the Jews has had to pay for it.

Just keep your eyes on Israel, beloved! Right there in the land of Palestine the most important event of the age is developing. God is drawing together the anti-Christ forces of the world so that He can pour out His prophesied judgments upon this sin-cursed, God-hating, Christ-rejecting world and restore the kingdom to Israel, His chosen people, according to His covenant with Abraham found in Genesis 13:14-17.

Now, beloved, Israel is ultimately going to possess the land! God gave the land to Abraham and said that his seed would possess the land as an everlasting possession. But Abraham never got it. He never got a square foot of it! Even Abraham's burial place (his grave) had to be purchased. Stephen was stoned to death by the Jews for emphasizing this very point! Turn with me, if you will, to Acts 7:5. Even Stephen talked about the land of Palestine which God is ultimately going to give to the children of Israel. Listen to what Stephen said to the Jews just before he was stoned to death:

"And he (God) gave him (Abraham) none inheritance in it (the land of Palestine), no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child."

**God gave the land to Abraham and said that his seed would possess the land as an everlasting possession.**

Oh, beloved, listen to what Stephen said! Stephen said that God promised this land to Abraham—but Abraham has never received it yet. Does that mean that God violated His promise? Does that mean that God didn't keep His Word? No, Beloved! God can't lie! The Lord Jesus Christ is going to come back according to God's prophetic Word. He is going to claim the land, resurrect Abraham and all the prophets and establish a divine kingdom on this beautiful earth. Listen to what Jesus said in Luke 13:28-29 about the restoration of

Israel:

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."



There it is—crystal clear. Why do people want to spiritualize the promises and the prophecies of God when they are so clear? Why can't we just take God's Word and believe it as it is written?

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God would come to this earth and that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets would sit down in the Kingdom of God. In other words, there is coming a heaven on earth! That is God's covenant with Israel. Remember that Israel is God's earthly people—the Church is God's heavenly people.

This land was promised to Abraham. Why, it was even deeded to the children of Israel before Abraham was born! Let me show you that. Turn to Deuteronomy 32:8 where we have the great promise that God made to Israel even before Israel came into existence. With man it was yet to be done, but with God it was already done! Notice:

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."

There it is, just as plain as the nose on your face! God promised this land to the children of Israel 251 years before Abraham was born. Other nations can claim their land by right of conquest; but Palestine is God's gift to the seed of Abraham, and only Israel is going to enjoy the land!

Oh, I realize that we have a lot of Jew haters today who say that the Jews are murderers and hijackers and that they have stolen the land from the Arabs. There is not one word of truth in it, beloved! Let me say this to all of you. Anyone who tells you that the Jews have stolen the land of Palestine from the Arabs doesn't know what he is talking about. The Jews have paid for every bit of land which they have taken from the Arabs. Every bit of land which the Jews have acquired from the Arabs in the Holy Land has been paid for with good money!

Why, even the Bible says in Jeremiah the 32nd chapter that the Jews would have to buy the land and pay for it when they went back home. That is exactly what the Jews have done. The Jews have bought the land from the Arabs and brought a standard of living to Palestine. They have brought sanitation and health

facilities and things that the land of Palestine has never enjoyed before. God said this would happen when Israel returned home.

Beloved, the land of Palestine is being prepared for the Jews. The Jews are being prepared for the land. And ultimately, the people are going to be prepared for their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**If you ever expect to understand your Bible, you must understand the place which Israel plays in God's plan.**

We're looking at Israel's amazing place in the plan of God. If you ever expect to understand your Bible, you must understand the place which Israel plays in God's plan.

No nation can destroy the Jew. The Jews are indestructible—just as indestructible as the burning bush which Moses saw that was not consumed.

There isn't a nation that has persecuted the Jews that hasn't had to pay for it. Why? Because God says in His Word in Genesis 12:3, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee..." Every individual who has ever persecuted the Jews has suffered. The Jew is still here, but where are his enemies? The Bible teaches that the nations will never get rid of the Jew. God has scattered them, but He will also regather them.

Yes, the Jew is the mystery nation. No nation has ever produced such prophets and seers as Israel. Look at Isaiah, look at Jeremiah, look at Ezekiel, look at Daniel, Samuel, Elijah, and John the Baptist! Look at the Lord Jesus Christ, born of a Jewish mother!

For what other nation has the Red Sea ever opened up to give passage when a people were being pursued by an enemy? For what other nation has a river ever opened its mouth and swallowed up its own waters so that people could cross over on dry ground? For what other nation has one lone angel come and destroyed 185,000 soldiers in one night's time?

For what other nation did the God of Heaven cause the sun and moon to stand still so that the people could fight a battle and win a victory over their enemies? For what other nation have the walls of a city fallen down as they marched around it? For what other nation—except to the Jewish nation—has a Saviour ever been born?

Beloved, to what other nation has God ever made such glorious promises as He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the 12 tribes of Israel? So you see the amazing place that Israel has in the plan of God. Everything about the Jew has been miraculous!

Now today let's look at Israel's future in the light of God's prophetic Word. The Word of God tells us that there's a glorious future ahead for the nation of Israel.

Turn with me please to Zephaniah 3:19-20. Here we have a remarkable prophecy which tells us what God is going to do for the Jewish people at the end time. Listen:

"Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord."

My, what a prophecy! Those who have studied Jewish history have to acknowledge that in the last 100 years the Jews have come to the front among the nations of the world in a very remarkable way. Of course, it's a well-known fact that the Jews received a very severe setback in World War II when Hitler had over six million Jews cruelly put to death. A great number of the foremost Jews of the world perished in World War II.

But Zephaniah's prophecy tells us that Israel is to ultimately win esteem and praise in the many countries where she was formerly put to shame. Today Israel is a curse, but ultimately she will be a blessing! Zephaniah tells us that God is going to uplift the Jewish nation and get the Jews fame in every land and punish all people who have afflicted the Jews.

Because of her sins Israel was severely punished. She was scattered among the nations. This humbling of Israel, however, will not continue forever. Ezekiel 28:25-26 tells us: "Thus saith the Lord God: When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely there in, and

shall build houses and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God."

Again in Ezekiel 34:13, 25-27 we read: "And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country... And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them."

How wonderful it will be when Israel no longer must fear her enemies. Today she shrinks in fear and hides her face. Russia has slain thousands of Jews and persecuted them unmercifully. Germany was turned into a veritable mad dog by Hitler when she tried to exterminate the Jew.

**Zephaniah tells us that God is going to uplift the Jewish nation and get the Jews fame in every land and punish all people who have afflicted the Jews.**

But according to God's prophetic Word a grand and wonderful day lies ahead for the nation of Israel. Let me give you another Scripture. Listen: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."

Can you imagine that the time is coming when ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying, "We'll go with you for we have heard that God is with you." Oh, let's do all we can to take the Gospel to poor, blinded, suffering Israel. When the Jews receive the Lord the Lord Jesus Christ, they will change the entire civilization of this world.

Yes, Israel someday will become a great blessing to the world. She will be a light unto the nations. She

*(Half continued on page 13)*



## The Seven Sevens of Prophetic Wonders

Fred J. Meldau

### Israel Under Messiah's Kingdom, Shall Have A Seven-fold Blessing as the Mountain of the House of the Lord

Micah 4:1-7; Isaiah 2:1-5

We list these seven as "blessings of Messiah's Kingdom;" hence they are blessings for Israel, as well as for all the world.\* (1) Messiah's Kingdom, "the Mountain of the House of the Lord," shall be established in the top of the mountains v.1. His kingdom over Israel will be supreme. (2) Many nations shall flow unto it for blessing, v. 2, because God will be there—"the House of the God of Jacob." (3) Jerusalem will be the world's political and spiritual center, for the "law" (politics) and "the Word of the Lord" (religion) shall go forth from Zion, v. 2. (4) Messiah shall rebuke the nations, and establish universal peace, v. 3. (5) Messiah's rule will bring universal prosperity, and economic liberty to all, v. 4. (6) Messiah's rule shall bring universal worship of God, v. 5, literally translated, "all the people do now walk in the name of their god, but shall walk (then) in the name of Jehovah our Elohim for ever." Cf. Isa. 11:9. (7) Israel, regathered, will walk in the light of God, and will be a strong nation under Messiah's rule, vs. 5-7; cf. Isa. 2:5.

### Israel Shall Have A Seven-Fold Blessing As God's People

Jeremiah 32:37-44; Ezekiel 11:17-21

When the nation is born again—converted to Christ—in a day (Isa. 66:8; Rom. 11:26), Israel will enter into a seven-fold blessing as His people. (1) They will dwell safely in the land, Jer. 34:37. (2) They will be God's people, and He will be their God, v. 38. (3) A heart to fear and obey God—a new spirit—will be given them, v. 39; cf. Ezek. 11:19. (4) God will make an everlasting covenant with them and He will never turn away from

\*Let us not get away from this fact: while the kingdom will be a time of blessing for Israel, all nations will share in that blessing. God is the God of the Gentiles as well as the God of the Jews. Rom. 3:29. True, Israel, as a nation, will be in preeminence, Deut. 28:13, but the cup of plenty will be passed around to all. This universal blessing of the kingdom taught and intimated in many places, (as, Is. 11:10; Jer. 16:19-21) is stated in Is. 19:24, 25, in these words, "...Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel mine inheritance." See also Rom. 11:12, 15-16.

them, v. 40. (5) God will do them good, vs. 40, 41. (6) God will "plant" them in their land, v. 41; cf. Ezek. 11:17 (7) The land shall be revived for their sakes—once desolate fields shall again be purchased for tillage, vs. 43, 44.

### Seven Striking Figures Used in Scripture that Illustrate Israel's Future

#### Regathering and Restoration Blessings

(1) Israel will be "found" and brought back to the land by "hunters" and "fishers." "I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish for them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain... and out of the holes of the rocks." (Jer. 16:15-16). (2) Zion will travail in childbirth, Isaiah 66:8, "and a Nation shall be born at once"—the instantaneous conversion of all Israel, when they shall look on Him "whom they have pierced." (Zech. 12:10). (3) Redeemed Israel, exalting Christ, will "suck the milk of Gentiles" and "suck the breast of kings," Isa. 60:16. Study this entire chapter, and read of Zion's coming "excellency"—and all because "the Redeemer shall come to Zion." (Isa. 59:20). (4) Israel will be arrayed in beautiful garments, "Awake awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the unclean." (Isa. 52:1). (5) Israel, with joy, will draw water out of the wells of salvation. Isaiah 12:3. Read the entire chapter. (6) Israel's popularity—and all for God—will be restored, for then "ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." Zech. 8:23; see Zech. 8:20-23. (7) God's Presence will be Israel's glory and will be round about her like a wall of fire. Zech. 2:5, 10. ✪

From *The Seven Sevens of Prophetic Wonders*, Pgs. 82-85. The Christian Victory Publishing Co. Denver, CO

Fred J. Meldau was editor of the *Christian Victory Magazine* in Denver, Colorado during the 1950s. He wrote *Messiah In Both Testaments* and *Christ The Prophet* among many other books and booklets.

## Israel in the Apocalypse

Nathaniel West



A closing word is demanded as to Israel in the Apocalypse. That wonderful Book is capable of many "applications," but only of one "organic interpretation," based upon the entire unity, analogy, and identity of prophecy. We may "apply" its symbols to the times of early Pagan persecution, and also to later Papal persecutions. This is the figurative "application" based upon the equation of "Israel" with the "Christian Church." The Apocalypse was a book of comfort to the early church. It was a comfort, also, to the witnesses of Christ in the Middle Age, and during the Reformation. But as surely as Israel "abides" Israel, and Daniel's "people" are not the "Church," so surely is Israel the key for the true and final interpretation of the closing prophecy of the New Testament. It sums up in itself all the unfulfilled predictions respecting that chosen and predestined race. We meet Israel everywhere. The very announcement of the theme of the book, viz., the Lord's Second Coming, refers us to Israel. "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him; they also who pierced Him," Rev. 1:7, i.e. the Jewish nation, as Zechariah assures us. The text is a combination of two passages, one from Zechariah, the other from Daniel, both in strict textual connection, in the prophets, with Israel's deliverance at the Second Advent of Messiah. We encounter Israel again in the promise made to the Philadelphian Church, Rev. 3:7-11, by Him who is the "Lion of Judah's tribe," and has "the Key of David." Israel shall be converted in the last time, and in connection with the coming of Christ. Again, we find Israel in the sealing of the 144,000 out of all their tribes, Rev. 7:1-8, just before the Trumpet Judgments occur, and the Tribulation begins. Again, we see Israel in chapters 10, 11, and 12, chapters that place us in the very midst of Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones, and show us the prophet's word, and the Spirit of Life from God, with attending earthquake, beginning that work of spiritual, personal and national, conversion and resurrection foretold by the prophets. The oath-taking Angel of the Covenant, Solar-faced, and Rainbow-crowned, whose shoulders are robed in cloud

and feet like pillars of fire, reminds us of the Pillar of Cloud in the Wilderness, and Him who dwelt in it coming to His people again. The "little book" is the matter of the testimony of the "two witnesses." Their 1260 days of witness is the first half of Daniel's 70th week. The slaughter of the witnesses is in the middle of that week, and is the first public persecuting act of the last Antichrist. The succeeding 1260 days is the second half of that week, the time of the tribulation. The "Worshippers," 11:1, the sun-clothed woman, or Daughter of Zion, 12:1, the "Our Brethren," 12:10, the "Woman" fled to the wilderness, are all the same, the Jewish Christian Church of the End-Time, or 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. The "Remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus," and whom Satan, through the Antichrist, persecutes 1260 days, 12:17, 13:1, 5, 7, are either Gentile believers, or the remainder of Israel returning from the East under the care of Eastern princes, doubtless both, 16:12. The 144,000 in 14:1-5 are Israel again, secure with Messiah returned to Zion, after the Trumpet judgments are over. Again, Israel stands triumphant, in 15:3, 4, singing "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb," blending their first and last deliverances in one, and declaring that the time for national Christianity on earth has come, now that Israel is victorious, and is a nation converted to Christ. What we see in 14:20 and 19:11-21, is the Armageddon conflict, closed out, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, outside Jerusalem, the Lord Himself descending from "Heaven Opened" to destroy the Antichrist, bind Satan, raise the faithful dead, and begin the "thousand years" blessed kingdom of glory on earth, Rev. 20:1-7. And what shines before us in Rev. 20:9, is the "Beloved City," Jerusalem restored, the home of the Daughter of Zion, which, for a "thousand years" has enjoyed the uninterrupted peace and glory, foretold by the prophets. He who cannot see *Israel* here, in this book as distinct from the *Church* and the *Nations*, will see nothing. Wonderful is the regularity of Israel's recurrence! After the 6<sup>th</sup> verse of the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter; in the 6<sup>th</sup> of the seven Epistles to the Churches; between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> seals; between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> trumpets; between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> vials; in the Wilderness here; on Mount Zion there; a worshipping part in the city now; a multitude pressing

Nathaniel West (1826-1906) during his 33 years of active ministry served eight churches and was a noted speaker at prophetic conferences. His writings include *A Complete Analysis of the Holy Bible*.

(West: continued on page 13)

*(Justice: continued from page 6)*

Above all, Israel in that future day will experience all the happiness of the presence and love of the Lord. Look at Zephaniah 3:14-17 here. "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." Isaiah 35:10 says that Israel will in that day break forth into singing and it will be for the joy of having the presence of Christ the Messiah with them. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Truly God has much in store for his ancient people, Israel! Israel's hope is far more, infinitely more than is

**Israel will in that day break forth into singing and it will be for the joy of having the presence of Christ the Messiah with them.**

expressed in the Hatikvah! Israel's hope is the hope of the coming of Jesus Christ. In Titus 2:13 Paul calls it "that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

Here is a brief summary of the glorious future God has reserved for Israel:

1. The Jews shall be gathered from all nations and restored to their land.
2. Armageddon will take place and just as the armies are ready to finally crush Israel in Jerusalem,
3. Jesus Christ shall return and save them and be king over them and they will be the favored nation through whom God will pour his blessings on the earth during the millennium.

Israel's hope centers in Christ. All hope held out in the New Testament is connected with the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Israel's hope is identified with Christ's second coming. Jesus Christ is coming back in glory and omnipotence someday to establish that for which the Jews have longed and dreamed for centuries. All of this will happen when Jesus Christ comes again! Let us pray that that day will come soon! ✧

## How Does the PBJ Survive?

A number of readers have written and called over the years, testifying to how the Premillennial Baptist Journal has helped their understanding of biblical eschatology. In order to continue publishing what several have described as a quality magazine, we have an ongoing need for money. The cost of each issue is now about \$2000. Since we do not sell subscriptions, we are dependent on the generous donations of our readers. Will you consider donating a one-time large gift or doing as several churches are doing and contribute \$50, \$100 or \$200 per month? We are now into the fourth year of publication. Will you help enable us to continue? Make checks payable to *Premillennial Baptist Journal* and send all donations to:

**Premillennial Baptist Journal 9601 Blue Ridge Extension Kansas City, MO 64134.**

*(West: continued from page 12)*

into the land from the East; a shelter, a victory, a triumph, a glory, an effect on the nations, and all at the Second Coming of Christ! He who cannot see this will see nothing! It is the Eschatology of all the prophets. It is the Eschatology of Christ. It is the Eschatology of the Apostles,—one eschatology, from first to last, built and based on the one eternal plan and purpose of God with respect to Israel, an interpretation grounded in the unity, continuity, organic structure, and genetic development of all prophecy, divine, infallible, sure, a light forever. ✧

From *The Thousand Year Reign of Christ*  
Kregel Publications, Grand Rapid, MI. 1993

*(Haiff: continued from page 10)*

will be the head of the nations instead of the tail as she is today. Deut. 28:13. Eventually the Jews will rule the world with Jesus Christ as their King.

There you have God's future program for Israel. And it will all be fulfilled at Christ's second coming when the Jews turn to God and repudiate their national sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. Let's pray that that day will soon come. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper that love thee." Psalm 122:6 ✧

Radio Sermons, Message 3, 4, 7.  
The Christian Jew Foundation

## The Prospect For Israel

Charles Lee Feinberg



Romans 11:1. "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."

It is the confirmed belief of many, contrary to the Scriptures, that there is no hope nor prospect for God's people, Israel. God has completely and finally cast her off, they say. From a letter addressed to the editor of a religious weekly concerning an article on the Jew we quote the following: "But the Bible, Old as well as New, more powerfully condemns the Jew than even a Hitler or a Roman did. And what is more, this eternal condemnation has already rested on him for 2000 years and more, and will so rest we may well judge to the end of time. When you quote God's Word to the effect that in Abraham shall all families of the earth be blessed and that a curse shall rest upon any who curse him, you quote a Scripture that was completely fulfilled in the words from the cross 'It is finished.'" If God is not faithful to His promises to Israel, will He be any more so to His promises to His Church? If the failure of Israel is argued, can it not be equally argued that the Church has miserably failed God also?

The prospect of Israel is not extinction. With such determined opposition from every side and from such inveterate enemies it appears as though the only prospect possible for Israel is their annihilation or extinction. But Jeremiah 31:35-37 refutes this for all time. The prophet Jeremiah says, "Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, so that the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name: If these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

Israel is the burning bush that was not consumed, not consumed because the Lord was in the bush (Jer. 30:11). Nor is her prospect Zionism. Much hope has been placed in it and much effort placed in it. The recent years of the establishment of the State of Israel have seen renewed energy on every hand. But Zionism has undergone many failures, and will yet see many more. The national prospect of Israel is not in the patronage of governments. Men and the arm of flesh will always fail. Her prospect is not realized in these directions.

God has not cast Israel away for all time and given her promises totally and finally to any other nation, or even to the Church. Someone has well said, "While Japheth is entitled to share the tent with Shem, he has no right to steal the tent and turn Shem out, robbed of his promises and his inheritance." Israel's prospect is not in extinction, nor in the arm of flesh, nor in Zionism, nor in friendly gestures from kindly disposed governments, but this does not mean God has cast her off. Is there a prospect for her? Does hope yet remain for her? In the much neglected eleventh chapter of Romans this is fully answered.

Paul proves conclusively that there is a prospect for Israel by three irrefutable arguments:

### Paul Himself in the Past (vs. 1)

If God had completely cast off His people after the crucifixion of Christ, then how is it that Paul is saved himself? Note the connection of 11:1 with the last verse of the tenth chapter of Romans. There it is stated that God is spreading out His hands all the day long to a disobedient and opposing people. If such be the case, if He be pleading with them daily and now, how then can anyone claim that God has cast off His people? Place Romans 11:1 in syllogistic form (as a friend has done) to see how impossible it is of being the truth that God has cast away His people and is "through with the Jews." The syllogism could read thus

God is through with the Jew.

I, Paul, am a Jew.

Therefore, God is through with me.

But this verse proves not only that an individual can be saved, but that like Paul, Israel will be saved. In 1

Charles Lee Feinberg, Professor Emeritus of Semitics & Old Testament at Talbot Seminary, was born in an Orthodox Jewish home. He made several trips to the Holy Land.

Timothy 1:16 Paul indicates that God manifested His grace, His lovingkindness and His mercy to him while he was yet a persecutor, injurious and blasphemous, because God wanted to show forth in Christ all His longsuffering, for an example to those that would afterward believe on the Lord Christ unto eternal life. This passage means that Paul in his conversion in the past is a picture and an assurance that God will save Israel in the future. There are definite similarities: Israel and Paul were both unbelieving, fanatical, ignorant of God's righteousness, and zealous; both will have the vision of the glorified and ascended Christ as the cause of their acceptance of Him by faith; the ministry of both is to all the nations of the earth. (See Isa. 2:1-4; Mic. 4:1-5; and Zech. 8:20-23.) How can it be said that God has cast off His people when Paul was saved and Israel will be saved after this same type?

#### **The Remnant in the Present (vss. 2-24)**

How can it be said God has cast away His people when the remnant of the present is considered? The remnant now, as in other ages, proves that the apostasy of Israel is never a complete one. From the times of greatest apostasy God has always had a remnant in Israel whether in Elijah's time, in Isaiah's time, or in the time of our Lord Jesus Christ (Simeon and Anna). Some interpret verses 7 to 10 as stating Israel is cast off for all time. But surely all the passage teaches is that there is a remnant in the midst of seeming universal apostasy. Their fall is not final. No, its purpose was to bring salvation to the Gentiles so that they would provoke Israel to jealousy. If God wants them to be provoked to jealousy, surely He has not cast them off forever.

Over a quarter of a century ago a Russian Jew of great learning named Joseph Rabbinowitz was sent to Palestine by the Jews to buy land for them. He went to Jerusalem. One day he went up on the Mount of Olives to rest. Someone had told him to take a New Testament as the best guide-book about Jerusalem. The only Christ he had known was the Christ of the Greek and Roman churches, who were his persecutors and the persecutors of his people. But as he read the New Testament he became acquainted with the real Christ of whom the Old Testament Scriptures had foretold, and his heart grew warm. He looked off toward Calvary and thought: "Why is it that my people are persecuted and cast out?" And his conviction gave him the answer, "It must be because we have put to death our

Messiah." He lifted his eyes to that Messiah and said: "My Lord and my God." He came down from the mount a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. He went home to Russia and erected a synagogue for the Jews, over the door of which was written: "Let all the house of Israel know that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." He was one of the many present remnant of Israel which proves conclusively and better than words, that God has not cast away His people, in fact, there is a prospect for them.

**Their fall is not final. No, its purpose was to bring salvation to the Gentiles so that they would provoke Israel to jealousy.**

#### **All Israel in the Future (vss. 25-27)**

Not only does Paul's conversion prove that God is not through with the Jew, but that of the remnant does also. But more than that: the blessed prospect beyond us proves it without a shadow of a doubt. For then God will be dealing with Israel in a national manner again. Israel knows they have a hope: their national anthem is "The Hope." What that hope is can be found in the Scriptures which tell of a returning and reigning Messiah (Zech. 12:10 and Isa. 24:23); a restored nation (Jer. 23:3, 4); a regenerated people (Ezek. 36:22-32 and Isa. 66:8, 10)—but first there must be the transaction of Ezekiel 20:38; the ratified new covenant (Jer. 31:31ff.); the reception of the outpoured Spirit (Joel 2:28, 29); the renovated earth (Isa. 35:1-10); the rebuilt temple, the reinstated sacrifices and feasts, and redivided land (Ezek. 40ff. And 45:18; 47:13-23; Zech. 14:16ff.). These are Israel's promises of hope, her prospects for the glorious future. They cannot be spiritualized away. The spiritualizing of Israel's blessings and promises, it has been well said, has meant the carnalizing of the Church. They have the promise of being grafted into their own olive tree—restoration to blessing. It will be life from the dead, as with Jonah and his preaching—conversion of the whole great city. Their blindness is only partial and temporary proving that God has not cast them off. They will yet herald abroad the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some years ago a very significant event took place in the city of Richmond in our own country. A certain elevated part of the city was recognized by a real estate firm as destined to become the most fashionable part of that area. A little church building had been erected there and a mission church established. The members of this church worshipped their Lord with great enthusiasm and fervor. As costly homes were

*(Feinberg: continued on page 16)*

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(Femberg: continued from page 15)

built near the church the owners finally became disturbed by the singing. These ultra-fashionable people said: "It won't do; they disturb the quiet of our homes with their enthusiasm." They appointed a committee to go to the city council with a petition and have the church declared a nuisance. They brought the petition to a Jew having no doubt that he would be the first to sign it. To their surprise he pushed the petition away from him and said, "I cannot sign it. If I believed as do these Christians that my Messiah had come, I would shout it from every housetop of Richmond, and nobody could stop me". Thank God, Israel will yet believe and will yet tell the glorious story.

Let us not attempt to shorten the arm of God or His good promises for the blessed prospect of Israel. Let us

pray for the hastening of that blessed time that is known to God. It is known that the treasury doors of banks are able to resist almost any destructive agent that would try to open them. The lock and bolt work is mounted on the inside of the door. The bolts are controlled by two keyless combination locks, and in addition there is a time-lock which prevents the door from being opened except at the determined time. This time-lock of the Jew defined in Scripture in comparatively definite terms, will be opened by God and no man will be able to close it. Then will begin the fulfillment of all concerning her which the Lord hath promised. Be assured that God has much in prospect for His ancient people, Israel. ✪

From *Israel in the Spotlight*, Scripture Press, 1956

### Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Amillennial Proof Texts Examined

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### Inside This Edition

- Paul and "The Israel of God," *S. Lewis Johnson* ..... p. 3
- Amillennialism and Revelation 20:4, 6-7, *Dan Hillard* ..... p. 9
- Amillennialist Proof Texts for Binding of Satan, *Leon King* ..... p.12
- An Exposition of Romans 2:28-29, *Royce Smith* ..... p.14

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### The *FIRST RESURRECTION* and Revelation 20:5

In 20:5 the writer of Revelation specifically identifies the kind of life referred to by the words "they lived" in verse 4. "This," he says, "is the first resurrection." Such a clear definition should be enough to settle the question. But again there has been prodigious labor expended in attempts to show that the term "resurrection" (*anastasis*) here refers to regeneration. Against these attempts the following may be said:

a. In spite of all that has been written on the point, no one has ever produced a single indisputable instance in the New Testament where the Greek *anastasis* is ever applied to man's soul, or an instance where the new birth is ever called a "resurrection." This would be strange if the terms were ever regarded as interchangeable. The very etymology of the Greek term suggests the idea of the standing up again of a body which has been laid down in the grave. Such an idea would be wholly incongruous when applied to the soul or spirit.

b. Those who try to change the "first resurrection" of Rev. 20:5 into spiritual regeneration generally use the great passage of John 5:24-25 as a point of departure. This deserves some attention. The first resurrection, it is alleged, is found in verse 25: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Now this is admittedly a clear reference to spiritual regeneration; but it is to be noted that our Lord is careful *not* to call it a "resurrection." Not only so, but He moves from the subject of spiritual life in verses 24-25 to the specific of physical life in verses 28-29, and only the latter is called "resurrection" (*anastasis*). Moreover, only those who are the recipients of resurrection are said to "come forth" from "the graves," as we might naturally expect.

Still further, in John 5:25-28 our Lord lays an exegetical foundation for the two resurrections of Revelation 20, by affirming that the saved will come forth unto "the resurrection of life" and the unsaved to "the resurrection of judgment" (Jn 5:29, ASV). And the order is correct: first, the saved; then the unsaved. Finally Christ distinguishes in *time* definitely between His work of regeneration and his work of resurrection. As to the time of the former he says, "the hour is coming, and now is" (vs. 25). But the work of resurrection he says only, "the hour is coming" (vs.28), a clear reference to an eschatological "hour." Thus the work of regeneration proceeds during the present hour-- "*now*," and also during an "hour" which is "*coming*"; i.e., the eschatological hour. But the work of resurrection is reserved wholly for the eschatological hour. It should be obvious that since the present "hour" of regeneration has already lasted 1900 years, there is no reason why the future hour may not last for a "thousand years," beginning with the resurrection of the saved and ending with the resurrection of the unsaved, as Revelation 20 states the order. Thus our Lord outlined the framework of a future age characterized by two divine works: first, the work of *spiritual* regeneration; and secondly, the work of *bodily* resurrection. The details are filled in by the Old Testament prophets and the Book of Revelation. The age will begin with the resurrection of the saints of past ages, and it will end with the resurrection of the unsaved. During the same age multitudes will be saved by the word of *regeneration*, and for these apparently, there will be no death.

Alva J. McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*. 488-489



## Paul and "The Israel of God"

S. Lewis Johnson

### An Exegetical and Eschatological Case-Study

In spite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, there remains persistent support for the contention that the term *Israel* may refer properly to Gentile believers in the present age. Incidental support for this is claimed in such passages as Romans 2:28-29; 9:6; and Philippians 3:3; but the primary support is found in Galatians 6:16 where Paul writes, "and those will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God" (NASB). The rendering of the NIV illustrates the point, for it has, "Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God." It is obvious from this rendering that the term "the Israel of God" is to be equated with "all who follow this rule," that is, with believers in the present age, whether Jew or Gentile.

This rendering of the verse serves quite well the purpose of those who would like to find New Testament justification of the practice of the spiritualization of Scripture, that is, the habit of taking Old Testament texts regarding ethnic Israel and referring them to the New Testament church.

I cannot help but think that dogmatic considerations loom large in the interpretation of Galatians 6:16. The tenacity with which this application of "the Israel of God" to the church is held in spite of a mass of evidence to the contrary leads one to think that the supporters of the view believe their eschatological system, usually an amillennial scheme, hangs on the reference of the term to the people of God, composed of both believing Jews and Gentiles. Amillennialism does not hang on this interpretation, but the view does appear to have a treasured place in amillennial exegesis.

In speaking of the view that the term refers to ethnic Israel, a sense that the term Israel has in every other of its more than sixty-five uses in the New Testament and in its fifteen uses in Paul, in tones almost emotional William Hendriksen, the respected Reformed commentator, writes, "I refuse to accept that explanation."

I am reminded of the comment of Irving Kristol, John M. Olin Professor of Social Thought at the New York

University Graduate School of Business. In another connection he once said, "When we lack the will to see things as they really are, there is nothing so mysterious as the obvious."

It is often said by New Testament and Old Testament scholars that systematic theologians do not pay enough attention to the text and its exegetical details. The claim is too frequently justified, but there is another side to the question. It may also be said that biblical scholars often unwittingly overlook their own theological presuppositions, logical fallacies, and hermeneutical errors. What I am leading up to is expressed neatly by D. W. B. Robinson in an article written about twenty years ago: "The glib citing of Gal. 6:16 to support the view that the church is the new Israel should be vigorously challenged. There is weighty support for a limited interpretation." We can say more than this, in my opinion. There is more than weighty support for a more limited interpretation. There is overwhelming support for such. In fact, the least likely view among several alternatives is the view that "the Israel of God" is the church.

I propose to review the present status of the interpretation of Galatians 6:16, then offer an analysis grammatically, exegetically, and theologically of the principal suggested interpretations. A few concluding comments will bring the paper to its termination.

### Galatians 6:16 In Contemporary Interpretation

VIEW ONE: "THE ISRAEL OF GOD" IS THE CHURCH: A few words will suffice for the context of the text in Galatians, for there is general agreement regarding it. Whereas others boast of their conquests and their statistics in winning adherents to their legalistic cause, Paul would confine his boasting to the cross of Christ, by which he had been severed from the world and its spirit. In Christ and in the church of Christ the circumcision issue has lost its relevance. He lives in the realm

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. (1915-2004) was called into the ministry in 1943. He served as both Professor and Visiting Professor at three universities, including Dallas Theological Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

of the new creation where walking by the Spirit prevails. For those who walk accordingly there is the blessing of peace and mercy, and that also touches the Israel of God. His scars in the service of Jesus, not circumcision, certify and authenticate his confession that his master is the Lord. And, fittingly, picking up the note of grace with which he began his letter (cf. 1:3), a benediction concludes the epistle. So much for Galatians 6:11-18.

Three principal interpretations have characterized the exegesis of Galatians 6:16. The first is the claim that "the Israel of God" is simply a term descriptive of the believing church of the present age. The term is linked with the preceding words, "And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them," by an explicative *kai* (NASB, "and"; NIV "even"), given practically the sense of apposition. The Israel of God is the body who shall walk by the rule of the new creation, and they include believing people from the two ethnic bodies of Jews and Gentiles.

It is well-known that Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Typho* is the first author to claim an identification of the term Israel with the church. Of the commentators, Chrysostom is one of the earliest to identify apparently the church with Israel, affirming that those who keep the rule are "true Israelites." Others who follow this view include Daniel C. Arichea, Jr., and Eugene Nida, Ragnar Bring, John Calvin, R. A. Cole, N. A. Dahl, Donald Guthrie, William Hendricksen, Robert L. Johnson, M.J. Lagrance, Hans K. LaRondelle, R.C. H. Lenski, J.B. Lightfoot, Martin Luther, Herman Ridderbos, Henrich Schlier, and John R. W. Stott.

The list of names supporting this view is impressive, although the bases of the interpretation are few and feeble, namely, the claim that the *kai* (KJV, "and"; NASB, "and"; NIV, "even") before the term "the Israel of God" is an explicative or appositional *kai*; the fact that the member of the church may be called "the seed of Abraham" (Cf. Ga. 3:29); and the claim that if one sees the term "the Israel of God" a believing ethnic Israel, they would be included in the preceding clause, "and those who will walk by this rule peace and mercy be upon them."

**VIEW TWO: "THE ISRAEL OF GOD" IS THE REMNANT OF ISRAELITES IN THE CHURCH.** The second of the

important interpretations of Galatians 6:16 and "the Israel of God" is the view that the words refer simply to believing ethnic Israelites in the Christian church. Does not Paul speak of himself as an Israelite (cf. Rom. 11:1)? And does not the apostle also speak of "a remnant according to God's gracious choice" (cf. 11:5), words that plainly in the context refer to believing Israelites? What more fitting thing could Paul write, it is said, in a work so strongly attacking Jewish professing believers, the Judaizers, than to make it most plain that he was not attacking the true believing Jews? Judaizers are anathematized, but the remnant according to the election of grace are "the Israel of God." At the conclusion of the *Kampfepistel* the battle ceases, an "olive branch" is offered to the beloved saints who are brethren. The epistle after a couple of lines concludes appropriately on the note of grace, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen."

Perhaps this expression, "the Israel of God," is to be contrasted with his expression in 1 Corinthians 10:18, "Israel after the flesh" (KJV), as the true, believing Israel versus the unbelieving element, just as in Romans 9:6 the apostle distinguishes two Israels, one elect and believing, the other unbelieving, but both ethnic Israelites (cf. vv. 7-13).

**VIEW THREE: "THE ISRAEL OF GOD" IS THE FUTURE REDEEMED NATION.** The third of the interpretations is the view that the expression "the Israel of God" is used eschatologically and refers to the Israel that shall turn to the Lord in the future in the events that surround the second advent of our Lord. Paul would then be thinking along the lines of his well-known prophecy of the salvation of "all Israel" in Romans 11:25-27. As F.F. Bruce comments, "For all his demoting of the law and the customs, Paul held good hope of the ultimate blessing of Israel." There are some variations in the expression of their views, but those who hold that Israel here either refers to or includes the nation as a whole that will turn to the Lord eschatologically, in line with Romans 11, include F. F. Bruce, Ernest De Witt Burton, W.D. Davies, Robert Govett, Franz Mussner, and Peter Richardson.

It is perhaps appropriate at this point to note simply that the weight of contemporary scholarship is opposed to the prevailing interpretation of amillennial

Three principal interpretations have characterized the exegesis of Galatians 6:16.

interpreters that "the Israel of God" refers to the church, composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers, although the subjective nature of this comment is recognized by the author. It is based upon the fact that those who hold to the second and third views unite in their opposition to the prevailing amillennial interpretation.

### An Analysis Of The Competing Interpretations

**VIEW ONE: "THE ISRAEL OF GOD" IS THE CHURCH.** *Grammatical and syntactical considerations.* It is necessary to begin this part of the discussion with a reminder of a basic, but often neglected, hermeneutical principle. It is this: in the absence of compelling exegetical and theological considerations, we should avoid the rarer grammatical usages when the common ones make good sense.

We do not have the space to discuss the semantic range of the Greek conjunction *kai*. The standard grammars handle the matter acceptably. Suffice it to say, there are several well-recognized senses of *kai* in the New Testament. First and most commonly, *kai* has the continuative or copulative sense of *and*. Second, *kai* frequently has the adjunctive sense of *also*. Third, *kai* occasionally has the ascensive sense of *even*, which shades off into an explicative sense of *namely*.

The ascensive sense, to my mind, is to be distinguished from an explicative, or epexegetic, sense. It expresses a further, a heightened, identification of a term. For example, I might say, "I visited Dallas, I even visited Dallas Theological Seminary." The *kai* would be an ascensive *kai*. But suppose I said, "I visited Dallas, even the home of the Dallas Cowboy football team." The *kai*, then, would be practically an appositional *kai*. It would be called explicative or epexegetic by some. The point I would like to make is that the English word *even* has multiple usage also. In fact, I tend to think that this may account for renderings such as the "even" of the NIV.

The genuine and fairly common usage of *even* in the ascensive sense in Greek has been taken over into English and made an *even* in the rather rare explicative or appositional sense. Because the latter usage serves well the view that the term "the Israel of God" is the church, the dogmatic concern overcame grammatical usage. An extremely rare usage has been

made to replace the common usage, even in spite of the fact that the common and frequent usage of *and* makes perfectly good sense in Galatians 6:16.

There are other uses of *kai* such as an emphatic and an adversative use, but these uses are so rare that we may safely drop discussion of them.

Coming to the problem, the first interpretation referred to above, that in which the term "the Israel of God" is referred to the believing church, involves taking *kai* in an explicative sense and the rendering of it as *even*. There are compelling objections to this view. In the first place, this usage in the light of *kai* in all phases of the literature is proportionately very infrequent, as both G. B. Winer and Ellicott acknowledge. Ellicott contends that it is doubtful that Paul ever uses *kai* in "so marked an explicative sense. There is not anything in recent grammatical study and research that indicates otherwise.

Finally, if it were Paul's intention to identify the "them" of the text as "the Israel of God," then why not simply eliminate the *kai* after "mercy?" The result would be far more to the point if Paul were identifying the "them," that is, the church, with the term "Israel." The verse would be rendered then, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, upon the Israel of God." A case could be solidly made for the apposition of "the Israel of God" with "them," and the rendering of the NIV could stand. Paul, however, did not eliminate the *kai*.

These things make it highly unlikely that the first interpretation is to be preferred grammatically. Because both of the other suggested interpretations are not cumbered with these grammatical and syntactical difficulties, they are more likely views.

*Exegetical considerations.* Under this heading are covered matters of context, both general and special, and matters of usage, both Pauline and other.

We turn again to consider the first interpretation, namely, that the "them" refers to the present people of God, and the term "the Israel of God" is a further description of the "them." From the standpoint of biblical usage this view stands condemned. There is no instance in biblical literature of the term *Israel* being

An extremely rare usage has been made to replace the common usage, in Galatians 6:16.

used in the sense of the church, or the people of God as composed of both believing ethnic Jews and Gentiles. Nor, on the other hand, as one might expect if there were such usage, does the phrase *ta ethne* (KJV "the Gentiles") ever mean the non-Christian world specifically, but only the non-Jewish peoples, although such are generally non-Christians. Thus, the usage of the term Israel stands overwhelmingly opposed to the first view.

The usage of the terms Israel and *the church* in the early chapters of the book of Acts is in complete harmony, for Israel exists there alongside the newly formed church, and the two entities are kept separate in terminology.

Occasionally Romans 9:6 has been advanced in support of the view that Israel may include Gentiles. Paul writes, "For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel" (NASB). But that will not do, for Paul is here speaking only of a division within ethnic Israel. Some of them are believers and thus truly Israel, whereas others, though ethnically Israelites, are not truly Israel, since they are not elect and believing (cf. vv. 7-13). In the NASB rendering the words "who are descended from Israel" refer to the natural descendants of the patriarchs, from Abraham through Jacob, whereas the opening words, "they are not all Israel," limit the ideal sense of the term to the elect within the nation, the Isaacs and the Jacobs (cf. Rom. 4:12). No Gentiles are found in the statement at all.

A book of recent vintage is that of Hans K. LaRondelle, entitled *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation*. It launches a broad-scale attack on dispensational views and lectures dispensationalists for their hermeneutical lapses. In his treatment of Galatians 6:16, Professor LaRondelle, a Seventh Day Adventist, takes a number of unsupportable positions, as well as largely avoiding obvious difficulties with his scheme of things. He misunderstands the general context of Galatians to begin with, contending that it is written by Paul to reject "any different status or claim of the Jewish Christians beside or above that of gentile Christians before God." On the contrary, the apostle is concerned with correcting the gospel preached to the Galatians by the Judaizers, particularly their false contention that it was necessary to be circumcised to be saved and to observe as Christians certain require-

ments of the law of Moses in order to remain in divine favor (cf. Gal. 1:6-9; 2:1-3:29; 4:1-31; 5:1-4; 6:11-18). The apostle makes no attempt whatsoever to deny that there is a legitimate distinction of race between Gentile and Jewish believers in the church. His statement in Romans 11:5 should have warned Professor LaRondelle against this error. There is a remnant of Jewish believers in the church according to the election of grace. That the professor overlooked

Paul's careful language is seen in his equation of terms that differ. He correctly cites Paul's statement that "there is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ" (cf. Gal. 3:28) but then a couple of pages later modifies this to "there is neither Jew nor Greek within the Church" (italics mine), as if the terms Christ and *church* are identical. This approach fails to see that Paul does not say there is neither Jew nor Greek within the church. He speaks of those who are "in Christ." For LaRondelle, however, inasmuch as there is neither Jew nor Greek within the church and in Christ, there can

be no distinction between them in the church. But Paul also says there is neither male nor female, nor slave nor free man in Christ. Would he then deny sexual differences within the church? Or the social differences in Paul's day? Is it not plain that Paul is not speaking of national or ethnic difference in Christ, but of spiritual status? In that sense there is no difference in Christ.

Throughout LaRondelle's discussion of the text there is no acknowledgment, so far as I can find, of the fact that the term Israel is never found in the sense of the church. Is not that very relevant to the interpretation of Galatians 6:16?

Finally, to sum up his position, Professor LaRondelle affirms that since the church is the seed of Abraham and Israel is the seed of Abraham, the two entities, the church and Israel, are the same. The result is a textbook example of the fallacy of the undistributed middle.

*Theological considerations.* Peter Richardson has pointed out that there is no historical evidence that the term *Israel* was identified with the church before A.D. 160. Further, at that date there was no characterization of the church as "the Israel of God." In other words, for more than a century after Paul there was no evidence of the identification.

There is no instance in biblical literature of the term Israel being used in the sense of the church...

To conclude the discussion of the first interpretation, it seems clear that there is little evidence—grammatical, exegetical, or theological that supports it. On the other hand, there is sound historical evidence against the identification of *Israel* with believing or unbelieving Gentiles. The grammatical usage of *kai* is not favorable to the view, nor is the Pauline or New Testament usage of *Israel*. Finally, if D. W. B. Robinson's article is basically sound, the Pauline teaching in Galatians contains a recognition of national distinctions in the one people of God.

**VIEW TWO: "THE ISRAEL OF GOD" REFERS TO JEWISH BELIEVERS IN PAUL'S DAY.** Perhaps it would be appropriate to confine attention to Hans Dieter Betz, due to the widespread recognition of his excellent commentary. He treats verse 16 as a conditional blessing upon those who walk according to the rule of the new creation mentioned in verse 15, remarking also on its uniqueness in Pauline literature. After a discussion of the term "the Israel of God" Betz concludes amid some ambiguity that the sentence refers to a blessing on those who remain faithful Paulinists in the Galatian churches, including both those of Gentile extraction and believing ethnic Jews. His final comment is, "Thus, Paul extends the blessing beyond the Galatian Paulinists to those Jewish-Christians who approve of his *kanon* ('rule') in v 15".

*Grammatical and syntactical considerations.* In order not to prolong the discussion, and also since the final interpretation has many similarities with the second, just a few comments are in order. So far as I can tell, there are no grammatical, or syntactical, considerations that would be contrary to Betz's view. The common sense of *kai* as continuative, or copulative, is followed.

*Exegetical considerations.* Exegetically the view is sound, since "Israel" has its uniform Pauline ethnic sense. And further, the apostle achieves a very striking climactic conclusion. Drawing near the end of his "battle epistle" with its harsh and forceful attack on the Judaists and its omission of the customary words of thanksgiving, Paul tempers his language with a special blessing for those faithful believing Israelites who, understanding the grace of God and its exclusion of any human works as the ground of redemption, had not succumbed to the subtle blandishments of the deceptive Judaizers. They, not the false men from Jerusalem, are

"the Israel of God," or, as he calls them elsewhere, "the remnant according to the election of grace" (cf. Rom. 11:5).

*Theological considerations.* And theologically the view is sound in its maintenance of the two elements within the one people of God, Gentiles and ethnic Jews. Romans 11 spells out the details of the relationship between the two entities from Abraham's day to the present age and on to the fulfillment in the future of the great unconditional covenantal promises to the patriarchs.

**VIEW THREE: "THE ISRAEL OF GOD" REFERS TO THAT BODY OF ETHNIC ISRAEL WHO ARE SAVED AT THE MESSIAH'S RETURN.** *Exegetical considerations.* The third view of "the Israel of God," namely, that the term is eschatological in force and refers to the "all Israel" of Romans 11:26, is an extension of the previous interpretation. It, too, takes the term "the Israel of God" to refer to ethnic Israel but locates their blessing in the future. Their salvation was a great concern of Paul, as his ministry attests cf. Rom. 9:3-5; 10:1). An impressive array of contemporary interpreters hold this view, although with some minor variations.

Because Peter Richardson, largely following Burton, has discussed the matter at some length, his views will be emphasized. Seeking to overthrow the common misconception that "the Israel of God" refers to the church composed of both believing Gentiles and believing Jews, he makes the following points: First, the unique order of peace and mercy, probably suggested by Jewish benedictions, particularly Benediction xix of the *Shemoneh Esreh* (Babylonian recension), may be significant. The prayer has the order of peace and then mercy in it, followed by a reference to "us and all Israel." Other Old Testament passages, such as Psalm 124:5 (=127:6), offer more general parallels. In such places "Israel" is used ethnically and, if there is Pauline dependence on them, he probably used the term ethnically.

Second, the strange order of peace and mercy suggests, as Burton contended, a repunctuation of the text as commonly edited. A comma should be placed after "them," and the comma after "mercy" found in many English versions and in editions of the Greek text should be eliminated. The text may then be rendered, *And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon*

...there is sound historical evidence against the identification of Israel with believing or unbelieving Gentiles.

them, and mercy also upon the Israel of God (or peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God).

Third, Richardson suggests that the future tense in "shall walk" may carry, by analogy, its future idea over into the benediction regarding mercy. In other words, it may point to Israel's future belief. This seems questionable to me.

Fourth, "the Israel of God" is a part of the whole Israel (cf. Rom. 9:6). Fifth, the *kai* is only slightly ascriptive, forestalling any inference that Paul in Galatians is condemning everything about Israel. Richardson thinks the presence of the *kai* is important and argues strongly against the view that the church is the Israel of God. If it were omitted, then that view would be strengthened, but its acknowledged presence is a major signpost pointing in another interpretive direction.

Sixth, just as Mussner, Bruce, and others, Richardson sees the expression as a reference to a hoped-for future conversion of ethnic Israel, a view that Paul expounds in detail in the great theodicy of Romans 9-11.

Mussner's identification of the phrase with Paul's "all Israel" of Romans 11:26 is in harmony with Richardson. Thus also Bruce, who concludes his discussion with, "The invocation of blessing on the Israel of God has probably an eschatological perspective."

*Evaluative summary.* Grammatically and syntactically this last option is sound, whether we adopt Burton's repunctuation of the text or not. There may exist some question regarding the exegetical aptness of the eschatological perspective. That certainly has not been one of the major emphases of the Galatian epistle as a whole, but in the immediate context it is very appropriate psychologically, providing a note of hope and expectation after a stern and severe admonition. And, further, the Abrahamic covenant and its benefits have been constantly before the readers, and the whole of the Old Testament as well as previous New Testament revelation testifies to its glorious future consummation. Heirship of Abrahamic covenant blessing and the kingdom of God, mentioned just a few lines previously (cf. 5:21), fit in well with an eschatological note.

Theologically the view harmonizes with the important Pauline teaching that there are two kinds of Israelites, a believing one and an unbelieving one. The teaching is plainly set out in such passages as Romans 2:28-29; 4:11-12; 9:6; and 11:1-36. Galatians 6:16 forms another link in the apostle's teaching.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

### Reflections On Contemporary Exegetical Methodology

It is not uncommon in our evangelical seminaries to hear exegetes criticize the systematic theologians for the tendency to approach the biblical text with dogmatic presuppositions that predetermine exegetical conclusions. Some of this criticism is justified, I will admit. Theologians do not come to the text without their presuppositions. The measure of the good theologian, such as a Calvin, an Owen, a Hodge, a Warfield, a Murray, and a Berkower is the skill with which one recognizes them, handles them, and avoids their dominion over us.

What is not as common as it should be in our schools, however, is the recognition of the fact that exegetes are exposed to the same perils and at least as often succumb to them. Presuppositionless exegesis is an illusive mirage, and exegesis is finest when it acknowledges the fact and seeks to guard against it. Exegetes frequently are as guilty of false methodology as that financial writer whose logic and unsound premises the *London Economist* once neatly impaled by commenting that he was "proceeding from an unwarranted assumption to a foregone conclusion."

**Presuppositionless exegesis is an illusive mirage, and exegesis is finest when it... seeks to guard against it.**

The present study illustrates this. If there is an interpretation that totters on a tenuous foundation, it is the view that Paul equates the term "the Israel of God" with the believing church of Jews and Gentiles.

To support it, the general usage of the term *Israel* in Paul, in the New Testament, and in the Scriptures as a whole is ignored. The grammatical and syntactical usage of the conjunction *kai* is strained and distorted and the rare and uncommon sense accepted when the usual sense is unsatisfactory only because it does not harmonize with the presuppositions of the exegete. And to compound matters, in the special context of Galatians and the general context of the Pauline teach-





## Amillennialism and Revelation 20:4, 6-7

Dan Hillard

I grew up in strong pre-tribulation, pre-millennial independent Baptist churches. While I was in Bible College, I heard about amillennialism and I began investigating the claims of those who held the a-millennial position. It was then I learned how heavily the a-millennial position relies on the spiritualization of Scripture.

I suppose, you can spiritualize Israel into the church, if you believe in a universal invisible church. You can spiritualize Israel to apply to all the saints if you believe in a local visible church. However, there was one thing I could not spiritualize. I could not spiritualize numbers. I asked myself, how could a thousand years be anything less or more than 1,000?

In this paper, I will consider Revelation 20:4 and 6-7 where the number one thousand appears. There is one question: is one thousand an approximate number or an exact number? I want to explore that question in two areas, the context and the hermeneutical implications.

The Greek word *chilioi* appears ten times in the New Testament. The first appearance is in 2 Peter 3:8. There Peter quotes from Psalm 90:4. Therefore, I will deal with 2 Peter 3:8 under the heading of interpreting poetic literature. Nine of the times are in Revelation and six of the nine are in Revelation chapter 20.

### Hermeneutical Implications

The scope of this paper does not allow the examination of all the uses of the word thousand in the Old Testament. Most of the uses are literal numbers giving details of population, the value of money and the number of soldiers in the army. There are two passages in the Psalms 50:10 and 90:4 that I want to mention. Psalm 50:10 tells us God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. The Apostle Peter quotes Psalm 90:4, a verse from poetry, and uses it in a prophetic passage. Robert Stein states,

The use of poetry in ancient times, as in our own, indicates that the writer is less concerned with precise description or scientific accuracy than with evoking emotions and creating certain impres-

sions...Physicians do not use poetry to describe their patients' medical problems, but lovers do when they seek to express their love for each other. The biblical poets and songwriters frequently used this form in their praise and adoration of God. When they did so, however, they anticipated their readers would interpret what they wrote according to the rules governing such poetry.<sup>1</sup>

If God owns the cattle on only a thousand hills, then which cattle on which hills does he own? This verse is not telling us about animal husbandry or topography. It is telling us that God knows all the animals that could be used for sacrifices to God or food for Him. But, wait! God does not need to eat. It is obvious that in this verse "thousand" is used figuratively for all the hills in Israel and in the world. It is poetry.

Psalm 90:4 is non-strict comparison of time. The context of this verse illustrates the infinity of God compared to the finiteness of man. Man is dust and grass compared to God. In Psalm 50 and 90, there is no reason to take the word "thousand" as literal.

This is the normal understanding of the words in poetry. Next, I want to consider the hermeneutical interpretation of numbers in prophetic and apocalyptic language. "The former is usually associated with 'this'—worldly events, whereas the latter is associated with 'other'—worldly events".<sup>2</sup> Prophetic languages can be figurative and symbolic. What about numbers in Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation the apocalyptic books<sup>3</sup> of the Bible? In the book of Revelation, there are 7 seals, trumpets, and bowls, 144,000 Israelites, 42 months, 1,260 days, 3 ½ years. Are these literal, figurative, or symbolic numbers? There are 4 angels, then 7 angels, and 2 witnesses. Do these simply mean small numbers and a thousand means a large indefinite time? "Neopostmillennianists also tend to take numbers in Revelation symbolically. For instance, Chilton writes

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that 1,000 years in [Revelation] 20:4–6 means “a large, rounded number ... standing for manyness”;<sup>4</sup> “Figurative language is present if the statement taken in its normal sense would be impossible or illogical”.<sup>5</sup> Do we confuse 1000 for representing “manyness” only because it is a round number? If God had planned a 973-year reign, few would question literalness. There is nothing impossible or illogical about the prospect of Jesus reigning for a thousand years on the earth.

### Contextual Implications

John uses the words “and I saw” to indicate major steps in the progress of events. In Revelation 19 – 21 the phrase “and I saw” appear ten times. The immediate context begins with John declaring, “And I saw,” five times in Revelation 20:1 – 15. In the specific verse, we are considering John says it twice. Using a flow chart of three columns, subject, verb, and direct object, to diagram verse 4, you can see the entire verse is the object of *kai eidon*, “and I saw.”

**It is important to follow the chronological sequence of events to understand properly Revelation 20.**

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Direct Object</u>
1. And I	saw	thrones
2.		and they sat on them,
3.		and a judgment was given them,
4.		and the souls of those beheaded
5.		for the testimony of Jesus
6.		and for the word of God
7.		and such as did not worship the Beast
8.		nor his image
9.		and did not receive the mark
10.		on the forehead
11.		and on their hand;
12.		and they lived
13.		and reigned
14.		with Christ
15.		a thousand years.

In other words, John first indicates *whom he saw*, followed by *who they are*, and finally *what they did*. The reader could move from the *whom he saw* statement, directly to the *what they did* statement without questioning that something is missing. “And I saw thrones and they that sat upon them ... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4a ... 20:4h.).

“The reader could move directly from the first three lines of the flow chart to the last four without being aware of anything missing”.<sup>6</sup> The emphasis is on sitting on thrones and reigning for a thousand years. The context of this passage shows movement. The word “when” (*hotan*) tells us that Satan will not be loosed until the thousand years are finished. When *hotan* is used with the aorist subjunctive when the action of the subordinate clause precedes that of the main clause it means “when, whenever”.<sup>7</sup> A specific time or event is meant.

“In Revelation 20 we are told that Satan is bound before the Millennium, loosed after the Millennium, then, cast into the lake of fire. These are three distinct acts. To confuse them is to misunderstand the entire passage. It is important to follow the chronological sequence of events to understand properly Revelation 20”.<sup>8</sup> According to Walvoord:

It is most important to observe that while the thousand years are mentioned in verses 4 and 5 in the vision of John, they are also mentioned in verse 6 in the interpretation. The expositor is not free to spiritualize the interpretation of the vision but must accept the interpretation in its ordinary and literal meaning. If this is done, there is no other alternative than the premillennial interpretation, which holds that at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound for a thousand years.<sup>9</sup>

Satan will be bound and Jesus will rule and reign for a thousand years.

There are numerous flawed interpretations of the Apostle John’s vision in Revelation 20. For example, I do not agree with those who say, “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and just as He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, so the history of the world would cover 6000 years, and then there would follow 1000 years of rest.” If this were true, I reverently say, “God is late.” That argument, and others like it, relies on interpretations of the meaning of 1000 years that are inadequate in light of both hermeneutical and contextual examination of the passage. I do not believe that this passage has been fulfilled by the Domitianic persecution as suggested by Summers in *Worthy is the Lamb*, a book on Revelation. I do not believe that the Apostle John borrowed his incarceration of Satan, and his millennium of

peace from the current thought among non-Christian Jews and from what is found in Zoroastrianism. The Bible is inspired and the Holy Spirit gave the Apostle John these words and visions.

In this article, I have shown that hermeneutically the number thousand can be interpreted figuratively in poetic language. However, when you are reading proph-

ecy there is no reason to assume that numbers are figurative. I have zeroed in on a very small part of the eschatology debate. Revelation 20:4, 6 – 7 is a very small part of the eschatology debate, however it does show that Jesus will rule and reign on the earth some day for 1000 years. Numbers must be taken literally in the Bible when the normal sense is the common sense. ✪

#### END NOTES

1. Robert H. Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 102.
2. *Ibid.*, 89
3. Apocalyptic literature has five characteristics: (1) Given in times of exile or Gentile oppression, (2) it consists of prophecies given in elaborate visions, (3) it includes many symbols, (4) an angel is often seen in the visions and frequently gave interpretations, and (5) it includes messages regarding the distant future. Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*. Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 1991), 243.
4. *Ibid.*, 245
5. *Ibid.*, 244
6. J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 90 – 92.
7. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 588.
8. Theodore Epp, *Practical Studies in Revelation*. (Lincoln: Back to the Bible Broadcast, 1966), 359
9. John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 293.

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It is indeed a splendid roll of honors, recited over this race "separate among the nations," a race which today [1928] as much as ever remains the enigma of history, to be solved only by Revelation. "The Jews, your Masters," was the reply of Frederick the Great's old believing courtier, when asked with a smile for the credentials of the Bible; the short answer silenced the Encyclopaedist King. It is indeed a riddle, made of indissoluble facts, this people everywhere dispersed, yet every where individual, scribes of a Book which has profoundly influenced mankind, and which is recognized by the most various races as an august and lawful claimant to be divine, yet themselves, in so many aspects, provincial to the heart; historians of their own glories, but at least equally of their own unworthiness and disgrace; transmitters of predictions which may be slighted, but can never, as a whole, be explained away, yet obstinate deniers of the majestic fulfillment in the Lord of Christ, ending human in every fault and imperfection, yet so concerned in bringing to man the message of the Divine that Jesus Himself said of them (John 4:22), "Salvation comes from the Jews." On this wonderful race, this its most illustrious member (after his Lord) here fixes his eyes, full of tears. He sees their glories pass before him—and then realizes the spiritual squalor and misery of their rejection of the Christ of God. He groans, and in real agony asks how it can be. One thing only cannot be: the promises have not failed, there has been no failure in the Promiser. What may seem such is rather man's mistaking of the promise.

(H.C.G. Moule, *Epochs in our Romanes* 9:5, p. 248-9)

## Ammillennialist Proof Texts for the Binding of Satan

Leon King



**Luke 10:18; John 12:31; 16:11**

Amillennialists believe that Satan was bound at the cross. Clearly, some of them believe that he is now bound and in the bottomless pit. The idea of Satan's being bound and cast into the bottomless pit is found in Revelation 20:1-3.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

It appears to this writer that those who hold the Amillennialist view appeal to the following three verses to prove the point that Satan is now bound.

- Luke 10:18 "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."
- John 12:31 "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."
- John 16:11 "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Therefore, according to their view, the saints are not now actively opposed by him. If he were in the bottomless pit, bound that he should not deceive the nations, he could not oppose them in any sense. These three passages—Luke 10:18; John 12:31 and 16:11—are used as proof texts that Satan has been cast out. An article by one Amillennialist represented Satan on a *leash* since the cross. Actually, Satan has always been on a *leash* under the hand of the Sovereign God as he was in the days of Job. Satan was the agent in the awful troubles of Job, but God obviously restricted Satan's activities with Job. God told him what he *could do* and what

he *could not do*. Job recognized that it was ultimately in the hand of the Almighty, for he said: ". . . What? shall we receive good at the *hand of God*, and shall we not receive evil? . . ." (Job 2:10).

The question is: "Do these verses prove, in any sense, that Satan is presently bound and shut up in the bottomless pit?" Let us see.

- Luke 10:18 "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."
- Jesus uttered these words to the seventy after they had returned from the work which Jesus had sent them to do (Luke 10:1). The verb beheld is in the imperfect tense which means the thing usually occurred in the past and was a continuing action. We could say it this way: "I was beholding Satan . . ." From this we are led to believe that our Lord was speaking of the work of the seventy as the devils (demons) were subject to them through the name of Jesus. There is nothing in this verse to indicate that Satan was bound at the cross. The cross was yet future.
- John 12:31 "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

Jesus is speaking of a future event. Undoubtedly the term "prince of this world" speaks of Satan. The adverb *now* is used twice and means "at this time" or "henceforth." It is certain that the general context is of his death for he spoke of his glorification (12:23)—of the corn of wheat dying (12:24)—and this hour (12:27). So what does it mean that the prince of this world be cast out? Does that indicate that Satan would be bound and sent to the bottomless pit at the cross? Was it not that the children of God were delivered from His bondage—and in that sense was cast out? Yes it was—yet we are still bidden to resist Satan steadfast in the faith.

- Hebrews 2:14-15 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

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- John 16:11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

In connection with Jesus' promise of the comforter, the Holy Ghost, Jesus makes this statement to the disciples. The Holy Ghost would reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . . (12:8). This verse undoubtedly refers to Satan as the prince of this world. The verb "is judged" is in the perfect tense. The perfect tense in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated. The Holy Ghost came as a comforter to the disciples—but a reproof to the condemned world. Satan stood as one judged already and was still judged—and shall yet experientially experience his perdition. That did not occur at the cross, nor does this verse give the Amillennialist proof of it.

**Our Lord defeated him at the cross, but Satan's binding and casting into the bottomless pit...is yet future.**

Satan –

- Filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:3).
- Moved Bar-jesus, a child of the devil, to pervert the ways of the Lord (Acts 13:10).
- Did not suffer the crushing of his head under the feet of the saints at the cross, for that is yet future (Rom. 16:20).
- Destroys the flesh of church members disciplined by the church (1Co. 5:5).
- Is the god of this age who is blinding the eyes of unbelievers. (2Co. 4:3-4).
- Masquerades as an angel of light (2Co. 11:14).
- Buffeted Paul by a thorn in his flesh,—and undoubtedly does others (2Co. 12:7).
- Is the "...prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:2).
- Has wiles (tricks, deceptions, etc) against believers who are to stand against them in the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11).
- Counterfeits miracles & signs deceiving those who are perishing (2 Th. 2:9-12).
- Hindered Paul and his companions (2Th. 2:18).
  - Is the object to whom some unmarried younger women turned (1Ti. 5:15).
  - Ensnares and takes captive some at his will (2Ti. 2:16).
  - Is to be resisted by the saints, therefore he is not presently bound (Jas. 4:7).
  - Is to be resisted by God's children, steadfast in the faith, for he goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. (1Pe. 5:8-9).

We ought to consider what is true of Satan in this present age according to the whole tenor of the Scriptures—all of which are

absolute proof that Satan is not presently bound and in the bottomless pit. He is a defeated foe. Without question, our Lord defeated him at the cross, but Satan's binding and casting into the bottomless pit and his being barred from deceiving the nations is yet future. His casting into the lake of fire, where both the Beast and the False Prophet shall have been burning for a thousand years is likewise in the future. The writer has not addressed the many passages on this subject from the book of Revelation—which Amillennialists claim has all been fulfilled. ✪

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## An Exposition of Romans 2:28-29

Royce Smith



Romans 2:28, 29 declares, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Does this passage teach that Gentiles become Jews when they are born again? Some *amillennialists*, like William E. Cox in his *Biblical Studies in Final Things* p.70, think so. In *Replacement Theology* the church takes the place of Israel. Since Israel broke the old, Mosaic Covenant, God is said to have rejected them and replaced them with the church, consisting of both Jewish and Gentile believers, under a New Covenant. Of course, to prove their views, our amillennial brethren must appeal to and interpret Scriptures to confirm this belief. Among the various Scriptures they use in an attempt to prove their premises is Romans 2:28, 29. My task is to expound this passage to see if the interpretation certain *amill* (I will use this term for brevity's sake) brethren give it is valid.

### The Context

Every passage of Scripture must be interpreted in light of the context in which it is found. We dare not use *eisegesis*—reading into the passage what is not there—but *exegesis* which reads out of the passage only that which is found therein. In his *Epistle to the Romans*, the Apostle Paul nowhere declares or implies that Gentile believers have become Jews. The distinction between Jews and Gentiles is maintained throughout this epistle. If in fact Gentiles became Jews when they believed in Christ, there would have been no reason to maintain the distinction between them. Consider just a few of the passages in which the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is emphasized. Paul was ready to preach the gospel to all in Rome: to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile (Rom. 1:15, 16). He reproves the Jews for resting in the law and making their boast of God while blaspheming the name of God among the

Gentiles by breaking the law (Rom. 2:17-24). Then Paul asserted, "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?" (Rom. 2:25-27). *Circumcision* is here put for the Jews, and *uncircumcision* is put for the Gentiles. The explanatory *for*, which begins the 28<sup>th</sup> verse, links the thoughts thusly: one may be circumcised and called a Jew, but he is not a true Jew on that basis alone, for a true Jew is not one only on external or fleshly grounds, but on internal or spiritual grounds. The distinction between Jews and Gentiles is continued into Romans 3 without any indication that Gentiles become Jews because of the inward circumcision of the heart or giving of a new nature in the new birth. (Cf. Rom. 3:1, 9, 29.)

### Companion Texts

Several passages of Scripture affirm there is no spiritual difference between Jewish and Gentile believers. We shall consider three of these passages. Romans 10:12 proclaims, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Despite there being no difference as specified in this text, they nevertheless are still referred to as Jew and Gentile. Galatians 3:26-28 declares "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Clearly, Gentiles do not become Jews when they believe any more than a bondman becomes a free-man or a female becomes a male or *visa versa*. These distinctions may not exist in their standing in relation to Christ, but they do persist in their individual identities. Elsewhere Paul contends that Christ has made in himself of the two—Jews and Gentiles—*one new man* (Eph. 2:15). Thus, the believing Gentile is not and never has been made into a spiritual Jew. Rather both Jews and Gentiles have become a new man in Christ.

Royce Smith has pastored Bethel Baptist Church in Choctaw, Oklahoma for 20 years. He is the author of a widely circulated tract, *The Christian and Cremation*.

### The Text Itself

We are ready now to examine Rom. 2:28, 29. What the Apostle teaches here is in complete harmony with what is taught about the spiritual nature or circumcision of the heart of a true Jew in the Old Testament. "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" Deut. 30:6. (Cf. Jer. 4:4; 9:25, 26.) By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul defines who a Jew really is both negatively and positively. First, one is not a true Jew just because he is a natural descendant of Abraham through Jacob and has been circumcised in the flesh on the eighth day of his life. Neither is true circumcision just an outward cutting in the flesh. Beyond the physical is the spiritual. Secondly, a true Jew—not one born a Gentile but a Jew—is one inwardly and spiritually. The true Jew is like Paul himself: he has been changed inwardly to conform to God's purpose for Israel by a

circumcision of the heart by the Spirit of God in the new birth. He is what some call a *completed Jew*. He no longer boasts in the law, for he knows he has not been justified by the law but by the grace of God (Rom. 3:24). Consequently, the praise he receives is not from men but of God (John 12:43).

But to suggest this text is implying that the true Jew can be a Gentile who has been renewed inwardly and circumcised in the heart is missing the point and reading into the Scripture something which is not there. This passage does not hint, imply, suggest, or declare that one born a Gentile by nature is a Jew because he has been renewed inwardly by a work of the Spirit of God and circumcised in heart in which his old nature is cut away and a new nature given to him. Consequently, this passage falls far short of teaching that all believing Gentiles have become true Jews, as some amillennialists contend. ✪



(Johnson: continued from page 8)

ing, especially as highlighted in Romans 11, Paul's primary passages on God's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles, are downplayed. If, as LaRondelle asserts, "Paul's benediction in Galatians 6:16 becomes, then, the chief witness in the New Testament in declaring that the universal church of Christ is the Israel of God, the seed of Abraham, the heir to Israel's covenant promise (cf. Gal. 3:29; 6:16), then the doctrine that the church of Gentiles and Jews is *the* Israel of God rests on an illusion. It is a classic case of tendentious exegesis.

### Reflections On Logical Failure

This is hardly the place to enlarge upon this theme. It has been done well elsewhere. Nevertheless I think it is permissible to suggest that exegetes seem particularly prone today to logical fallacies. The case of the undistributed middle, mentioned earlier, underlines the importance of clear thinking in exegetical discussion.

### Reflections On Contemporary Theological Positions

A certain rigidity in evangelical eschatological debate emerges again in the discussion of Galatians 6:16. For

example, amillennialists seem to strongly desire to equate "the Israel of God" with the church. Some amillennialists, however, think an ethnic future for Israel is compatible with their system. An example of this is found in the fine work of Anthony A. Hoekema on eschatology. He grants that an ethnic future for Israel would with certain strictures be compatible with his amillennial views, but he argues strongly against such an interpretation.

Why, then, are amillennialists so opposed generally to an ethnic future for Israel? That is not an easy question to answer. It may be perfectly conceivable that an amillennialist would grant that an ethnic future for Israel at the Lord's return could be fitted into his system. But if such a normal interpretation of the language of the Old Testament is followed in this instance, it is difficult to see how one can then escape the seemingly plain teaching of the many Old Testament prophecies that the nation of Israel shall enjoy a preeminence in certain respects over the Gentiles in the kingdom that follows our Lord's advent (cf. Isa. 60:1-4; 62:1-12; Mic. 4:1-5; Hag. 2:1-7; Zech. 14:16-21, etc.).

On the other hand, the case for premillennialism does not rest on the reference of the term "the Israel of God"

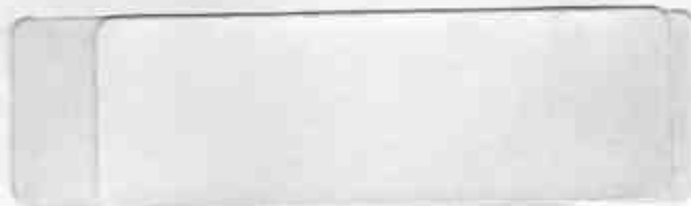
(Continued on page 16)

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*(Johnson: continued from page 15)*

to ethnic redeemed Israel here. Its case against the exegetical practice of the spiritualization of the Scriptures would be weakened a bit, but premillennialism's support in the history of the church's eschatological interpretation, in the use of the grammatico-historico-theological method of exegesis, and in the interpretation of Scripture by the prophets and the apostles would still stand firm.

Let the church, then, seek to avoid the practice of rigidly tendentiously defending its systems. Let us listen

to the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures, and then let us freely and forcibly proclaim what we are taught. After all, His system—and there is such—is the best one. ✪ From *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*. 1986. Moody Press.

Editorial Note: The footnotes (which are quite extensive) have been eliminated from this article to save space. The reader may consult the book for them.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Romans 11:26-29



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Dispensationalism

### Inside This Edition

- ◆ Dispensationalism Wrongly Divides God's Word, *Laurence A. Justice* ..... p. 3
- ◆ Spurgeon Quotes, *Charles H. Spurgeon* ..... p. 7
- ◆ Dispensationalism, *Arthur W. Pink* ..... p. 8
- ◆ Dispensationalism and the Law of God, *Arthur W. Pink* ..... p.10
- ◆ Book Review, *Craig Blaising* ..... p.12
- ◆ A Preacher Without a Bible, *Vance Havner* ..... p.14

**"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."**

**"...the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem..."**

## Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

## The Reign of Christ on Earth

It is sometimes asserted that these predictions of the future glory of the Messiah, are to be figuratively interpreted; but it is well for us to be cautious how we invoke the aid of fancy and allegory to evade the conclusions enforced by the plain statements of Scripture. Quite probably the Jewish Rabbis held that the prediction that Christ was to be born of a virgin was allegorical. Unquestionably they regarded the prophecies of his sorrows, his rejection, and his suffering, as couched in "highly figurative language." They could believe the predictions of his glory, but they could not accept those which foretold his sorrows and his shame. Doubtless they may have had plausible theories and reasonable conjectures, which may have commanded the assent and respect of their followers; but when in the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son to accomplish all that he had spoken it speedily became evident that he had no need of their figures, fancies, or theories to accomplish the fulfillment of his own word. And if in opening to his disciple the Scriptures, and expounding unto them all things in the Law and in the Prophets and in the Psalms, concerning himself, he demonstrated his Messiahship by the accuracy with which every prediction was fulfilled: if his birth of the virgin,

his nativity in Bethlehem, his ministry and work, were all foretold; if prophecy was fulfilled by the beast that carried him, by the nation that rejected him, by the disciple that betrayed him, by the price of his betrayal, by the nails that pierced his hands; by his death, and burial, and resurrection, and ascension;--if in all these instances God fulfilled his word with the utmost literality and precision, by what rule shall we, when we read the words of those same prophets concerning his future glory, refuse to accept them as precise and unquestionable statements of things which must shortly come to pass? If the prophecies of his shame were literally fulfilled, shall the predictions of his glory be cast aside as vague and shadowy? If the cross on which he hung was a reality, shall the throne which he shall inherit be a figure of speech? If the sufferings which he endured were real, shall the glory which is to follow be an empty vision or an idle dream? Surely if any portion of the prophecy were to be figuratively expounded, it should be that portion which told of the shame, and sorrow, and suffering of the Son of God. If we can believe that God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," we can believe anything which God has promised to do for Him or for us. ✪ Daniel T. Taylor, 1882.

### How Does the PBJ Survive?

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## Dispensationalism Wrongly Divides God's Word

Laurence A. Justice

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Timothy 2:15

The eschatological system that dominates modern fundamentalism and even modern evangelicalism is something called dispensationalism. Those who hold this view are called dispensationalists. Dispensationalists take II Timothy 2:15 to mean that God's word is to be sharply divided into compartments called dispensations. To them, correctly interpreting the Bible means correctly dividing these dispensations from each other.

In this message we shall consider this thing called dispensationalism and try to come to some understanding of its meaning, its history and its errors. In seeking to accomplish this I shall ask and try to answer three basic questions about dispensationalism.

### What Is Dispensationalism?

It is somewhat difficult to clearly define it because even dispensationalists themselves define it differently. Dispensationalism is a unique eschatology but it is not just an eschatology. It is a whole system of theology that touches every major doctrine in the word of God. Dispensationalism is a theological system adhered to by many sincere and godly Christians. I have personally known many wonderful and godly Christians who claimed to be dispensationalists.

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language defines dispensationalism as "the interpreting of history as a series of divine dispensations." Dispensationalists divide history into seven arbitrary periods of time which they call dispensations. These dispensations are listed on page 5 of the Scofield Reference Bible as follows:

1. The dispensation of "Innocency" from Eden to the fall.
2. The dispensation of conscience from the fall to the flood.
3. The dispensation of human government from the flood to the call of Abraham.

4. The dispensation of promise from the call of Abraham to the giving of the law at Sinai.
5. The dispensation of law from the giving of the law at Sinai through most of the ministry of Christ.
6. The dispensation of grace from the closing days of Christ's ministry to his second coming. This is also called the church age.
7. Finally there is the dispensation of the kingdom. This is the millennium, the 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth which lasts from Christ's second coming to the end of the 1,000 years.

A footnote on page 5 of the Scofield Reference Bible says, "A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God." These dispensations are said to be distinct, mutually exclusive and even opposed to each other in what they involve. God has supposedly dealt differently with men in each of these different eras. Each dispensation represents a different principle in God's dealings with men and man is tested in each dispensation by the governing principle God assigns to that dispensation. In each succeeding dispensation there is a radical change of character and governing principle so that God deals with man on a plan different from that of any preceding dispensation. In each dispensation man has failed the test and each has ended in moral bankruptcy and a judgment. Dispensationalists say that the purpose of these dispensations is to show that sinful men will fail when they try to save themselves by the particular provisions of each dispensation.

### What Is the History Of Dispensationalism?

Dispensationalism is of fairly recent origin. Dispensationalists often give the impression that dispensationalism was believed and taught all the way back to Christ. The truth is that dispensationalism is not to be found in history till 1830 AD.

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It began with the Plymouth Brethren movement that came out of the Church of England in 1827. Dispensationalism began under the thinking and leadership of a man named John Nelson Darby who lived from 1800 to 1882. For this reason dispensationalism is sometimes called Darbyism. Before Darby there was no dispensationalism as it is defined by its leaders today.

The first record of dispensationalism in the United States is in 1864-1865 when J.N. Darby visited this country twice. He preached in the Sixteenth & Walnut Presbyterian Church of St. Louis where James H. Brookes was pastor. Brookes was an avid student of Darby and dispensationalism and his church soon became the center of dispensationalism in America. Because of his championing of and promulgation of this theological system Brookes has been called the father of dispensationalism in the U.S.

Brookes' best-known student was an attorney named C.I. Scofield who lived from 1843-1921. Scofield was converted under Brookes' ministry and he quickly and completely imbibed the dispensational system and began to publish it widely. Scofield wrote a little booklet to which he gave the title "Rightly Dividing The Word of Truth." In this booklet Scofield used II Timothy 2:15 to explain and promote dispensational doctrine. In time Scofield became the pastor of a Congregationalist church in Dallas, Texas.

In 1909 he published the world famous Scofield Reference Bible complete with copious footnotes in which he explained and promoted dispensationalism. This Bible probably did more than any other single thing to spread the ideas of dispensationalism around this country and around the world. Many years later in 1967 the New Scofield Reference Bible was published. This was a revision of the original Scofield Reference Bible which attempted to answer several criticisms of dispensationalism that had arisen over the years. Such was the personal influence and leadership of C.I. Scofield in spreading dispensationalism that dispensationalism in its classic form is often referred to as *Scofieldism*.

Another man who has played a huge part in popularizing dispensationalism is a Baptist preacher named Clarence Larkin. Larkin lived from 1850-1924 and was pastor of an American Baptist church in Fox

Chase, Pennsylvania for 20 years. In 1918 Larkin published a book of dispensational charts, the name of which is "Dispensational Truth." Most every conservative pastor in today's older generation either owns or has seen this book and has studied these charts.

C.I. Scofield was mentor to Lewis Sperry Chafer who lived from 1871-1952. In 1924 Dallas Theological Seminary was formed and Chafer was its first President. The major emphasis of this school was on dispensationalism and today it remains the great center of dispensationalism in America. To sum up this brief history of dispensationalism in the U.S., dispensationalism was passed on from Darby to Brookes, from Brookes to Scofield, from Scofield to Chafer and from Chafer to Dallas Theological Seminary.

Some well-known modern and contemporary dispensationalists include men like H.A. Ironside, M.R. DeHaan, Charles Ryrie, J. Dwight Pentecost, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsey and W.A. Criswell. Modern fundamentalism is the stronghold of dispensationalism and the leading schools that champion this system are the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and the Dallas Theological Seminary. Today dispensationalism is in a state of increasing tension and is breaking up into several smaller groups, one of which is called *progressive dispensationalism*.

While we are thinking about the history of dispensationalism it is important that we deal with the relationship of dispensationalism to premillennialism. The enemies of premillennialism love to equate premillennialism with dispensationalism but this is a misrepresentation of the facts. In truth, dispensationalism is to be distinguished from premillennialism. To be a premillennialist is not necessarily the same as being a dispensationalist. While it is true that all dispensationalists are premillennial, it is not true that all premillennialists are dispensationalists.

Premillennialists or millenarians or Chiliasts as they were once known have existed from the time of the apostles, but dispensationalism came into existence in about 1830 AD. Premillennialism is the most ancient view of eschatology in Christianity. Philip Schaff points out that such early Christians as Justin Martyr, Hermas, Papias and Irenaeus have left writings that show that they were premillennial in their eschatology.

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It was not until Augustine in the fourth century that other views of eschatology began to arise and spread. Augustine broke with the prevailing beliefs and teachings of his day and founded the system that later became the eschatology of the Roman Church. According to Gordon Dane in an article in *Watching & Waiting* magazine for Oct/Dec 2009, the title of which is "Premillennial Protestantism," the Albigenses and Waldensians during the middle ages were premillennial in their view of eschatology. Some well known premillennarians who were not dispensationalists include Benjamin Keach, John Gill, Charles Spurgeon and Horatius Bonar. The millenarianism of these and other of the older theologians was inconsistent with dispensationalism.

Today dispensationalism has become so dominant in Christianity that we might properly say that dispensationalism has hijacked premillennialism until many non premillennarians conclude (wrongly) that premillennialism *is* dispensationalism and vice versa. There are many things upon which premillennarians agree with dispensationalists but the serious things on which they disagree must not be ignored!

### What Are Some Errors Of Dispensationalism?

There are many very serious errors in dispensationalism! I want us to briefly consider just six of them here. Its first error is in *dividing up God's word*. They cut up the Bible. This is a serious error because there is no scripture to support the dividing of history into seven dispensations. There is no scriptural evidence whatsoever that there are seven dispensations in God's plan for history. Scofield says that a dispensation is a period of time but the word dispensation, which is from the Greek word *oikonomia*, never means this in God's word. The word is used in I Corinthians 9:17 and Colossians 1:25 and in these cases it obviously means a trusteeship or stewardship of something. In I Corinthians 9:17 Paul says, "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me." Again Paul says in Colossians 1:25, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God." W.E. Vine in *Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament words* says, "A dispensation is not a period of time or epoch but a mode of dealing, an arrangement or administration of affairs."

**There is no scriptural evidence whatsoever that there are seven dispensations in God's plan for history.**

God's word is not "rightly divided" by separating its parts into different dispensations! God's word cannot be split up into contradictory parts, much less into seven mutually exclusive dispensations!

It is significant that the titles of five of these dispensations actually characterize every age of human history: conscience, human government, promise, law and grace. Conscience existed before the so-called dispensation of conscience and it existed after it and still does today.

Dispensationalists like C. I. Scofield say that the Sermon on the Mount and most of the gospels belong to the kingdom dispensation and not to us in the so-called church age today. On page 1000 of the Scofield Reference Bible is this note: "The Sermon on the Mount in its primary application gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the Church." But the Lord Jesus said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" That's Luke 6:46. He also says in John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me..." Their dividing God's word like this soon leads to great confusion on the part of the earnest student of God's word.

A second serious error of dispensationalism is *its denial that God's law is for Christians in this present age*. The negation of the moral law of God is found throughout their writings. The Scofield Reference Bible says on page 20 "That Israel rashly accepted the law...At Sinai they exchanged grace for law." Charles Ryrie on page 88 of his book *Balancing the Christian Life* says, "The law was never given to the Gentiles and is expressly done away for the Christian." Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote a book called *Grace* and on page 88 of this book he says that Christ "disannulled" the law. On page 989 the Scofield Reference Bible says, "the Sermon on the Mount is law, not grace." The synoptic gospels are placed in the dispensation of the law rather than in that of grace.

Dispensationalism tends to set law and grace against each other as mutually exclusive principles. Dispensationalism infers that in the dispensation of law there was no grace and in the dispensation of grace there is no law. In his book, *Grace*, Lewis Sperry Chafer says that the law was a condition of salvation placed upon the people of God in the Old Testament during a special and limited time period – the Dispensation of

Law. This condition no longer has application to the New Testament believer since we relate to God under a new dispensation, the Dispensation of Grace. Since we are no longer under law but under grace there is no necessary relationship between law and grace. Someone else has said that here is law without grace and grace without law.

In dispensationalism, always and in every sense, law and grace are opposed to each other. This teaching is the ancient error of antinomianism which denies the law has application to the Christian. Paul answers this in Romans 3:31 when he asks, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" Dispensationalists answer: Yes! Exactly! But Paul answers in the Holy Spirit, "God Forbid! Yea we establish the law!"

A third serious error of dispensationalism has to do with *salvation*. Charles Ryrie says on page 123 of *Dispensationalism Today* that "The basis of salvation in every age is the death of Christ; the requirement for salvation in every age is faith; the object of faith in every age is God; *the content of faith changes in various dispensations.*" Dispensationalists deny that they teach more than one way of salvation but here one of their leading thinkers says that the content of faith changes in various dispensations. On page 130 Ryrie goes on to say that such verses as Acts 17:30, Romans 3:25 and John 1:21 "make it impossible to say that Old Testament saints under the law exercised personal faith in Jesus Christ."

Dispensationalists also claim that repentance is required in the kingdom age but only faith is required in this present dispensation of grace. Chafer says in an article in the journal *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. 93, No. 7, page 336 that "The one and only requirement on the human side which the kingdom gospel imposes is repentance; while the only requirement in the gospel of the grace of God is faith or believing."

Dispensationalist George D. Beckwith says on page 22 of his book "God's Prophetic Plan" that "To study the Bible Dispensationally is all-important, if one would learn to divide aright the word of truth. God's plan of redemption cannot be fully understood except through an understanding of dispensationalism." If this is true it means that Benjamin Keach, John Gill, Charles Spurgeon, John Owen, Thomas Watson and John Bunyan did not fully understand God's plan of

redemption because none of them knew anything about dispensationalism!

Dispensationalism is *in error concerning the gospel itself*. Scofield said on page 1348 of the Scofield Reference Bible that there are four gospels and each is for a different age and purpose and each has a distinct message. The Scofield Reference Bible says on page 1343 that "Four forms of the Gospel are to be distinguished:

The Gospel of the Kingdom  
The Gospel of the grace of God  
The everlasting Gospel of Revelation 14:6 and  
That which Paul calls 'my Gospel' in Romans 2:16."

My friends, there is not now, there never has been and there never will be but one gospel, the gospel that Galatians 3:8 says was preached unto Abraham. And Paul says in Galatians 1:8-9, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Dispensationalism is in serious error concerning the Bible doctrine of *the kingdom*. It distinguishes between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven even though these two are used interchangeably throughout the New Testament. On page 1003 of the Scofield Reference Bible we read: "The kingdom of God is to be distinguished from the kingdom of heaven" The Lord Jesus said, however, Repent: for *the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" That's Matthew 4:17. Mark 1:15 reports the Lord Jesus as saying, *The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye...*" In Matthew 5:3 the Lord Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is *the kingdom of heaven*" while in Luke 6:20 he says, "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is *the kingdom of God.*" Dispensationalists say that John the Baptist offered the Jews an earthly kingdom with Christ as King but no such offer can be found in scripture!

Dispensationalism is in *serious error concerning the church*, teaching that the church age which is the present dispensation is a parenthesis in God's plan, something he is now doing while his real work has been postponed. Since Israel rejected the kingdom that was

**Dispensationalists say that John the Baptist offered the Jews an earthly kingdom with Christ as King but no such offer can be found in scripture!**



## Spurgeon Quotes

Charles H. Spurgeon

“He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law” (Isaiah 42:4).

As for the Lord’s second coming, we know not when it shall be. Shall the world grow darker and darker till he comes? It may be so. There are passages of Scripture and signs of the times which may be taken to indicate it. On the other hand, shall the age grow brighter and brighter till he appears to bring the perfect day? Through the preaching of the gospel shall there yet be periods in which multitudes shall be converted, and whole nations shall be saved? I do not know; there are texts that seem to look that way, and many a brave worker hopes as much. There are brethren who can map out unfulfilled prophecy with great distinctness; but I confess my inability to do so. They stick down one leg of the compasses and describe a circle here and a circle there, and they draw

two or three lines, and there it is. Can you not see it, as plain as a pikestaff? I am sick of diagrams; I have seen enough of them to make another volume of Euclid. My impression is that very little is to be learned from the major part of these interpretations or speculations. I do not think that anybody can map out the future so as to be absolutely sure of anything definite except certain great clearly-stated facts. It is certain that the Lord will come, that he will come in such an hour as the most of men look not for him; and that his coming will be a surprise even to many of his own church. He may come at this moment while yet I am speaking to you, and he may delay his coming, if so it pleaseth him, through many a century yet. ✪

*Christ’s Work No Failure*, Charles H. Spurgeon, from Spurgeon’s *Sovereign Grace Sermons* (Calvin Classics V. 3)

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7).

I suppose that everybody will agree that the language of David in this psalm was most suitable to his condition. When he prayed, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,” he prayed a proper prayer, did he not? Surely no one is going to cavil with David over this petition; and yet I cannot be sure. The modern way of handling the Bible is to correct it here and amend it there; tear it to pieces, give a bit to the Jews, and a bit to the Gentiles, and a bit to the church, and a bit to everybody, and then make it out that sometimes the old servants of God made great blunders. We, in modern times, are supposed to be more spiritual, and to know a great deal better than the inspired saints of the Old and New Testaments. But still, I should not think that anybody would say that David was wrong; and if he did, I should reply: This is an inspired Psalm, and there is not half a hint given that there is any incorrectness in the language of it, or that David

used language under an exaggerated state of feeling, which was not truly applicable to a child of God, and that, even when he had defiled himself, he was still dear to the great Father’s heart. I gather, therefore—I feel sure of it—that he was quite right in praying the language of this fifty-first psalm, and saying, “have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions; wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! Yet this is precisely the way in which an unconverted man ought to pray, just the way in which every soul that comes to God may pray. It is only an enlargement of the prayer of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner! This language, so suitable to the sinner, was not out of place in the mouth of one who was not only a believer, but an advanced believer, an experienced believer, an inspired believer, a teacher of others, who, with all his faults, was such a one as we shall rarely see the like of again. ✪

*A Mingled Strain*, C.H. Spurgeon, from *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* Vol. 32, P. 702

## Dispensationalism

Arthur W. Pink



Occasionally a brief reference is made in these pages to the crudities and absurdities of what is termed "Dispensationalism," for some of our readers have been influenced by its evil teaching, and it becomes a duty to seek to remove this stumbling-stone from their path. Others of our friends, though unacquainted with this erroneous system, need to be warned against the same. The movement was born a century ago, and has been proudly advertised and extensively propagated under the guise of "new light on God's Word," an opening up of the deeper things of God." It is a system of *interpreting the Scriptures*: an unwarrantable method of segregating its contents, which, if adopted, *robs* God's people of much of His Word. Not content with rightly distinguishing between what pertained unto those under the old and new covenants, and between what is spoken to the "saints" and to "the children of disobedience," Old and New Testament alike are broken up into sections and labeled "for the Jew," "for the Gentiles," "for the Church of God," and most of it "NOT to us." These modern Jehoikims (Jer. 36:23) sever one passage from another, as they are arbitrarily alleged to belong to different dispensations or eras, both in the past and in the future.

Though posing as men of exceptional insight, as "profound Bible teachers," the Dispensationalists are far from being agreed among themselves as to how many separate eras are treated of in Scripture, or at what precise point one ends and another begins. Some claim there are but seven, others twelve, while a few make them to be fourteen. The popular Scofield Bible teaches there are no fewer than four covered by the book of Genesis alone, and that a fifth starts in Exodus 19, under which God dealt with men on entirely different lines. Dr. S. says: "A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God." The first he styles "The Dispensation of Innocency," which "ended in the judgment of the Expulsion (Gen. 3:24)." The second "conscience," which "ended in the

judgment of the Flood." The third "human Government," and "the judgment of the confusion of tongues ended the *racial* testing." The fourth "Promise," which "ended when Israel rashly accepted the Law." The fifth "Law," which "extends from Sinai to Calvary."

Now the Greek word *oikonomia*, meaning "house arrangement," occurs seven times in the New Testament. The first three in Luke 16:2, 3, 4, where it is rendered "stewardship" which connotes something radically different from an *era*! In no instance does the *time-element* enter into the signification of the word! In I Corinthians 9:17, Paul declared "a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me": how utterly absurd would it be to conclude that an "age" had been entrusted to him!—rather was it an evangelical stewardship or economy. "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is *given me* to you-ward" (Eph. 3:2), "whereof I was made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is *given to me for you*" (Col. 1:25). In neither of those verses is there the remotest reference to a section of history, but rather to an evangelical administration. As the business of a steward is to serve and distribute, so the apostle was called to *dispense* the Gospel to the Gentiles, to communicate to others what God had revealed to him. In Ephesians 1:10—the only other reference—the simple meaning is that God's plan or economy of salvation is to concentrate all in Christ, all the redeemed being united to one Head. Thus, the Scriptural usage of the word "dispensation" signifies *not* an age or *era*, but a stewardship or administration of things received by commission.

What Scriptural authority, it may be asked, do the Dispensationalists have for their startling method of exegesis?—one quite unknown to the Reformers and godly Puritans! To what passages do they point as warrant for their emphatic assertion that the greater part of the Bible pertains not to those living in this Christian era?—wrongly denominated by them "the Dispensation of Grace." Wrongly, we say, for as a distinguishing title it is utterly misleading, seeing that God dealt in pure grace with all He chose in Christ, from the time of Abel until the day of Pentecost: see Genesis 6:8; Exodus 33:12; Jeremiah 31:2; Psalm 84:11; Proverbs 3:34; Nehemiah 9:31; Jonah 4:2. Surely some very plain and

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emphatic "thus saith the Lord" is required by believers today when they are dogmatically informed that the whole of the Old Testament and much of the New has no direct reference to them. But no such Divine authorization is forthcoming: nothing but an appeal to the *sound* of one verse, and a human *guess* upon another!

The first passage to which they have recourse is, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing* the Word of Truth." (II Tim. 2:15), which they affirm to mean partitioning one part to this dispensation and another to that. Let it be duly noted that this verse is not an exhortation to God's people at large, telling them how to handle His Word; but, instead, part of the instructions given to a minister of the Gospel; nor is there any intimation in the context that the Spirit was about to enunciate a revolutionizing principle for interpreting the Scriptures. If this verse be compared with Matthew 7:6; John 16:12; I Corinthians 3:2, etc., its meaning is clear. The occupant of the pulpit is to give diligence in becoming equipped to give his hearers "their *portion* of meat in due season (Luke 12:42). For him to "rightly divide the Word" is to minister it *suitably* to the cases and circumstances of his congregation—to sinners and saints, the indifferent and inquiring, babes and fathers, the tempted and afflicted, the backslider and the fallen.

The remaining passage is Luke 4:16-20, where in the synagogue of Nazareth Christ read Isaiah 61:1, and for some reason or other stopped in the middle of verse 2. The unauthorized *guess* of the Dispensationalists is that our Lord omitted the next words "and the day of vengeance of our God" (almost always ignoring the additional "to comfort all that mourn") because that pertained to a future and distant era. Scofield's Bible says, "Jesus stopped at 'the acceptable year of the Lord,' which is connected with the first advent and the dispensation of grace; 'the day of vengeance of our God' belongs to the second advent and judgment." Thus we are asked to believe that Isaiah 61:2, treats of two totally different "dispensations" and that the word "and" in the middle of it covers a period which has already extended for more than nineteen centuries! Anything more bizarre and ridiculous could scarcely be imaged. *Facts refute it!* Did not Christ plainly proclaim "the day of the vengeance of our God" when He pronounced "woe" after "woe" upon the scribes and Pharisees? when He declared to the Jewish nation

"Behold! Your house is left unto you desolate"? when He announced of the temple "there shall not be left here one stone upon another"? He *did* as certainly as He also comforted all that mourned with a godly sorrow.

On those two verses (II Tim. 2:15; Isa. 61:2) has been based an entire system of interpreting the Scriptures, which is claimed to be essential to their right understanding and apportioning. That is all the support which this fanciful theory has! Never was so imposing a structure erected upon so flimsy a foundation. Never were credulous simpletons so easily beguiled as when they believed the *ipsi dixit* of these exegetical thieves and suffered themselves to be deprived of much of God's Word by accrediting their assertions that much in the Prophets is "Millennial," that the Sermon on the Mount belongs to "the Kingdom age," and that most of the Revelation treats only of "the Tribulation period." Cease ye from man! Receive the whole Bible as God's Word *to* you and *for* you.

As a sample of the pernicious teaching of the Scofield Bible on this subject, we cite a part of its note on John 1:18: "As a Dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 3:24-26; 6:24, 25). The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ," etc. It betrays the greatest ignorance to assert that sinners were saved in a different way under the Mosaic economy. Limiting ourselves to the Psalms, we there see that there was then *the same* conviction of guile and demerit (32:3-5), the same inevitable condemnation on the ground of God's Law (143:2), the same earnest crying for undeserved mercy (51:1), faith in His revealed character as a just God and Saviour (25:8), hope of pardon, resting on propitiation (130:7), pleading of God's name or glory

of all His perfections (25:11), joy and peace in believing (89:15, 16), trust in God's faithfulness to His promises (89:1, 2), confidence in the righteousness of Another (84:9), disowning of all ground for boasting (115:1) as there is now! Thus the *same Gospel* which was "preached unto Abraham" (Gal. 3:8), was proclaimed and believed in the days of David, and Jewish sinners were no more saved then by "legal obedience" than are Gentile sinners today. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (II Tim. 3:16). Every part is needed by us: let none filch any from you. ✨

From *Studies in the Scriptures*, August, 1948

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## Dispensationalism and the Law of God

Arthur W. Pink



All truth is catholic or universal. It embraces many elements and opens upon wide horizons, and therefore involves endless difficulties and apparent inconsistencies. But the mind of man seeks for unity, and tends prematurely to *force* unity in the sphere of his imperfect knowledge by securing one element of truth at the sacrifice of another. This is eminently the case with all rationalists: they are clear and logical, but at the expense of being superficial and half-orbed. Such is the case with heretics. The Greek word from which "heresy" is derived means an act of choice, and hence of diversion, a picking and choosing one part instead of comprehensively embracing the whole truth. The man who holds to the Law of God and repudiates Divine grace is a heretic. Equally so, the man who glories in the grace of God and throws overboard His law is a heretic. Jude 4 speaks of "turning the *grace* of our God into lasciviousness."

In his Estimate of Manton, J.C. Ryle wrote, "I admire the scriptural wisdom of a man who, in a day of hard-and-fast systems could *dare to be apparently inconsistent*, in order to 'declare all the counsel of God.' I firmly believe that this is the test of theology, which does good in the Church of Christ. The man who is not tied hand and foot by systems, and does not pretend to reconcile what our imperfect eyesight cannot reconcile in this dispensation, he is the man whom God will bless. Manton was such a man; and because he was such a man, I think his works, like the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' deserve the attention of all true Christians."

Alas, how few such men has Christendom been favoured with during the last century. For the most part certain favorite portions of Scripture have been seized, and every thing which appeared to conflict with them has been either ignored, explained away, or repudiated. Some aspects of the truth have been eagerly contended for by champions of the faith, but anything which appeared "inconsistent" therewith, has been studiously avoided or bitterly denounced. The great majority would not allow that there is a perfect agreement between the invincibility of God's decrees and the freedom of human actions, insisting that if God has definitely predestinated a certain course of conduct, the individual is reduced to the level of a machine. Some

believe in God's sovereignty, and some in man's responsibility' but few indeed *really* believe fully in both, and with rare exceptions, the more strongly the one is retained, the more loosely the other is held.

Few perceive there is a perfect consistency between justification by the righteousness and blood of Christ and the necessity of our obedience, if ever we are to reach Heaven; nor can they reconcile the efficacy of Divine grace with the indispensability of our performance of duty. There have been some good men who have honoured the Spirit in clearly teaching His effectual call, but those same men have denounced others who exhorted unsaved sinners to repent of their sins and believe in Christ. Certain men of God have rightly affirmed that Scripture assures the real saint of the absolute security of his salvation, but have denied that the solemn warnings and admonitions addressed to Christians in the New Testament also belong to them: They gloried in the immutability of God's promises, but failed to see that the Christian is preserved from apostasy by his own use of appointed means.

Logic takes a certain premise and draws from it a rational and "consistent" conclusion. But faith appropriates a Divine statement and leaves God to draw His own conclusions, for faith knows that "logical conclusions" *often contradict the Scriptures*. For example, logic says, "God is one, and *therefore* there cannot be three persons in the Godhead." Faith says "God is one, yet Scripture affirms there are three Divine Persons, and [by God's grace] I believe it." Logic says, "Jesus Christ is man, and therefore He cannot be God." Faith says, "Christ is man, but Scripture also declares He is God, and [by God's grace] I believe it." It is really pitiful to see some men such slaves to "logical consistency" that they use one portion of Truth to overthrow another portion equally blessed. So it is deplorable to find so many ignoring or despising passage after passage of Holy Writ because they are unable to "harmonize" them with some favorite text. O for grace to receive *all* that God has given us in His Word.

The same spirit of partiality or lopsidedness explains why so many insist that law and grace are antagonistic principles. In his youth the writer was taught by men he

looked up to, that law and grace could no more be united than oil and water: may the Lord forgive him for inserting this error in some of his earlier writings. How many are now being told by the "champions of orthodoxy" that law and grace are hostile to each other, and that where the one is in exercise the other must necessarily be inactive. But this is a serious mistake. How could the Law of God and the grace of God conflict? The one expresses Him as "light" (1 John 1:5), the other manifests Him as "love" (1 John 4:8); the one makes known His righteousness, the other reveals His mercy. The manifold wisdom of God has made known the perfect consistency between them. Instead of their being contradictory, they are complementary. Both shone forth in their full glory at the Cross; both are published in the true Gospel.

In all of God's works and ways we may discern a meeting together of *seemingly* conflicting elements. The centrifugal and centripetal forces which are ever at work in the material realm illustrate this principle. So it is in connection with Divine providence: there is a constant inter-penetration of the natural and supernatural. So it was in the giving of the Scriptures; they are the product both of God's and man's agency; they are a Divine revelation, yet couched in human language, and given through human media: they are inerantly true, yet written by fallible men. They are inspired throughout, yet the superintending control of the Spirit over the writers did not exclude nor interfere with the natural exercise of their faculties. So it was with Christ. He was omniscient yet He marveled at unbelief. He was omnipotent yet He hungered and slept. He was eternal, yet He died. He was man, yet He rose again from the dead by His own power.

In view of what has been pointed out in the preceding paragraph, to which many other examples might be added, why should so many stumble over the fact of Divine Law and Divine grace being exercised side by side, operating at the same season? Do law and grace present any greater contrast than the inexorable justice and abounding mercy of God, or between His fathomless love and everlasting wrath? No indeed, not so great. Grace must not be regarded as an attribute of God which eclipses all His other perfections. As Romans 5:21 so plainly tells us, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign *through righteousness*," and not at the expense of righteousness. Divine grace and Divine right-

eousness, Divine love and Divine holiness, are as *inseparable* as light and heat from the sun. In bestowing grace God never rescinds His claims upon us, but rather enables us to meet them. Was the prodigal son, after his penitent return and forgiveness, less obliged to conform to the laws of his father's house than before he left? No indeed; but more so."

"The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a *fiery law* for them. *Yea, he loved the people*" (Deut. 33:2, 3). What a strange collocation of terms must those words present unto many today! The very giving of the fiery law unto Israel was in effect an evidence of Jehovah's special *love* for them! His very grant unto them of what is now so bitterly hated, is here said to be a signal instance of God's benignity, being a distinguishing blessing which other nations were not favored with. So too, as good old Matthew Henry says, "The law of God written in the heart is a certain evidence of the love of God being shed abroad there."

Divine grace was exercised unto Israel throughout the entire Mosaic economy. It seems to be generally overlooked that full provision was made for forgiveness and restoration unto those who transgressed the Divine statutes. The ceremonial institutions, which afforded expiation and ablution, were wholly of *grace*. Amongst the "statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between Him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai" (Lev. 26:46), was this one, "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and that also they have walked contrary unto Me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham" (Lev. 26:40-42)! Note how this was reiterated in the time of Solomon: 1 Kings 8:37-40; 44-49! Thus, under the Old Testament dispensation there was *provision of pardon* for penitent sinners.

**Divine grace  
was exercised  
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Mosaic  
economy.**

## Book Review

***Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged*** by Barry E. Horner. Nashville, TN: B & H ACADEMIC, 2007. Pp. 394. \$19.99. Hard. [Reviewed by Craig Blaising.]

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul warned Gentile believers not to be arrogant toward Israel, which was becoming hardened by unbelief and was soon to experience national judgment. For the most part, the history of Gentile Christian thought has failed to heed that warning. Instead, many have dismissed Israel from having any future place in the plan of God. Oftentimes, this is done by re-conceptualizing the meaning of Israel and reinterpreting its place in the biblical text. The end result is the same; Israel has been excluded from the plan of God in any real, national sense.

Challenging this mindset, which has fixed itself in the traditions of Christian thought over twenty centuries, is the aim and purpose of Barry Horner's book *Future Israel*. Of particular concern for Horner is the oftentimes strident supersessionism, or replacement theology, that characterizes much of Reformed thought, Horner's own tradition. After setting the historical context, Horner profiles contemporary manifestations of Reformed supersessionism both in their actual claims and in their hermeneutical operations. He then counters them with biblical arguments for the future of a national Israel in the plan of God, focusing particularly, but not exclusively, on Paul's argument in Romans 11.

The issue, Horner says, is not anti-Semitism per se, but "classic anti-Judaism, which involves opposition to the biblical legacy of Torah mediated through Abraham and Moses." It is this classic anti-Judaism which denies that "Israel, incorporating individuality, nationality, and territory, has a future according to the mind of Abraham's God" (p. xx). Nevertheless, in spite of the prevalence of anti-Judaism, there have been dissenters, and one of the virtues of Horner's work is the profile he gives to this dissent along with the exposé of key supersessionists.



The first chapter sets forth the paradigmatic anti-Judaism of Augustine and Calvin, along with the equally paradigmatic dissent of Horatius Bonar and Charles Haddon Spurgeon. The second chapter consequently contextualizes the Augustinian paradigm and then traces its history to the early twentieth century. The third and fourth chapters provide exposés of American and British Reformed writers hostile to the notion of a national future for Israel. These include Albertus Pieters and Loraine Boettner, but extensive attention is given to Gary Burge, O. Palmer Robertson, the 2002 "Open Letter to Evangelicals and Other Interested Parties: The People of God, the Land of Israel, and the Impartiality of the Gospel" (signed by several Reformed scholars and posted on the website of Knox

Theological Seminary), and the Anglican Colin Chapman. The treatment of Chapman includes comments on the views of Stephen Sizer, N. T. Wright, and others.

The fifth chapter sets in contrast to this history of anti-Judaic theological thought the rise of Jewish and Christian Zionism in the context of political and military opposition. The chapter includes a poignant extract from the diary of Theodore Herzl, recounting his meeting with Pope Pius X.

The sixth and seventh chapters present another historical survey, this time focusing on supersessionist hermeneutics. Horner begins by focusing on individuals such as Patrick Fairbairn, Gerhardus Vos, and George Eldon Ladd, but particularly valuable is the extended attention, critique, and reformulation he gives in chapter seven to the Reformed notion of a "Christocentric hermeneutic."

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The eighth and ninth chapters challenge supersessionist reinterpretation of the land promise, both in its pre-

suppositions about the nature of the eternal state and in its treatment of the land promise in the biblical covenants. Chapters 10–12 follow this up with an extended consideration of Romans 11, both in terms of its own teaching and as a hermeneutical reference point for several other contested New Testament texts. There are a number of excellent studies on the exegesis of Romans 11, and Horner is clearly dependent on them. However, where Horner goes beyond most of them, in my opinion, is in his development of the implications of Romans 11:28, the notion of unbelieving Israel as *God's beloved enemy*. This conception of the covenant status of unbelieving Israel is crucial for understanding God's treatment of Israel and Gentile nations even in Old Testament history. Paul's statement indicates that the covenantal status remains through the dispensation of Israel's hardening, to the coming of Messiah, and beyond. It is the framework in which to understand everything that has happened to Jews in this dispensation, and to Gentiles in relation to Jews, even up to the founding of the modern state of Israel and beyond that point to the present day. But most importantly, this covenant relationship is the evangelical basis for contemporary missions to the Jews, and focuses and enriches the understanding of that mission even as it helps to sweeten the tone.

Horner's own tone throughout the book is sobering. The reader may find his style – survey punctuated with frequent criticisms – bracing, although never, in the opinion of this reviewer, inappropriate. In actual fact, the book is compelling, engaging the reader's interest. The exposés of contemporary Reformed authors are enlightening, but the book is especially valuable for reminding readers today of key nineteenth century Reformed theologians who did affirm the future of Israel, including Spurgeon, J. C. Ryle, and especially Horatius Bonar.

At times, Horner's need to confront and oppose supersessionist slogans forces him into some unnecessary dichotomies – for example, Judeo-centric versus Christocentric – or simplistic criticisms such as: "The hermeneutical principle that imposes the NT revelation of Jesus Christ on the OT in such a way that the new covenant (upper layer) has become the controlling hermeneutic whereby the old covenant (lower layer) is Christologically reinterpreted" (p. 179). The issue is not Christocentricity per se, or the interpretation of the old covenant by the new covenant per se,

but the supersessionist manner in which these are done and the way the terms are used as slogans for a supersessionist agenda. In actual fact, Horner himself recognizes the inadequacies of these labels, and the reader will not have gone far before Horner nuances them.

Horner's reference to premillennialism, however, could be further differentiated. While all premillennialists envision a future earthly kingdom during the millennium, not all have fully appreciated the spiritual materialism of the eternal state. Seventeenth and nineteenth century premillennialists can generally be distinguished on this issue, and it is the unique position of classical dispensationalism to have embraced both views at the same time!

Overall, *Future Israel* is a significant work, and this reviewer hopes that it receives the attention it deserves. Horner not only explains why Christian anti-Judaism must be challenged (as his subtitle reads), but he has in fact challenged it, and in the opinion of this reviewer, effectively so.

The significance, however, should not be limited to eschatology alone, if one considers eschatology as simply one area of theological thought – the last, coming at the end, after all other theological considerations have been finished. Actually, to see eschatology this way is, in my opinion, to misunderstand it and to impoverish theological thought generally. The significance of Horner's work lies in its challenge to the generally held overall understanding of the story of the Bible, a challenge to the entire structure of biblical theology as it is understood by many today. Recognition that Israel has a future in the plan of God is the first step. Tracing out the ramifications for the scope and structure of that plan must follow. ✪



Barry E. Horner pastors in Tucson, Arizona. Besides his book on Israel, he specializes in the ministry & writings of John Bunyan.

## A Preacher Without a Bible

Vance Havner



I started out back in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I did not know much. I have not learned a lot since, but I knew precious little in those days. However, I believed the Bible. I just took it and read it as it came. I started in Genesis and was having a great time, taking promises right and left, just like a boy picking apples off a tree in an orchard. One day I was met by a so-called Bible scholar and he told me that those promises were not for me, that they were for the Jew. Well, that discouraged me a little bit, but I said, "I believe I will give it another try."

So I moved over into the New Testament and started down through Matthew, claiming promises right and left. Again I was interrupted and duly notified that those promises were all for the Kingdom age, not for me. I had never heard of the Kingdom age before, but since those things were not for me, I did not want to take them.

So I moved over into the Acts of the Apostles and was daring to claim some of the blessings that flowed from Pentecost. Once again I was interrupted and told that it

was a transitional period, that we were not to press those promises too literally.

Well, that left me, by and by, with nothing but the Epistles and Revelation, and most of the Revelation was for the future. By the time I had made allowances between groups and marginal references, and tried to look at the Bible through the spectacles of a dozen disagreeing expositors, bless your heart, I was afraid to put down my foot on any verse for fear some scholar would come along like a policeman and order me off private property, and tell me, "This verse is not for you. Get going, brother, somewhere else."

Finally, I said, "Lord, I have heard of a man without a country. If this keeps up, I am going to be a preacher without a Bible. If you will give me a verse I can stand on, I will have to have it in a hurry, because they are just about to take it away from me." I got down to that one, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4) and I have been standing on that one ever since!

All the promises of God are "Yea" and "Amen" in Christ. Brother, I tell you, I believe it is all for me, and I enjoy it. We need just that child-like enjoyment of the Word of God. Today we have gotten to the place where people are taking the Bible apart and then are trying to put it back together, analyzing it, dissecting it—not enjoying it. There needs to be a childlike enjoyment of God's Word and a sweetheart love for Jesus. ✪

Vance Havner (1901-1986) was a noted pastor, evangelist and author. He was gifted with an ability to phrase a thought in such a way, as to drive home a point with absolute effectiveness.

## Study

to shew thyself approved unto God,  
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly  
dividing the word of truth.

II Timothy 2:15

(Pink: continued from page 11)

How deplorable, then, that one who exercised such a wide influence as the late J.N. Darby should say in volume 1 of his *Synopsis* (p. 126). "Had it been a human righteousness, it would have been by the law, which is the rule of that righteousness—a law given to *the Jews only*." And again, "It is certain we have not commandments like those of the old law—they would be quite contrary to the spirit of the Gospel of grace" (p. 218). Yet the Lord Jesus plainly enough declared, "If ye love Me, keep *My commandments*" (John 14:15). Equally baneful is this statement found in the introduction to "The Four Gospels" in the popular Scofield Bible, "The sermon on the mount is not grace...*the doctrines of grace are to be sought in the epistles, not in the gospels.*" We are prepared to show that *every* doctrine of grace contained in the epistles is found clearly expressed in the four gospels; while the law is just as clearly enforced in the epistles.

That there is no conflict whatever between the Law and the Gospel is plain enough from Romans 3:31. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea we establish the law." Here the Apostle anticipates an objection which might be drawn from what he said in verses 26-30, namely, that justification is entirely by grace through faith. But so far from this annulling the law, it recognizes and enforces it. No greater respect could have been shown to the law than in determining to save some men from its curse. God sent His own co-equal Son to fulfill all its requirements. O marvel of marvels! The great Legislator humbled Himself to full obedience unto its precepts; the God who gave the law became incarnate and bled under its condemning sentence, rather than let a tittle thereof fail. Magnified thus was the law indeed, and forever "made honourable."

There is therefore no feud whatever between the Law and the Gospel. They sweetly stand together in their proper place. In the Gospel we see the law fulfilled (by Christ) as a covenant, and established (in the hands of Christ) as a rule of obedience. The Gospel brings to light new motives and arguments to obedience, arguments drawn from the consideration of redeeming grace and love, which have a far greater constraining power than all the threats and cursings which the law denounces against those who do not continue in obedience thereto. Thus in the case of the Christian, the law remains, although the motives to obedience are changed: our obedience is spontaneous, our motive love. Should it be asked, What happens when the Christian deliberately breaks the law? The answer is given in Psalm 89:30-33, "If His children forsake My

*There are now tens of thousands in Great Britain and the U.S.A. who say of large portions of God's Word, "This is not for me; this belongs to the Jews; this relates not to the present dispensation, that concerns those who will be on earth during the great tribulation or the millennium." And thus their souls are deprived of the present value of much which God Himself plainly declares is "profitable" for us (2 Tim. 3:16).*

*Dispensationalism A.W. Pink, from Studies in the Scriptures Vol. XII, #1, Jan. 1933*

law, and walk not in My judgments; If they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail"—he comes under the rod of his heavenly Father's displeasure, but the Spirit leads him to repentance and confession, and he is forgiven; Proverbs 28:13, 1 John 1:9.

Summing up now what has been before us in the four articles. 1. Adam was under the Law of God in a two-fold way: His fear and love ruling his heart, there was wrought into the very constitution of his soul that which answered to all the requirements of his Maker; and further, he received from Him, objectively, a revelation of His will: Genesis 1:26, Romans 7:10. 2. The whole human race was, in Eden, placed under the law as a covenant of works, and fell under its penalty when their federal head broke it: Romans 5:18. 3. The law was known long before Sinai: Genesis 26:5. 4. All mankind are under the law, and will be judged by it: Romans 3:19. 5. Christ satisfied every demand of the law and His righteousness is imputed to His people: Romans 5:19, 2 Corinthians 5:21. 6. The Holy Spirit implants in the heart of the regenerate a love for the law: Romans 7:22. 7. The true Christian is under the law to Christ (1 Cor. 9:21), and gladly obeys it: Romans 7:25.

"It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law" (Psa. 119:126). ✪

*Studies in the Scriptures, April, 1934*

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Theme of next issue:  
**The Antichrist**

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*Justice: continued from page 6*

offered her, God had to come up with a contingency plan which is the church.

The scripture says in Ephesians 5:25 that Christ died for the church and my friends, the death of Christ for the church was no contingency plan! Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world! The church is not a mere parenthesis in God's plan. To dispensationalists the church is not nearly so important as the kingdom.

God is never frustrated in his plans and he never postpones his plans! Look at Isaiah 14:24. "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand."

There are many very serious errors in the theological system called dispensationalism. Beware my friends! Beware!

The most important question about dispensationalism is, is it biblical? Our question must not be, what does Dr. Scofield say or what does Dr. Walvoord say? But what saith the scripture? As we have seen dispensationalism is a system that has no solid scriptural sup-

port! Any theory or view or system that anyone teaches as true should find clear and plentiful support in plain passages of God's word. Therefore, dispensationalism should more properly be called a speculative theory rather than a biblical system!

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth.*" *Rightly dividing* does not mean to divide up the scriptures into dispensations and set each one at variance with the others. *Rightly dividing the word of truth* actually paints a word picture of the work of the pastor in preaching the word. What Paul is really saying in our text is that in his preaching God's preacher is to distribute God's word to each of his hearers according to his age and appetite and capacity to receive it. It's as if he has a loaf of bread and he breaks off a small piece that fits his less mature hearers as far as the things of God are concerned and a bigger piece for his more mature hearers. The preacher is to distribute the spiritual food of the word of God to babes in Christ and to mature Christians as that food fits their particular cases and circumstances. ✪



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## The Antichrist

### Inside This Edition

- ◆ Will There Be a Literal Antichrist? *Bill Lee* ..... p. 3
- ◆ The Papacy Not the Antichrist *A.W. Pink*..... p. 8
- ◆ The Antichrist—A Particular Person, *David Park* ..... p.13

"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

"...the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem..."

## Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

### The Spirit of Antichrist I John 4:2-3

#### Why did God wait so long to send Jesus? (False Views)

**The Rev. Mary Omwake**, former pastor, Unity Church of Overland Park, Kansas: What an intriguing question you have asked. Pondering the fate of the 6 billion of us that inhabit spaceship Earth is quite an undertaking, let alone going back hundreds of thousands of years. Let me begin by sharing what I think has been an incredible misunderstanding of Jesus. In John 3:16 of the Christian New Testament we are told that "God so loved the world that God gave his only begotten Son, that all who believed in him would not perish, but have everlasting life."

The key here is that God's love is so great, it gave not an individual personality named Jesus but the divine idea of sonship, called the Christ, and placed it within each one of us. "Christ in you" the apostle Paul said is the greatest mystery hidden from the beginning of time. Jesus discovered the "truth that sets us free" that God and I are one. Awake to his true potential, he lived a life of such radical love and profound wisdom that the Western world measures time by his birth.

We miss the message of his teaching if we see him as the great exception rather than the great example of what each of us can and, if the world is to be saved, must become. As we awaken and come to believe that we are the beloved sons and daughters of God, we discover that the same spirit that guided Jesus is guiding and prospering and protecting every one of us. My hunch is that the people before us and after us who discover the source of goodness within themselves and who, like Jesus, strive to live lives of love and selfless service, will experience the peace that passes understanding, a joy that is overflowing and abundant life.

**The Rev. Patrick Rush**, vicar-general of the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph: We usually think that Christ's activity among us began around A.D. 1 and continued until A.D. 33. The reality, however, is much different.

The incarnation of Jesus is not one moment in history. Instead it is a continuous divine activity of self-giving that stretches from before creation to the future final judgment. Christ has always and will always be coming into our world. Even before and beyond God's creation of the universe, Christ's predetermined role is that of mediator, or bridge, between the father and creation (Jn 17:24). Christ is the intermediary in creation itself (Jn 1:3).

This mediator is later experienced as God's covenant with people, first made with Israel through Moses and subsequently made with humanity in Jesus. Christ, who yesterday was crucified, is today active as Lord of his church and in the future will return in glory. These are all successive moments in the one event of salvation. All these saving activities of Christ past, present and future compose the one history of salvation.

Therefore Christ doesn't come into our world only for three decades in a specific century. From creation to the end of the world, this is the "Christline" of salvation. Therefore no one lives before Christ or beyond the saving power of Christ. All persons regardless of when or where they live are saved by God's self-giving love, which comes to us in these many "Christ moments," which, taken together, accomplish our salvation. The next moment in this Christline is the final judgment. Like previous moments, no one knows the time of it.

Kansas City Star October 16, 1999

### How Does the PBJ Survive?

A number of readers have written and called over the years, testifying to how the Premillennial Baptist Journal has helped their understanding of biblical eschatology. In order to continue publishing what several have described as a quality magazine, we have an ongoing need for money. The cost of each issue is now about \$2000. Since we do not sell subscriptions, we are dependent on the generous donations of our readers. Will you consider donating a one-time large gift or doing as several churches are doing and contribute \$50, \$100 or \$200 per month? We are now into the fifth year of publication. Will you help enable us to continue? Make checks payable to *Victory Baptist Church* and send all donations to: **Victory Baptist Church 9601 Blue Ridge Extension Kansas City, MO 64134.**



## Will There Be a Literal Antichrist?

Bill Lee

II Thessalonians 2:1-12; "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

To begin this message, let me just say two things: It is impossible for me to read these verses, verses 1 through 12, without being even more thankful for verse 13. The first 12 verses of this reading just magnify verse 13. How we ought to be thankful for divine election! If it were not for God's sovereign grace and divine election, we would be in the category of verse 11 and in verse 12, but I am thankful to be in verse 13. "God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation!"

Another thing I want to say at the outset of this message is any time we study prophecy, we ought to always do it in a search for truth, and not out of carnal curiosity. I find that many times people want to hear messages on prophecy just out of idle curiosity. There is just something about prophecy that piques even the unbelievers' attention. There are so many that are open and susceptible to mere speculation and the ideas of men. And it seems the more absurd you might make prophecy, the more readily it will be accepted.

But I think our goal ought to always be to know, "What does God say?" "What saith the Scripture?" It always ought to be our desire to know truth! And we ought to have enough good sense that if what we read in the Scripture contradicts our preconceived idea, we ought to get rid of our preconceived idea, and stay with "Thus saith the Lord."

There are several observations I want to make from this passage of Scripture. The first is this; I believe there is a direct relationship between the revelation of the Antichrist, and the return of the Lord. The Bible states, "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." I have run across many people over the years that want to make their boast: "I am looking for Christ and not the Antichrist." These seem to have the idea this makes them more righteous, or more spiritual, than those who want to look for the order of events to unfold as God says. I think we ought to look at what God has said, notice the order that He has set, and then base our belief upon that, instead of trying to exalt ourselves in some other way.

Another thing I would like to point out in verse 4 is that Antichrist is also anti-God. You cannot be antichrist without being anti-God, any more than you can be anti-God without being antichrist. So, we are dealing with one that opposes both Christ and God. But even more than the opposition, he is one that seeks to take the place of both Christ and God. He seeks to come in the "stead" or "in the room" of Christ, and certainly he does oppose every thing that is of God.

In verse 6, notice there is a set time, "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time." There is a time for every purpose under heaven. I believe in a predestinating God who has set things in order and on schedule and they will unfold in their time.

Then in verse 7, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." Let it be understood, being "taken out of the way" does not necessarily mean being "taken out of

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the world." For some reason, there are those who automatically hold that the one that is "letting" or "hindering" is the Holy Spirit of God. This verse does not say that. That might be the case, but this verse does not say that. And it certainly does not say in this verse that the Holy Spirit or the Church is going to be taken out of the world. You have to read that into this verse. You cannot get it from just reading the Word of God. This is one of those "preconceived ideas" I have mentioned. It could be understood that the Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, will come "out of the midst." There are other ways to look at this other than the Holy Spirit being taken out of the world. And if anyone comes to verse 7 and sees the Holy Spirit being taken out of the world, and He is completely absent from the world, they have removed the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit of God. Surely this would be a grave error.

**Antichrist is a single individual who has not yet been revealed.**

Verse 8 states: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." I just believe that when God says "then" it means something. Contrary to what many today seem to think, words do have meanings even as numbers have meanings. If this is not the case, language is meaningless. This "then" in verse 8 is important in establishing the order of events.

Next I look at verse 9: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." Immediately upon reading this verse we know that the Antichrist is not Satan himself, but rather the Antichrist's coming, or his appearing as we can view it, is after the working of Satan. Satan is the one who is behind this. He is the one who motivates and empowers the Antichrist.

And let me say here, the Antichrist is not simply a system of evil. The Antichrist is not simply a religious system. But rather the Antichrist is a real, literal, single individual. He will certainly head up a system of evil. He will even head a religious system. But Antichrist is a single individual who has not yet been revealed.

Now notice I John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time;" (that statement is important in itself) "and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." How do we know it is the "last time"? Because "even now are there many antichrists." I am going to deal with this a little bit later, if I have time, but understand, that the Antichrist is not a system, but an individual. And

we read that "antichrist shall come," referring to a single individual. But even now, there are many antichrists.

In that mystery of iniquity that doth already work, and I personally view that phrase as a "hidden conspiracy of lawlessness," there are many antichrists already in the world. In our own country we can certainly see the working of many antichrists in and of the world. But "the" Antichrist is yet to come. He will be revealed in his time. And in verse 18 we read, "as ye have heard that antichrist shall come." This is a great announcement: "antichrist shall come"!

Now, in the Scriptures, the Antichrist is designated or referred to by many different names. And I want to give you some of them, and certainly this is not an exhaustive list. We have already read that he is called "the man of sin, the son of perdition," II Thessalonians 2:3. He is called "that wicked" or lawless one in II Thessalonians 2:18. He is "the beast" of Revelation 11:7. He is "the bloody and deceitful man" of Psalms 5:6. He is the "wicked one" of Psalms 10:2,4. He is the "man of the earth" in Psalms 10:18. He is the "mighty man" of Psalms 52:1. He is "the enemy" of Psalms 55:3. He is the "adversary" of Psalms 74:8-10. He is the "violent man" of Psalms 140:1. He is the "little horn" of Daniel 7:8. He is the "prince that shall come" in Daniel 9:26. He is the "vile person" of Daniel 11:21. He is the "king" of Daniel 11:36. He is the "idol shepherd" of Zechariah 11:16,17.

And if you would, turn in your Bible to Genesis, chapter 3, he is the "seed of the serpent." Brother Dan Cozart made some great illustrations last night about interpreting the Scripture literally. How inconsistent it is to be reading along, and understanding things as literal, and then in the same context, shift and say, "Well, this is no longer real, it is figurative." This simply does not make sense and is a poor way to read and to interpret Scripture. I want you to notice Genesis, Chapter 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

I maintain that the "seed of the woman" is literal and the seed of the serpent is as literal as the seed of the woman. You cannot have one being literal, and the other not being literal. By any honest interpretation of Genesis Chapter 3:15, the seed of the woman is a man. He is "the man Christ Jesus." The seed of the serpent is a man. He is the man of sin, and the son of perdition.

Back in our text in II Thessalonians 2:3, Paul speaks about the revelation of the man of sin: "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." One of the reasons I believe this is yet future, is that he has not yet been revealed. Do you know who the Antichrist is, or was? And can you prove it by "Thus saith the Lord" and not by speculation and supposition? He has not been revealed as yet, but when he is revealed, God's elect will know who and what he is. And they will not worship him or his image, nor will they take his mark. I believe the Bible tells us that all that do so are going to "drink of the wine of the wrath of God," Revelation 14:9,10. Surely this can have no reference at all to the redeemed of the Lord.

God's elect are not going to be deceived. There is going to be a revelation. And a revelation that comes from God is much better than speculation that comes from men. And we ought to be waiting for the revelation of the man of sin. Again, there has always been much speculation. I do not know how many times I have been asked over the years, "Who do you think the Antichrist is?" "Who do you think the two witnesses are?" "Who do you think this or that is?" And these are the wrong questions to ask. We should ask, "Does the Bible tell us who the Antichrist is?" If so, ask who does the Bible tell us it is. Where in the scripture can we find the answer? What I think, and what other preachers think, does not amount to a hill of beans. It is "What saith the Scriptures?"

There are a lot of questions we are asked from time to time that we don't have the answers for. Many times this is because God has not told us the answers in His Word. I think many preachers have the idea they have to answer every question that is posed, or they are somehow going to lose esteem with people and they are too prideful to simply say, "I don't know." So they begin to come up with their own theories and speculations, and lead people astray. I don't know how many people have told me over the years that they believe this and that just because Brother So-and-So taught it to them. There are some things we simply do not know and we ought to be honest enough to say so.

There are some who speculate that the Antichrist is the pope, not any particular pope, just the pope, the office of Papacy. Some say it is the Roman Catholic Church. Well, the fact of the matter is, the revelation of the Antichrist has not yet been given. Therefore speculation in this matter is useless and fruitless. We are to focus on what we can know, what we are told in God's word. If anyone is

expecting me to state who the Antichrist is or shall be, they are going to be disappointed.

Now, let's look at Daniel 11:21, "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." We are going to read several verses here, and I don't really have time to go into all of them, but this particular verse is important. Think about the coming of the Antichrist, this vile person. At first they shall not give the honor of the kingdom unto him, but he is going to come in peaceably. He is not going to first appear to be what he actually is. Israel has always been looking for a peacemaker. They still are today. They are going to welcome one that can bring in peace. He is going to come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

Let's take up our reading in Daniel with verse 22. "And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him, he shall work deceitfully; for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches; yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time. And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand; for they shall forecast devices against him. Yea,

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they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed. Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land. At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flat-

teries; but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be helped with a little help; but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

I read all of that because I think all of it is important. I don't have time to discuss all of it, but what a great outline we have here for the history of the anti-Christ. Let me also point out a very important fact that never should be forgotten. When you read and study about the career of the Antichrist, and the things that are going to come to pass, never, never forget that God is still on his throne. Never lose sight of the fact that God is in control. God never stops being God.

**Never lose sight of the fact that God is in control.**

If you go all the way back to verse 27 in this passage you will find these words, "for yet the end shall be at the time appointed." Who do you think appointed that time? Also in verse 29, "At the time appointed." In verse 35 we read, "even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed." In verse 36 we have, "for that that is determined shall be done." And then in verse 45, "yet he shall come to his end," an end that is appointed by God. "Anti-Christ shall come" is the declaration of John. Antichrist is going to come! This vile person, the one who is before appointed of God is going to come, but he will have an appointed end.

Now, looking in Daniel, chapter 8, I want to mention three things about this Antichrist. I want us to notice three things about his career and reign. He is going to control at least three different areas. He is going to control commerce. He is going to control the military. He is going to control governments. In Daniel in chapter 8:25, "And through his policy also he shall cause craft (fraud) to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." Compare this with Revelation 13:16, 17, "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

Now, again, God's elect are not going to take this mark of the Antichrist. There will be a revelation for them. But that being the case, we are going to be considered as outlaws in this world. We are not going to be able to buy or sell. Now, I have heard some people say, "Well, I own my own land, and I will stay on it, and I will raise my crops, I can live by myself." How are you going to pay your taxes? We are going to be outlaws during the reign of Antichrist.

Let's also look at Revelation 6:2, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." Let me also go back to Revelation 13:4, "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast; saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" The Antichrist is going to have such great military power that people will view him as a foe that cannot be defeated by ordinary means. Who is able to make war with him?

### Notice:

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Revelation 17:1-18, is an important passage dealing with these things, especially what is stated in verse 13, as he speaks about the different kings of the earth. "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Now, do not be deceived by those who would have you believe that all the kingdoms of the earth are working at odds with each other. What we read in Revelation 17:13 is getting closer and closer. The "mystery of iniquity" is already at work. These things are fast approaching. One day, they will all give their power and authority of the beast.

When you read and study these things, always remember, God is still in control. For God has put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, verse 17. Nobody but God can make the kings of this earth agree. But, God has put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled. Antichrist is going to control commerce. He is going to control religion. He is going to control the military. He is going to control the government. What Nimrod sought to do many years ago, Antichrist will do!

And Antichrist is going to fulfill the aim of the United Nations: a one-world government.

Let me mention something else to you. Revelation 19:20. As surely as there is a Holy Trinity, there is also an unholy trinity. And as surely as the first is literal, so is the second. In the first there is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the latter there is the beast, the false prophet and the devil. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him." Here we have two of the three, the beast and the false prophet. In Revelation 20: 10 we find the third; "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are." There is an unholy trinity: Satan, the beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet. They are real. You can rest assured they are as real as the Holy Trinity.

I will close by mentioning what Jesus said in John 5:43, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not." But then He told them, He told those Jews, "if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." ✪

Henry M. Parsons

## Christ

John 3:31: "Comes from above."  
 John 5:43: "Comes in His Father's name."  
 Phil. 2:8: "Humbled Himself and became obedient."  
 Isa. 53:3: "Was despised and rejected, and we esteemed Him not."  
 John 6:38: "Comes to do His Father's will."  
 John 17:4: "Glorifies God on earth."  
 John 10:14,15: "The Good Shepherd that giveth His life for the sheep."  
 Phil. 2:9, 10: "God highly exalts Him, and gives Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."  
 Matt. 24:30: "Shall be seen coming in the clouds with power and great glory."  
 Rev. 11:15: "Shall reign forever and ever."  
 Heb. 1:2: "The heir of all things."

## Antichrist

Rev. 11:7: "Comes from below."  
 John 5:43: "Comes in His own."  
 2 Thess. 2:4: "Exalts himself above all."  
 Rev. 13:3, 4: "All the world wondered after the beast, saying, who is like unto Him?"  
 Dan. 11:31: "Does according to His own."  
 Rev. 13:6: "Blasphemes the name of God."  
 Zech. 11:16, 17: "The evil shepherd or idle shepherd who shall tear the flesh."  
 Isaiah 14:14, 15: "Exalteth himself above the heights of the clouds, yet is brought down to hell."  
 Isaiah 14:16: "They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake the kingdoms."  
 Dan. 7:26: "They shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it to the end."  
 2 Thess. 2:3: The son of Perdition.

## The Papacy Not the Antichrist

A. W. Pink



"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the occasion on which they were uttered and the connection in which they are found, invest them with peculiar solemnity. The chapter opens by depicting the Saviour healing the impotent man who lay by the pool of Bethesda. This occurred on the Sabbath day, and the enemies of Christ made it the occasion for a vicious attack upon Him: "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day" (v. 16). In vindicating His performance of this miracle on the Sabbath, the Lord Jesus began by saying, "My father worketh hitherto, and I work" (v. 17). But this only served to intensify their enmity against Him, for we read, "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (v. 18). In response, Christ then made a detailed declaration of His Divine glories. In conclusion He appealed to the varied witnesses which bore testimony to His Deity; —the Father Himself (v. 32); John the Baptist (v. 33); His own works (v. 36); and the Scriptures (v. 39). Then He turned to those who were opposing Him and said, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (vv. 40, 42, 43). And this was immediately followed by this searching question—"How can ye believe which receive honor (glory) one of another, and seek not the honor (glory) that cometh from God only?" (v. 44).

Here is the key to the solemn statement which begins this article. These Jews received glory from one another; they did not seek it from God, for they had not the love of God in them. Therefore it was that the One who had come to them in the Father's name, and who "received *not* glory from men" (v. 41) was rejected by them. And just as Eve's rejection of the word of God's truth laid her open to accept the serpent's lie, so Israel's *rejection* of the true

Messiah has prepared them, morally to *receive* the false Messiah, for he will come in his own name, doing his own pleasure, and *will* "receive glory from men." Thus will he thoroughly appeal to the corrupt heart of the natural man.

The future appearing of this one who shall "come in his own name" was announced then, by the Lord Himself. The Antichrist will be "received," not only by the Jews, but also by the whole world; received as their acknowledged Head and Ruler; and all the modern pleas for and movements to bring about a federation of the churches and a union of Christendom, together with the present-day efforts to establish a League of Nations—a great United States of the World—are but preparing the way for just such a character as is portrayed both in the Old and New Testaments.

There will be many remarkable correspondences between the true and the false Christ, but more numerous and more striking will be *the contrasts* between the Son of God and the Son of Perdition. The Lord Jesus came down from Heaven, whereas the Antichrist shall ascend from the bottomless Pit (Rev. 11:7). The Lord Jesus came in His Father's name, emptied Himself of His glory, lived in absolute dependence upon God, and refused to receive honor from men; but the Man of Sin will come in his own name, embodying all the pride of the Devil, opposing and exalting himself not only against everything that bears His name, and his deepest craving will be to receive honor and homage from men.

Now since this parallel, with its pointed contrasts, was drawn by our Lord Himself in John 5:43, how conclusive is the proof which it affords that the Antichrist will be a single individual being as surely as Christ was! In further proof of this 1 John 2:18 may be cited: "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that Antichrist cometh, even now hath there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour" (R.V.). Here *the* Antichrist is plainly distinguished from the many who prepare his way. The verb "cometh" here is a remarkable one, for it is the very same that is used of the Lord Jesus Christ in reference to *His* first and second Advents. The Antichrist, therefore, is also "the coming one," or "he that cometh." This defines his relation *to the world*,—which has long been expecting some Conquering Hero—as "the Coming One" defines the relation of the Christ of God *to His*

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*Churches*, whose Divinely-inspired hope is the return of the Lord from Heaven.

Nor does this by any means exhaust the proof that the coming Antichrist will be a single individual being. The expressions used by the apostle Paul in 2 Thess. 2—"that Man of Sin," "The Son of Perdition," "he that opposeth and exalteth himself," "the Wicked One whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth," "he whose coming is after the working of Satan"—all these point as distinctly to a single individual as did the Messianic predictions of the Old Testament point to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, in accordance with these texts, and many others which might be quoted, we find that all the Christian writers of the first six centuries (that is all who make reference to the subject) regarded the Antichrist as a real person, a specific individual. We might fill many pages by giving extracts from their works, but three must suffice. The first is taken from a very ancient document, entitled "The Teaching of the Apostle," which probably dates back to the beginning of the second century:

"For in the last days the false prophets and the destroyers shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate. For when lawlessness increases, they shall hate and persecute and deliver up one another; and then shall appear the world-deceiver as Son of God, who shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall do lawless deeds such as have never yet been done since the beginning of the world. Then shall the race of men come into the fire of trial, and many shall be offended and shall perish, but they who have endured in their faith shall be saved under the very curse itself."

Our second quotation is taken from the writings of Cyril, who was Bishop of Jerusalem in the fourth century: "This aforementioned Antichrist comes when the times of the sovereignty of the Romans shall be fulfilled and the concluding events of the world draw nigh. Ten kings of the Romans arise at the same time in different places, perhaps; but reigning at the same period. But after these, the Antichrist is the eleventh, having, by his magic and evil skill, violently possessed himself of the Roman power. Three of those who have reigned before him, he will subdue; the other seven he will hold in subjection to himself. At first he assumes a character of gentleness (as if a wise and understanding person), pretending both to moderation and philanthropy; deceiving, both by lying miracles and prodigies which come from his

magical deceptions, the Jews, as if he were the expected Messiah. Afterwards he will addict himself to every kind of evil, cruelty, and excess, so as to surpass all who have been unjust and impious before him; having a bloody and relentless and pitiless mind, and full of wily devices against all, and especially against believers. But having dared such things three years and six months, he will be destroyed by the second glorious coming from heaven of the truly begotten Son of God, who is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus the true Messiah; who, having destroyed Antichrist by the Spirit of His mouth will deliver him to the fires of Gehenna."

Our last quotation is made from the writings of Gregory of Tours, who wrote at the end of the sixth century A.D.: "Concerning the end of the world, I believe what I have learnt from those who have gone before me. Antichrist will assume circumcision, asserting himself to be the Christ. He will then place a statue to be worshipped in the Temple at Jerusalem, as we read that the Lord has said, 'Ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place'."

Our purpose in making these quotations is not because we regard the voice of antiquity as being in any degree authoritative: far from it; the *only* authority for us is "What saith the Scriptures?" Nor have we presented these views as curious relics of antiquity—though it is interesting to discover the thoughts which occupied some of the leading minds of past ages. No; our purpose has been simply to show that the early Christian writers uniformly held that the Antichrist would be a real person, a Jew, one who should both simulate and oppose the true Christ. Such continued to be the generally received doctrine until what is known as the Dark Ages were far advanced.

**Jesus the true  
Messiah; who,  
having  
destroyed Anti-  
christ by the  
Spirit of His  
mouth will de-  
liver him to the  
fires of Gehenna**

It is not until we reach the fourteenth century (so far as the writer is aware) that we find the first marked deviation from the uniform belief of the early Christians. It was the Waldenses, so remarkably sound in the faith on almost all points of doctrine—who, thoroughly worn out by centuries of the most relentless and merciless persecutions, published about the year 1350 a treatise designed to prove that the system of Popery was the Antichrist. It should however be said

in honor of this people, whose memory is blessed, that in one of their earliest books entitled "The Noble Lesson," published about 1100 A.D., they taught that the Antichrist was an individual rather than a system.

Following the new view espoused by the Waldenses it was not long before the Hussites, the Wycliffites and the

Lollards—other companies of Christians who were fiercely persecuted by Rome—eagerly caught up the idea, and proclaimed that the Pope was the Man of Sin and the papacy the Beast. From them it was handed on to the leaders of the Reformation who soon made an earnest attempt to systematize this new scheme of eschatology. But rarely has there been a more forcible example of the tendency of men's beliefs to be moulded by the events and signs of their own lifetime. In order to adapt the prophecies of the Antichrist to the Papal hierarchy, or the line of the Popes, they had to be so wrested that scarcely anything was left of their original meaning.

"The coming Man of Sin had to be changed into a long succession of men. The time of his continuance, which God had stated with precision and clearness as forty-two months (Rev. 13:5), or three years and a half, being far too short for the line of Popes, had to be lengthened by an ingenious, but most unwarrantable, process of first resolving it into days, and then turning these days into years.

"The fact that, in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Apocalypse, the first Beast or secular power, is supreme while the second Beast or ecclesiastical power is subordinate, had to be ignored; since such an arrangement is opposed to all the traditions of the Roman system. Also the circumstances that the second Beast is a prophet and not a priest, had to be kept in the background; for the Roman church exalts the priest, and has little care for the prophet. Then, again, the awful words pronouncing sentence of death upon everyone who worshipped the Beast and his image, and receives his mark in his forehead or in his hand (Rev. 13), seemed—and no wonder—too terrible to be applied to every Roman Catholic, and, therefore, had to be explained away or suppressed" (*G.H. Pember*).

Nevertheless, by common consent the Reformers applied the prophecies which treat of the character, career, and doom on the Antichrist, to Popery, and regarded those of his titles which referred to him as "that Man of Sin the Son of Perdition," the "King of Babylon" and "the Beast," as only so many names for the head of the Roman hierarchy. But this view, which was upheld by most of the Puritans too, must be brought to the test of the one infallible standard of Truth which our gracious God has placed in our hands. We must search the Scriptures to see whether these things be so or not.

Now we shall hold no brief for the pope, nor have we anything good to say of that pernicious system of which he is the head. On the contrary, we have no hesitation in

denouncing as rank blasphemy the blatant assumption of the pope as being the infallible vicar of Christ. Nor do we hesitate to declare that the Papacy has been marked, all through its long history, by impious arrogance, awful idolatry, and unspeakable cruelty. But, nevertheless, there are many scriptures which prevent us from believing that the Papacy and the Antichrist are identical. The Son of Perdition will eclipse any monstrosities that have sprung from the waves of the Tiber. The Bible plainly teaches us to look for a more terrible personage than any Hildebrand or Leo.

Undoubtedly there are many points of analogy between Antichrist and the popes and without doubt the Papal system has foreshadowed to a remarkable degree the character and career of the coming Man of Sin. Some of the parallelisms between them were pointed out by us in the previous chapter, and to these many more might be added. Not

only is it evident that Roman Catholicism is a most striking type and harbinger of that one yet to come, but the cause of truth requires us to affirm that the Papacy is *an antichrist*, doubtless, the most devilish of them all. Yet, we say again, that Romanism is not *the* Antichrist. As it is likely that many of our readers have been educated in the belief that the pope and the Antichrist are identical, we shall proceed to produce some of the numerous proofs which go to show that such is not the case. That the Papacy cannot possibly be *the* Antichrist appears from the following considerations:—

- ✦ The term "Antichrist" whether employed in the singular or the plural, denotes a person or persons, and *never a system*. We may speak correctly of an anti-Christian system, just as we may refer to a Christian organization; but it is just as inadmissible and erroneous to refer to any system or organization as "the Antichrist" or "an antichrist," as it would be to denominate any Christian system or organization "the Christ," or "a Christ." Just as truly as *the Christ* is the title of a single person, the Son of God so *the Antichrist* will be a single person, the son of Satan.
- ✦ The Antichrist will be a lineal descendant of Abraham, a Jew. We shall not stop to submit the proof for this, as that will be given in our next chapter; suffice it now to say that none but a full-blooded Jew could ever expect to palm himself off on the Jewish people as their long-expected Messiah. Here is an argument that has never been met by those who believe that the pope is the Man of Sin. So far as we are aware no Israelite has ever occupied the Papal See—certainly none has done so since the seventh century.

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✧ In line with the last argument, we read in Zech. 11: 16, 17, "For, lo, I will raise up a Shepherd in the land which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young ones nor heal that that is broken nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the Idol Shepherd that leaveth the flock! The sword (of Divine judgment) shall be upon his arm (his power), and upon his right eye (intelligence): his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened." "The land" here is, of course, Palestine, as is ever the case in Scripture with this expression. This could not possibly apply to the line of the Pope.

✧ In 2 Thess. 2:4 we learn that the Man of Sin shall sit "in the Temple of God," and St. Peter's at Rome cannot possibly be called *that*. The "Temple" in which the Antichrist shall sit will be the rebuilt temple of the Jews, and that will be located not in Italy but in Jerusalem. In later chapters it will be shown that the Mosque of Omar shall yet be replaced by a Jewish Temple before our Lord returns to the earth.

✧ The Antichrist will be *received by the Jews*. This is clear from the passage which heads the first paragraph of this chapter: "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive"; but the *Jews* have never yet owned allegiance to any pope.

✧ The Antichrist will make a Covenant with the Jews. In Dan. 9:27 we read, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." The one referred to here as making this seven-year Covenant is "the Prince that shall come" of the previous verse, namely, the Antichrist, who will be the Head of the ten-kingdomed Empire. The nation with whom the Prince will make this covenant is the people of Daniel, as is clear from the context—see v. 24. But we know of no record upon the scroll of history of any pope having ever made a seven-year Covenant with the Jews!

✧ In Dan. 11:45 we read, "And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." The person referred to here is, again, the Antichrist, as will be seen by going back to v. 36 where this section of the chapter begins. There we are told, "The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God

of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that that is determined shall be done." This is more than sufficient to identify with certainty the one spoken of in the last verse of Dan. 11. The Antichrist, then, will plant the tabernacles of his palace "between the seas," that is, between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. By no species of ingenuity can this be made to apply to the pope, for his palace, the Vatican, is located in the capital city of Italy...

✧ The Antichrist will deny both the Father and the Son: "He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22). This scripture does not speak of virtual, but of actual and formal denial. But Rome has always maintained in her councils and creeds, her symbols of faith and worship, that there are three persons in the Godhead. Numerous and grievous have been her departures from the teaching of Holy Scripture, yet since the time of the Council of Trent (1563 A.D.) every Roman Catholic has had to confess "I believe in God the Father...and in the Lord Jesus Christ...and in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son."

As a system Romanism is a go-between. The "priest" stands between the sinner and God; the "confessional" between him and the throne of grace; "penance" between him and godly sorrow; the "mass" between him and Christ; and "purgatory" between him and Heaven. The pope acknowledges both the Father and the Son; he confesses himself to be both the servant of God and His worshipper; he blesses the people not in his own name, but in that of the Holy Trinity.

**We know of no record upon the scroll of history of any pope having ever made a seven-year Covenant with the Jews!**

✧ The Antichrist is described as the one "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (1 Thess. 2:4). This is what the popes have never done. Not even Leo ventured to deify himself or supersede God. The popes have made many false and impious claims for themselves; nevertheless, their decrees have been sent forth as from the "vicegerent" of God, the "vicar" of Christ—thus acknowledging a Divine power *above* himself.

✧ In Rev. 13:2, 4 we read, "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority...and they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast." By comparing these verses with Rev. 12:9 we learn that the Dragon is none other

than Satan himself. Now by almost common consent this first beast of Rev. 13 is the Antichrist. If, then, Romanism be the Antichrist, where, we may ask, shall we turn to find anything answering to what we read of here in Rev. 13:4—"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast"!

- ✧ This same 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation informs us that the Antichrist (the first Beast) shall be *aided* by a second Beast who is denominated "the False Prophet" (Rev. 19:20). The False Prophet, we are told "exerciseth all the power of the First Beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the *First Beast*" (Rev. 13:12). If the First Beast be the Papacy, then who is the False Prophet who "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship" her?

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- ✧ Again; we are told that this False Prophet shall say to them that dwell on the earth "that they should make an image to the Beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live" (Rev. 13:14). Further, we are told, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live" (Rev. 13:14). Further, we are told, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed" (Rev. 13:15). Where do we find anything in Popery which in anywise resembles this?

- ✧ The *dominion* of the Antichrist shall be *world-wide*. The coming Man of Sin will assert a supremacy which shall be unchallenged and universal. "And all the world wondered after the Beast" (Rev. 13:3). "And power was given him over *all* kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (13:7). It hardly needs to be pointed out that half of Christendom, to say nothing of Heathendom, is *outside* the pale of Rome, and is antagonistic to the claims of the Papacy. Again; in 13:17 we read "No man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name" and when, we ask, has any pope exercised such commercial supremacy that none could buy or sell without his permission?

- ✧ The *duration* of Antichrist's career, after he comes out in his true character, will be *limited* to forty-two months. There are no less than six scriptures which, with a variety of expression, affirm this time restriction. In Dan. 7:25 we learn that this one who shall

"speak great words against the Most High," and who shall think to change times and laws," will have these "given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time" that is, for three years and a half—cf. Rev. 12:14 with 12:6. And again in Rev. 13:5 we are told, "and there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue *forty and two months*" (Rev. 13:5). Now it is utterly impossible to make this harmonize with the protracted history of Romanism by any honest method of computation.

- ✧ In Rev. 13:7-8 we read, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the face of the earth shall worship him, *whose names are not written* in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Here we are expressly told that the only ones who will not "worship the Beast," i.e. the Antichrist, are they whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. If then the pope is the Antichrist, all who do not worship him must have their names written in the Lamb's book of life—an absurdity on the face of it, for this would be tantamount to saying that all the infidels, atheists, and unbelievers of the last thousand years who were outside of the pale of Roman Catholicism are saved....

- ✧ That the Antichrist and the Papacy are totally distinct is unequivocally established by the teaching of Rev. 17. Here we learn that there shall be ten kings who will reign "with the Beast" (v. 12), and act in concert with him (vv. 13, 16). Then we are told "these shall hate the Whore (the papacy), and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (v. 16). Instead of the Antichrist and the Papacy being identical, the former shall destroy the latter; whereas, the Antichrist shall be destroyed by Christ Himself, see 2 Thess. 2:8.

Perhaps a word of explanation is called for as to why we have entered into such lengthy details in presenting some of the many proofs that the Papacy is not the Antichrist. Our chief reason for doing so was because we expect that many who will read this paper are among the number who have been brought up in the belief which was commonly taught by the Reformers and which has prevailed generally since their day. ✧

From *The Antichrist*. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, PA



## The Antichrist—A Particular Person

David Park

In thinking about this subject of the antichrist – a particular person, as distinct from many antichrists, my mind was drawn to 1 John 2:18, where the apostle says, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.” No doubt, there were many antichrists in John’s day, as there have been many antichrists since, and, of course, the world is abounding with antichrists today. In each successive age of the last days, there has been a multiplicity of those who have stood in opposition to Bible Truth. The word “Anti” means “against.” Any person, any system, any doctrine, any belief, anything which is against Christ might well be described as “antichrist.”

Sabellianism of the third century, a form of Unitarianism, propagated the view that God is not only one single essence but that God is one single person. That is antichrist. It is a belief that is adopted to this very day by those who would propagate the “oneness” theory. Arianism of the fourth century, named after Arius who espoused erroneous teachings about the godhead, maintaining that God the Father alone was eternal, and Jesus Christ His Son was the first creature He created, is antichrist. Arius took away from the eternal Sonship and the essential deity of Jesus Christ. His teachings were rejected by the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325.

The Papacy, emerging in the fourth and fifth centuries with all its blasphemous doctrines and practices, is antichrist. Many of our forefathers saw the system of Rome as being “The Antichrist.” Each successive pope in history, in their claims and professions, is antichrist. All the false religions of the world that stand in opposition to Christ can rightly be defined as antichrist – Buddhism, Mohammedanism and all the other false religions. The numerous cults with all their diverse unbiblical beliefs are antichrist – the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Mormons, Spiritism, Armstrongism, Seventh Day Adventism, the New Age Movement, etc. There are hundreds of cults, thousands perhaps, and they stand in opposition to the Lord Jesus.

But there is a difference between the numerous antichrists which were in John’s day, together with those antichrists which are still abundant in this present age, and “the antichrist” mentioned in 1 John 2:18. John tells us, “Ye have heard that antichrist shall come.” The rendering of the

Greek is important. There are three significant facts that emerge from this verse of Scripture.

Firstly, the Greek includes the definite article, which we do not see in our English translation. The actual reading of this text is, “According as ye have heard that THE antichrist is coming,” as opposed to an antichrist or the multiplicity of antichrists.

Secondly, John uses both a singular noun and a plural noun in this text. He uses the word “antichrist” pointing to one single individual, and he uses the noun “antichrists,” in the plural, indicating more than one. There are “many antichrists” which have abounded since the days of the apostles and shall continue to abound, but there is one final manifestation of THE antichrist.

Thirdly, in this text, John highlights the period or the time during which both emerge. He is contrasting the present with the future. “The antichrist,” according to the apostle, was still to come. “The antichrist is coming,” he says. But the “many antichrists” were present in John’s time. “Even now,” he says, in the present time, “many antichrists have risen.” The church was beset by those who were against Christ during the era in which John lived and wrote his epistle.

This first letter which he wrote, it is reckoned, was written in A.D. 90, some sixty years after the ascension of Jesus Christ to glory. Antichrists, a multiplicity of them, were manifest then, and clearly, from the sense and application of John’s words, would continue to rise in each successive generation. There will always be “many antichrists.” There will always be “the spirit of antichrist” abroad. There will always be those who stand in opposition to the Saviour, men who will be against the Son of God. So antichrist, in our text, is clearly identified as being THE antichrist, someone that is apart from all the others. He is a singular individual and someone future, to arise in a later day than that of John. Having established this, let us see elsewhere in Scripture that the antichrist is indeed a particular person and not the many antichrists which have abounded in every age.

### The Titles that are Attributed to Him

First of all, the titles that are attributed to him point to a particular person. Various names and titles are given to

the antichrist which distinctly highlight his personality. We have seen this term "antichrist," identifying a singular individual. The word is used only five times in the Bible once in the plural and four times in the singular, and always by John, and in his epistles.

The first two references are in our text, where he says that "antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists." The third reference is in verse 22, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is the antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. And then in 4:3, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist (*every time that John uses the word "antichrist," the definite article is used in the Greek*), whereof ye have heard that it should come: and even now already is it in the world." And then the final reference to the antichrist is that of 2 John 7, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

This word "antichrist" can mean either, as we have suggested already, "against Christ," or it can mean "instead of Christ," or, combining both of them together, it will suggest to us that the antichrist is one who, assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ. Antichrist, when he comes will certainly fulfill both aspects. He will be against Christ and he will come instead of Christ.

There are other names and titles that are given to the antichrist in the Word of God. In Revelation 13 we have the name, "beast," as in verse 1, "I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." Revelation 13 mentions two beasts. The opening ten verses speak of the first beast rising out of the sea, the great sea, the Mediterranean Sea, referring to the area of the ten kingdoms, the prophetic or Roman earth. From verse 11, we read of the second beast, coming up out of the earth. It is the first beast which is identified as the antichrist. The second beast is the false prophet, who supports the antichrist in all his antichristian ways, and promotes worship of him. This chapter contains the fullest and clearest description of the antichrist given in the Bible. It builds and enlarges upon the details of Daniel's prophetic description.

In the graphic picture set before the apostle John in this portion of God's Word, the antichrist is seen to be an individual person by the use of the possessive pronouns. It talks about his horns his feet, his mouth, his heads, his

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and he will  
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of Christ.**

deadly wound. In addition to this we should also note how often the pronoun "him" is recorded, again indicating a singular person. The question is asked in verse 4, "Who is able to make war with him?" And we read in verse 2, "the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." And in verse 5, "there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." In verse 7, "It was given unto him to make war with the saints...and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." And also in verse 8, "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." We could also take in the pronoun "he." Verse 6 "And he opened his mouth." If you count these pronouns which are mentioned in these opening eight verses, you will find something like fourteen of them, all given in the singular, pointing to an individual person.

The language of this chapter is, no doubt, figurative, even a child could see that is so. Consider the seven heads, the ten crowns, the leopard-like appearance, the bear-like feet, and the mouth like a lion. But the question is, what does the picture represent? What is the Word of God speaking about? Some say it depicts a system, or an empire. Others believe that it is an individual man. Which is the case?

The Bible tells us at the end of the chapter (verse 18), "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a MAN; and his number is six hundred threescore and six." Here is the explanation of the figure that is given. The beast is a MAN who is identified by the number six hundred and sixty-six. Six in Scripture is associated with sinful man. Therefore a triple six must surely mark out sinful man at his peak. Such is the antichrist.

This beast is not Rome. It is not the system of Rome or the pontiff of Rome. Look at what it says in the next chapter. Revelation 14:9-11, "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

Those who interpret the beast as being Rome obviously have a difficulty when it comes to this passage. If the pope or the system of Rome is the antichrist, then all who have, at any time, given allegiance to Rome are most certainly damned, because that is what the Word of God is teaching here. If Rome is the antichrist then those who have followed that system can never be saved and those who have claimed that they have been delivered by the grace of God out of such darkness have deceived themselves, and others who have come into contact with them. But we know that many have been delivered from the darkness of Rome, and they have been brought into Christ's light, not least, many of our Reformers.

There is no doubt that popery is antichrist, but it is not the antichrist. I believe that, as the Westminster Confession of Faith puts it, the pope "is that antichrist...that exalteth himself in the church against Christ." That is, the pope is the principle antichrist in the church or in Christendom, but he is not the sole antichrist in the world. I put it to you that the beast is one particular individual, not a system, not a succession of individuals.

There are other titles that you might consider. They all highlight the fact that the antichrist is personal and individual. Three of these names are given by the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 2. In verse 3, he is called "the man of sin" (and you will notice again that he is called a man, not a system nor a succession of various men). "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." The second name given in this verse is "the son of perdition," which, again, is individual and personal. And then in verse 8, he is referred to as being "that wicked be revealed." That wicked one is a name again describing a particular person.

In Daniel 11, we have him called "the king." Verse 36 says, "the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that that is determined shall be done." Again, all the words in the English there are referring to an individual singular person. So the names point to a particular person.

#### The Testimony that is Ascribed to Him

Not only the titles but the testimony that is ascribed to him points to a particular person. What is said about him suggests that he is an individual. We come back to Reve-

lation 13 and discover in verse 3 that the world will wonder after him. This verse tells about "one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." All the world is to wonder after the antichrist. This has never happened with regard to any person or any system or belief that may have been classified as the antichrist by others. The whole world has never yet so wondered after any religion or succession or religious leaders.

You will see from verse 4 that the world will not only wonder after him but the world will worship him. "They worshipped the dragon (that is, the devil) which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him." Again in verse 8, "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." All those whose names are not written in this Book will worship the antichrist. No religion, no system, no succession of persons, no individual as yet, could lay claim to this.

Some religions and antichrist systems receive considerable following throughout the world – Romanism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Humanism, etc., but though they are unquestionably antichrist in belief and practice, yet they are not THE antichrist for none of them have been worshipped by the entire world of unregenerate men. Take, for example, the Roman Catholic church. She has made inroads into every continent, exercised influence in most governments of the world, received a tremendous following throughout the earth. There is no doubt that the Romish system is antichrist and that every pope has been antichrist, but not the antichrist. Neither the system nor the leader has been wondered after and worshipped by the whole world. Rome will ultimately, without doubt, form part of the system of the antichrist but there will also be many other evil systems amalgamated together in one unholy confederation. So, the testimony that is ascribed to the antichrist is pointing to a particular person. The world will wonder after him. The world will worship him.

#### The Torment that Awaits Him

Then, the torment that awaits him points to a particular person. At the coming of the blessed Son of God, this individual, the antichrist, will be "destroyed with the brightness of Christ's coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8). His being so destroyed at the appearing of Jesus Christ in His glorious return again emphasizes the fact that the antichrist is a particular person, not many antichrists, not a succession

**There is no doubt that popery is antichrist, but it is not the antichrist.**

## Premillennial Baptist Journal

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Theme of next issue:  
**The Book of Revelation**

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of antichrists, not a system of antichrists, but a future personal antichrist who is alive at the coming of the Saviour and will be destroyed when He comes. He will then be taken and cast into the depths of eternal hell.

In Revelation 19:20, we have these fearful words, "The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." One cannot speak of a system or an empire being cast alive into hell. This can only be asserted concerning a man, and that man is the antichrist. Antichrist, the beast, is as much an individual as the false prophet and the devil.

In Revelation 20:10, we are told that "the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Again, a system or an empire cannot be tormented in hell, but a man

can, and this man, the antichrist, will endure such eternal judgment. So, the torment that awaits him points to a particular person. I am putting it to you that the antichrist that is revealed in the Bible is, indeed, a particular person.

As I come to close this message, I want to ask the question, "Are you safe-guarded against him if he should arise soon? Are you cleansed, and covered, and protected by the Blood of the Saviour? Are you found in Christ and saved by grace?" For only those who are found in such a state will be kept and preserved in the evil day of antichrist. Make sure that you have a saving, living, vital relationship with the Son of God, that you can say in the depths of your heart, It is well with my soul; I know Christ as my Redeemer; and I know should the evil day overtake me in my generation that it will be well for I will be sheltered and I will be shielded, and will be kept by the power of God. ✪

*From Watching and Waiting July-September 2001*

### On the Antichrist:

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, (Col. 1:18; Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:21-22) all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; neither can the pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof, but is (2 Thess. 2:2-9) [no other] than antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

*The Philadelphia Confession of Faith Chapter XXVI. Of the church.*



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## The Book of Revelation

### Inside This Edition

- The Book of Revelation, *John T. Daniel* ..... p. 3
- A General Introduction to Revelation, *Wayne Camp*..... p. 6
- The Book of the Last Days, *Horatius Bonar*..... p. 9
- Christ, the Spirit of Prophecy, *Laurence A. Justice* ..... p. 12

"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

"...the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem..."

# The Book of Revelation

John T. Daniel



- It is a Revelation of Jesus Christ from the Father, through John.
- It is a Christian book that glorifies Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The Lord Jesus is the central and commanding figure throughout.
- It is the prophetic book of the New Testament. Ch. 1:3; Ch. 22:18-19.
- It unites the prophetic element of the Old Testament.
- It is a revelation of His glory in relation to the world, the unveiling of the future in and through Him. The book emphasizes Him in all the glory of his Divine Person and universal rule.

The entire Bible is a book of revelation, so clear that even a child can understand. Revealed unto babes Matthew 11:25-26. Though in simple words of one syllable, yet, the Bible is no shallow urn whose treasures can be easily exhausted. Great scholars have grown gray in the study of the Bible and still have felt that they were but children picking up pebbles on the shore of the boundless, fathomless deep.

Every book in the Bible has its problems. Every book is a book of revelation, filled with mystery.

In Revelation 1:1-3 we read, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants... and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John..." "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand."

The book declares itself to be "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The devout Christian should read it carefully and prayerfully expecting to learn more about the Lord Jesus. Any other approach to the study of the Revelation is fruitless and will lead to confusion. Whatever is found in the book is part of the Revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ.

Because of the wrong approach to the book it turns out to be the greatest enigma of the New Testament.

The confusion and lack of understanding of this Revelation of Jesus Christ is no doubt the work of Satan. God wants us to know about the Lord Jesus. The Devil opposes such knowledge. You cannot read the book without seeing the conflicting work of Satan.

This book is the only book in the Bible which tells about the Devil being chained and finally imprisoned in the Lake of Fire. The Devil knows it and seeks to keep God's children from knowing it. He goes up and down the land saying, "It is no use to read the book of Revelation. You cannot understand it. It is too hard and difficult for you." The fact is that he does not want men to know and understand about his certain and final defeat.

The Devil is also responsible for the deceptive, confusing, and misleading books and sermons purporting to interpret the book. It must be remembered that God is not the author of confusion. This is ever the work of Satan.

Again, whatever is found in the book is a part of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Like the Bible itself, it is first a book of blessed revelation, and second, a book of profound mystery.

In Ephesians 6:19, Paul says that the Gospel was a mystery, not meaning that it would never be fully understood, but that it was once a secret, but now, through Paul, is manifested and easily understood by anyone who will hear it.

We will never in this life fully understand the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Our finite minds cannot fully comprehend the Infinite. However, if we read the book we will be blessed and an increasing appreciation of our glorified Lord in ultimate victory, will be our reward. Read it and pray, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," and ever increasing light will come.

In Chapter 1:3 a blessing is promised to those who read, hear, and keep the words of this prophecy.

In Chapter 22:18-19, there is a solemn threat to those who add to or take from the words of the book of this prophecy. It is our privilege to enjoy the blessings. Let us be careful to avoid the curse plainly revealed.

John T. Daniel (1891-1987) was a longtime Baptist pastor in Oklahoma City, OK.

There are many and conflicting interpretations of the Revelation. It is well for us to remember that it is a God-given Revelation of Jesus Christ which was divinely imparted to John. God gave it not to confuse us but to enlighten us regarding His Son in the final conflict with Satan and his evil influence.

It is filled with visions which are symbolical, which signify something regarding the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The words "I saw" occurs over forty times.

It will help us to realize that there is scarcely a vision or symbol in the whole book which is not to some extent modeled after something similar in the Old Testament. It may be doubted whether it contains a single figure not drawn from the Old Testament or a single complete sentence not more or less built up on materials brought from the same. See, for instance, Balaam, Jezebel, Michael, Abaddon, Jerusalem, Mount Zion, Babylon, the Euphrates, Sodom, Egypt, Gog and Magog. Similarly, the tree of life, the scepter of iron, the potter's vessels, the morning star. Heaven is described under the figure of a Tabernacle in the wilderness. The song of the redeemed is the song of Moses. The plagues of Egypt appear in the blood, the fire, thunder, darkness, and locusts.

The great earthquake of chapter six is taken from Haggai; the sun becoming black as sackcloth of hair and the moon becoming blood, from Joel; the stars of heaven falling as a scroll, from Isaiah; the scorpions of chapter nine, from Ezekiel; the gathering of the vine of the earth, from Joel; the treading of the winepress in chapter nine, from Isaiah.

The details of the vision of the glorified Redeemer in 1:12-20 is taken from different prophets. In main the same description is found in Daniel, chapter 10. But the candle sticks are from Exodus and Zechariah; the garments down to the foot, from Exodus and Daniel; the golden girdle and hairs like wool, from Isaiah and Daniel, the feet like burnished brass and the voice like the sound of many waters, from Ezekiel, the two edged sword, from Isaiah and Psalms, the falling of the seer as dead, from Exodus, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; the laying of the Lord Jesus' right hand on the seer, from Daniel.

In these brief statements the source of symbols may be traced, and light upon them found in the Old Testament.

Thus, we find in Revelation a perfect fusion of the Revelation given to Israel and its ultimate meaning. The vision

of the four living creatures in chapter four is like that in Ezekiel, chapter one.

In the tenth chapter, of the little book to be eaten in Ezekiel 2: 8-9, 3:1-3; of the seal on the forehead in Ezekiel 9:4; Gog and Magog of 20:8 are interpreted in Ezekiel; likewise the measuring of the Temple and the river of life are from the last chapters of Ezekiel. Thus the weird and wonderful visions of Ezekiel, unique in the Old Testament, reappear in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. They are typical of Him.

*It would profit and enrich us if we saturated our hearts and minds with the entire Bible.*

There are fully as many parallels with the book of Daniel. In 1:1 the sending of the angel; in 10:6, the swearing of the angel; in 12:7, Michael the archangel; in 1:13, the name and description of the Son of Man; in 13:1, the beast with his many heads and horns; in 19:20, the lake of fire. In all, there are forty-five references to the book of Daniel in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

But, in spite of all these references and parallels, there is no direct quotation of the Old Testament anywhere in the Revelation! Not one!

John's spirit and style are saturated with the influence of the Old Testament images and allusions, language, and thought. If we are to better understand the Revelation it would behoove us to familiarize ourselves with the Old Testament prophets, especially Ezekiel and Daniel. To disregard them makes the Revelation of Jesus Christ a mass of confusing symbols, which will lead to all sorts of wild images and ultimately to disregard it entirely.

In line with these facts, in Westcott and Hort's "Appendix to the Greek New Testament" a table is given, which shows that in four hundred and four verses in Revelation, there are about two hundred and sixty-five which contain Old Testament language and about five hundred and fifty references made in them to Old Testament passages.

John made more use of Daniel than any other Old Testament book. More than half of his Old Testament references are to the Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Next in frequency of use come Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Joel, and Zechariah. He uses every book of law; Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Job, all of the major prophets, and seven of the minor prophets. John evidently knew his Bible from cover to cover. The Lord Jesus quoted every Old Testament book but Ecclesiastes. It would profit and enrich us if we saturated our hearts and minds with the entire Bible.

All of this reveals the Unity of the Word of God. Thus John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gathers up the threads of prophecy, spun through various ages, and from varying minds, and combines them in one final book. Thus all previous pictures, revelations and predictions have their complete fulfillment in the Revelation of Jesus Christ in His final and complete victory over the Devil, his subjects and his influence.

This book tells us that, Jesus shall reign wherever the sun shall its successive journeys run. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ (Ch. 11:15).

In the Revelation there is the symbolism of numbers. The number seven is most prominent. Seven was the sacred number among the Hebrews. It is the perfect number, the number of completeness or rest. It stands for governmental completeness. It represents the divine or the perfectly complete.

A simple outline of the book is in sevens:

(1) The Seven Churches, 1-3 (2) The Seven Seals, 4:1-8:1 (3) The Seven Trumpets, 8:2-11:19 (4) The Seven Personages, 12:1-14:20 (5) The Seven Vials, 15:1-16:21 (6) The Seven Dooms, 17:1-20:15 (7) The Seven New Things, 21:1-11:21.

- The number seven occurs 54 times in the Revelation.
- There are seven clear divisions in the introduction of chapter one.
- There are seven descriptive statements touching the Christophany.
- There are seven different sayings of the Living One Himself.
- There are seven characteristics of the scourging locusts.
- Also, there are seven beatitudes, 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:19, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14.
- There are the seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven spirits, seven stars, seven candlesticks, seven lamps of fire, seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb, seven heads of the dragon, seven heads of the beast, seven diadems, seven names of blasphemy, seven plagues, seven angels, seven thunders, seven hills of Babylon, seven kings, seven thousand men.

There is complete unity revealed here. It is a book of finality.

It is profitable to compare and contrast the first three or four chapters of Genesis with the last three or four chap-

ters of Revelation. There are at least sixteen points of comparison. It might be stated that the original paradise which was lost in the first Adam, is regained and restored by the last Adam.

This is the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It unveils, not conceals, the Lord. It is full of Him. The thoughtful student will not fail to see that He is the subject and the substance of every part.

**John, ...gathers up the threads of prophecy, spun through various ages, and from varying minds, and combines them in one final book.**

A blessing awaits those who will read, hear, and keep the words of this prophecy.

The New Testament as divine revelation, is concerned with the past, the present, and the future.

It includes a consideration of the Person of Christ in the Gospels, of the Church of Christ in the Acts and Epistles, and the Rule of Christ in the Revelation. Thus we have the foundation, the structure, and the completely furnished house. We pass from faith, to love, and to hope.

Here we find the answer to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come". While the spiritual principles of the kingdom obtain now, the kingdom in full reality is not yet revealed nor will it be till our Lord comes. A kingdom is impossible without a king.

### Christ in the Revelation

1. He is the risen, glorified Son of God among the churches as the light bearers of this present age, judging their state by His Spirit. Ch. 2-3.
2. He is the Lamb in heaven publicly invested with authority to carry out the determined preliminary judgments upon men before His personal arrival on earth as Judge and King. Ch. 4-9:10.
3. He comes to earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the Great Day of Wrath. Ch. 19:11-21.
4. He is Christ, reigning with His glorified saints on earth, during one thousand years, Ch. 20:1-6. He is King over all the earth. Zechariah 14:9.
5. He is the Judge upon the Great White Throne with the holiness, righteousness, and truth of deity absolutely and finally unveiled in judgment. Ch. 20:1-15.
6. He is the Lamb upon "the throne of God and the Lamb" through whom, though subjected willingly to the Father (I Cor. 15:28), the glory and love of the Deity will be expressed forevermore. Ch. 21:22, 23, 22:3-4.
7. He is "I Jesus...the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star," to His own, Ch. 22:16. He is

## Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

the coming One, expected and longed for by His real saints who are under His grace continually.

The Revelation's last words are "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the saints. Amen."

Finally: This book is stated to be "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him...and sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."

This book presents the Capstone of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. To bypass it leaves us with but a fragmentary picture of the Lord. To read and believe its contents will reveal the fact that Satan will finally and completely be conquered, and that the Lord Jesus will emerge as victor over the Devil, death, hell, and the grave.

In chapter 20 we read that for 1,000 years Christ and His resurrected saints will reign. Following this 1,000 year reign of Christ, the Devil will be "loosed out of his prison" and will make his final assault against the Lord and His saints. But the Lord will cast him "into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and he shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

The climax of "the Revelation of Jesus" is found in the last two chapters. A new Heaven, a new Earth and a new Jerusalem are pictured here, "and the Lamb is the light thereof." All taints, tarnishes, and traces of sin and its blight are removed and all the redeemed shall be with the Triune Godhead forever and "they shall reign for ever and ever" Ch. 22:5.

In the gospels the Lord Jesus is seen as a prophet, in the epistles He is seen as a High Priest. In the Revelation he emerges as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In chapter 1:3, we read that "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy."

In chapter 22:18-19, we read of a curse that will come to those who add to or take from the words of the book of this prophecy. Thus

it is stated that blessing or blight is the result of one's attitude to "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him" and to us through His servant John.

"He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." ✪

**This book  
presents the  
Capstone of the  
Revelation of  
Jesus Christ.**

### How Does the PBJ Survive?

A number of readers have written and called over the years, testifying to how the Premillennial Baptist Journal has helped their understanding of biblical eschatology. In order to continue publishing what several have described as a quality magazine, we have an ongoing need for money. The cost of each issue is now about \$2000. Since we do not sell subscriptions, we are dependent on the generous donations of our readers. Will you consider donating a one-time large gift or doing as several churches are doing and contribute \$50, \$100 or \$200 per month? We are now into the fifth year of publication. Will you help enable us to continue? Make checks payable to *Victory Baptist Church* and send all donations to:

**Victory Baptist Church 9601 Blue Ridge Extension Kansas City, MO 64134.**

# A General Introduction to Revelation

Wayne Camp



Revelation 1:1-20 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

I want to emphasize in the very beginning that this book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, not the revelation of the Anti-Christ or the revelation of the great tribulation. Though these are mentioned in the book in some detail, we need to keep the focus on Jesus Christ as we study the entire book. The revelation of Jesus Christ is not speaking of things revealed by Jesus Christ, as some suppose. But I will shortly show that it refers to Christ revealed. This book reveals Jesus Christ. If one could just see the different ways in which Christ is revealed in this book and it would make a great study. For instance, in this chapter he is revealed as:

1. The one which was, which is, and which is to come. V-4
2. The faithful witness. V-5
3. The first begotten from the dead. V-5
4. The prince of the kings of the earth. V-5
5. The one who loved us. V-5
6. The one who washed us from our sins. V-5
7. The one who made us kings and priests unto God. V-6
8. The one to whom eternal glory and dominion belongs. V-6
9. The one who comes with clouds. V-7
10. The one whom every eye shall see. V-7
11. The one who was pierced. V-7
12. The one whose coming shall cause men of the earth to wail. V-7
13. The one who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. V-8
14. The almighty. V-8
15. The one who speaks with a voice as of a great trumpet. V-10
16. The one who is the first and the last. V-11
17. The glorified Son of man. V-13
18. The one who lived, was dead, and is alive forevermore. V-18
19. The one who has the keys of hell and of death. V-18
20. The one who holds the seven stars (pastors) of the seven churches in his right hand. V-16, 18

Jesus Christ is revealed in 20 different ways just in the first chapter of this book. In each of his messages to the seven churches he sets forth other things about himself. This will give you an idea of why this is called "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." This first chapter is an introduction to the entire book so let us note some important things about this book that are brought before us in this first chapter.

## This Book Is the Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Greek word translated revelation is *apokalupsis*. The meaning of the word will be best understood if we look at some verses in which the Greek word is used in noun and verb forms. Paul uses the word in his first letter to the Church at Corinth. 1 Corinthians 1:7 "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming *apokalupsin* of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul uses the word again in his letter to the assembly at Thessalonica. 2 Thessalonians 1:7 "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." Note: Literally this says, "In the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven."

Peter uses the noun form in his first epistle. 1 Peter 1:7 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the *appearing* of Jesus Christ." Peter uses the noun again just a little further on in this same chapter. 1 Peter 1:13 "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Peter uses the word again. 1 Peter 4:13 "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Literally, *In the revelation of the glory of him.*

The verb form is used in the letter to the Galatians. Galatians 1:16 "To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." The verb is used in the book of Luke.

Wayne Camp pastored Pilgrim's Hope Baptist Church for 17 years. He currently spends several months each year in Thailand teaching native pastors.

Luke 17:30 "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. " Paul used the word again in his first letter to Timothy. 1 Timothy 6:14 "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

These are but a few uses of the word; I have chosen those that refer to Jesus Christ in his second coming except Galatians 1:16. Another example is found in reference to the revelation of the man of sin. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

### The Revelation Was Given to Christ by God the Father

As the Son of man many things were *given* to him. The elect were given to him. *John 6:37* "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The sheep were given to him. *John 10:29* "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." All authority was given to him. *Matthew 28:18* "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

In this revelation that God gave to Christ is revealed all the things which God promised to give to Christ. He promised to give Christ the heathen for his inheritance. *Psalm 2:7-9* "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. " He promised to make Christ higher than the kings of the earth. *Psalm 89:27* "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth."

Consider also these words about the dominion God would give Christ in the millennium. *Psalm 72:7-11* "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."

**In this revelation that God gave to Christ is revealed all the things which God promised to give to Christ.**

Because Christ humbled himself and became obedient to the death of the cross, God highly exalted him and has given him a name that is above every name. *Philippians 2:5-10* "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

This glorious revelation of Jesus Christ that God would give him was very much a part of Hannah's song of praise. *1 Samuel 2:10* "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

This glorious revelation that God would give to his Son was seen in Daniel's night vision. *Daniel 7:13-14* "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." *Daniel 7:27* "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

The Psalmist wrote prophetically of this revelation God would give to Jesus Christ again in the eighth Psalm. *Psalm 8:6* "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." The Psalmist again sings of this revelation in glorious majesty which God would give to Jesus Christ in the first verse of the 110<sup>th</sup> Psalm. *Psalm 110:1* "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

This revelation of power and rule that would be given to Christ was the subject of his parables. *Luke 19:11-12* "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a

parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."

Jesus spoke of the things the Father had and would give him again in the book of John. John 3:35 "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand"

Paul wrote of this in his epistle to the church in Ephesus. Ephesians 1:20-22 "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."

I will close this point by going to the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ and reading one more passage. Revelation 11:15 "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

#### **The Revelation Was Given To Show To God's Servants Things Which Must Shortly Come To Pass**

The things in this revelation were given by God. Revelation 1:1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." The things in this revelation were sent by Christ. The things in this revelation were signified by an angel. "Signified it by his angel." The things in this revelation were recorded by John. Revelation 1:1-2 "... signified it by his angel unto his servant John. Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

That this human author is the Apostle John, there can be little doubt. Consider his words in Revelation 1:2 "Who bare record of the word of God. Compare this with these words from the pen of the Apostle John." John 1:1, 14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." Consider also his words found in the First Epistle of John. 1 John 1:1 "That which was from the beginning,

which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life."

I close this point with these words from the pen of J. A. Seiss. "Such, then, is the exalted source and derivation of this wonderful production. It takes its origin in God's covenant gift to Jesus Christ as the reward of triumph and glory for his humiliation and obedience unto death. It was sent by the loving Saviour from heaven, in the charge of an angelic messenger, to be shown to John. And by the hands of 'that disciple whom Jesus loved,' thus visited in his lonely exile—emblem of that consolation in distress with which this book has ever irradiated the dark and gloomy days of the Church,—was traced out in the language of mortals, and delivered over as Christ's last message to his people on earth." (*The Apocalypse*, J. A. Seiss, Pp. 21-22).

#### **The Value and Preciousness of This Revelation of Jesus Christ**

All Scripture is good and profitable. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." There are times when special attention is called to certain portions of the word as being abundantly profitable to those who read, hear, and keep what is written. This is true on the words of this book. Revelation 1:3 "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Revelation 22:7 "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

This book is especially valuable for several reasons. In those dark days of persecution that have already come upon the Lord's churches, the brethren found comfort in the words of this book. This revelation, this drawing away of the veil on future events, is especially profitable for our study. It shows the covenant-reward the Father has given the Son because of his humiliation and suffering for those elect ones given to him by the Father. Revelation 1:18 "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." It shows us the faithfulness of God to his covenant promises to the Son. It shows us a history of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ until his coming again with the armies of heaven and his glorified saints and the setting up of his rule and reign on this earth.

(Camp: continued on page 16)

**In those dark days of persecution... the brethren found comfort in the words of this book.**





## The Book of the Last Days

Horatius Bonar

Revelation 1:1-3 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

The title of this last and most wondrous of inspired books is 'the revelation (uncovering, unveiling of Jesus Christ.' It is he who "unveils," and it is he who is here unveiled to us, and who shines out with transfiguration-brightness before the Church's eye. The spirit and sum of this book is 'testimony to Jesus' (Ch. 19:10). He is its Alpha and its Omega. We find Him everywhere, in description, in song, in symbol, in prediction; in things past, present, and to come. Here Christ is all and in all. This last book completes the "unveiling" which was begun in the Gospels and carried on through the Epistles. The last fragment of the veil is here taken from His face. We see Him as He is, on the Father's right hand, on the throne, through the rent veil. The heavens are opened, and we see him (as Stephen did) in his present glory and in the glory of his second coming.

Which God gave unto him: This unveiling is given to him by the Father that he may give it to us; for even on the throne is he subject to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28), waiting on his will and doing it. This revelation is God's gift to him, and it is his gift to us; becoming thus doubly precious, as a gift worthy of God, worthy to be given to him, and worthy to be given by him to us.

To show unto His servants: "Show" is the word used in the case of Moses, 'the pattern showed to thee in the mount' (Ex. 25:40; Hebrews 8:5); and is almost always used in reference to things submitted to the eye. They are sons, yet servants also; both of these names of honour belonging to Him who was both the Son and the Servant of the Father (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Rev. 7:3, 22:3). This book, then, consists of the things shown by Christ to his servants.

The things that must shortly come to pass: He had said, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be." The word is the same, signifying, not to be fulfilled,

but to be or begin to be (Jn. 13:2; not 'supper being ended', but supper being brought in'). So here it is the things that must shortly (or quickly) be, the things just about to be, that the Lord shows to his servants. And what he has shown to us it becomes us to study. These things are the unveiling of Christ, and of earth's future, in connection with him, both in grace and glory, both in love and wrath. These are some of the things which the angels desire to look into, and in carrying out which they are specially 'ministering spirits;' and it does not become us, whom they chiefly concern, to slight them. Seeing that God has revealed them, we may conclude that they are neither too high nor too low for us, but worthy of most earnest thought. The tendency of the present age is to set aside prophecy as specially belonging to the supernatural, and therefore the incredible and impossible. Let us stand aloof from this incredulity, and welcome the prophetic word as all the more precious because supernatural and specially divine.

And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: More exactly the words run, 'and He signified it (having sent it by His angel) to his servant John.' This 'unveiling' is of no common importance; for mark the steps by which it reaches us. The Father gives it to the Son; the Son summons his angel (perhaps the angel which once and again ministered to him on earth, as in Gethsemane), this angel descends from heaven with it, and makes it known to the prophet (Ch. 22:16). All the agencies in heaven and earth are thus brought into connection with it. How valuable its contents must be when such pains are taken with its transmission! Shall we slight that book which has been thus attested and honoured?

Here being those references to angelic agency of which this book is full. God takes us (as in Daniel) behind the scenes, and shows us the living instrumentality through which the movements of earth and the judgments of divine righteousness are wrought. We look into the inner and invisible world, and see angels there at work, executing God's purposes, the 'angels that excel in strength;' that 'do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word;' his 'hosts;' his 'ministers that do his pleas-

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) was a Scottish churchman and poet. He was a popular author, writing many books, tracts and hymns.

ure' (Ps. 103:20-21). Angels have far more to do in the affairs both of the Church and the world than we generally conceive. Ever at hand, ever waiting and watching, ever working, they help, they protect, they strengthen, they deliver, or they smite, they destroy, they inflict the judgments of God. In this last book of the Bible there is more of angelic ministry, both for good and evil, than in any other; as if men would need more to be reminded of this in the last days; and as if, when Satan comes down with his hosts, having great wrath, Michael and his hosts were to have more to do than ever; as if, in the battle of the great day, their numbers required to be reinforced, and their reserves brought up, to meet the multitudinous foe.

Who bare record of the word of God: It is the same John who said, 'In the beginning was the Word,' that now is written to by his Lord. He who testified of his Lord on earth now testifies of him as he sits in heaven. And we know that his testimony is true. The Word spoken of in the Gospel, and the Word revealed in the Apocalypse, are one (Rev. 9:13); both of them revealing wonderfully the Son of the Father, the one in his grace, and the other in his glory. To believe this 'record' is to become a son of God; for it is faith that introduces us into the heavenly family. He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

And of the testimony of Jesus Christ: The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, no less than of the four Gospels. To make known the divine contents of these two glorious names, Jesus and Christ, was John's special mission, both at the beginning and at the close of his life. He is a witness for Jesus from first to last. It is not merely of the eternal Word that he testifies, but of the 'Word made flesh.' 'God manifest in flesh,' the bearer of sin, the 'Saviour of the world,' the Anointed of the Holy Ghost.

And of all things that he saw: Here also the Gospel and the Revelation are similar. In the former we have what John saw of Jesus on earth (Jn. 19:35 'he that saw bare record'[3]) in the latter, what he saw of Jesus in heaven. The earthly grace and the heavenly glory are thus proclaimed to us on like sure authority, that of an eye-witness, an inspired eyewitness, whose testimony has in it all that is true and certain, both in God and man. It is all true. Not only do the water and the blood bear witness, but 'the Spirit beareth witness' (1 Jn. 5:6); the testimony of God is greater than all the testimony of man (1 Jn. 5:9). The reception of this testimony by the sinner is life eternal.

**The testimony  
of Jesus is the  
spirit of  
prophecy, no  
less than of the  
four Gospels.**

Blessed is he that readeth: What God calls blessedness must be great; and that word 'blessed' is used by him very frequently in the Old Testament and New. In this book it occurs seven times (1:3, 14:13, 16:15 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14), as if the fullness or perfection of blessedness were contained in what this book reveals. The word "readeth" refers to the public reading in the church (Lk. 4:16; Acts 15:21; Col. 4:16; Rev. 5:4). The reader even in his public reading finds blessing. God blesses him in so doing. Into him as well as out of him flow rivers of living water. Most wondrous book! It begins and ends with blessing on those who read it and give heed to it. How much has the Church of God lost by her neglect of it! It may be hard to be understood; but the privilege of reading it and keeping its sayings remains the same. Surely the Holy Spirit knew what he wrote, when he pronounced blessings on its readers and its observers! Not to gratify the curious; not to suit itching ears; not to encourage human speculation or restless guesses; not to excite the excitable, or furnish materials for poetry; but to feed the Church of God; to be a light in a dark place; to set up a line of beacons along the rocky and stormy coast of the Church's perilous voyage; to be her chart and compass in the last days; to make man wakeful, happy, and blessed; to bring us into sympathy with the mind and purpose of God, these are the objects of a book in which Father, Son and Spirit are all engaged.

And they that hear the words of this prophecy: They that are but listeners receive the blessing too. To hear the voice of God speaking to us in grace, though to the world in judgment, is blessedness. 'Open ears' are the least that God can expect when he speaks. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear! The words spoken are so full of God, so full of Christ, so full of the Spirit, that in listening we are blest. His doctrine drops as the rain, and distils as the dew. 'Blessed are they that hear,' are among the opening words of this wondrous Revelation; and 'let him that heareth say, Come,' are amongst its closing ones. The result produced upon the hearer by the reading of these prophecies should be to make him say, "come;" 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

And keep those things that are written therein: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." The 'keeping' and the 'doing' are the consequent of the 'hearing.'

The 'keeping' of Christ's word is what is specially enforced here. For the Revelation is a thoroughly practical book, meant to bear upon our daily life, to guide the Church, to warn kings and kingdoms, to lift us out of the region of the visible into that of the invisible. Keep the words of this book, is Christ's message to the churches. But how shall we 'keep' them if we do not study the

book? Whether we fully comprehend it or not, let us study it. Each perusal will give a new insight into its visions; we shall take on the mould and impress of its truths, even unconsciously, in the simple childlike reading of it.

For the time is at hand: Coming judgments, coming glories, a coming Judge, and a coming kingdom, these are some of the things held up before our eyes. In regard to all these we are bidden to 'watch.' When and how they are to burst upon our world, and to awaken the slumbering church, we know not. The time has always been concealed. It is uncertain. It may be soon, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." "Awake thou that sleepest," for the time is at hand. The trumpet is always ready to sound; the last storm is always just on the point of breaking. Christ is always 'coming.' The end of all things is at hand. Whether we are able to reconcile these words with the delay of so many centuries, it matters not. The words were meant to be words of warning, on account of the suddenness of the final crisis. In looking forward from a human view-point, and measuring the times and seasons by a human standard, the above expression may seem 'hard to be understood;' looking back upon it hereafter from the eternal viewpoint, we shall see how it was always near.

Here let us stop short and gather up the following lessons, taught us in these verses by the Spirit of God:

1. God wishes us to study Christ: Again and again he opens out his 'unsearchable riches,' and gives us another and another view of the 'unspeakable gift.' Study his person; study his work; the wisdom, and the power, and the love of God are there. Study all his fullness, and, as you study it, drink it in. Study the cross; study the resurrection; study the present majesty of the ascended and interceding Christ; study his coming glory as Judge, and King, and Bridegroom. There is none like him, neither shall be. He is the chief among ten thousand; the only perfect One; the all-perfect One; the representative of the invisible Godhead; the doer of the Father's will; the accomplisher of the Father's purpose, both of vengeance and of grace.
2. Christ wishes us to study himself: 'Look unto me,' he says in this book. Jesus showed to his servant John the things concerning himself, that the Church in all ages might see and know these things. He unveils himself in his glory, and says, Look on me! Here Christ is all and

in all; and he would fain teach us here what that all is, and what that in all implies.

3. Christ uses human messengers: He is head over all things to the Church, and he makes use of all things as his servants, saying to one, "Go," and he goeth, to another, 'Come,' and he cometh. Though invisible now and in the heavens, he uses human agencies still. He speaks through men; he teaches through men; he comforts through men; he warns through men. 'We pray you, in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God,' are words which show us how he stands towards us.

**God lifts a little of the veil and shows us angels at work in conducting the affairs of earth.**

4. God uses angelic messengers: In the government both of the church and of the world he makes use of angels. They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. Jesus comes Himself to John; yet the Revelation comes to John by an angel. How the angel communicated with John we know not. Who he was, whether Michael or Gabriel, we know not. But it is an angelic messenger that is made use of here. This whole book is full of angelic agencies and ministries. God lifts a little of the veil and shows us angels at work in conducting the affairs of earth. This is the book of angels; for the word occurs in it seventy-six times. They minister to man; they execute God's judgments; they do His will here; excelling in strength, and able to counteract the power of Satan and his angels.

5. He annexes a special blessedness to the study of this book. Few believe this; fewer act upon it. The Apocalypse is to many like the Sibyl's books or the Iliad of Homer. The so-called philosophy of the age is undermining the prophetic word, reducing it to a mere collection of figures, or symbolic representation of principles or abstract truths. Prophecy as the direct prediction by God of what is to come to pass on earth is set aside, and the prophetic books are studied merely in reference to their poetry or their lofty ideas. Blessedness in studying them is seldom thought of even by many Christians. Yet the word of God here stands true. Prophecy is a sure word, and it is as blessed as it is sure. Woe to him who slights it! Blessed are all they who meditate on it, seek to know it, and take it for guidance and counsel in the evil day! ✨

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# Christ, the Spirit of Prophecy

Laurence A. Justice



Recently I received in the mail a slick, multi-colored advertisement from something called Spirit of Prophecy Church in Topeka, Kansas. This beautifully designed eight page flyer listed for sale a number of professionally produced videos concerning a number of exotic subjects having to do with Bible prophecy and announcing several conferences on prophecy to be held in major cities across the country. I was interested in the topics listed as titles for the videos, both for the subjects they included and the one subject that was missing. This circular and the number of religious TV programs and religious newsletters and books on the subject of prophecy I have received in recent months led me to think of our text in Revelation 19:10 and what it says about Bible prophecy.

The background of our text is this: An angel appeared to the apostle John and gave him a vision of a great multitude praising the Lamb in heaven. John was so struck by this angel and this vision that he fell down at the angel's feet to worship him. The words of our text are the angel's response to John's attempt to worship him. This angel gives the reason as to why John and all men must worship God instead of angels. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: *for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*" In this statement the angel gives us a very important guide and safeguard for the study of all Bible prophecy.

In seeking to understand this guiding principle I shall ask and try to answer three simple questions and then make some practical applications. First,

## What Is Meant by Prophecy?

Prophecy as the word is used in scripture means the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God. Prophecy is not always foretelling the future or predictive. It is often forth telling God's mind for the present but much of the time it is purely predictive. A very large part of Old Testament prophecy involves great and important predictions concerning Israel and the nations of the world and

most of all concerning the Person and work of the coming Messiah. Though some deny it, Revelation is a book of prophecy! The word prophecy appears seven times in this book.

Revelation 1:3 clearly states that Revelation is a book of prophecy. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of *this prophecy* and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." The closing verses of the book of Revelation in 22:18-19 again state that Revelation is a book of prophecy. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of *the prophecy of this book*, If any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of *the book of this prophecy* God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book." The word *prophecy* also occurs in Revelation 11:6, 22:7 and 22:10 as well as in our text in Revelation 19:10. The prophecy mentioned in our text no doubt refers to the *predictive* prophecies of the book of Revelation. "...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of *prophecy.*"

The book of Revelation is the great prophetic masterpiece of the New Testament, the capstone, the crowning consummation of many unfulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament. So prophecy is the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God and has within it both an element of forth telling and one of foretelling. In our text the foretelling or predictive element is largely what is involved.

## What Is Meant by the Spirit of Prophecy?

"...For the testimony of Jesus is *the spirit of prophecy.*" W. E. Vine in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says that this word spirit in our text means purpose or aim or goal and is used with this meaning in such verses as II Corinthians 12:18. "I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? Walked we not in the same *spirit*? Walked we not in the same steps?" Did we not walk with the same *purpose* or *aim* or *goal*? Paul was asking.

In Philippians 1:27 we have another example of the use of the word spirit to mean purpose or aim or goal. "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may

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hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast *in one spirit*, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." Paul wanted his readers to stand fast in one spirit, one purpose or aim or goal here.

Let's look at one further example of the use of the term *spirit* to mean purpose or aim or goal. Ephesians 4:22-23 says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the *spirit of your mind*..." Paul exhorts his readers here to be renewed in the spirit or purpose or aim or goal of their minds.

With these meanings of *prophecy* and *spirit* in mind let us look again at our text. "...For the testimony of Jesus is the *spirit of prophecy*." The testimony of Jesus is the purpose or aim or goal of the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God in predictive prophecy.

#### What Then Is the *Spirit of Prophecy*?

What is the purpose, the aim, the goal of Bible prophecy? Our text answers very clearly that *the testimony of Jesus* is the spirit of prophecy! The testimony which the prophecies bear to Jesus is the spirit, the purpose, the aim, the goal of prophecy. The Person and work of Jesus Christ is the grand theme of Bible prophecy! The central subject of all Bible prophecy is Jesus Christ! The subject of predictive prophecy is future *events as related to Christ*!

The theme of Bible prophecy is not certain future events, bad or good, revealed for the curious and the speculative. The theme of Bible prophecy is not the mere rise and fall of nations and kingdoms. It is not philosophy, it is not science, it is not morality, it is not speculation about the future but *Jesus Christ*! The theme of Bible prophecy involves earthly events and hopes and fears only as they are linked to Jesus Christ! Bible prophecy all focuses on one point, one Person, one work and one kingdom and that is Christ!

I want us to look here at some biblical statements to this effect, some scriptures that state that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Following his resurrection from the dead the Lord Jesus himself taught his disciples that he is the central theme and goal and aim of prophecy.

He told them so when he appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Look at Luke 24:27. "And beginning at Moses and *all the prophets* he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the *things concerning himself*." The Lord

went back to the Old Testament prophecies here and showed how those prophecies spoke of *him*.

In Acts 10:43 Peter preached that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus when he said, "To him (to Christ) give *all the prophets* witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

The angel says in our text that the prophets had the testimony of Jesus. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant and of *thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus*..." He's talking about the prophets here.

**The theme of Bible prophecy involves earthly events and hopes and fears only as they are linked to Jesus Christ!**

"The *testimony of Jesus*" speaks of the things of Jesus, especially the two aspects of his Person and work as presented in scripture. In I Peter 1:10-11 we read that prophecy foretells the two aspects of the work of Jesus Christ. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what or what

manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the *sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow*." Here is a very important principle to keep in mind in all study of Bible Prophecy: All prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ is about one or both of these two aspects of his work; his suffering and his glory, that is, his sufferings and death and his return in glory. The Old Testament prophets spoke, not only of Christ's first coming, not only of his sufferings and death but of his glory that should follow, his return in glory as well.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of Christ's coming glory. For example in Zechariah 14:1-4 the prophet spoke of Christ's return someday to stand on the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem. "Behold *the day of the Lord cometh*, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. *Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle*. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south."

Next let's consider Isaiah 63:1-7. Isaiah 63 is a much misunderstood chapter that actually prophesies Christ's coming glory. Let's read verses 1-3 here. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments and I will stain all my raiment."

A lot of people think this is talking about the first coming of Christ and about his suffering on the cross because it speaks of blood being sprinkled on his garments. But if this is read carefully it is apparent that this is not speaking of Christ's first coming to suffer but of his second coming in glory. The key is that Christ did not come the first time to tread down his enemies as this prophecy describes. It is at his second coming that Christ will tread down his enemies in his great anger. Let's continue reading with verses 4-6 here and we can see that this is the proper view.

"For the day of vengeance is in mine heart and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked and there was none to help: and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger and make them drunk in my fury and I will bring down their strength to the earth."

It is the blood of Christ's enemies that will be sprinkled on his garments when he shall tread them down in his great anger at his return to this earth. Christ did not come the first time in wrath but he will come that way the second time according to the scriptures!

We're looking at scriptural examples of prophecies of Christ's coming glory. Another is found in Numbers 14:21 which prophesies that time in the future when Christ shall reign personally and in glory on this earth. "But as truly as I live *all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.*"

The grand consummation of all Bible prophecy is the return of Jesus Christ in glory to the earth. The book of Revelation as we have seen is a book of prophecy and the actual title of the book as listed in verse 1 is, The Revelation of Jesus Christ. The prophecies of the book of Revelation focus on the coming of Christ in glory or what we most often call his second coming. Seven times it is

stated in the book that Jesus Christ will come back. The book opens with the salutation "He cometh" in 1:7 and closes with the prayer "Even so, come Lord Jesus" in 22:20. And in between these the book is all about the second coming of Christ, his personal appearing on this earth. The other five mentions of this climactic event are found in 2:25, 3:3, 3:11, 22:7 and 22:12.

The statement of the angel in our text in Revelation 19:10 introduces the passage which follows in verses 11-21 on the second coming of Christ in glory. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men, both* free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth,

and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

At this point the climax of the book is reached with the presentation of Jesus Christ as the glorified King of Kings and Lord of Lords! In keeping with the subject of the book itself which is the revelation of Jesus Christ, everything that precedes Revelation 19:11-21 is in some sense introductory and everything that follows is epilogue.

**The grand consummation of all Bible prophecy is the return of Jesus Christ in glory to the earth.**

The return of Christ in glory in Revelation 19:11-21 is not only the high point of the book. It is the high point of all history! Here is the manifestation of the Son of God in glory, the demonstration of the Sovereignty of God and the beginning of the end of human rebellion. From first to last Bible prophecy testifies of Jesus Christ! He is its aim, its purpose, its goal, its theme and its central focus!

Our text means that prophecy at its very heart is designed to unfold the majesty and glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Bible prophecy reveals to believers things to come as they relate to the person and majesty of Jesus Christ. Christ is the all in all of prophecy! The very meaning and purpose of Bible prophecy is to reveal Jesus Christ and cause us to worship him! "...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." In closing I want to make

### Three Practical Applications of This Text

First of all the fact that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy *should cause us to measure all preachers of prophecy by this fact.*

Today's prophecy mongers (a monger is one who pedals or hawks prophecy to titillate the carnal masses and/or to profit financially), major on the exotic subjects of the Antichrist and the mark of the beast and the revived Roman Empire which they are certain is the European Union and Christ is just a footnote in their programs!

Listen! When preachers focus on the four horsemen of the apocalypse or the plagues or the Satanic trinity or the image of the beast or anything else and neglect Christ and don't center all these things in him, they are off the track and will soon end in error if they are not already there!

That beautiful, multi-colored flyer I told of receiving in the mail was sent to me by the Spirit of Prophecy Church in Topeka, Kansas, lists the following as topics of the videos they have for sale (at \$25.00 each I might add): Holy War For The Promised Land, Israel In Crisis, Islamic Threat Update, The Beast; Covenant, Mark, Image and Abomination, Prophetic Oil In Israel, The ABC's of Globalism, Prophetic Picture Portrayed In The Jewish Wedding Ceremony, The Great Secret of Solomon's temple and Painful Answers About 911.

Is "the testimony of Jesus" apparent in these titles? Anyone who gets hung up on the events of prophecy or on the order or time schedule of these events and neglects Christ or relegates Christ to a place of secondary importance or

prominence *has missed the spirit of prophecy!* Beware of prophecy mongers!

The second practical application of this text is that the principle in this text *should determine the way we look at Bible prophecy.*

There is a carnal curiosity about the future that fuels much modern preaching and study of prophetic events. This carnal curiosity about what the future holds leads to a lot of speculation in connection with Bible prophecy. We should *never* look upon prophecy as a speculative subject! Bible prophecy has a particular spirit, a particular aim, a particular goal and *that spirit is the testimony of Jesus!* "...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." This is the very key to Bible prophecy.

As we read the great prophecies of God's word, if we consider them properly, our thoughts will be led to Jesus Christ and the great work he will do at his return to this earth! What is the battle of Armageddon without Christ the conqueror of Antichrist and his armies? What is the future resurrection of the dead without Christ to glorify our vile bodies and make them like unto his glorious body and take us to be with him body and soul for all eternity? What is the millennial kingdom without realizing the personal and peaceable reign of Christ on this earth? How poverty stricken is any view of prophecy that minimizes Christ and his second coming! How limited is the Christian hope that does not include the glorious climax to God's announced program of exalting His Son and putting all creation under His recognized control!

Lastly this fact that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy *should cause us to study and preach prophecy keeping this principle in mind.* The *proper* study of prophecy centers all things in Christ and sees Christ as the aim and purpose and goal of all events. Therefore all prophecy must be interpreted *Christologically!* ✨

Behold, he cometh with clouds;  
and every eye shall see him,  
and they also which pierced  
him: and all kindreds of the  
earth shall wail because of him.  
Even so, Amen. Revelation 1:7

**How poverty  
stricken is any  
view of  
prophecy that  
minimizes  
Christ and his  
second  
coming!**

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Theme of next issue:  
**The Church and the Kingdom**

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*(Camp: continued from page 8)*

This revelation forecasts those trials and sufferings through which his churches must go before they are brought victoriously to their glory. It tells us of the final triumphs and victories of the saints who shall rule and reign with Christ a thousand years. Revelation 20:4-6 "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

This revelation tells us of the tribulations and trials that shall come upon the world before that great and final day

of the Lord. From first to last, it tells us of the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ. The revelation begins with the promise of his coming. Revelation 1:7 "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." It closes with the assurance of that coming. Revelation 22:20 "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

May the Lord open the hearts of all who read this to comprehend the message of this revelation of Jesus Christ and bring the readers into a full realization and enjoyment of those blessings it foretells. Let the reader of this book just rejoice with its human author and say, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." ✪

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



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## The Church and the Kingdom

### Inside This Edition

- ◆ The Church and the Kingdom, *Dan Cozart* ..... p. 3
- ◆ The Kingdom of Heaven, *Michael McCoskey* ..... p. 6
- ◆ The Church and the Kingdom Contrasted, *Royce Smith* ..... p. 8
- ◆ Watching for Christ's Coming, *C.H. Spurgeon* ..... p. 11

"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

"...the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem..."

## Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization of the prophetic Scripture*
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

**W**e have often received questions from people about C.H. Spurgeon's views on prophecy. Was he postmill, premill, amill, or preterist? Some sources, especially among the "Reformed" brethren, have attempted to cast Spurgeon into some prophetic category other than Premillennialism. Also, at least one writer, Peter Ruckman, has, in three different writings, represented Spurgeon as postmill, premill, and amill—all three! Quite a trick, if you have the gift of sleight of hand.

I was recently rummaging thru the 1891 volume of Spurgeon's magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, and came upon another instance of Spurgeon's premillennial views. This was in the form of a book review of George C. Needham's book entitled, *Primitive Paths in Prophecy*, appearing in the October, 1891 issue on page 581. Here is that review:

Here are nine Prophetic Addresses, given at the Brooklyn Conference of the Baptist Society for Bible Study, under the presidency of our good friend, Dr. [A.J.] Gordon, of Boston, U.S.A. The treatment throughout is Scriptural, vigorous and practical; and does honour to the body from which it emanates. Very heartily should we rejoice to see this handy volume circulating largely among the churches in this country. One quotation will prove that dispensational truth is no novelty among Baptists.

"John Bunyan's Millenarianism is well known, and generally conceded; he maintaining the early patristic view, that the seventh millennial will be the Sabbath of the world, to be ushered in by the advent of Christ (Works V, p. 286; VI. P. 301).

"One of Bunyan's contemporaries, Benjamin Keach, an illustrious predecessor of Spurgeon in the pastorate, has left a very full confession of his views on this point. He was brought to trial Oct. 8, 1664, on two charges of Anabaptism and Millenarianism. As he stood before Lord Chief Justice Hide, the representative of the State Church [i.e. Church of England], he was summoned first to answer for his 'damnable doctrine' concerning baptism; which, being disposed of, the second article of indictment was taken up, viz., that he held 'that the saints shall reign with Christ a thousand years.' The judge pronounced this 'an old heresy, which was cast out of the church a thousand

*(Spurgeon on Premillennialism: continued on page 5)*

### How Does the PBJ Survive?

A number of readers have written and called over the years, testifying to how the Premillennial Baptist Journal has helped their understanding of biblical eschatology. In order to continue publishing what several have described as a quality magazine, we have an ongoing need for money. The cost of each issue is now about \$2000. Since we do not sell subscriptions, we are dependent on the generous donations of our readers. Will you consider donating a one-time large gift or doing as several churches are doing and contribute \$50, \$100 or \$200 per month? We are now into the fifth year of publication. Will you help enable us to continue? Make checks payable to *Victory Baptist Church* and send all donations to:

**Victory Baptist Church 9601 Blue Ridge Extension Kansas City, MO 64134.**



## The Church and the Kingdom

Dan Cozart

Matthew 13:1-3 "The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;"

Matthew 13:10-17 "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

There are seven parables in Matthew 13 which deal with the subject: The Kingdom of Heaven:

(1) The Parable of the Sower in verse 3 "And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;"

(2) The Parable of the Wheat and Tares in verses 24-25; "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

(3) The Parable of the Mustard Seed in verse 31; "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:"

(4) The Parable of the Leaven in verse 33; "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

(5) The Parable of the Hidden Treasure in verse 44; "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

(6) The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price in verses 45-46; "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: "Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

(7) The Parable of the Dragnet in Verse 47; "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind"

Notice that after the first parable, all of the other parables are prefaced with "the kingdom is like." This helps us tremendously to identify what this kingdom is, and so we pose the question: *What Is the Kingdom Of Heaven?* How can we understand it if we do not know what it is? First, I would have you to know that

### Divine Assistance Is Essential If We Are To Understand the Kingdom Of Heaven Because It Is a Mystery

Matthew 13: 10-11 says "And the disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, because it is

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given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." *"Mystery"* is not that which cannot be known, but rather that which has not yet been revealed. If God gives understanding, men will know it. If He does not, men will never understand it. This knowledge does not come from natural intellect, but by God's revelation of the truth. We need to pray for such revelation in our study of God's Word.

### **The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God Are Used Synonymously in Scripture**

Compare the account of Matthew 13 with the account of Mark 4. They refer to the same teachings of our Lord, yet Matthew uses "the kingdom of heaven" while Mark uses the "kingdom of God". Mark says in verses 11, 26 and 30: "...unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables....And he said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground....And he said, whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God, or with what comparison shall we compare it?" The time setting is the same with Matthew. It came after John the Baptist's imprisonment. Our Lord did not preach two messages, but one and the same. John the Baptist preached the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 3:1-2. The Lord Jesus resumed the same message after John was imprisoned in Matthew 4: 12, 17. Mark's account of the same passage says our Lord preached the kingdom of God in Mark 1:14-15. Jesus commanded his disciples to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand in Matthew 10:5-7. After the resurrection, he taught his disciples things pertaining to the kingdom of God in Acts 1:3.

Phillip preached the kingdom of God in Acts 8:12. Paul left Ephesus to go and preach the kingdom of God in Acts 20:25. Thus, both terms, the *Kingdom of Heaven* and the *Kingdom of God* are equal, and are used interchangeably in the scripture.

### **The Church and the Kingdom Are Not the Same**

Though the church plays a very important role in the kingdom, it is not the kingdom. The kingdom is the Greek word "BASILEIA" meaning to rule. The kingdom of heaven refers to the rule and dominion of God and his son, Jesus Christ. The church is the Greek word

**The kingdom of heaven refers to the rule and dominion of God and his son, Jesus Christ.**

"Ekklesia" meaning called out assembly. The church is an assembly of voluntary baptized believers in Jesus Christ, who have come together for the purpose of carrying out the commands of Christ. It is local and visible. It is never universal and invisible. While on Patmos, John saw seven of these churches recorded in the Book of Revelation. Everyone of those churches could be seen, and all seven had addresses. These seven churches give to us a picture of the church as an institution from its beginning until the second coming of Christ. There are seven parables dealing with the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13. They give to us a picture of the kingdom as it progresses until the return of our Lord. One enters the kingdom by the new birth, but one enters the church upon profession of faith and scriptural baptism. The church is an assembly. The kingdom has never assembled. The church is commissioned to baptize; the kingdom has never baptized anyone. One might be unsaved in the church, but cannot be unsaved in the kingdom.

### **Matthew Uses the Term "Kingdom of Heaven" Exclusively**

He speaks of the kingdom of God but four times; but uses the kingdom of heaven 32 times. The rest of the Gospel writers use the term *the kingdom of God*. John presents Christ as the "*Son of God*." Luke presents him as the "*Son of Man*." Mark presents him as the "*Servant of God*." Matthew presents our Lord as the "*King of the Jews*". Thus, the "Kingdom of Heaven" is a Messianic term.

### **Scripture Reveals the Kingdom of Heaven In Its Three-Fold Presentation**

(1) The Kingdom of God Sovereignly: Daniel 4:34-37 "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me;

and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

I Timothy 1:17 "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

God always has and always will rule over his creation. He will never abdicate His throne. Lucifer tried to elevate himself above God Almighty, and he was expelled from the glory world. Jesus Christ is God incarnate, and is not waiting to become king. He has always been king. He rules over his creation. "All things were made by him" John 1:1-3.

(2) The Kingdom of God Soteriologically: Luke 9:23 "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me."

This relates to the sovereign rule of Christ in the hearts of believers. When a person is converted, he bows his knees and his heart to the Lordship of Christ. Christ becomes his king. There is no salvation apart from *Lordship salvation*. One cannot receive Christ as *Saviour* without receiving Him as Lord. Christ becomes Lord and King of the believer's Life.

(3) The Kingdom of God Eschatologically: "Which in His times, He shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords". There is a future aspect to the kingdom of God. The repentant thief said: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Christ taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...."

Matthew 8:11 "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Since there is no east, west, north or south up in the glory world, I have to accept it as being down here on this earth. Christ will establish His Kingdom down here on the earth, and when He does, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess!!

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

At His first coming, Christ appeared as the Lamb of God to die for the sins of His people. When He comes the second time, He will appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah to establish His kingdom on this earth. ✪

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*(Spurgeon on Premillennism: continued from page 2)*

years ago, and was likewise condemned by the Council of Constance five years after, and hath lain dead ever since, till now this rascal hath revived it.' ...He was condemned, and sent to the pillory...

"Dr. John Gill, the commentator and theologian, has drawn out the premillennial scheme more fully, and set forth the Scriptural arguments for it more cogently, perhaps, than any Baptist writer who has treated the subject... Couple his testimony with that of Charles H. Spurgeon, who said, in a recent sermon, that 'there can be no millennium without the presence of the visible Christ, any more than there can be summer without the sun., He must come first, and then will the golden age begin.'

"Thus, we have an illustrious trio of Baptist witnesses in a single pastoral succession—Keach, Gill, and Spurgeon." Baptist history is thus pleasantly blended with prophetic exposition, making a most interesting volume [End of review].

In our time when some of our "Reformed" Baptist brethren are seemingly more influenced by the views of the Presbyterian baby baptizers, who apparently are predominantly amill, Spurgeon's premill view is another reason why we do not care to identify ourselves as "Reformed."

Bob Ross, Pilgrim Publications

## The Kingdom of Heaven

Michael McCoskey



In the area of Biblical study, one of the most controversial subjects, and one that is difficult to actually be dogmatic on is the Kingdom of God. The controversy and difficulty result from the vastness of the subject and from the various aspects of the kingdom which are presented in the scriptures. Few students of the Bible would say that they have come to a complete understanding of this eternal subject; nevertheless, it is certain that Jesus desired that we have some understanding of the kingdom. This is clear from his answer to his disciples when asked why he taught in parables. Growing up in Baptist churches and taught in Sunday school, I often heard that parables were nice little “practical illustrations that made clear what Jesus was teaching.” As I became a serious student of God’s word, I found that the parables were deeper and much harder to understand than expressed by the “nice little practical illustrations” definition. In fact, Jesus said he taught in parables, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” Three things are certain from Jesus’ statement: first the “kingdom” is a deep subject containing mysteries revealed to believers, secondly that he wants us to know these mysteries, and thirdly the lost can not comprehend these mysteries. Admittedly, there are mysteries concerning God’s Kingdom I do not comprehend; nevertheless, notice with me some truths revealed concerning the kingdom of God.

There is some confusion because of the use of the terms “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” as if these terms expressed something different. The term “kingdom of heaven” is unique to Matthew’s gospel. The term “kingdom of God” is used by Matthew, and by all the other inspired writers of the New Testament. The fact that the gospel writers use these terms interchangeably clearly shows that they are not describing different things. Both Matthew and Mark record the beginning of the ministry of Jesus after John the Baptist is imprisoned. In Matthew 4:17, Matthew writes, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Re-

pent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Mark records this very same event in 1:15 and writes, “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Clearly, the inspired gospel writers were referring to the same kingdom. This can also be seen in Christ’s rebuke of His disciples as they refused the approach of little children to him. Matthew records, “But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (19:14). However, Mark in recording the same event writes, “But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (10:14). It seems clear that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are to be understood as the same thing.

Furthermore, it seems clear that the word kingdom is to be understood as expressing three important truths: there is a king; there is a domain; and there are subjects. The term “kingdom of God” expresses clearly who this great king is. As Israel sang their psalms of praise, they heralded praise to God as king. “For the kingdom is the Lord’s” declared the song writer David (Ps. 22:28). And again Israel sang, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter” (Ps. 45:6). The question of the domain seems clear from the scriptures as well. The term “kingdom of heaven” seems to clearly reveal the place from which God as king rules. David declares, “The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens” (Ps.103:19a), and then he tells us the extent of His domain, “his kingdom ruleth over all” (Ps. 103:19b). God is the great majestic king who rules over heaven and earth. In the book of Daniel, our great God made known to an earthly king His sovereignty in heaven and in earth. Nebuchadnezzar the ruler of Babylon, then the most powerful and majestic earthly kingdom, spent seven years in the divine seminary of insanity to learn that God’s kingdom is universal, and that all are subjects of His rule. Listen to a portion of his declaration of what he learned from God’s hand, “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for

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ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou" (Daniel 4:34-35).

This sovereign rule of God is one of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Because the kingdom can not be seen by the human eye, it is not perceived by those who are unbelievers. They see the earthly rise and fall of nations without perceiving that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). This should not surprise us for Jesus declared, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Nebuchadnezzar, full of self and unregenerate, declared, "Is this not great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty" (Daniel 4:30). Humbled by God and regenerated by the Spirit of grace, his eyes were opened to the mystery of God's kingdom and his praise was no longer of self: "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven," (Daniel 4:37). Likewise, only those who have experienced God's grace today can truly understand the God's universal rule.

It is this kingdom over which Christ reigns as co-regent today. In coming to earth to die on the cross, God the Son stepped down from the heavenly throne, emptied himself of his divine glory, "and took upon him the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). This humiliation was for the purpose of our redemption and was temporary in nature. In his prayer just before his arrest and crucifixion, Jesus prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). When Christ ascended to heaven after his resurrection, he returned to the place of honor and authority that he had held before his incarnation. The writer of Hebrews records, "when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:3). It is from this throne that Christ reigns in his church today.

This relationship of the Lord's church to the kingdom in the present age is another interesting aspect of this study. The New Testament Church was established by Jesus Christ during his personal ministry with a very

important function during this present age. Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ are never legislative. They do not make laws, for the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. New Testament Churches are executive in function. They are authorized to carry out the duties, laws or affairs of the kingdom. All authority in kingdom work is found in Christ as he clearly stated, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). This authority he gave to his church as he commissioned it and sent it forth into the world: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20). They are to "preach the kingdom of God," (Luke 9:2). They have been given the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," (Matthew 16:19). The Lord's New Testament churches have been commissioned to carry out the affairs of the kingdom of God according to his word and under his leadership and headship during this present age.

Furthermore, there will be a future manifestation of the kingdom on this earth. Christ when he ascended to heaven after his resurrection sat down on the right hand of God on a heavenly throne. This is declared by Jesus to be his Father's throne, "even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21). He promises those who overcome that they will "sit with me in my throne" (Revelation 3:21). Christ was speaking of the time prophesied by the prophets when he would set up the kingdom on Earth so that he might visibly be seen in his glory. When Christ returns to this earth, he will return as, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 19:16), and He will "smite the nations" and "rule them with a rod of iron" (Revelation 19:15). At that time, He will be "king over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:9). The world will know him and will "go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of host," (Zechariah 14:16). Christ will "judge among the nations," and "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-4). The Lord, who was taken and abused by the hands of man in his first coming for our redemption, declares: "Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezekiel

*This sovereign rule of God is one of the mysteries of the kingdom of God.*



## The Church and the Kingdom Contrasted

Royce Smith

Both the *church* and the *kingdom* are prominent themes in the Word of God. Each has a very important role in God's eternal purpose. However, they are not *one and the same*. The church is not the kingdom, and the kingdom is not the church. In this short article, our purpose is to detail some of the differences between the church and the kingdom.

### The Church Defined

To perceive the differences between the church and the kingdom, it will be helpful to define them both. First, what is the *church*? The English word church is derived from the middle English *churche* or *cherche* that in turn came from the Greek *kuriakon* which means "belonging to the Lord" (Liddel & Scott). However, the Greek word from which the word church is translated in the New Testament is *ekklesia*. To determine the definition of the word *church*, we must seek the meaning of *ekklesia*.

*Ekklesia* appears 115 times in the Greek New Testament. In the Authorized Version [hereafter, A.V.], it is translated *church* 112 times and *assembly* 3 times. *Ekklesia* is composed of two words in the Greek: the prefixed preposition *ek*, meaning *out*, and *kaleo* which means *to call*. Thus, *ekklesia* means those called out or an assembly. Perhaps the fullest and most exact definition is *a called out assembly*. When *ekklesia* is not referring to a New Testament church, it is translated *assembly* in the AV. In Acts 19:32, 39, 41, *ekklesia* refers to "an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned" (Liddel & Scott).

In its application *ekklesia* refers either to a particular church—e.g. "the church of the Thessalonians" (1 Thess. 1:1), "the church of Ephesus" (Rev. 2:1)—or to the church as an institution ( Eph. 1:22; 3:21; Col. 1:18), or the nation of Israel which was a called-out assembly or congregation in the wilderness (Acts

7:38). The concept of a universal, invisible church is not found in the word *ekklesia* or the teachings of the New Testament.

### The Kingdom Defined

Defining the *kingdom* is more difficult than defining the church because there seem to be several different aspects to the kingdom. Also, there are several Hebrew words translated *kingdom* in the Old Testament as well as the Greek word translated *kingdom* in the New Testament. By looking at each of these words, we will be able to get a better grasp on the meaning of the word *kingdom* which in English refers to the *domain of the king*.

The first of the five Hebrew words—one of these words is actually Chaldee which is very much like Hebrew—is *melucah*. This word is found 24 times (if I have counted correctly) and translated *kingdom* 18 times in the A.V.. It is translated *royal* four times and *king's* twice. In every instance where this word is found, reference seems to be restricted to the kingdom of Israel or Judah. This word is used in Psalm 22:28 which reads, "For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. While the "kingdom" in this passage may refer to the entire world, it for sure speaks of Israel.

The second of these Hebrew words is *malecuth* which appears over 80 times in the O.T. It is translated *kingdom* (49), *reign* (19), *royal* (13), *realm* (2), and *empire* (1) in the A.V. This word is used of visible kingdoms such as that of Israel, of certain Persian kings, of Nebuchadnezzar, and of other kings. In Psalm 45:6, it refers to the kingdom of Christ, Cf. Heb. 1:8. This word is used in Psalm 103:19 which states: "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." This same word is also found in Psalm 145:11-13. In these passages it is evident that the *kingdom* is the entire domain over which Jehovah reigns.

*Mamelacah* is the third and most used of the Hebrew words for kingdom. Found some 109 times in the O.T., it is translated *kingdom* (103), *royal* (4), and *reign* (2) in the A.V. Again, this word usually refers to visible

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kingdoms, either of Israel or of other nations. As used in Micah 4:8, it seems to refer to a future kingdom for Jerusalem.

The fourth Hebrew word is *mamelacuth* which is found 9 times in the O.T., and it is translated *kingdom* in the A.V. in every passage except one in which it is rendered *reign*. This word refers only to the particular earthly kingdoms which are named in these passages. See Joshua 13:12, 21, 27, 30, 31; I Samuel 15:28; 2 Samuel 16:3; Jeremiah 26:1; Hosea 1:4.

The fifth word is the Chaldee *malecu* which is found some 55 times in the books of Ezra and Daniel, portions of which were written in the Chaldean language. This word is translated *kingdom* (47), *reign* (4), *realm* (3), and *kingly* (1). By means of this word, reference is made to the reign of Darius, the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdom of Cyrus, and the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God seems to refer to both His present reign (Dan. 4:3, 17, 35) and to the millennial reign of Christ which is yet future (Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14, 18, 27). Thus, both a present invisible kingdom and a future visible kingdom are involved in the meaning of this word.

In the New Testament, the single Greek word translated *kingdom* is *basileia*. This word appears 162 times in the Greek New Testament. The phrase *kingdom of God* is found 71 times while the words *kingdom of heaven* occur 32 times. *Basileia* seems to denote a spiritual or invisible kingdom in such passages as Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 5:3; 7:21. In other passages, the kingdom is obviously a visible or organized kingdom (Matt. 8:11; Luke 4:5; Acts 1:6; Rev. 17:17). We must ever keep in mind that all words have an actual meaning known by all men. Figurative or spiritual meanings derived from actual meanings are often used in the sacred Scriptures. It is our task as students of the Word of God to discern which meaning is used in particular texts.

### Various Aspects of the Kingdom

The first and broadest aspect of the kingdom of God is His reign over all the earth. Of this aspect of the kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar spoke when he said, "How great are his [God's] signs! and how mighty are his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation" (Dan. 4:3). Be-

cause He rules over all, God appoints the human rulers over the kingdom of men as He wills (Dan. 4:25, 32). Men do not acknowledge the fact of God's rule over all the kingdoms of men, but He reigns over them in every generation (Dan. 7:27).

The second and more narrow aspect of the kingdom of God is His reign over a specific people who acknowledge His rule. This aspect of the kingdom is in view in Psalm 145:10, 11 which states: "All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. Since this Psalm was written by David, the reference is very obviously to Israel which was the visible kingdom of God in Old Testament times. Is there a spiritual kingdom which is without national boundaries, yet consists of people who acknowledge God's rule over their lives? The answer is yes. The *kingdom of heaven* proclaimed by both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Himself is a spiritual kingdom without national boundaries or organization (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). That His kingdom was a worldly kingdom like other national kingdoms was very clearly disavowed by our Lord to Pilate. In response to whether He was King of the Jews, "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

**Men do not  
acknowledge  
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over all the  
kingdoms of  
men...**

Is there a third and yet future aspect of the kingdom of God in which our Lord will reign visibly over all the nations and peoples of the earth who will acknowledge Him as King? I believe there is. Many passages of Scripture seem to point to His being King over a universal kingdom. "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9). Since the spiritual kingdom of God already existed when Jesus gave the *Sermon on the Mount*, the kingdom which He bade us pray to come must be this future, visible aspect of the kingdom (Matt. 6:10). It was to this aspect of the kingdom of God the Apostles referred when they asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Surely they understood that Christ already had a spiritual kingdom at this time, but their question concerned a visible kingdom in which Israel was restored to its place as head of the nations (Deut. 15:6; 28:1). If they were incorrect in their expectation of a visible kingdom being restored to

Israel in the future, would not this have been the right time for our Lord to set them straight? Instead of suggesting they were wrong in their general eschatology, He simply stated, “. . . It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7). That all the visible kingdoms of this world will one day become the visible kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is clear from the prophecy of Revelation 11:14 which declares, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Evidently, the future visible kingdom of God is that which those described as sheep at Christ's right hand are invited by Him to enter. “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

### The Church and the Kingdom Contrasted

Now that both the church and the kingdom have been defined, we are now ready to note how they are contrasted in Scripture. From John 3:5 we learn that men enter the kingdom of God by means of being born again: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” The Apostle Paul wrote that the Father “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). By way of contrast, one is not *born* into the church but received by the vote or consent of the church (Acts 2:41; 9:26-28).

As we have seen, the church is always local—except in the cases where its usage is generic, but even then the generic usage, while not pointing to a particular church, denotes any local church—but the kingdom is much more extensive. The spiritual kingdom of God consists of all those born of God (Matt. 7:21; Luke 18:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11), but the church is composed only of baptized believers who have entered into covenant with one another in a particular locality, *e.g.* the churches of Galatia which were obviously composed of baptized believers (Gal. 1:2; 3:26, 27).

The kingdom of God is not confined to a particular church or group of churches, but each church is in the

kingdom of God, since it is composed of those who have been born into the kingdom. In fact, all of the Lord's churches compose a visible kingdom over which the Lord Jesus Christ reigns. He is shown walking in the midst of the seven churches of Asia, denoting His reign among them (Rev. 2:1). It seems that it was to the visible kingdom of His churches that our Lord referred when He said to the chief priests and elders, “. . . The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43). The Greek word for nation, *ethnos*, refers to the Gentiles, especially when used in the plural form. It was not to a particular Gentile nation our Lord referred, but to an institution, which has primarily been composed of Gentiles, called the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:16). Granting this aspect of the kingdom, we would never teach or even imply that the church and the kingdom of God are one and the same in every aspect.

That the church and the kingdom of heaven or God are not the very same thing is evident from our Lord's words in Matthew 16:18, 19: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . .” Note the differences here: the church is being built upon Christ the Rock, not Peter. Christ is the Rock (1 Cor. 10:4) and the only Foundation upon

*...we would never teach or even imply that the church and the kingdom of God are one and the same in every aspect.*

which anything lasting can be built (1 Cor. 3:11). But to Peter as the representative of the church the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given. Consequently, Peter, together with all the Apostles, used those keys on the day of Pentecost in preaching Christ to Jews from every nation, effectively opening the kingdom to all who believed in Him (Acts 2:14, 32-42). With brethren from the church in Joppa, Peter used the same keys in opening the kingdom to Gentile believers in Christ (Acts 10:34-48). In both cases, those who were received into the church had first entered the kingdom of God by means of the new birth.

These are but a few of the contrasts that can be drawn between the church and the kingdom of God. The church and the kingdom are really allies, not antagonists. If we rightly divide the word of truth, however, we cannot but denote the distinction between them. ✪



## Watching for Christ's Coming

C.H. Spurgeon

Luke 12:37-38 "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."

I am about to speak of the Second Coming of Christ; and I felt thankful that my dear brother's prayer, although we had not been in consultation with one another upon the matter, was in every way so suitable to the subject upon which I am to speak. He led us in prayer to think of our coming Lord; so that I trust you are on the margin of the subject now, and that you will not have to make any great exertion of mind to plunge into mid-stream, and be carried away with the full current of thought concerning the Second Advent of the Saviour. It is a very appropriate topic when we come to the Lord's table; for, as that prayer reminded us, the Lord's supper looks backward, and is a memorial of his agony; but it looks forward, and is an anticipation of his glory. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "For as often as ye eat of this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." By looking forward, in a right state of heart, to that Second Coming of Christ which is the joy of his Church, you will be also in a right state of heart for expecting him, not knowing at what hour the Master of the house shall come. The world does not expect him; it goes on with its eating and drinking, its marrying and giving in marriage; but his family should expect him. When he will return from the wedding, I trust that he will not find the door shut against him, but that we shall be ready to open to our Lord immediately when he knocketh. This is the object of the few words that I shall have to say tonight, to stir you up, and my own heart also, to be ever watching for Christ's Second Coming.

First, *the Lord will come*. He that has come once is to come again; he will come a second time. The Lord will come.

He will come again, for he has promised to return. We have his own word for it. That is our first reason for expecting him. Among the last of the words which he

spoke to his servant John are these, "Surely I come quickly." You may read it, "I am coming quickly. I am even now upon the road. I am traveling as fast as wisdom allows. I am always coming, and coming quickly." Our Lord has promised to come, and to come in person. Some try to explain the Second Coming of Christ as though it meant the believer dying. You may, if you like, consider that Christ comes to his saints in death. In a certain sense, he does; but that sense will never bear out the full meaning of the teaching of the Second Advent with which the Scripture is full. No, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." He who went up to heaven will come down from heaven, and stand in the latter day upon the earth. Every redeemed soul can say with Job, "Though after my skin worms shall destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Christ will as certainly be here again in glory as he once was here in shame, for he has promised to return.

Moreover, the great scheme of redemption requires Christ's return. It is a part of that scheme that, as he came once with a sin-offering, that, as he came once to redeem, he should come a second time to claim the inheritance which he has so dearly bought. He came once, that his heel might be bruised; he comes again, to break the serpent's head, and, with a rod of iron, to dash his enemies in pieces, as potter's vessels. He came once to wear a crown of thorns; he must come again, to wear the diadem of universal dominion. He comes to the marriage supper, he comes to gather his saints together; he comes to glorify them with himself on this same earth where once he and they were despised and rejected of men. Make you sure of this, that the whole drama of redemption cannot be perfected without this last act of the coming of the King. The complete history of Paradise Regained requires that the New Jerusalem should come down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and it also requires that the heavenly Bridegroom should come riding forth on his white horse, conquering and to conquer, King of kings and Lord of lords, amidst the everlasting hallelujahs of saints and angels. It must be so. The man of Nazareth will come again. None shall spit

in his face then; but instead thereof, he shall grasp the scepter of universal sovereignty; and he shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah!

When will he come? Ah, that is the question, the question of questions! He will come in his own time. He will come in due time. A brother minister, calling upon me, said as we sat together, "I should like to ask you a lot of questions about the future." "Oh, well!" I replied, "I cannot answer you, for I dare say I know no more about it than you do." "But," said he, "what about the Lord's Second Advent? Will there not be the millennium first?" I said, "I cannot tell whether there will be the millennium first; but this I know, the Scripture has left the whole matter, as far as I can see, with an intentional indistinctness, that we may be always expecting Christ to come, and that we may be watching for his coming at any hour and every hour. I think that the millennium will commence after his coming, and not before it. I cannot imagine the kingdom with the King absent. It seems to me to be an essential part of the millennial glory that the King shall be revealed; at the same time, I am not going to lay down anything definite upon that point. He may not come for a thousand years; he may come tonight. The teaching of Scripture is, first of all, 'In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' It is clear that, if it were revealed that a thousand years might elapse before he would come, we might very well go to sleep for that time, for we should have no reason to expect that he would come when Scripture told us he would not."

"Well," answered my friend, "but when Christ comes, that will be the general judgment, will it not?" Then I quoted these texts, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." I said, "There is a resurrection from among the dead to which the Apostle Paul labored to attain. We shall all rise; but the righteous shall rise a thousand years before the ungodly. There is to be that interval of time between the one and the other; whether that is the millennial glory, or not, this deponent sayeth not, though he thinks it is. But this is the main point, the Lord shall come. We know not when we are to expect his coming; we are not to lay down, as absolutely fixed, any definite prediction or circumstance that would allow us to go to sleep until that prediction was fulfilled, or that circumstance was apparent."

*When will he come?...He will come in his own time. He will come in due time.*

"Will not the Jews be converted to Christ, and restored to their land?" enquired my friend. I replied, "Yes, I think so. Surely they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and God shall give them the kingdom and the glory, for they are his people, whom he has not for ever cast away. The Jews, who are the natural olive branches, shall yet be grafted into their own olive tree again, and then shall be the fullness of the Gentiles." "Will that be before Christ comes, or after?" Asked my friend. I answered, "I think it will be after he comes; but whether or no, I am not going to commit myself to any definite opinion on the subject."

To you, my dear friends, I say,—Read for yourselves, and search for yourselves; for still this stands first, and is the only thing that I will insist upon tonight, the Lord will come. He may come now; he may come tomorrow; he may come in the first watch of the night, or the second watch, or he may wait until the morning watch; but the one word that he gives to you all is, "Watch! Watch! Watch!" that whenever he shall come you may be ready to open to him, and to say, in the language of the hymn we sang just now—

"Hallelujah!

Welcome, welcome, Judge divine!"

So far I know that we are Scriptural, and therefore perfectly safe in our statements about the Lord's Second Advent.

Brethren, I would be earnest on this point, for the notion of the delay of Christ's Coming is always harmful, however you arrive at it, whether it be by studying prophecy, or in any other way. If you come to be of the opinion of the servant mentioned in the forty-fifth verse, you are wrong: "If that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." Do not, therefore, get the idea that the Lord delayeth his Coming, and that he will not or cannot come as yet. Far better would it be for you to stand on the tiptoe of expectation, and to be rather disappointed to think that he does not come. I do not wish you to be shaken in mind so as to act fanatically or foolishly, as certain people did in America, when they went out into the wood with as-

cension dresses on, so as to go straight up all of a sudden. Fall into none of those absurd ideas that have led people to leave a chair vacant at the table and to put an empty plate, because the Lord might come and want; and try to avoid all other superstitious nonsense. To stand star-gazing at the prophecies with your mouth wide open, is just the wrong thing; far better will it be to go on working for your Lord, getting yourself and your service ready for his appearing, and cheering yourself all the while with this thought, "While I am at work, my Master may come. Before I get weary, my Master may return. While others are mocking at me, my Master may appear; and whether they mock or applaud, is nothing to me. I live before the great Taskmaster's eye, and do my service knowing that he sees me, and expecting that, by-and-by, he will reveal himself to me, and then he will reveal me and my right intention to misrepresenting men." That is the first point, brethren, the Lord will come. Settle that in your minds. He will come in his own time, and we are always to be looking for his appearing.

Now, secondly, *the Lord bids us watch for him*. That is the marrow of the text: "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching."

Now what is watching? Not wishing to use my own words, I thought that I would call your attention to the context. The first essential part of this watching is that we are not to be taken up with present things. You remember that the twenty-second verse is about not taking thought what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; you are not to be absorbed with that. You who are Christians are not to live the fleshly, selfish life that asks, "What shall I eat and drink? How can I store up my goods? How can I get food and raiment here?" You are something more than dumb, driven cattle, that must think of hay and water. You have immortal spirits. Rise to the dignity of your immortality. Begin to think of the kingdom, the kingdom so soon to come, the kingdom which your Father has given you, and which, therefore, you must certainly inherit, the kingdom which Christ has prepared for you, and for which he is making you kings and priests unto God, that you may reign with him forever and ever. Oh, be not earth-bound! Do not cast your anchor here in these troubled waters. Build not your nest on any of these trees; they are all marked for the axe, and are coming down; and your nest will come down, too if you build it here. Set your affection on

things above, up yonder,—

"Up where eternal ages roll,  
Where solid pleasures never die,  
And fruits eternal feast the soul;"

there project your thoughts and your anxieties, and have a care about the world to come. Be not anxious about the things that pertain to this life. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Reading further down, in the thirty-fifth verse, you will notice that watching implies keeping ourselves in a serviceable condition: "Let your loins be girded about." You know how the Orientals wear flowing robes, which are always getting in their way. They cannot walk without being tripped up; so that, if a man has a piece of work on hand, he just tucks in his robe under his girdle, ties his girdle up tightly, and gets ready for his task, as we should say in English, turning the Oriental into the Western figure, rolling up your shirt-sleeves, and preparing for work. That is the way to wait for the Lord, ready for service, that, when he comes, he may never find you idle. I called to see a sister one morning; and when I called, she was cleaning the front steps with some whitening, and she said, "Oh, my dear pastor, I am sorry that you should call upon me just now! I would not have had you see me like this on any account." I answered, "That is how I like to see you, busy at your work. I should not have liked to have come in, and caught you talking to your neighbor over the back palings. That would not have pleased me at all. May your Lord, when he comes, find you just so, doing your duty!" You see exactly what is meant; you are to be doing your duty; you are to be engaged about those vocations to which God has called you. You are to be doing it all out of love to Christ, and as service for him. Oh, that we might watch in that style, with our loins girded about! Work, and wait, and watch! This is what your Master asks of you.

*Oh, be not  
earth-bound!  
Do not cast  
your anchor  
here in these  
troubled  
waters.*

And next, he would have us wait with our lights burning. If the Master comes home late, let us sit up late for him. It is not for us to go to bed till he comes home. Have the lights all trimmed; have his chamber well lit up; have the entrance-hall ready for his approach. When the King comes, have your torches flaming, that you may go out to meet the royal Bridegroom, and escort him to his home. If we are to watch for the Lord, as we ought, it must be with lamps burning. Are you making your light to shine among men? Do you think

that your conduct and character are an example that will do your neighbours good, and are you trying to teach others the way of salvation? Some professors are like dark lanterns, or candles under a bushel. May we never be such! May we stand with our lamps trimmed, and our lights burning, and we ourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord; not walking in darkness nor concealing our light, but letting it shine brightly! That is the way to watch for Christ, with your girdle tight about you because you are ready for work, and your lamp flaming out with brightness because you are anxious to illuminate the dark world in which you live.

To put it very plainly, I think that watching for the Coming of the Lord means acting just as you would wish to be acting if he were to come. I saw, in the Orphanage school-room, that little motto, "What would Jesus do?" That is a very splendid motto for our whole life, "What would Jesus do in such a case and in such a case?" Do just that. Another good motto is, "What would Jesus think of me if he were to come?" There are some places into which a Christian could not go, for he would not like his Master to come and find him there. There are some kinds of amusements into which a believer would never enter, for he would be ashamed for his Master to come and find him there. There are some conditions of angry temper, of pride, petulance, or spiritual sloth, in which you would not like to be if you felt that the Master was coming. Suppose an angel's wing should brush your cheek just as you have spoken some unkind word, and a voice should say, "Your Master is coming, you would tremble, I am sure, to meet him in such a condition. Oh, beloved, let us try every morning to get up as if that were the morning in which Christ would come; and when we go up to bed at night, may we lie down with this thought, "Perhaps I shall be awakened by the ringing out of the silver trumpets heralding his Coming. Before the sun arises, I may be startled from my dreams by the greatest of all cries, "The Lord is come! The Lord is come!" What a check, what an incentive, what a bridle, what a spur, such thoughts as these would be to us! Take this for the guide of your whole life. Act as if Jesus would come during the act in which you are engaged; and if you would not wish to be caught in that act by the coming of the Lord, let it not be your act.

The second verse of our text speaks about the Master coming in the second watch, or in the third watch. We

are to act as those who keep the watches of the age for Christ. Among the Romans, it was as it is on board ship, there were certain watches. A Roman soldier, perhaps, stood on guard for three hours, when he had been on the watch for three hours, there came another sentry who took his place, and the fresh sentinel stood in his place during his allotted time. Brethren, we have succeeded a long line of watchmen. Since the days of our Lord, when he sent out the chosen twelve to stand upon the citadel, and tell how the night waxed or waned, how have the watchers come and gone! Our God has changed the watchers, but he has kept the watch. He still sets watchmen on the walls of Zion, who cannot hold their peace day or night, but must watch for the Coming of their Master, watch against evil times, watch against error, and watch for the souls of men. At this time, some of us are called to

*Take this for the guide of your whole life. Act as if Jesus would come during the act in which you are engaged...*

be specially on the watch, and dare we sleep? After such a line of lynx-eyed watchmen, who counted not their lives dear unto them that they might hold their post, and watch against the foe, shall we be cravens, and be afraid; or shall we be sluggards, and go to our beds? By him that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, we pray that we may never be guilty of treason to his sacred name and truth; but may we watch on to the last moment when there shall ring out the clarion cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." People of the Tabernacle, you are set to watch tonight just as they did in the brave day of old! Whitefield and Wesley's men were watchers; and those before them, in the days of Luther and Calvin, and backward even to the days of our Lord. They kept the watches of the night, and you must do the same, until—

"Upstarting at the midnight cry,

"Behold your heavenly Bridegroom nigh,"

you go forth to welcome your returning Lord.

We are to wait with one object in view, viz., to open the door to him, and to welcome him: "that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Perhaps you know what it is to go home to a loving, tender wife and children who are watching for you. You have been on a journey; you have been absent for some little time; you have written them letters which they have greatly valued; you have heard from them; but all that is nothing like our personal presence. They are looking out for you; and if, perchance, the boat should fail you, or the train be late, if you arrived at eleven or twelve o'clock at night, you would not expect to find the house all shut up and nobody watching

for you. No, you had told them that you would come, and you were quite sure that they would watch for you. I feel rebuked myself, sometimes, for not watching for my Master, when I know that, at this very time, my dogs are sitting against the door, waiting for me; and long before I reach home, there they will be, and at the first sound of the carriage-wheels, they will lift up their voices with delight because their master is coming home. Oh, if we loved our Lord as dogs love their masters, how we should catch the first sound of his Coming, and be waiting always waiting and never happy until at last we should see him! Pardon me for using a dog as a picture of what you ought to be; but when you have attained to a state above that, I will find another illustration to explain my meaning.

Now, lastly, *there is a reward for watchers*. Their reward is this, "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching."

They have a present blessedness. It is a very blessed thing to be on the watch for Christ, it is a blessing to us now. How it detaches you from the world! You can be poor without murmuring; you can be rich without worldliness; you can be sick without sorrowing; you can be healthy without presumption. If you are always waiting for Christ's Coming, untold blessings are wrapped up in that glorious hope. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." Blessednesses are heaped up one upon another in that state of heart in which a man is always looking for his Lord.

But what will be the blessedness when Jesus does come? Well, a part of that blessedness will be in future service. You must not think that, when you have done working here, you Sunday school teachers, and those of us who preach and teach, that the Master will say, "I have discharged you from my service. Go and sit on a heavenly mount, and sing yourselves away forever and ever." Not a bit of it. I am but learning how to preach now; I shall be able to preach by-and-by. You are only learning how to teach now; you will be able to teach by-and-by. Yes, to angels and principalities, and powers, you shall make known the manifold wisdom of God. I sometimes aspire to the thought of a congregation of angels and archangels, who shall sit and wonder as I tell what God has done for me; and I shall be to them an everlasting monument of the grace of God to an unworthy wretch, upon whom he looked with infinite compassion and

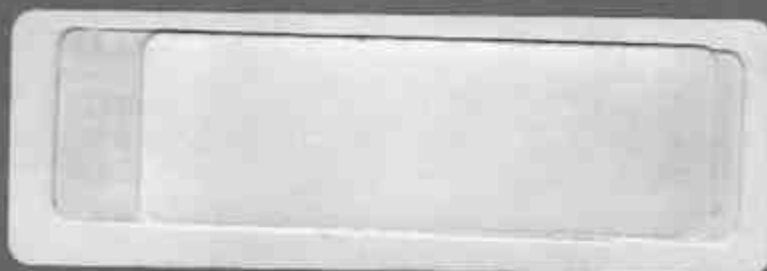
saved with a wonderful salvation. All those stars, those worlds of light, who knows how many of them are inhabited? I believe there are regions beyond our imagination to which every child of God shall be an everlasting illumination, a living example of the love of God in Christ Jesus. The people in those far-distant lands could not see Calvary as this world has seen it; but they shall hear of it from the redeemed. Remember how the Lord will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." He is to keep on doing something you see. Instead of having some little bit of a village to govern, he is to be made ruler over some great province. So it is in this passage. Read the forty-fourth verse: "Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." That is, the man who has been a faithful and wise steward of God here, will be called of God to more eminent service hereafter. If he serve his Master well, when his Master comes, he will promote him to still higher service. Do you not know how it used to be in the Spartan army? Here is a man who has fought well, and been a splendid soldier. He is covered with wounds on his breast. The next time that there is a war, they say, "Poor fellow, we will reward him! He shall lead the way in the first battle. He fought so well before, when he met one hundred with a little troop behind him; now he shall meet ten thousand with a larger troop." "Oh!" say you, "that is giving him more work." That is God's way of rewarding his people and a blessed thing it is for the industrious servant. His rest is in serving God with all his might. This shall be our heaven, not to go there to roost, but to be always on the wing; forever flying, and forever resting at the same time. "They do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." "His servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face." These two things blended together make a noble ambition for every Christian.

*Blessednesses  
are heaped up  
one upon  
another in that  
state of heart  
in which a man  
is always  
looking for his  
Lord.*

May the Lord keep you waiting, working, and watching that when he comes, you may have the blessedness of entering upon some larger higher, nobler service than you could accomplish now, for which you are preparing by the lowlier and more arduous service of this world! God bless you, beloved, and if any of you do not know my Lord, and therefore do not look for his appearing, remember that he will come whether you look for him or not; and when he comes, you will have to stand at his bar. One of the events that will follow his Coming will be your being summoned before his judgment-seat, and how will you

## Premillennial Baptist Journal

Victory Baptist Church  
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Theme of next issue:  
**Postmillennialism**

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answer him then? How will you answer him if you have refused his love, and turned a deaf ear to the invitations of his mercy? If you have delayed, and delayed and delayed, and delayed, how will you answer him? How will you answer him in that day? If you stand speechless, your silence will condemn you, and the King will say, "Bind his hand and foot, and take him away." God grant that we may believe in the Lord Jesus unto life eternal, and then wait for his appearing from heaven, for his love's sake! Amen. ✪

From MTP, V. 39, Pp 157-165.

**And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Daniel 2:44**

*(McCaskey: continued from page 7)*

38:23). Christ will rule on his throne and his glory shall be manifest throughout the earth for a thousand years. Saints of God shall partake in this glorious magnification of the Lord, and "they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

At the end of this exaltation of Christ before the eyes of the world, Earth's final battle will be fought. Satan who has been restrained for the thousand years will be loosed, will marshal an army, and will attempt a final

assault against God's Kingdom (Revelation 20:9). It is at this time that this "earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10), and the "new heaven and a new earth" will appear (Revelation 21:1). Christ will "have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Corinthians 15:24), and God's plan for the ages and purposes for redemption will be completed. All evidence of Satan's rebellion and man's fall will be erased. All sin and every result of its entrance into God's creation will be eliminated in the glory of God's presence. God's Kingdom will be universally revealed. ✪



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Postmillennialism

### Inside This Edition

- ◆ Postmillennialism, *Wayne Camp*..... p. 3
- ◆ The Coming and Reign of Christ, *David N. Lord*..... p.13

"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

"...the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem..."

## Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

## Postmillennialists

The Postmillennialists are so called because they believe that the second coming of Christ will be after the thousand years reign mentioned in Rev. 20:2-7. Dr. Daniel Whitby of Northhampshire who was born in 1638, was the originator of this position. They believe that the world will get better instead of worse, and that through the preaching of the gospel and other influences for good that the nations will finally be persuaded to cease from war, and an age of peace and righteousness will come in. After this thousand years of peace and righteousness Christ will return and a general resurrection and a general judgment will take place. Favorite expressions with the Postmillennialist are "Bringing in the kingdom," and "Taking the world for Christ." They think it is the business of the churches to win this world over to Christ. Their long range programs are built around this false conception of the millennium. The tendency among them is to institutionalism. They put great stress on secular training. They are drifting more and more into a social gospel, and they are putting less and less stress on individual regeneration, blood redemption, and personal repentance and faith.

From *The Millennial Issue*. G.E. Jones, pg. 6-7.

### How Does the PBJ Survive?

A number of readers have written and called over the years, testifying to how the Premillennial Baptist Journal has helped their understanding of biblical eschatology. In order to continue publishing what several have described as a quality magazine, we have an ongoing need for money. The cost of each issue is now about \$2000. Since we do not sell subscriptions, we are dependent on the generous donations of our readers. Will you consider donating a one-time large gift or doing as several churches are doing and contribute \$50, \$100 or \$200 per month? We are now into the fifth year of publication. Will you help enable us to continue? Make checks payable to *Victory Baptist Church* and send all donations to:

**Victory Baptist Church 9601 Blue Ridge Extension Kansas City, MO 64134.**



## Postmillennialism

Wayne Camp

### God's People Are Establishing Christ's Reign and His Kingdom on the Earth at This Time

Acts 13:47 "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

As is true for most doctrinal positions the postmillennialists fit into more than one group. There are those who hold that Christ's kingdom, the millennium, is being advanced on earth completely through the preaching of the gospel. For the sake of identity I will call this *Historical Postmillennialism*.

Others believe that it is the duty of Christians to seek to take over all forms of government to establish righteousness through establishing the law of Moses as the law of the land, even the whole world. This latter position is sometimes called *Dominion Theology*. It is also called *Theonomy* and *Christian Reconstructionism*.

#### Historical Postmillennialism

The verse at the beginning of this message is one of the primary Scriptures used by postmillennialists to try to substantiate their view of eschatology, especially their post-millennial view of the second coming of Christ. They see the world gradually getting better and better until it evolves into "the new heaven and the new earth." Conditions on earth, both morally and spiritually, will get better and better until Christ finally returns.

Typically, postmillennialists do not believe the church is the kingdom but that it will bring in the kingdom through the preaching of the gospel. They say that Christ will not be on earth during the millennium but that he will rule in the hearts of men from heaven and will return after the millennium. They say that the church, not Israel, will receive the promises of God to Abraham and David. These will be received spiritually, not literally and materially.

Some historical leaders of the historical view have been B. H. Carroll, George W. Truett, Daniel Whitby, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, and Augustus Strong.

B. H. Carroll, a giant of the faith and founder of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas, was a

postmillennial Baptist. Of B. H. Carroll, one author wrote, "Carroll's theology can best be described as moderately Calvinistic, postmillennial, and thoroughly Baptist. His postmillennialism was associated with neither the social engineering of Walter Rauschenbusch, nor the expectation that every soul in every community would be converted. Instead, Carroll held such a strong confidence in the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ's Vicar, that churches who accepted their role as God's instruments on earth would not ultimately fail in the Holy Spirit's mission to bring about the conversion of the vast majority of humanity, at which time Christ would return to fully institute His kingdom on earth. Carroll vehemently attacked Roman Catholicism for the papal claim that usurped the Holy Spirit's role as Christ's representative, dispensational premillennialism for their pessimism about the success of the Holy Spirit and the success of churches, Campbellism for their reliance on human apprehension and denial of direct revelation, and modernism for the over-reliance on scientific method to the exclusion of Divine revelation and historical evidence." James Spivey, "Benajah Harvey Carroll," in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2001), P. 169 [copied from Wikipedia online encyclopedia.]

In his book, *Redeeming the South*, Paul Harvey wrote, "Baptist postmillennialists such as B. H. Carroll pictured God as a supreme arbiter of conflict, with churches in the future acting as heavenly courts on earth, adjudicating international strife."

Some postmillennialists have tried to argue that C. H. Spurgeon was post-millennial in his views. Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart, in their book *The Reduction of Christianity*, state in a footnote: "You can also find strains of postmillennialism in the writings of the great English Baptist preacher of the 19th century, Charles Haddon Spurgeon."

That is absolutely not true! Spurgeon wrote, "There are sanguine brethren who are looking forward to everything

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growing better and better and better, until, at last this present age ripens into a millennium. They will not be able to sustain their hopes, for Scripture gives them no solid basis to rest upon. We who believe that there will be no millennial reign without the King, and who expect no rule of righteousness except from the appearing of the righteous Lord are nearer the mark." (Spurgeon, *The Form of Godliness without the Power*, MTP Volume 35, Page 301.)

Again Spurgeon wrote, "They think they perceive in the future a great progress of civilization, and they expect to see the spread of the gospel; they expect to hear of great agencies employed, of multitudes of ministers going forth to preach the Word, and a gradual conversion of the world to the religion of Christ; but he who understands the prophets, and has seen Elias, believes not in the immediate conversion of the world, not in universal peace; he believes in 'Jesus Only;' he expects that Jesus will first come; and, to him, the great hope of the future is the coming of the Son of Man." (Spurgeon, *Jesus Only*, 45:374.)

Spurgeon also wrote, "Some think that this descent of the Lord will be post-millennial—that is, after the thousand years of his reign. I cannot think so. I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial; that he will come first; and then will come the millennium as the result of his personal reign on earth." (Spurgeon, *Justification and Glory*, 11:249.)

One champion of the post-millennial view is Lorraine Boettner. He writes, "Post-millennialism is that view of the last things which holds the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and saving work of the Holy Spirit, that the world eventually will be Christianized, and that the return of Christ will occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace, commonly called the millennium." (*Postmillennialism: Statement of the Doctrine* by Loraine Boettner.)

Jonathan Edwards was another postmillennialist. He called this Golden age the *Latter-day Glory*. What is interesting about his position is that Edwards thought it was yet future at the time he was writing but that it would take place before the coming of Christ. He also held that it would probably begin in America. In Volume 1 of his works Edwards wrote, "It is not unlikely that this work of God's Spirit, so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or, at least, a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which, in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind. If we

We who believe that ... no rule of righteousness except from the appearing of the righteous Lord are nearer the mark.

consider how long since the things foretold as what should precede this great event, have been accomplished; and how long this event has been expected by the church of God, and thought to be nigh by the most eminent men of God in the church; and withal consider what the state of things now is, and has for a considerable time been, in the church of God, and the world of mankind; we cannot reasonably think otherwise, than that the beginning of this great work of God must be near. And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in America.—It is signified that it shall begin in some very remote part of the world, with which other parts have no communication but by navigation, in Isa. lx. 9. 'Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far.' It is exceeding manifest that this chapter is a prophecy of the prosperity of the church, in its most glorious state on earth, in the latter days; and I cannot think that any thing else can be here intended but America by the isles that are far off, from whence the first-born sons of that glorious day shall be brought. Indeed, by the isles, in prophecies of gospel-times, is very often meant Europe. It is so in prophecies of that great spreading of the gospel that should be soon after Christ's time, because it was far separated from that part of the world where the church of God had till then been, by the sea. But this prophecy cannot have respect to the conversion of Europe, in the time of that great work of God, in the primitive ages of the Christian church; for it was not fulfilled then. The isles and ships of Tarshish, thus understood, did not wait for God first; that glorious work did not begin in Europe, but in Jerusalem, and had for a considerable time been very wonderfully carried on in Asia, before it reached Europe. And as it is not that work of God which is chiefly intended in this chapter, but some more glorious work that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church; therefore, some other part of the world is here intended by the isles, that should be, as Europe then was, far separated from that part of the world where the church had before been, and with which it can have no communication but by the ships of *Tarshish*. And what is chiefly intended is not the *British* isles, nor any isles near the other continent; for they are spoken of as at a great distance from that part of the world where the church had till then been. This prophecy therefore seems plainly to point out *America*, as the first-fruits of that glorious day." (Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume One, Page 382.)

On the next page Edwards says, "This new world is probably now discovered, that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual re-

spect, when he creates the new heavens and *new earth*." Edwards was referring to America. He believed that God would create his new heaven and new earth and the new earth would be here in America. One of the Scriptures cited by Jonathan Edwards in his effort to prove that this would occur in America is from the first chapter of Hosea. Hosea 1:10 "... it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God".

Edwards further suggests that he had an idea in what part of America this great work, this *Lat-ter-day Glory* would begin. He says, "And if we may suppose that this glorious work of God shall begin in any part of *America*, I think, if we consider the circumstances of the settlement of *New England*, it must needs appear the most likely, of all *American* colonies, to be the place whence this work shall principally take its rise. And, if these things be so, it gives us more abundant reason to hope that what is now seen in *America*, and especially in *New England*, may prove the dawn of that glorious day; and the very uncommon and wonderful circumstances and events of this work, seem to me strongly to argue that God intends it as the beginning or forerunner of something vastly great."

Kenneth Gentry wrote, "Postmillennialism expects the proclaiming of the Spirit-blessed gospel of Jesus Christ to win the vast majority of human beings to salvation in the present age. Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history [which they identify with the "millennium"] prior to Christ's return in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in the affairs of people and of nations. After an extensive era of such conditions the Lord will return visibly, bodily, and in great glory, ending history with the general resurrection and the great judgment of all humankind. Hence, our system is postmillennial in that the Lord's glorious return occurs after an era of 'millennial' conditions" (Kenneth

## Charles G. Finney

*"Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), founder of Oberlin College and the premier revivalist of his generation, preached a strident postmillennialism: converts were to strive for both personal sanctification and social reform for the nation. Finney expected the millennium to come as soon as Christians secured enough conversions and achieved sufficient reforms. Indeed, many Finney converts invested their energies in revival, abolition, and temperance crusades, which they believed would hasten the millennium. Finney envisioned the millennium as an age of benevolence or active good-will toward others. Human beings as moral agents could either speed the progress of the millennium through active benevolence or postpone it through stubborn selfishness. Finney vigorously applied enlightenment faith in benevolence, progress, and humanitarianism to the moral issues of the day and coupled this with a revivalist's passion for conversion. Finney's campaign for a sanctified social order represents the high tide of postmillennialism in America." The Future in Our Past: Postmillennialism in American Protestantism, Nancy Koester, St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church St. Paul, Minnesota, Page 138.*

Gentry, *Postmillennialism*, in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, pp. 13-14).

Gentry also wrote, "Postmillennialism is the view that Christ will return to the earth after the Spirit-blessed Gospel has had overwhelming success in bringing the world to the adoption of Christianity."

In the *Dictionary of Evangelical Theology*, under the heading "Views of the Millennium," Page 715, Walter Elwell writes, "The Postmillennialists emphasize the present aspects of God's kingdom which will reach fruition in the future. They believe that the millennium will come through Christian preaching and teaching. Such activity will result in a more godly, peaceful, and prosperous world. The new age will not be essentially different from the present, and it will come about as more people are converted to Christ. Evil will not be totally eliminated during the millennium, but it will be reduced to a minimum as the moral and spiritual influence of Christians is increased. During the new age the church will assume greater importance and many economic, social, educational problems can be solved. This period is not necessarily limited to a thousand years because the number can be used symbolically. The millennium closes with the

second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment.”

One branch of post-millennial thinking advocates that this great improvement in the spiritual and moral condition of man will be brought about through the preaching of the gospel. These folks hold that a great percentage of the human race will be saved. Crime will decrease. Men will live at peace. Differences will be settled in a peaceful way and there will be no more war. They arrive at this conclusion through making a current application of such verses as the following. Isaiah 2:4 “And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Micah 4:3 “And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

Postmillennialists believe that when Christ comes back he will find a Christianized world. The “ingathering” (as postmillennialists call it) of the “elect” of the Gentiles will be almost, if not altogether, complete. And it appears from all I’ve been able to discern they believe that most Gentiles are of the elect. The conversion of the Jews will take place near the end of the millennium and shortly before the return of Jesus Christ.

Biblical principles of righteousness will be the rule rather than the exception. This righteousness will be seen in economics, culture, politics, and global affairs. The kingdom of God will be advancing and the gospel will be subduing Islamic radicalism and Islam in general. Buddhism will gradually fade from the earth to be replaced with Christianity. Spiritism, witchcraft, and all false religions will submit to the claims of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All forms of slavery will gradually disappear. Incidentally, I read in a recent issue of Reader’s Digest that there is more slavery in the world now than at any time in history. Human trafficking for prostitution and forced labor is the fastest-growing criminal enterprise in the world, second only to the movement of drugs and weapons in size and scope. It is “a \$19 billion industry with as many as 27 million victims.” “There are more people in slavery today than at any other time in human history,” says Kevin Bales, president and cofounder of Free the Slaves, a nonprofit human rights organization. (Reader’s Digest,

October 2010, page 133.) Such statistics seems to blast the rosy dreams of postmillennialists.

The abomination of homosexuality will be almost nonexistent. Child molestation will be no more, or extremely rare. The state of all women and children will be much improved. Theft, murder, and other crimes will diminish until they are almost or altogether nonexistent.

According to postmillennialists there may be times when it appears that the kingdom advance is being hindered by sin and Satan but those times will be brief and not very widespread. When this does occur God’s evangelists will move in preaching the gospel and the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit will quickly prevail and sin will be subdued again. The head of Satan will be bruised again. Unless he has been chained and cast into the bottomless pit, he may still walk about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, but his victims will be few and far between. The advocates of Theonomy, the position of modern postmillennialists, believe he will be chained but I am not sure of the position of Historical Postmillennialists.

Postmillennialists cite a number of things that they say are already evidences that the kingdom of God is advancing through the preaching of the gospel. They claim we are seeing decreasing crime. International problems are mostly settled by arbitration rather than military operations. When one considers world events at the present time, it is hard to believe that most international problems are being settled through arbitration rather than war.

**Post-millennialists believe that when Christ comes back he will find a Christianized world.**

The Bible has been translated into many languages so that the nations of the world are gradually receiving God’s word. Nearly 10,000,000 copies of the Scriptures are sold annually so that nearly every home in the world has at least one Bible. This last claim is ludicrous! I have been in villages in Thailand where the Bible had never been preached much less nearly every home having a Bible. Right now, postmillennialists claim that Christianity is on the very verge of becoming the religion of the world.

Postmillennialists say that if this does not come as quickly as it could the blame lies at the door of the churches for not obeying the great commission. They have not obeyed the Lord’s command. Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Matthew 28:19 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”. Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This position seems unbelievable in view of the fact that many postmillennialists are Calvinistic in their theology.

The misguided, almost blind optimism of the postmillennialists reminds me of the movie, *Field of Dreams*. A line in that movie said, "If you build it they will come." The postmillennialists seem to be saying, "If we will just go and preach the gospel they will come." One wonders if they have never read the words of Jesus. John 5:40 "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life". Matthew 22:3 "And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come." According to post-millennial thinking, the only reason the whole world is not already converted to Christianity is that Christians have not gone with the gospel as they should have. "If we go they will come."

The idea expressed here was behind the great movement called Key 73. The goal of that great movement was to take the whole continent of North America for Christ. I recall reading a guide for Southern Baptist Churches in Illinois on how to operate to bring this about. At the time I thought this was a movement solely in the Southern Baptist Convention churches. But in some recent research I learned that Lutherans, Methodists, and a number of others were involved in Key 73. Frankly I saw little, if any, evidence of the effects it was supposed to bring.

Some of the readers may be aware that at one time the main millennial position of Southern Baptists was the post-millennial position. In fact, I seem to remember that this position was the impetus behind the establishment of the Cooperative Program. Through that program Southern Baptists wanted to take the world for Christ and thus bring in a golden age of Christianity. They would have the kingdom on this Earth without the King.

On some post-millennial websites I have read that post-millennialism is making a resurgence in a lot of circles. If that is truly happening folks must be blind or cannot see as far as a newspaper or their TV to believe that the world is getting better and better. After almost 2000 years of the Lord's churches carrying the gospel one would think, if the post-millennial view is correct, things would be much, much better than they are.

After almost 2000 years of the Lord's churches carrying the gospel, if the post-millennial view is correct, things would be much better.

While pastoring in Illinois (February 1965 to September 1978) I was talking to the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Washington. From previous conversations I knew that he was a premillennialist. I asked him if most of the Southern Baptist preachers and churches were still post-millennial in their eschatology. He said they were not. I asked if they were pre-millennial or a-millennial. He replied that they were neither. I asked what their position was. He replied that they were pan-millennialists. I knew that the prefix *pan* meant *all*. Rather puzzled I asked him what was a pan-millennialist. He said, "They just believe that everything will pan out all right." That was certainly a new one on me.

I will reserve a refutation of the post-millennial view until the end of this paper. Please wait patiently for that.

Before proceeding to a discussion of Theonomy, I want to spend just a little time contrasting postmillennialism and gospel-millennialism. There is one sense in which both are post-millennial. They believe we are in the millennium now and that Christ will come at the end of it, thus post-millennial. But, the brethren whom I know who identify themselves as gospel-millennialists do not hold too much of what postmillennialists teach. They do not believe that the world has been getting and will continue getting better and better as the end-time approaches. They do not believe that before Christ comes true Christianity will be the religion of the world. They do not believe that Christianity is now on the very verge of converting the majority of the world's population. They do not believe that through their carrying the gospel into the world they will be able to bring the demise of false religion. They do not believe that the world not being converted to faith in Jesus Christ is the failure of the church. To my knowledge they do not believe that most of the Gentiles are God's elect. As I understand their position, they do not believe that national Israel will be restored and converted to Christianity before the coming of Jesus Christ. I'm certain that they would not agree with Jonathan Edwards that the new heaven and new earth would be built in New England or somewhere else in America. If I am wrong I ask these dear brethren to correct me.

#### **Dominion Theology, Theonomy, or Christian Reconstructionism**

We will now consider modern views of postmillennialism. Apparently, there are those who hold to the post-millennial view who are convinced that earlier post-millennial ideas that simply preaching the gospel would

not accomplish the results their post-millennial views call for. Therefore there are those who now believe that it must be brought in by Christians seizing the reins of government and pretty much forcing their views on the inhabitants of the earth. It is their intention to establish the civil laws of Israel on the earth. Some of the leading proponents of this approach to establishing the kingdom of God on earth through Theonomy are R.J. Rushdoony, his son Mark Rushdoony, Gary North, Greg Bahnsen, David Chilton and D. James Kennedy.

Dennis M. Swanson, Director of Academic Assessment, The Master's College in a presentation at the Far-West Region of the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting, April 22, 1994 said, "Since the early 1960's a theological-political-social movement known as "Christian Reconstructionism," "Dominion Theology," or simply "Theonomy" has been developing and growing. This growth has been both in numbers and in influence within mainstream Christianity. Evangelical Christians of all persuasions have viewed this movement with a good deal of suspicion and anxiety. As Robert Lightner states, "Theonomy is a growing concern in both covenant and dispensational circles." Under the leadership of three individuals: R. J. Rushdoony, Gary North, and Greg Bahnsen, who are universally recognized as the founders of the movement, Theonomy has been almost revolutionary in both the interpretation and application of Scripture, particularly the Old Testament."

In discussing the brunt of Theonomy, William S. Barker states, "...this school of thought has produced a vast amount of literature, influenced the Christian-school movement, affected many churches, and stimulated some previously quietistic evangelicals to political reform. Having begun in Reformed or Calvinistic circles, theonomy has in the last decade proved attractive to a wider group of American evangelicals and fundamentalists, including some charismatics. At the same time several of the earlier spokesmen for theonomy have fallen into different camps with the result that it is difficult to describe theonomy or Christian reconstruction as a single movement."

After World War II there was a gradual demise of post-millennialism. Some of the leading proponents of what I have called Historical Postmillennialism died and those that remained mostly became a-millennialists. With the rise of Theonomy, however, postmillennialism took on new life. It spread from Reformed circles into various other groups including Charismatic groups. This brought great friction within the movement. Reconstructionist

writers do not get along. R. J. Rushdoony and Gary North reportedly do not speak to one another. Greg Bahnsen considers some of the postmillennialists so far off that he says they are not a part of the "body of Christ." In other words he does not even consider them to be saved. He and Rushdoony do not get along. There is other strife and splinters among this group. [This material was gleaned from the article *Theonomic Postmillennialism* by Dennis M. Swanson referenced earlier.

**Theonomy has been almost revolutionary in both the interpretation and application of Scripture.**

I said earlier that those who hold this Theonomic post-millennial view believe that the civil law given to Israel should be established as civil law in the earth. In the prologue to *By This Standard The Authority of God's Law Today* by Greg L. Bahnsen (1985) Gary North wrote, "God is glorified when His law is enforced by those who honor Him. Similarly, God is outraged when men turn their backs on His law, for in doing so, they turn their backs on the social and legal restraints that alone keep man from destroying himself and the creation. Someone has called God's law a "user's manual"

for the creation, but it is more than this: it is a user's manual for life, God's laws, when imparted to men redeemed by grace through faith in Christ, are the laws of life."

Notice what North said. He took the position that God's laws are to be enforced by those who honor him. If I understand what some of these folks teach, this enforcement would expand to all men, not just Christians. This seems to be true of Gary North.

North declared, "The postmillennial conception of victory is of a progressive cultural victory and expansive influence of Christianity in history. . . . The personal status of the believer and the corporate standing of the Church in salvation is . . . one of present victory – in principle. . . . The distinctive post-millennial view of Christianity's progressive victory, in time and history, into all of human life and culture, is postmillennialism's application of the doctrine of Christ's definitively completed salvation" ("Whose Victory in History?" in Gary North, ed., *Theonomy: An Informed Response* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991], p. 215). [Editor's note: *Theonomy* is another name by which postmillennialism is called. It means *the state of being governed by God, a god, or by priests or preachers.*] Note that North said that this victory of postmillennialism would extend into "all of human life and culture."

It is unequivocally evident that R.J. Rushdoony was a proponent of Theonomic postmillennialism. He wrote, "Postmillennialism is the belief that Christ, with His com-



ing, His atonement, and His continuing regenerative power in those whom He calls, creates in His redeemed people a force for the reconquest of all things. The dominion that Adam first received and then lost by his fall will be restored to redeemed man. God's people will then have a long reign over the entire earth, after which, when all enemies have been put under Christ's feet, the end shall come, and the last enemy, death, will be destroyed." (R.J. Rushdoony from *Back to the Future*.)

Notice that Rushdoony said that Christ "creates in His redeemed people a force for the reconquest of all things." This was corroborated by a statement made by a co-worker when Rushdoony died in February, 2000. P. Andrew Sandlin wrote, "Rushdoony boldly proclaimed that Christians must apply the Faith in all areas of life, including politics, and that meant dismantling the mammoth state. He wanted political government replaced with church government, family government, and especially self-government. Sandlin went on to say of Rushdoony, He believed...Christians *must* conform the modern culture to the Bible and the Faith." (Emphasis mine RWC).

Following are additional quotes from R. J. Rushdoony and his son Mark.

"A godly nation must keep the Sabbath to have God's blessing, embracing not only a weekly observance, but

the observance of the sabbatical year of rest ... This is a legal national duty and requirement ... For the nation to deny the Sabbath is to deny God" (R. J. Rushdoony, *Chalcedon Report* #20).

"A godly law order will work to disinherit, execute, and supplant the ungodly and to confirm the godly in their inheritance. For Christians to work for anything less is to deny God." (R.J. Rushdoony quoted in *Notes on Reconstructionism: Roots of a New "Christian" Inquisition?*)  
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"The divorce problem will be solved in a society under God's law because any spouse guilty of capital crimes (adultery, homosexuality, Sabbath desecration, etc.) would be swiftly executed, thus freeing the other party to remarry" (Mark Rushdoony, *Chalcedon Report* #252, 1986).

"Parents would be required to bring their incorrigible children before the judge and, if convicted, have them stoned to death" (Mark Rushdoony, *Chalcedon Report* #252, 1986).

Another Theonomist, David Chilton, has written, "The kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of Christ. They are to be disciplined, made obedient to the faith." Chilton also wrote concerning the world, that it has

### J. MARCELLUS KIK

*J. Marcellus Kik, another postmillennialist, has said:*

*"That there is still a remnant of paganism and papalism in the world is chiefly the fault of the Church. The Word of God is just as powerful in our generation as it was during the early history of the Church. The power of the Gospel is just as strong in this century as in the days of the Reformation. These enemies could be completely vanquished if the Christians of this day and age were as vigorous, as bold, as earnest, as prayerful, and as faithful as Christians were in the first several centuries and in the time of the Reformation" (An Eschatology of Victory, p. 250).*

*Kik also said, "...before the advent of Jesus, this world was very much Satan's kingdom. In His earthly ministry, Jesus bound Satan and began the process of rooting out the devil's kingdom as He established the Kingdom of God. Satan is still powerful and believers must watch for him but he has been bound by the power of Christ and has no more ability to deceive the nations. Because of Christ's work of binding Satan, the power of the gospel is free to bring the nations to Christ. Christ's work of exorcism was proof of the inauguration of His kingdom. His binding of Satan is the theological foundation of the Great Commission. Citizens of Christ's Kingdom will have success in bringing the nations under the discipline of God's law precisely because Satan, who once deceived the nations, can no longer do so." Ibid., Page 12.*

"tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of years of increasing godliness ahead of it, before the Second Coming of Christ" (Paradise Restored, Reconstruction Press, 1985, pp.221, 222).

D. James Kennedy was a well-known proponent of Dominion Theology. He wrote, "The Christian Reconstruction movement believes that the Bible contains not only a message of personal salvation through the blood of Christ shed on the cross, but also a comprehensive law structure which is alone able to provide a just basis for society. It is committed to the view that sovereignty and thus government belong to God, and that all delegated government, whether to family, church or state (civil government), is to be exercised in obedience to the law of God's covenant. Furthermore, salvation involves every aspect of man's life and thus also the relationships he sustains to the world around him. The exercise of dominion in accordance with the terms of God's covenant is therefore basic and vital to the Christian faith. To neglect this is to deprecate the extent of Christ's victory at Calvary." [Emphasis added by BDM] (*D. James Kennedy: General Teachings/Activities* "Copyright BDM. All Rights Reserved")

Reconstructionism or Theonomy has ambitions to become a very severe form of government. Consider the

following assessment of their intentions. "Reconstructionism would eliminate not only democracy but many of its manifestations, such as labor unions, civil rights laws, and public schools. Insufficiently Christian men would be denied citizenship, perhaps executed. So severe is this theocracy that it would extend capital punishment beyond such crimes as kidnapping, rape, and murder to include, among other things, blasphemy, heresy, adultery, and homosexuality" (*Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence: Part 1 -- Overview and Roots*, by Frederick Clarkson, 3/94 *The Public Eye*).

The following material is taken from *Notes on Reconstructionism: Roots of a New "Christian" Inquisition?* "Copyright BDM. All Rights Reserved"

From the mouths of the Reconstructionists themselves (7/94, *Chalcedon Report*):

"Since we are Calvinists, we believe the Christian Faith applies to all of life."

"Reconstructionists are dominionists, not priests. We hold that to limit God's authority over all of life is to deny His sovereignty ... We believe we are called like the first Adam and mainly in the strength of the second Adam, our

### Daniel

"Prior to the Great Awakening, Daniel Whitby, an English commentator in Britain, popularized his theory that before the second Advent the whole world would be converted, and there would be a thousand years of peace culminating in the return of Christ. This meant that Christ would first come in mighty power through the Holy Spirit to convert the world, and then at the end of this glorious millennial period He would come in Person. But Christ did not say that all the world would be converted, only that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; then the end would come. There would be no temporal millennium as Whitby and others envisioned." *Deceptive Use Of The Second Coming*. *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 5/2 (Spring 1994): 116-135. Article copyright © 1994 by Jack J. Blanco. Editor's note: This quotation is taken from a *Seventh Day Adventist Journal* but is borne out by more dependable sources elsewhere.

It is rather interesting that Whitby systematized the doctrine of postmillennialism but admitted that for almost the first three centuries of church history the historical pre-millennial view was the almost universal view of true churches. *Treatise on Tradition* as follows:

"The doctrine of the Millennium, or the reign of saints on earth for a thousand years, is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants; and yet it passed among the best Christians, for two hundred and fifty years, for a tradition apostolical; and, as such, is

Lord, to exercise dominion in His name throughout the earth.”

“Reconstructionists are Theonomists. Theonomy just means the law of God. It equals the requirements found in His written Word.”

“The law is the standard of sanctification. It is true that Christ merited salvation for His people by keeping the law, and thus released us from its penalty and condemnation. But God never intended to replace the law as a reflection of His character. The law cannot save us, but it will forever remain a perfect reflection of God’s character. For that reason, we strive to keep the law, not as a means of justification, but as the standard of sanctification. The Spirit has been given to us to assist us in keeping the law.”

“Theonomists believe God’s law governs all of life. It must govern society no less than it governs our individual lives, families, and churches.”

“Reconstructionists are Postmillennialists. We believe that Christ established His mediatorial kingdom at His first coming.”  
 “We believe ... that the main reason God gave the Holy Spirit to the church in a special empowering was so the

church could do even greater works than Christ did while He was on earth, so it can fulfill the commission given to it, bringing all nations and peoples under the authority of Christ and his gospel and word. ... We believe our calling as individuals and families and churches and civil governments is to take godly dominion in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

“We Reconstructionists are God-centered not church-centered. We believe the church is but one (though an important) institution among others.”

“We fervently support the separations of church and state. But we do not believe in the separation of the state (or any other institution) from God. God by His law must govern the state just as He governs the individual, family, and church.”

Some critics say our views would destroy the freedoms we Americans have. Some say we want to replace the Constitution. That is utter nonsense. It is true that the Constitution -- like everything else -- must be subordinate to God’s word, but we have never advocated replacing the Constitution.”

### *Whitby*

*delivered by many Fathers of the second and third century, who speak of it as the tradition of our Lord and His apostles, and of all the ancients who lived before them; who tell us the very words in which it was delivered, the Scriptures which were then so interpreted; and say that it was held by all Christians that were exactly orthodox.”* “It was received not only in the Eastern parts of the Church, by Papias (in Phrygia), Justin (in Palestine), but by Irenaeus (in Gaul), Nepos (in Egypt), Apollinaris, Methodius (in the West and South), Cyprian, Victorinus (in Germany), by Tertullian (in Africa), Lactantius (in Italy), and Severus, and by the Council of Nice” (about A.D. 323). Even in his *Treatise on the Millennium*, in which he endeavors to set aside the ancient faith by his substitution of “a new hypothesis,” he acknowledges, according to Justin and Irenaeus, that (ch. 1, p.61) there were “three sorts of men: (1) The Heretics, denying the resurrection of the flesh and the Millennium. (2) The exactly orthodox, asserting both the resurrection and the Kingdom of Christ on earth. (3) The believers, who consented with the just, and yet endeavored to allegorize and turn into a metaphor all those Scriptures produced for a proper reign of Christ, and who had sentiments rather agreeing with those heretics who denied, than those exactly orthodox who maintained, this reign of Christ on earth.” (Vol. IV, Chap. XIV, *General Features Of Eschatology, A Brief Survey of the History of Chiliasm*, pg. 264)

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In conclusion to this paper I would like to note some

### Biblical Contradictions of Postmillennialism

I believe I can say without fear of contradiction that the fantasies of postmillennialists are clearly refuted by Scripture. Jesus asks a rhetorical question that seems to clearly indicate that true faith will be hard to find on the earth when he comes. Luke 18:8 "I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Commenting on this verse John Gill wrote, "In the world at the last day: there will then be little of the doctrine of faith, and less of the grace of faith, and still less of the exercise of faith, particularly in prayer, and especially about the coming of Christ; it will be little thought of, and expected, or faith little exercised about it." The picture that Jesus paints in the 24th chapter of Matthew certainly does not indicate that the dreams of postmillennialists will be realized. Matthew 24:9-12 "Then

Pre-millennialists look for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus

#### AL MOHLER, POST-MILLENNIAL?

Mohler rejects the cliché (sic. cliché) of infiltrating Washington to take dominion in Christ's name. "I don't invest a lot of hope in the political sphere," he says. "I believe in Niebuhr's analysis, and then some—evangelicals invest too much confidence in a political recovery that Scripture doesn't prescribe." Mohler prefers instead to offer a stream of commentary on a diverse range of subjects, provide the secular media with a consistent evangelical viewpoint, and give constituents talking points to defend the biblical worldview on any subject that might come their way—all while running a seminary and serving the SBC. Copied from *Christianity Today* online, *The Reformer: How Al Mohler transformed a seminary, helped change a denomination, and challenges a secular culture.*

Molly Worthen | posted 10/01/2010 10:13AM. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/october/3.18.html>

shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold". Abounding iniquity will be the trend in latter days and because of that the love of many of God's people will wax cold. Does that sound like the postmillennialists will succeed in converting the world to Christ?

Consider those words of Paul found in the third chapter of Second Timothy. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." 2 Timothy 3:13 "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

On one occasion the disciples of Jesus asked him about the signs of his coming and of the end of the world (age). Matthew 24:3 "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?" He certainly did not answer their question in the way that a postmillennialist would. Matthew 24:4-11 "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

Everything promised by postmillennialists is refuted by these passages.

Postmillennialists accuse premillennialists of being pessimistic in our eschatology. Not true! While they look for ways to accomplish world conquest we look for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. They will be disappointed. We will not! ✨



## The Coming and Reign of Christ

David N. Lord

### Christ's Second Coming Is To Precede the Millennium

The most important question between Millenarians and Anti-millenarians, respects the time of Christ's second coming, and the nature of his reign on the earth during the millennium. Pre-millennialists hold that he is to come at the commencement of the thousand years, and is to reign in person on the earth during that period and forever thereafter. Anti-millenarians hold that his reign during the thousand years is to be only such as he now exercises by influences, laws, and providences, and that he is not to come to raise the dead and judge the living till after the millennium has passed. It is, however, on altogether insufficient and arbitrary grounds. There are very few future events predicted with such clearness and amplitude as that his second coming is to precede the thousand years of the saints' reign, and that he is then to establish his kingdom on the earth and reign over it in person.

1. There is no direct prophecy or clear indication that he is not then to come and reign over the earth. There is no prophecy that either expressly declares, or naturally implies that his second advent is to follow, instead of preceding the thousand years. There is no declaration nor hint, nor any thing that can consistently with the laws of language be construed as teaching that his reign on the earth is not to be a reign in person and visible glory, but only by the Spirit, by laws, and by providences. It is by an arbitrary rejection of the natural sense of the predictions respecting his coming and reign, and substitution in their place of a fanciful meaning by a process of spiritualization, that Anti-millenarians force them to yield a seeming attestation to their theory.

2. It is consonant to Christ's nature as Jehovah-man, and the ends of his mediation, that he should reign here in person in accomplishing the redemption of the race. He is himself in his finite nature of our race. What so natural and appropriate as that he should reign in that person over our race, rather than in some distant realm that is the habitation of a different order of intelligent beings? The work of redeeming men is the most important measure of his administration, and is to exert a vaster and more momentous influence on the other orders of his subjects than any other act of his government. How natural and fitting that this world where he is to make the most glorious display of his perfections, and whence the most powerful and beneficent influences are to emanate to all other parts of his

empire should be made the scene also of his visible presence, and the seat of his throne?

3. But it is expressly revealed that his coming in the clouds of heaven and receiving the dominion of the earth, is to take place before the conversion of the nations, and therefore is to precede the millennium. After the vision of the judgment and destruction of the fourth beast, the prophet Daniel says: "I continued to look in the visions of the night, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he advanced toward the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and tongues should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away; and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." Chap. 7:13-14. His coming thus in person in the vision, is, according to the law of divine symbols, representative of his really coming in person in the clouds at the epoch of the destruction of the powers denoted by the fourth beast to which the vision relates; and is his second coming as he himself has shown in his profession to the high priest that he was "the Son of God," and declaration that, "hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," Matt. 26:63-64; and 24:30; and 25:31. That it is to precede the conversion of the nations is seen from its being of the epoch of the destruction of the persecuting horn of the beast that is to prevail against the saints till the time of Christ's coming; and from the consideration that it is then that the empire of this world is to be first given to Christ, people, nations, and languages *may* serve him, which symbolizations also in the Apocalypse of his coming with his heavenly hosts in power and glory at the destruction of the beast and its armies under the sixth seal and the seventh trumpet, which are indisputably to precede the millennium, Rev. 19:11-21; 11:15-18; 6:12-17. These visions admit of no other construction. They determine the time of his second coming to be that of the overthrow of the anti-Christian powers, with as absolute certainty as it could have been expressed in a language prophecy. It is revealed also with equal clearness in the language prophecies.

David N. Lord, 1792-1880, was a Congregationalist business man and author of *Exposition of The Apocalypse, Characteristics of Figurative Language, Visions of Paradise and The Reign of Christ On Earth*. He was Editor of *The Theological and Literary Journal* from 1848 to 1861.

Thus, it is foreshown that the destruction of the man of sin is to take place at the time of Christ's coming, because that usurper is to be consumed by the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming, 2 Thess. 2:6, and that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, when he takes vengeance of them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe, 2 Thess. 1:7-10. The time when he "comes to be glorified in his saints," is the time when he comes to raise them from death in glory, and exalt them to thrones in his kingdom.

4. It is revealed that his coming is to be at the resurrection of the holy dead, and that is to take place at the commencement of the thousand years. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not go before them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first," 1 Thess. 4:15-16. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own band; Christ *απαρχή*, first; *επειτα*, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming; *εἶτα*, afterwards, (at a still later period,) the last band," 1 Cor. 15:22-24. But the resurrection of the holy dead is to take place before the thousand years, as is expressly foreshown, Rev. 20:4-6, where the symbols of their restoration to life and elevation to thrones, are said by the Spirit to be symbols of the first resurrection; and it is declared that they are to reign with Christ during the thousand years. As then their resurrection is to precede the thousand years of their reign with Christ, and as Christ's second coming is to take place at the time of their resurrection, his coming is to precede the thousand years of their reign with him.

This is confirmed also by the fact that those who are to be raised are to be divided into bands, and that those bands are to be raised at different periods.

Now as the resurrection foreshown, 1 Cor. 15:22, is the resurrection of mankind universally that die; and as those who are to rise are to be distributed into separate bands and according to their character, as is shown by the resurrection of those who are Christ's in a band by themselves at his coming, it is clear that the unholy are to form a band by themselves. And as the bands are to rise in suc-

cession at different periods, it is clear that the band of the unholy is to rise at a different and later time than the holy.

That the unholy are to form a band by themselves is seen from the declaration, "All shall be made alive, but every one in his own band," and the definition of the first band as Christ, perhaps including those who rose with him; and of the second as consisting of those who are Christ's. As the unholy are not included in the second band, they must of course form another band by themselves; and this is indicated by the term *ἰδίω* his own band, which doubtless means the band to which he belongs by his character, and the nature of the resurrection he is to receive. Every one who is Christ's belongs to the band that is to be raised in glory and admitted to immortal life in his kingdom, and that band is his own band; that in which his character and relations to Christ place him. Every one who is not Christ's, belongs to the band whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life, and who are to be raised to shame and contempt. That is the host in which his character and relations to Christ place him. It is a clear, therefore, from the distribution of them which is to take place into bands according to their character and the nature of the resurrection of which they are to be the subjects, that the unholy are to form a band by themselves, as it is that the holy are, who it is expressly shown are to be raised as a band by themselves at Christ's coming.

It is foreshown that the destruction of the man of sin is to take place at the time of Christ's coming.

It is equally certain, also, from the designations of time, that the resurrection of these bands is to be at different periods. The terms *ἀπαρχή*, *επειτα*, and *εἶτα* are designations of times, and as they are here used, of times that are in a series. The first, Christ; which, as the event has shown, precedes that next in order, more than eighteen centuries. *Επειτα*, afterwards, they that are Christ's at his coming. *εἶτα*, after that—that is, at a still later period, after an interval, as the Apocalypse shows, of a vast round of ages, *το τέλος*, the last band in the train. *Εἶτα* as clearly designates a time that is subsequent to that denoted by *επειτα*, when those who are Christ's are to be raised; as *επειτα* denotes a time that is subsequent to Christ's resurrection. The express and sole office of *επειτα* is to show that the resurrection of the holy dead is to take place at a distance from Christ's resurrection, and that distance is defined as extending to his coming; and the express office, in like manner, of *εἶτα*, is to show that the resurrection of the last band is to take place at a later period than the resurrection of the holy; and its period is defined as that at which Christ, having put down all his enemies, is to deliver up to the Father the scepter of the universe which he received at his exaltation, and commence his everlasting reign, exclusively, over this world

and race. *ἔϊτα* is used in this sense, Mark 4:28: "For the earth spontaneously brings forth fruit, first the blade; *ἔϊτα* then, that is, next, the ear; *ἔϊτα*, afterwards the full grain in the ear." It is used in a like manner, 1 Cor. 12:28, to denote an analogous gradation in a series of miraculous gifts. "And God has placed some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, *ἔπειτα*, next after, miracles, *ἔϊτα* after them, gifts of healing, helps, governments." They are used in the same manner in this discussion respecting the resurrection. "He was seen of Peter; *ἔϊτα*, next after by the twelve; *ἔπειτα*, afterwards by more than five hundred brethren at once, *ἔπειτα*, after that by James; *ἔϊτα*, next after that by all the apostles; *ἔσχατον* δὲ πάντων, last of all by me." To deny, then, that these terms are used to denote successive times, and that *ἔϊτα* (v. 24) denotes a later time than *ἔπειτα* (v. 23), and treat it as though it were *τότε*, then, and stood for the same times as *ἔπειτα*, is to deny its clear and indubitable meaning, and assign it one that is foreign to its usage. It is to disregard, also, the structure of the sentence of which *ἔϊτα* το τέλος is a continuation.

*ἔϊτα* is not the beginning of a new sentence and a new subject. Had a new sentence begun after *παρουσία*, Christ's coming, it would have been introduced by *τότε*, then, and *καί γάρ*, or some other word, or words, indicating a new sentence and another event, and its contemporaneousness with Christ's *παρουσία*, coming. Instead of that, *ἔϊτα* το τέλος is a continuation of the sentence commenced in v. 23, and completes the series of times of which *ἀπαρχή*, and *ἔπειτα*, are the first and second. And finally, this is confirmed by the specification which follows, of the time to which *ἔϊτα* refers, namely, *ὅταν*, when Christ shall deliver up to the Father the kingdom which he received at his exaltation; and the specification also, of that time, as *ὅταν*, when he shall have put down all his enemies, of which the last that is to be put down is death, which is to be after the period denoted by the millennium has passed (Rev. 20:14); while his coming, at which his own people are to be raised, is to precede that epoch by a vast round of ages (Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 11:15; 20:4-6.) The time of the resurrection of the last band, is thus specifically defined as the time of the last judgment, when the rest of the dead who are not to live till after the thousand years are past are to be raised; (Rev. 20:4-6, 14); precisely as the time of the resurrection of the second band is defined, as the time of Christ's second coming.

It is clear then beyond the possibility of refutation, that those who are to be raised, are to be divided into bands according to their character and the nature of the resurrection they are to experience; and that the resurrection of these bands is to take place successively at times that are

to be separated from each other by wide intervals. The resurrection of the holy dead is to be at a distance of at least near nineteen centuries after Christ's resurrection. The resurrection of the unholy is not to take place till after the period denoted by the thousand years of Christ's coming, therefore, at the distance of three hundred and sixty thousand years.

5. His coming is to take place at the close of the tribulation of the Israelites that followed their conquest and dispersion by the Romans. Thus Christ foretold that, "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden by the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with

power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh," Luke 21:24-28. The redemption of that people therefore is to take place at the time of Christ's coming in the clouds. This is foretold also by Peter, Acts 3:20-21, where he declares that when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of Jehovah, he shall send Jesus Christ—before preached unto them—whom the heavens must retain *until the times of the restitution of all things* which God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets. But the times of the restitution of all things which God has promised, are the times of the restoration of the Israelites to their ancient land and to their relation to God as his chosen people. Christ is to return from the heavens therefore at the epoch, and commence his reign on the earth.

This is foretold also with equal explicitness, Zech. 14:1-16, where it is declared that when in the day of Jehovah he shall gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations, and his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee; and that then the Lord shall be king over all the earth; and thereafter there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited; and "such as are left of the nations that come against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." There is a like prediction also, Isaiah 66:15-22. But the restoration of the Israelites is to take place at the time of the conversion of

Christ is to return from the heavens therefore at the epoch, and commence his reign on the earth.

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Theme of next issue:  
**The Fullness of the Gentiles**

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the Gentiles. For it is to be at the time when the fulness of the Gentiles comes in, that the Redeemer is to come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob; and it is then that God is to have mercy on all, both Gentiles and Jews, who are previously to be shut up in unbelief. The restoration of the Israelites is to take place also at the time of the creation of the new heavens and the new earth; for then God is to "create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy; and he is to rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in her people, and the voice of weeping is no more to be heard in her, nor the voice of crying;" but they are to be freed from the curse, and crowned with unmixed blessedness and peace, Isaiah 65:17-25, and the creation of the new heavens and new earth is to take place at the time that "the tabernacle of God" descends from heaven and "is with men and he dwells with them, and they become his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God." For that is the time when he is to "make all things new," Rev 21:1-5. It is therefore at the commencement of the millennium. For that is the time of the resurrection of the saints, whom the new Jerusalem, the tabernacle of God, symbolizes, who are to reign with him during the millennium, Rev. 20:4-6, and the time of their marriage as the bride to the Lamb, Rev 21:9; 19:7-9, and that is to take

place soon after the destruction of great Babylon under the seventh trumpet and seventh vial, Rev. 19:1-6.

Such are the clear, specific and uniform teachings of the Scriptures. The revelation they make is, beyond all room for debate, that the second coming of Christ is to take place before the conversion of the nations and his reign of a thousand years with the risen saints. It is to treat those numerous passages as without meaning to deny that that is their import. It is also to impeach the wisdom and truth of God. Why did he employ these numerous, specific, and consistent designations and definitions of the time of Christ's second coming, if the time of his coming is not that which they denote? Why is no other period designated? Why are all the predictions of his advent in harmony with these? Among all the revelations God has made of future events, there is scarcely one that is more clearly and frequently foreshown, or more indubitably certain than that Christ's second coming is to take place under the seventh trumpet, and is to precede his thousand years' reign and the conversion of the world. ✪



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## The Fullness of the Gentiles

### Inside This Edition

- ◆ The Fullness of the Gentiles, *J.C. Settlemyer*..... p. 3
- ◆ The Fullness of the Gentiles and the Salvation of Israel, *John Murray*..... p.14

"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

"...the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem..."

## Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

Doubtless with great joy and expectation, Paul tells believing Jews and Gentiles alike that he does not want them to be uninformed of a marvelous mystery. At the end of the epistle Paul defines mystery as being a revelation “which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God” (Rom. 16:26; cf. Eph. 3:5-7).

Before Paul identifies and explains the particular mystery of which he is speaking here, he once again cautions Gentiles against pride, warning them to avoid construing the truths of that mystery as reasons for being wise in their own estimation.

The first component of this mystery is that a partial spiritual hardening has happened to Israel. Partial does not modify mystery but Israel. That is, those who are hardened—the great majority—are totally hardened, but not every Jew has been or will be hardened. As always through the ages of redemptive history, God sovereignly has preserved for Himself a believing remnant. That is the gracious truth Paul emphasizes in the first part of this chapter (11:1-10).

The second component of this mystery is that the hardening will remain only until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. Until refers to time, fullness indicates completion, and together those terms denote impermanence. The hardening will last only for God’s divinely-determined duration. It began when Israel rejected Jesus as her Messiah and Savior, and it will end when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Has come in is from *eiserchomai*, a verb Jesus frequently used. He used it of entering the kingdom of heaven/God (Matt. 5:20; Mark 9:47; John 3:5; cf Acts 14:22) and of entering eternal life (Mark 9:43, 45) both of which refer to receiving salvation. Israel’s unbelief will last only until the complete number of the Gentiles chosen by God have come to salvation. Paul’s special calling was “to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, Ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:16). In his letter to Titus, Paul refers to himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God” (1:1) The mystery ends when the gathering of the elect is complete. ✪



## The Fullness of the Gentiles

J.C. Settlemoir

Rom 11:12 *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

Rom 11:25 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

We begin with a definition of significant terms to be used throughout this discussion which are found in text, context or elsewhere in Scripture.

### Israel

The first term which one must define in chapters 9, 10 and 11 of Romans is *Israel*. No discussion of this portion of the epistle can hope to meet with success without a careful understanding of what the writer meant by this term. By *Israel* we understand Paul to mean the nation of Israel. This is just to say the term means the people of the nation as a nation. Bruce hones this idea:

It is impossible to entertain an exegesis which understands 'Israel' here [11:26] in a different sense from 'Israel' in verse 25 ('a hardening has come upon a part of Israel'). The connecting words 'and so' (cf. 5:12) say more than 'and then'; they imply that 'in this way'—by the operation of the divine purpose that the gospel should be received by the Gentile first, and then also by the Jew—the salvation of 'all Israel' will come about. [Bruce, *Romans*, 11:26, p. 209].

The question is frequently asked, Does not *Israel* mean rather than the nation, only the *elect* of that nation?

We have already said that there can be no question here of applying the term *Israel* to the *spiritual* Israel in the sense of Gal. 6:16. It is no less impossible to limit its application, with Bengel and Olshausen, to the *elect portion* of Israel, which would lead to a tautology with the verb *shall be saved*, and would suppose, besides, the resurrection of all the Israelites who had died before. And what would there be worthy of the term *mystery* (ver. 25) in the idea of the salvation of all the elect Israelites! [Godet, *Romans*

11:26, p. 411; Cf. S. Lewis Johnson, *Paul and 'The Israel of God,'* PBJ, Oct.-Dec. 2009, p. 3].

Peters also discusses this idea:

Unless we accept the Divine Order laid down, it is impossible to explain the numerous prophecies which describe the Jewish nation, *as a nation*, to experience a blessedness unexampled here on earth. If we say, this has been fulfilled, then we *belittle* the Word of God, and challenge His foreknowledge; [we would rather say His predestination—JC]; if we divert these prophecies to a fulfillment in the Church, then we *violate* the plainest rules of language and make Scripture to utter and give hope which were never intended to be realized. [Peters, *Theo. Kingdom*, II, 77].

### Fullness

The next term to be considered is *pleroma* and it is translated *fulness*. This word occurs frequently in Scripture [17 times] and the meaning is *fulness* or *abundance* in our text [Cf. Thayer]. I give a few examples. In Mk 8:19 when they took up these baskets, they were said to be *full* or *to be filled*. Who would think to say these baskets only contained a fourth of a basket? Half a basket? Three fourths of a basket? The meaning is obviously *full* baskets.

The term is used in Mk 2:21, for *filled it up*—that is a patch. Now who would take a mere scrap that could in no wise cover the torn place and think to patch garment with it? The idea is that the patch must exceed the torn place in every way. There must be a fullness or a surplus. So the *fulness* here means that it *fills up* the rent place.

When Paul spoke of going to Rome to preach to the disciples there, he said, And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the *fulness* of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Rom 15:29. This fullness of blessing is that which is referred to in Eph 1:3 and 3:19 and speaks of an

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abundance—for example, all that a vessel can hold. This cannot then be a smattering, a remnant, or a brand plucked out of the fire—but it means an abundance of whatever it is applied to. Delling in TDNT says:

1. "That which fills;"....
2. a. In measurement, "full measure," R. 11:25 numerically "the whole," for *panta ta...*(cf. 1:5), with *pas Israel*, v. 26 intentionally chosen as a fuller expression. [TDNT. 6. 302].

### Fullness of Israel

The fullness of Israel is the direct opposite to their *casting away*, their *diminishing or decay* [margin], their being *broken off* the good olive tree (their own root), their blindness, trespass, their unbelief. This great apostasy continues until the time which Paul describes in Ro 11:26-29:

*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

This is what Paul calls "their fullness" in the text. The nation will then be saved as a nation. Not every person in that nation, but the great mass of them.

### Fullness of the Gentiles

We have also the *Fullness of the Gentiles* in text and context [Ro 11:12, 25]. What is the meaning of the *Fullness of the Gentiles*? The term *fullness of Gentiles* leads some to think that when this occurs, the Gentiles and Israel will merely change places. The Gentiles, they think, will then be cast away in the main and Israel will be restored in the main, a sort of divine do si do. But this idea does not fol-

low from Scripture. Rather the restoration of Israel will bring about a fullness—a *pleroma* of the Gentiles. If the loss of Israel was the *riches* of the Gentiles, how much more their *fullness*. That is the fullness of Israel will add riches upon riches to the Gentiles in terms of the gospel being effectual among them. This is that euphoria of which the OT prophets glowingly predict. The full glory of God reaching even the far flung regions of the earth—the Gentile domain!

### The Times of the Gentiles

This term is found in Lk 24:21 and is frequently confused with the fullness of the Gentiles. We believe the two terms are distinctly different. The *times of the Gentiles* refers to that period when they are dominant. Israel continued to exist after the *time of the Gentiles* began. Nor was Israel broken off until their rejection of Christ. Then was the Kingdom taken from them and given to a nation that would bring forth the fruit thereof, that is the Gentiles. [Mt 21:43; Cf. Lk 20:16]. But mark well that from that time until this day, the *fullness of the Gentiles* has not yet come in but the *times of the Gentiles* still roll on. The fullness of Gentiles is another aspect of the mystery and it will not take place until the Fullness of Israel comes in at the coming of the Lord! The times of the Gentiles began when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem. Israel again became a nation in 1948 but this did not bring about the end of Gentile times. The Times of the Gentiles will end only when Israel turns to the Lord in repentance and faith. Thus the *Times of the Gentiles* and the *Fullness of the Gentiles* are different and distinct things.

### Remnant

Having determined the meaning of *Israel* to be the *nation* of Israel, it follows that a *remnant* of Israel, is a part of the whole. "There is a remnant according to the election of grace." Ro 11:5. *Remnant* means "that which is left...i.e., there is a spiritual 'remnant' saved by the gospel from the midst of apostate Israel...the 'remnant' is small, and as such is an evidence of God's electing grace..." [Vine, 522]. We have an OT example of the meaning of the term in the account of Rehoboam and the two tribes left to him after the revolt of the ten northern tribes under Jeroboam, 1 Kings 12:23. "Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people..." The remnant to Paul means Israel was not totally rejected, but only in part, even though it was the greater part. This also indicates that this casting off is not permanent, for

*The Times of the Gentiles  
will end only when  
Israel turns to the Lord in  
repentance and faith.*

why preserve any, if by the casting away God meant to reprobate the nation?

### Mystery

"Mystery in the NT is not the idea of something which cannot be understood but rather it is some Divine truth which once was hidden but is now revealed." [ISBE, 2105]. Men would never be able to know the mystery unless the Lord had seen fit to reveal it. Thus Paul does not wish the Romans to be ignorant of this mystery of the blindness of Israel and the fullness of the Gentiles. Ro 11:25-29.

### A Word on Interpretation

The interpretation of Scripture as set forth by the Reformers has greatly colored all who came after them. We can scarcely realize the weight of a man like Calvin (and other reformers) on our method of Scripture interpretation. This influence is especially strong in eschatology because he took his ideas on this subject primarily from Roman Catholicism and these ideas consequently dominate biblical interpretation to this day. [Cf. Ramm. *Prot. Bib. Inter.*, 38-43]. Of course the Reformers were expressly biased against two things in particular in eschatology and these two things clouded their whole approach to this subject. These two things were: 1. The restoration of the Jews, and 2. The thousand year reign. Godet recognized their bias:

It is almost incredible how our Reformers could have held out obstinately, as they have done, against a thought [the restoration of the Jews—JC] so clearly expressed but they showed themselves in general rather indifferent about points of eschatology, and they dreaded in particular everything that appeared to favor the expectation of the thousand years' reign which had been so much abused in their time. [Godet. *Romans*. 11:25-26, p. 410].

It seems impossible that during the fullness of Israel and the fullness of the Gentiles we should find the bodies of the saints still under the power of death; the Colossus still erect on Israel's grave, Da 2; the apostasy of Israel still rampart; the knowledge of the Lord scarcely known among the Gentiles; the departed saints reigning with Christ, separate from their bodies and Christ supposedly sitting on David's throne! All those marvelous times, described by the Prophets in which they foresaw the restoration of Israel, the fullness of the Gentiles, Satan bound, evil put down, Christ reigning in Jerusalem, the knowl-

*Men would never be able  
to know the mystery  
unless the Lord had seen  
fit to reveal it.*

edge and glory of the Lord covering the earth, were meant only to teach us, so we are told, that we die and go to Heaven! This is what an *un-spiritual* interpretation has forced upon the Revelation of God! How could these things be?

### Great Transformation of Israel

*Salvation is of the Jews!* These profound words of Jesus Christ to the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:22) are full of the Bread of Heaven. Nor can we understand them without going back to the very beginning. Salvation is of, or from, the Jews because it was Abraham that God called up out of Ur and He made a covenant with him and promised him untold and incalculable blessings which concerned not only salvation, but how this salvation was to be delivered and through what means. These marvelous blessings were not only to the Jews, but according to the inscrutable purposes of Jehovah, they were to be sent to the Gentiles who had nothing to do with that covenant. This included the rebellion of Israel and their crucifying their Messiah, the Lord of glory. Because of their hardness, blindness and perverseness, they were cast away as a nation. And what then? The gospel they rejected become the riches of the Gentiles, Ro 11:12, 15!

Thus we have *Israel* described as *enemies* in Ro 11:28—that is to the Gentiles. This term *enemies* cannot refer to the elect of Israel for they were anything but enemies of the Gentiles. It was in fact through their ministry that the Gentiles were given the gospel in the first place and it was by them that they were received into fellowship, Ac 11:18. Through the fall of the nation of Israel, salvation is come to the Gentiles, Ro 11:11. So the term *enemies* refers to those who fell, that is the majority of the nation of Israel. Those who fell are contrasted with the rest who did not fall. Both groups are of the nation of Israel. But those who received the gospel are defined as a remnant according to the election of grace, Ro 11:5, ( Cf. 2 K 19:4 and 1 K 11:31).

Among the predicted blessings in this chapter is the restoration of Israel as a nation of believers in Jesus as the Messiah. Israel, now dwelling in darkness, turned away from God, a veil lingers over them, their branches broken off, and only a remnant abiding to confirm the fact that their stumbling and fall was not for their reprobation or annihilation but for the purpose of sending forth the gospel to the Gentiles. The kingdom was taken from Israel temporarily and given to a nation which would bring forth the proper fruit thereof. God is working out His will in and through these very things. This mystery of the unbelief of Israel and the inclusion of the Gentiles is now revealed and we are to believe it and to be humbled by it. Ro 11:21, 25.

As there is a *casting away* of Israel so there is a *receiving* of them (Ro 11:12, 15, 26). As there is a blindness, a stupor, a falling, a death, an enrobing in sin so there is also a casting away of the vile garments, a healing of their blindness, an awakening from their dullness and a removal of their sins, a restoration of life! And so all Israel shall be saved, [Ro 11:26]. This is the fullness of Israel and it is necessary in the purpose of the Lord before the fullness of the Gentiles can come in.

By the fall of Israel, salvation is sent to the Gentiles. Of course one cannot make Israel here to be anything but Israel because this Israel is contrasted with the Gentiles. There can be no reasonable denial that there are here two distinct entities—Israel and the Gentiles referred to by Paul. This fall of Israel and this turning to the Gentiles has for its purpose primarily to provoke the Jews to jealousy. The implication is that as the fall of Israel produced a marvelous blessing for the Gentiles, the fullness of Israel will bring even greater blessings to the Gentiles! So what will happen to the Gentiles when the fullness of Israel comes in? The restoration of Israel in a national sense will bring about the Fullness of the Gentiles.

Haman, Hitler and numbers of other tyrants have attempted to eliminate the Jews. Some theologians have

tried to do the same thing in a different way. (Cf. *Future Israel* by Horner). But all of these men are under the control of God. Israel could not fall or fail before Christ came, nor can it cease to exist since Christ came simply because Israel is tied to the purpose of God. Nor is it possible for the restoration of Israel to fail. Israel's restoration is not a possibility, it is an absolute necessity because the Word of God speaks of the *Fullness* of Israel and there can be no fullness of a thing without the existence of it. God works all things after the counsel of His own will. In His Word we are taught to pray, "Thy kingdom come." What did Christ mean by this phrase? Certainly not that His everlasting kingdom should come—for that kingdom was in existence since the foundation of the world! But this refers to that Kingdom which was future to the disciples, who were taught to pray for its coming. It is still future to us for this prayer is yet being offered up by all His servants on earth. And that Kingdom will come. When we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come,' as McClain puts it, "our true meaning is, Come Lord Jesus." [McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*, 35]. All of these great promises are tied essentially to the coming of Christ! The Fullness of Israel waits for Christ to return!

#### The Present Status of the Jewish Nation

The present condition of Israel is described by Paul in various terms. They are in unbelief! This is not merely the idea of a nation which has never received the gospel, for in that case, the world is full of such. But this unbelief, is that which indicates that Israel had all the bounties given to them but in vain. It is described in these mournful terms:

*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Rom 9:1-5*

They are then described in chapter eleven as having the spirit of slumber, with eyes which do not see and ears which do not hear unto this day, v. 8. They rejected the gospel and through their trespass salvation is come to the Gentiles. Now to identify Israel, one need only ask to whom did these circumstances belong?

*As there is a casting  
away of Israel so  
there is a receiving  
of them.*

Was it to the believing remnant? Certainly not! Was it to the mass of humanity? In no way! Well, to whom then?

The answer is that it was to Israel as the nation chosen of God who were the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. This included both the elect and non-elect; the believing and the unbelieving. This definition is the only consistent meaning which can be assigned to the term Israel in Ro 9,10, 11. This is the definition which always distinguishes Gentiles from Israel. If one accepts the idea that *Israel* means the *elect remnant*, he is immediately confronted with such an unwelcome statement as "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in," where such an idea is impossible.

But Israel is neither reprobated nor annihilated, Le 26:44, 45; De 4:31. Israel is destined to have what is here called a *fullness*, a *pleroma*. This is something that will exceed all that has gone before.

#### **Fullness of the Gentiles Not the End of the Gentiles**

In using this term *fullness of the Gentiles*, (Ro 11:25), Paul does not speak of the *end* of the Gentiles or the cutting off of the nations! Just as he did not speak of the end of Israel when they were cast away. But here there is a difference between Israel and the Gentiles. The fullness of the Gentiles speaks of a plethora—an abundance. We are not here to think of the end of the blessings, but of a superabundance, an overflowing—a marvelous expansion which we believe will exceed any thing ever witnessed before!

#### **Calling of the Gentiles Not Their Fullness**

The Gentiles were called when Peter was sent with the keys to open the door of the gospel to them in Acts 10. But we must not think that this *calling* of the Gentiles was the *fullness* of the Gentiles because that calling was a historical event when Paul wrote, but the fullness of the Gentiles was yet future when he wrote, Ro 11:25. The calling of the Gentiles was an open door (1 Cor 16:9 with 2 Cor 2:12) to them. Christ specifically said that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel during His personal ministry, Matt 15:24. And when He sent out the twelve to preach He forbid them to go to Samaritans or Gentiles, Mt 10:5-6. But in the "depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Ro 11:33) He opened the door to the Gentiles and broke down the middle wall of partition, Ep 2:14-17.

## *The gospel was welcomed by the Gentiles when it was declined by the Jews.*

Another reason the calling of the Gentiles could not refer to their fullness is that this great time waits for the fullness of Israel, Ro 11:12, 15, 25. As the breaking off of Israel and grafting in of the Gentiles was purposed and fulfilled by the Lord, (Jn 10:16; Ac 10:15), we can rest assured that He will also bring about the fullness of the Gentiles at the appropriate time, Ro 11:25.

This idea is borne out when we read *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?* What we are given here is that the fall of the Jews introduced great riches to the Gentiles. This is a fact. We see how Israel's rejection of Christ and the gospel constituted their fall. Yet, the Lord did not leave himself without a people in the world, but rather this fall of the Jews produced the riches of the Gentiles through His grace.

The gospel was welcomed by the Gentiles when it was declined by the Jews, Act 13:48. The more the Jews were hardened, the more they blasphemed and the more they blasphemed, the more the Gentiles were enriched! This was so bountiful that the pagan temples were deserted to the point the pagans sought and obtained government support to suppress Christianity!

The gospel ran into all the known world like electricity and churches sprang up throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. Now if this was the riches of the Gentiles resulting from the Jews' "diminishing," or "decay" (margin), or "slipping away," (Green) and it was, then Paul asks, how much more their fullness? That is, if what we know took place under the casting away of Israel was to the advantage of the Gentiles, what will it be when Israel is restored to their fullness? This will result in the fullness of the Gentiles as well, Ro 11:25. This is a great promise that when Israel receives its fullness, the corresponding fullness of the Gentiles will be proportionately greater!

This means that Israel will be restored to a place of fullness and this may be only understood in the light of Israel's being cast away. We mean that Israel fell by unbelief. This was not by accident or chance. Rather it was done at the direction of the Lord because it was written in the prophets. Nor was this unbelief for the destruction or reprobation of Israel. It was not to evacuate the world of the gospel. Far from it. It was through this fall or stumbling of Israel, that the greatest riches the world ever saw should come to the Gentiles! Everything the gospel has ever done in the history of the world, every nation that has had any knowledge of Jesus Christ in any age received it because these riches accrued to them through the fall of Israel.

### Status of the Gentiles at this Present Time

This present time is still the *time of the Gentiles*, Lk 21:24, but it is in no sense the *fullness* of the Gentiles. Instead of there being a fullness of the Gentiles, we see the exact opposite. The Gentile nations are benighted. Though Gentiles were called by the gospel nearly two thousand years ago, yet the world today is not under gospel influence. Far from it. The number of gospel churches in the world is comparatively small. Much of what is termed "Christian" will not bear the test of Scripture. The world is dominated by false religions, false Christs, false 'Christian' systems and this apostasy is deepening in every way. This is not that fullness of the Gentiles of which Paul was speaking. Are we to take the present "Christian" scene and elevate it to the place of a great plethora of gospel effectiveness? West describes the world as he saw it in the late 1800s.

Already, by hyperbole of expression, we say the gospel has gone to all lands, the Bible been translated into all tongues, and Christianity achieved a substantial victory over Satan's empire. Our vouchers for this, are Paris, London, Berlin, St Petersburg, Vienna, Edinboro, Glasgow, Dublin, Boston, New York, Chicago, St.

Louis, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Washington, etc., etc., the paragons of Christendom, like which, if the whole planet were, it would be ripe for the sickle of judgment! *Blood-shedding, adulterous, intemperate and mammon-loving, Christendom! Sabbath-breaking too!* And this, after 18 centuries, the paraded boast of pre-advent Millennialism! Blow the trumpet in Bethhaven! What a phalanx of able and scholarly men challenge attention to the fact that, "*Not one nation yet, in its general mass, has accepted Christianity, but only individuals, and, relatively to the population, few!*" (Thiersch.) If we ask what the prophets looked for, what the Apostles expected, and what John saw in vision, in this state of things, there is but one answer, and that is, not the conversion of the *world*, but the *waxing of Anti-Christianity to its height, in the very midst of Christendom, the crisis, the conversion of Israel, and Advent of the Lord to Judgment.* [West. Thousand Years. 452].

And now a hundred years later can anyone think things are better? It is imperative that we grasp this truth. If we fail to do so, we are warned by Paul [Ro 11:18,19]. The Gentiles had known of God before they were called but they rejected the knowledge they had of God. They overlooked the things which they could see. When they knew Him they glorified Him not as God. They changed His eternal Godhead into that of beasts or of men. They ran into vile affections such as homosexuality, lesbianism and every other vice. They saw the truth of God but did not like what they saw and God gave them up to a reprobate mind, [Ro 1:18-32]. They continued to carry on their idolatry, their wickedness, their sexual aberrations, their vile habits, their false worship in every nation and clime and tongue from the very beginning of time and still do in the mass until this day! The world scene—the world of the Gentiles—is worse today than ever before! When will this be changed? When the fullness of the Gentiles comes in.

### Fullness of the Gentiles a Great Transformation

There is this concept of *the fullness of the Gentiles*. What a great transformation is here predicted! The covering which now covers the nations shall be removed [Is 25:7-8]. And when will this be done? We set no dates. We do not attempt to put each predicted event into some local account. All such things, we believe, are to be left in the hands of Him who ruleth over all. We believe they will be perfectly manifest at the appropriate time.

*It was through this fall of Israel, that the greatest riches the world ever saw should come to the Gentiles.*



### The Fullness of the Gentiles Does Not Stand Alone

Rather we believe the *Fullness of the Gentiles* is directly related to the *Fullness of Israel*. We cannot disconnect the falling of Israel from the grafting in of the Gentiles—these are separate things but not unrelated. Thus when it shall turn to the Lord, and Israel shall have the veil taken away, and shall look on Him whom they pierced as a nation, that conversion will be the *Fullness of Israel*, which has lingered, lo, these two thousand years. This is not to be understood as the events of one day only as was the beginning at Pentecost, but it is that which will run on throughout the millennial age. Such a great outpouring upon Israel will be greater for the nation than anything that has gone before! This, by the grace of God, will, result also in the *Fullness of the Gentiles*. If the fall of them be the riches of the world—and it was! And the loss of them the riches of the Gentiles—and it was! Then, the apostle asks, How much more their Fullness? That is, if the breaking off of Israel, when that nation rejected and Crucified the Lord of Glory, when God's chosen nation refused to recognize Jesus as Christ—if that brought untold riches to the world of the Gentiles and opened the gospel to all nations then, what will be the result of the conversion, the fullness of Israel as a nation?

The *Fullness of Israel* refers to the whole nation, not just a remnant, Ro 11:12. Now when we read of the *Fullness of the Gentiles* we are not to think that it means only a remnant of the Gentiles. This is to give the same term different values in the same context. If the fullness of Israel means the almost total number of Israel will be saved it must have the same meaning in reference to the Gentiles. And if this is correct, then we are to anticipate, according to Paul, a greater in-gathering of Gentiles than this world has ever known before! We believe this is Paul's idea.

#### Other Prophetic Events Connected to the Fullness of the Gentiles

We have these things connected to other events. We notice a few of them:

- It is the day the iniquity of Jacob shall be purged, Is 27:9; Ro 11:26.
- It is the day the great trumpet shall be blown, Is 27:13; Mt 24:31; Re 11:15.
- It is the day when Israel shall be given a heart to know the Lord, Je 24:7.
- It is the day of the resurrection, Is 26:19; Da 12:2.

*The gospel will be  
used in bringing this  
fullness of the Gentiles in.*

- It is the day HE WIPES away tears from all faces, Is 25:8; Re 21:4.

This time of the fullness of the Gentiles then will be the production of the Lord Himself at His coming—it will not be brought about by the saints before Christ returns. This is no Post-millennial revival. Yet, the gospel will be used in bringing this fullness of the Gentiles in.

When God shall dispel Jewish darkness, and confer salvation on all Israel, he will enlighten the benighted Gentiles, and bring them into the glorious liberty of the children of God. He will bless them with his word, his Gospel, and his ordinances, by which they shall know their natural guilt and misery, the way of salvation by Divine grace reigning through Christ's righteousness, and the exercise of faith in Christ for eternal life. They will then be brought from barbarism to civilization, from treating one another with cruelty to kindness and brotherly love, from abominable idolatry to the true worship of God, and from brutal immoralities to that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. What a change will be accomplished on heathenish, Mohametan and antichristian Gentiles, when they shall be rescued from their ignorance and delusions, and enlightened with the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Such are the blessings which the converted Gentiles have enjoyed, and which are prepared for the other nations, when their fullness will come in. [Mason. *Divine Mystery*, 73, 1825].

#### The Fullness of the Gentiles Will Be As Much Greater Than Their First Conversion As the Full Harvest is Greater Than the First Fruits

These terms are pregnant with promise. The Fullness of Israel and the Fullness of the Gentiles means that the numbers of elect extend far beyond the numbers saved

beforehand just as the first fruits are exceeded by the harvest. This was typified by the Feast of Pentecost when the first fruits were presented before the Lord, Le 23:10. Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection and those he raised after His resurrection promise a much greater number will be raised from the dead, (1 Co 15:23; Mt 27:53). So Pentecost was the promise of the fullness of Israel and the fullness of the Gentiles. We need not think that God is limited. These terms, we believe, do not refer to mere remnants but the whole of both groups and this is not limited to the life time of a man but for the entire Millennium, a hundred years times ten. What great numbers will then be saved!

The text imports that when God shall bring in the fullness of the Gentiles, he will confer on them great and glorious privileges. God's removing Jewish blindness, and his bestowing salvation on all Israel, are mentioned in the context as glorious operations of Divine mercy and power. His bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles must be considered in the same way. When God gathered the Gentiles into the Church, at the beginning, and in the course of the Gospel dispensation, he bestowed great and precious blessings upon them. But when he shall gather the outcasts of the Gentiles, when their fullness shall come in, it will be a more glorious display of his almighty power and his everlasting love to the nations. He will then bring the residue of the Gentiles from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. [Mason. *Divine Mystery*, 73. 1825].

#### **Numbers of Prophetic Scriptures Wait in the Docket for Fulfillment**

Beside Ro 11:12, 15 and 25 there is a mass of Scripture which refers to this time of great blessing not only to Israel but also to the Gentiles and that fact is constantly stated. We can give only a sampling. Among them are the following:

*“But as truly as I live,  
all the earth shall be  
filled with the glory  
of the Lord.”*

Gen 18:18 *Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?*

Mal 1:11. *For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.*

Ps 2:8 *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*

Num 14:21 *But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.*

Ps 22:27 *All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*

Ps 65:5 *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:*

Ps 67:7 *God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*

Isa 52:10 *The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

Ps 72:11 *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.*

Ps 72:17 *His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.*

Isa 2:2 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*

Isa 52:10 *The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

Hab 2:14 *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

Hag 2:7 *And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.*

Rev 15:4 *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*

Luke 2:30-32 *For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

Rev 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

Isa 11:10 *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*

Isa 42:1 *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

Isa 42:6 *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;*

Isa 49:22 *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.*

Isa 49:6 *And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*

Isa 60:3 *And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.*

Isa 66:12 *For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.*

Isa 66:19 *And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and*

*“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”*

*Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.*

Jer 16:19 *O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.*

Let any student of Scripture make a list of unfilled prophecies referring to the Gentiles, and he will find an abundance of references which point to this fullness of the Gentiles which are waiting to be fulfilled.

### Supporting Evidence From Scholars

Because this theme is so seldom set forth in pulpit or in our papers, let me give some supporting evidence from various writers to prove this is not a new doctrine.

Anderson wrote:

The coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles must not be confounded with the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24). The one refers to spiritual blessing, the other to earthly power. Jerusalem is not to be the capital of the free nation, independent of Gentile power, until the true Son of David comes to claim the sceptre. [Anderson. *Coming Prince*. 149].

J.R. Graves in his message on Satan Dethroned set forth this position:

Christ and his Saints will reign on the earth for 1000 years, during which time every curse but death will be removed; the fertility of the earth restored; the ferocity of animals contained the nations learn war no more; and all thrones as in all offices, from the highest to the lowest, filled, and all governments of the earth be administered, by the Saints of Christ in equity and

peace. Then will truth spring out of the earth and righteousness look down from heaven; Christ, the once crucified, now earth's victorious and glorious King of kings and Lord of lords, take the throne of his father David, and reign from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.

Thus shall all nations of the world  
In Abraham's promised seed be blessed.  
Oh, scenes surpassing fable, and yet true--  
Scenes of accomplished bliss, which who can see,  
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
His soul refreshed with foretaste of the promised joy?  
[J.R. Graves. *Satan Dethroned* page 34].

This is the day when he takes away the rebuke of his people and from all the earth! John Owen, in his work on Hebrews, affirms,

Israel shall be a guide and blessing to the residue of the gentiles who shall seek after the Lord and may be entrusted with great empire and rule in the world. [Owen. Hebrews. Vol. 1, p. 445].

In their Commentary on Romans Sandy and Headlam say:

St. Paul strengthens his statement by an argument drawn from the spiritual character of the Jewish people. If an event which has been so disastrous to the nation has had such a beneficial result, how much more beneficial will be the result of the entrance of the full complement of the nation into the Messianic kingdom? [Sandy-Headlam. *Epistle to Romans*. 11:12, 322]

The *Expositor's Bible Commentary*:

The logic of the verse compels us to take it in this sense, that as surely as Israel's defeat (identified with her stumbling) has brought the riches of God's grace to the Gentiles on a large scale, the conversion of Israel to her Messiah (v

26) will bring even greater blessing to the world. [Harrison. *Ex. Bible Com.* 120].

Moule

But if their partial fall be the world's wealth, and their lessening... their reduction, (a reduction in one aspect to a race of scattered exiles, in another to a mere remnant of 'Israelites indeed,' be the Gentiles' wealth, the occasion by which 'the unsearchable wealth of Messiah' (Eph. 3:8) has been as it were forced into Gentile receptacles, how much more their fullness, the filling of the dry channel with its ample ideal stream, the change from a believing remnant, fragments of a fragmentary people, to a believing nation, reanimated and reunited? What blessings for 'the world,' for 'the Gentiles,' may not come through the vehicle of such an Israel? [Moule. *Romans*. 11:12, p. 298].

Godet:

But their destination is nevertheless irrevocable; and through the overflowing of divine mercy (chap. 5:20) it will be realized in them at the period announced by the apostle, when, saved themselves, they will cause a stream of life from above to flow into the heart of Gentile Christendom (15:12, 15, and 25, 26). [Godet. *Romans*. 11:29, p. 413].

The American Commentary:

In our view Paul teaches that when the great mass or multitude of the Gentiles shall have accepted a Jewish Savior and a salvation which is from the Jews, and shall enter into the messianic kingdom, then the Jews themselves, 'provoked to emulation,' will be ashamed to hold out longer in their opposition and exclusiveness, and Israel as a whole, perhaps 'the whole nation which shall then be in existence' (Prof. Turner), will accept of Jesus as their Messiah, and the unspeakably blessed influence of their reception within the Christian fold will extend all over the Gentile world. [A. N. Arnold. *American Commentary*, Ro 11:26. Note by D. B. Ford, p. 260].

West describes this great prophecy:  
To the holy living, reserved in God's counsel to be the local and sustaining center of the Messianic Kingdom in victory on the earth, and whose "reception" is to be as "life from the dead" to the nations, Rom. 11:15, and their "fullness" the

*This is the day when he  
takes away the rebuke  
of his people and  
from all the earth!*

greater "riches of the Gentiles," 11:12, "the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under all heavens" is given. Under Christ, they lead the world. The Gentile Powers have had the "Times of the Gentiles," and answered for their conduct. Israel's times in the kingdom now begin, the world a witness of the difference of administration in the new and better age from that which obtained in the age just buried with its crimes. It means that, by the will of God and the gift of the Son of Man, earth's sovereignty shall pass to the hands of God's ancient people, the kingdom be restored to Israel, and all the promises to Abraham and his literal believing seed be at last fulfilled. The "gifts and calling of God" to them are irreversible, a boon their own apostasy could not invalidate. (Ro 11:29), the gift of primogeniture, the gift of the land, the gift of their mission to be the bearer of the promises and collective mediator of salvation to the world. Their elect remnant was the nucleus of the church. Their elect remnant augmented to fullness, shall be the fullness of the Kingdom in the coming age. Their gathering, last struggle, conversion to Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit and political establishment in their own land as a "righteous nation," and their transcendent blessing to the nations are guaranteed by the covenant, promise and oath of God, and by a hundred most decisive scriptures in both Testaments, Ezk. 36: 24-28; 37:21-27; Zech. 12:10-14; Ro. 11:25, 33; Re. 7:4-8; 12:10,11; 14: 1-5. [West. *Daniel's Great Prophecy*. 84].

One of the best commentaries on Ro 9,10, and 11, known to me is that of John Murray. His comment on Ro 11:12 is pertinent:

'How much more their fullness.' There should be no question but this is the fullness of Israel as a people. The stumbling was theirs, the fall was theirs, theirs was the trespass, and theirs the loss. The fullness, therefore, can have no other reference. What is 'their fullness'? ...No word could serve to convey the thought of the thoroughness and completeness of this contrast better than the term 'fullness'. For if 'fullness' conveys any idea it is that of completeness. Hence nothing less than a restoration of Israel as a people to faith, privilege, and blessing can satisfy the terms of this passage. The *argument* of the

*"How long" so frequently,  
so pathetically asked,  
will finally be answered!*

apostle is not, however, the restoration of Israel; it is the blessing accruing to the Gentiles from Israel's 'fullness'. The 'fullness' of Israel, with the implications stated above, is presupposed and from it is drawn the conclusion that the fullness of Israel will involve for the Gentiles a much greater enjoyment of gospel blessing than that occasioned by Israel's unbelief. Thus there awaits the Gentiles, in their distinctive identity as such, gospel blessing for surpassing anything experienced during the period of Israel's apostasy, and this unprecedented enrichment will be occasioned by the conversion of Israel on a scale commensurate with that of their earlier disobedience. [Murray. *New International Com. Rom.* 11:12, 78-79].

According to this interpretation of the text we are to anticipate great blessings to both Jews and Gentiles by the Lord Jesus Christ who is able to do above and beyond what we can think [Ep 2:20]. The nation Israel is to come to a time which is referred to as the *fullness of Israel*—all Israel is to be saved! This will then result in the Gentiles coming to a time called the *fullness of the Gentiles*—all the nations shall be saved! These great and glorious blessings will fulfill all those wonderful OT prophecies which the saints of God have waited for through the ages. The cry, "How long" so frequently, so pathetically asked, will finally be answered! When Christ Jesus brings these things to pass, He will be received by the Jews as the Messiah [Ze 13:6] and the fullness of Israel will then be made an overflowing to the Gentiles [Is 66:12] and this will run to the ends of the earth:

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, Is 11:9.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" ✨

## The Fullness of the Gentiles and the Salvation of Israel

John Murray



Romans 11:25-26 *For I would not, brethren have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*

The words, "for I would not, brethren, have you ignorant", as in other instances (1:13; I Cor. 10:1; 12:1; II Cor. 1:8; I Thess. 4:13), draw attention to the importance of what is about to be said and the necessity of taking full account of it. The apostle is still speaking to Gentiles and has in view the liability to erroneous assumptions and vain conceits on their part. This is evident from the purpose for which he gives them the disclosure concerned, namely, "lest ye be wise in your own conceits" (cf. vs. 18-21). The disclosure he is about to make he calls a "mystery". This term appears frequently in Paul's epistles but this is the first occasion in this epistle and it occurs again in 16:25. The latter instance virtually furnishes a definition. We are liable to associate with the term the idea of secrecy or of unintelligible mysteriousness. This is not the meaning in Paul's use of the term. As appears in 16:25, there is in the background the thought of something hid in the mind and counsel of God (cf. Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26-27) and therefore not accessible to men except as God is pleased to make it known. But, as is obvious in this verse, it is not the hiddenness that defines the term but the fact that something has been *revealed* and thus comes to be known and freely communicated. Paul is jealous that his readers be not ignorant of the mystery and therefore that they know it. But, in addition to emphasis upon revelation and knowledge, "mystery" draws attention to the greatness and preciousness of the truth revealed. In several instances the unsurpassed sublimity of that denoted by mystery is apparent (cf. I Cor. 2:7; 4:1; 15:51; Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4; 5:32; Col. 1:27; 2:2; 4:3; I Tim. 3:16). It is not necessary to suppose that the revelation in this instance (vs. 25) was given only to Paul. The truth denoted as "this mystery" is that "hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come

in". Both elements are clearly expressed: the hardening of Israel is partial not total, temporary not final, "in part" indicating the former, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" the latter. The restoration of Israel was implied in verse 24 but not categorically stated. Now we have express assurance. The word "mystery" is itself certification of the assurance which divine revelation imparts.

The partial hardening of Israel will have a terminus. This is marked as "the fulness of the Gentiles". What is this "fulness"? The term as applied to Israel (vs 12) has the complexion of meaning appropriate to that context. It is contrasted with their trespass and loss. Without doubt the present context yields its own complexion to the term as applied to the Gentiles. But it would not be proper to discard the basic meaning found in verse 12. There "fulness", like the "receiving" in verse 15, refers to the mass of Israel in contradistinction from a remnant, the mass restored to repentance, faith, the covenant favour and blessing of God, and the kingdom of God. In other words, the numerical cannot be suppressed. To exclude this notion at verse 25 would not be compatible with the indications given in this chapter as to the import of the term in question. To say the least, we would expect that the "fulness" of the Gentiles points to something of enlarged blessing for the Gentiles comparable to that expansion of blessing for Israel which "their fulness" (vs. 12) and their "receiving" (vs 15) clearly involve.

There are, in addition, other considerations which have to be taken into account, derived from the immediate context. (1) The verb, of which "the fulness of the Gentiles" is the subject, namely, "be come in", is the standard term in the New Testament for entering into the kingdom of God and life (cf. Matt 5:20; 7:13; 18:3; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 13:34; John 3:5; Acts 14:22). The thought is, therefore, that of Gentiles entering into the kingdom of God. The perspective is that of the future, at least from the standpoint of the apostle. The only way whereby those who had already entered could be included is to suppose that "the fulness of the Gentiles" means the total number of elect from among the Gentiles, a supposition that will be dealt with presently. The chief point now is, however, that it is impossible to exclude from the expression "be come in" the thought of numbers entering God's kingdom. (2) In the words "hardening in part" there is an intimation of the numerical. Not all were hardened; there was always a remnant; the hardening was not complete. (3)

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"All Israel" in verse 26, as will be noted, refers to the mass of Israel in contrast with a remnant. In view of these considerations it would be indefensible to allege that to the expression "the fulness of the Gentiles" no thought of numerical proportion may be attached.

It has been maintained that the designation means the full tale of the elect from among the Gentiles or the added number necessary to make up the full tale of elect Gentiles. On this view the signal for the restoration of Israel would be the completion of the full number to be saved from the Gentiles. Admittedly, "fulness" could of itself denote such completion. But contextual considerations militate against this interpretation. (1) Israel's "fulness" (vs 12) cannot be the total of the elect of Israel. The "fulness" is contrasted with Israel's trespass and loss and must refer to the restoration to faith and repentance of Israel as a whole. The total number of the elect of Israel or the number necessary to make up this total would not provide this contrast nor express the restoration which the passage requires. The total number of the elect or the number remaining to make up that total would require nothing more than the total of a remnant in all generations. Verse 12, however, envisions a situation when it is no longer a saved remnant but a saved mass. Applying this analogy in the use of the term "fulness" in verse 12 to the instance of verse 26 we are, to say the least, pointed in the direction of an incomparably greater number of Gentiles entering into the kingdom of God. But, in any case, the "fulness" of Israel cannot mean simply the full tale of the elect of Israel nor the added complement necessary to complete that tale. And so there is no warrant to impose that concept upon the same term in verse 25. The evidence is decidedly against it. (2) The idea that "fulness" means the added number necessary to complete the elect of the Gentiles would agree with the expression "be come in". But the view that "fulness" means the full tale of elect Gentiles does not comport with the perspective indicated in the clause "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in", the reason being that this clause refers to an entering in that takes place in the future and provides this perspective. The full tale includes those who had already entered in and it would be unnatural to speak of those who had entered in as contemplated in such an expression as "until they have entered in". Thus the interpretation "full tale" is ruled out. But even if we adopt the view that "fulness" means the added number, a view compatible with "be come in", we have still to reckon with the analogy of verse 12, namely, that "fulness" intimates a proportion such as supplies contrast with what goes before. In other

words, we cannot exclude from "fulness" the enhancement and extension of blessing which "fulness" in verse 12 necessarily involves. In this case this increase would have to be interpreted in terms of entering into the kingdom of God, and this, in turn, means a greatly increased influx of Gentiles into God's kingdom. (3) In verse 12 the fulness of Israel is said to bring much greater blessing to the Gentiles. As observed above, the interpretation most consonant with the context is the greater expansion of the blessing mentioned in the same verse as the riches of the world and of the Gentiles. But if "the fulness of the Gentiles" means the full tale of the elect of Gentiles, then the fulness of Israel would terminate any further expansion among the Gentiles of the kind of blessing which verse 12 suggests.

The contextual data, therefore, point to the conclusion that "the fulness of the Gentiles" refers to blessing for the

*Verse 12, envisions a situation when it is no longer a saved remnant but a saved mass.*

Gentiles that is parallel and similar to the expansion of blessing for Israel denoted by "their fulness" (vs.12) and the "receiving" (vs 15).

It could be objected that the foregoing interpretation brings incoherence into Paul's teaching. On the other hand, the "fulness" of Israel brings unprecedented blessing to the Gentiles (vss. 12, 15). On the one hand, "the fulness of the Gentiles" marks the terminus of Israel's hardening and their restoration (vs. 25). But the coherence of these two perspectives is not prejudiced if we keep in mind the mutual interaction for the increase of blessing between Jew and Gentile. We need but apply the thought of verse 31 that by the mercy shown to the Gentiles Israel also may obtain mercy. By the fulness of the Gentiles Israel is restored (vs. 25); by the restoration of Israel the Gentiles are incomparably enriched (vss. 12, 15). The only obstacle to this view of the sequence is the unwarranted assumption of blessing for the Gentiles and leaves room for no further expansion of gospel blessing. "The fulness of the Gentiles" denotes unprecedented blessing

## Premillennial Baptist Journal

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Theme of next issue:  
**The Last Days**

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*(Address—continued from page 15)*

for them but does not exclude even greater blessing to follow. It is to this subsequent blessing that the restoration of Israel contributes.

It must not be forgotten that the leading interest of the apostle in verse 25 is the removal of the hardness of Israel and their conversion as a whole. This is the theme of verses 11-32. It is stated expressly in verse 12, is reiterated in different terms in verse 15, and is resumed in verse 25. In verses 17-22 Paul found it necessary to warn Gentiles against vain boasting. But he returns to the theme of Israel's restoration at verse 23, pleads considerations why Israel could be grafted in again in verses 23, 24, and in verse 25 appeals to divine revelation in final confirmation of the certainty of this sequel. This prepares us for the interpretation of verse 26. ✪

### How Does the PBJ Survive?

A number of readers have written and called over the years, testifying to how the Premillennial Baptist Journal has helped their understanding of biblical eschatology. In order to continue publishing what several have described as a quality magazine, we have an ongoing need for money. The cost of each issue is now about \$2000. Since we do not sell subscriptions, we are dependent on the generous donations of our readers. A considerable number of our readers have made just one small contribution during the entire life of our publication. We need our readers to contribute annually in order for us to continue publishing. Will you consider making an annual large gift or doing as several churches are doing and contribute \$50, \$100 or \$200 per month? We are now into the fifth year of publication. Will you help enable us to continue? Make checks payable to *Victory Baptist Church* and send all donations to:

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# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## The Return of Christ

### Inside This Edition

- ◆ The Advent, *Horatius Bonar*..... p. 3
- ◆ Date Fixing, *A.W. Pink* ..... p. 8
- ◆ The Personal Return of Jesus Christ, *Laurence A. Justice*..... p.12

"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

"...the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem..."

## Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism

### The Millennium by a Postmillennialist

I count much on the millennium. Even if it means only a literal thousand years, who can estimate the teeming population this earth may bring forth and nourish in ten centuries of the highest religious civilization, with Satan shut up; peace reigning; no armies; no wars; no plague, famine or pestilence? I am quite sure that all the population for the first six thousand years would not be a tithe of the population of the seventh thousand and under millennial conditions of health, knowledge, peace, and love. The devil banished and selfishness routed and religion reigning as Christ taught it, all the latent forces of nature developed by civilization, disease checked, and this earth could easily produce and support a hundred billion people for each generation of the thousand years. I mention this just this way because of the deep earnestness and ever-recurring interest attaching to the question: "Lord, are there few that be saved?"

B.H. Carroll. *The Interpretation of the English Bible*. Vol. 11 p. 128-9.

### The Future of the PBJ

When we started publication of this journal we pledged that we would never go into debt but would publish only when we had the funds in hand with which to do so. During the past several weeks, thanks to the generosity of several readers we have had almost exactly enough money come in to publish another issue. Once this edition reaches you we will have only a few dollars on hand toward a future issue. We are determined to follow our policy and this will necessitate our not publishing again until we have the approximately \$2,300 needed to do so. We are already late with the present issue and this may throw our schedule off even further. If you want to see the magazine continue please help us with whatever amount of money you are able to send. - The Editor

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## The Advent

Horatius Bonar

What a trial the departure of Jesus must have been to his disciples! His absence was a bitter blank in their circle. How they would miss Him! He knew this, and prepared them for it. Love like theirs could ill bear the absence of one so dear. No wonder that they delighted in the prospect of his return, and clasped the promise of it to their heart, as their treasure and their joy. "I will see you again," was the solace of their souls. They knew that he loved them though absent; they were made to taste the refreshment of his spiritual presence; their inward fellowship with him was unbroken, yet to see him again face to face was what they desired. Without this they could not be satisfied.

What a trial also must his departure have been to the family that he loved at Bethany! How often had he been their guest! How often had he sat at their table, and slept beneath their roof! How often had they watched him in the still evening, coming over the brow of Olivet, and slowly descending its shady slopes! How eagerly they had gone forth to meet him, and to welcome him to their quiet dwelling, where no city hum could meet his ear, and nought be heard around, save the breath of the breeze as it murmured through the palms! What a blank, then, would his absence be! How empty, how desolate would their dwellings now appear! Their loved friend and guest had gone, and left behind him a vacancy which none but himself could ever fill. They could not doubt his love; they had his abiding though unseen fellowship; but *he*, the living Jesus, *he*, the visible companion, was away. How they would mourn! How eagerly they would cling to the promise of his speedy return! It would be to them truly a "blessed hope."

Such should be the feelings of the Church, such should be the longings of every saint. The Bridegroom is absent, and should not the friends of the Bridegroom mourn? Above all, should not the Bride lament his absence? Should she not watch without ceasing, for the return of the beloved of her heart? Until he appear, she cannot be comforted. She must feel the dreary blank. No glory, no prosperity to which she may attain, can satisfy her without his personal presence. A Millennium, without him in the midst, would be poor indeed. And besides, it is on his *return* that God wishes her to fix her eye. It is around his return that all her hopes revolve. It is *in* his return that all the glory she has been promised is wrapt up. It is *then* that the marriage is to take place, for this is but the time

of her betrothment. It is then that she is to receive from his own hands the crown of royal dominion, and be invested with the rule of the universe as his queen. Till then, sorrow and tribulation are her lot below.

Some wish to brand all this as carnal. But what do they mean by carnal? Is it sinful, fleshy, corrupt? Do they mean this? Then I answer it is not carnal; it is holy, it is spiritual. If by carnal, they mean human, natural, I admit it. It is human, it is natural. God meant it so to be. This was one of the ends for which the Word was made flesh, that God might present himself to us in visible form, so that we might have fellowship according to our nature. It was the God who made us that gave us these longings for visible, palpable intercourse, this delight in hearing, seeing, handling each other. Without these our nature cannot be satisfied. And just that we might be satisfied, he sent us his Son, in the likeness of an elder brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, to meet those natural and God-given cravings of our souls. It is upon this principle of our nature, holy love, and holy desire for personal intercourse with him we love, that our grief for the absence of the Lord, and our desire for his return, are founded. They are not, then, carnal; they are spiritual, they are holy.

Our union with Christ by faith necessarily leads us to desire closer and more sensible union. Faith can do much, but still it cannot do all; it is not sight; and the stronger it becomes, the more does it excite within us the desire for sight. To know that I am his and that he is mine, and yet not to long to behold and embrace him, is strange inconsistency, nay, it is undisguised coldness and estrangement. And to make his *spiritual* presence a reason for not desiring his *actual* presence, is to turn a blessed privilege into an excuse for unbelief and unfaithfulness. Was it not the beloved disciple, he who enjoyed most of his spiritual presence, he who was most favoured with visions and revelations of the Lord, that has left behind him as the closing words of inspiration, so earnest an expression of his longing for the coming of the Lord? The well-known voice, addressing him amid the rocks of Patmos, had no

*Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) was a Scottish churchman and poet. He was a popular author, writing many books, tracts and hymns.*

sooner said, "Surely I come quickly," than the full heart of the apostle joyfully responded, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Each year that passes over us says, "Surely I come quickly." Every event in these last days gives utterance to the same note of promise and of warning. Do we, then, respond with joyful hearts, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus?"

The Lord likens himself to "a certain nobleman" who went into a far country "to receive for himself a kingdom and to return." He is now in that far country, and has been sojourning there these eighteen hundred years. But he is not always to remain there: he is to return, having received the kingdom. Before he left, he gave many intimations regarding his return. His instructions were minute and special, implying the great stress he laid upon it, and his anxiety that his Church should at all times be fully prepared for it, however sudden it might be. He always spoke of its time as a profound uncertainty, but of the event itself as most absolutely certain, and most abruptly unexpected overtaking men "as a snare," stealing in upon them with silent foot, as "a thief in the night." He intimated, moreover, that it was not far off; that the period of his absence would be but "a little while," and that the day of his advent was so hidden that no one could calculate it, no one could say, "It cannot be in my day." "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."

Looking to these intimations, the early Christians were ever on the eager watch to hail his Advent. It was the resting-place of their hopes, the strength of their souls, the very life of their joy. They allowed no object to intervene between them and their Lord's appearing: they were ever waiting and looking for it, as if all between it and them were a dreary, rugged waste. As, in a night of clouds, when no small tempest lies upon his vessel, the seaman's eye is ever on the outlook for the star of morning, so were their anxious eyes, amid tribulation and darkness, ever watching for the appearing of "the bright and morning star."

He did not, however, come in their day. The Bridegroom tarried, the King delayed his return. Was, then, all their waiting profitless? Were they as men disappointed,

cheated, befooled? No! their watching was not in vain. Besides its being their Lord's command, it was blessedness unspeakable to them. It sustained them, comforted them, gladdened them. Sanctified them in a way such as no other truth, No other hope could have done. Verily they had their reward.

But are his promises made of none effect by this delay? Are we to suppose that when he said, "Surely I come quickly," he did not truly mean what he said? No. He deceived them not: nor did he speak at random, using loose or exaggerated language. And though they miscalculated the time implied in the "quickly," yet that did not prevent their holding fast the great idea involved in it, namely the suddenness of the Advent, and the entire uncertainty as to its time. If the first age could say, "Ah! He has not come in our day; the word 'quickly' did not apply to our time;" the second age could take up the welcome promise, and say, "He came not in the first age, indeed, and thus far our ideas of his coming have not been verified; but his not coming in the first age is all the stronger reason for expecting him in the second." So also might the third age reason from his not appearing in the second. And thus might each succeeding age most justly argue, concluding from his non-arrival in the preceding age, not that his coming was to be prolonged indefinitely, and that, therefore, they might cease watching and expecting, but that he must be so much the nearer in their day. Take a common instance. A friend promises you a visit "very soon." His language is such that he may perchance come tomorrow; and accordingly you wait for his arrival on that day. But he comes not. The third day passes, but still he comes not. What do you infer from this? Do you say forthwith, "Oh! he did not mean what he said; I must have mistaken him; he meant that I was to go to him, not that he was to come to me." Would you reason thus? Not if you believed his word, and were assured that no hindrance could stay him. Not if you were really anxious for his arrival, and felt the dreary solitude of absence from him. On the contrary, you would say, "I know he will fulfill his promise, and that nothing can hinder him; and therefore, since he has not arrived today, I may be more sure of him tomorrow." Every lengthening day would only make you the surer, as well as the more eager in your expectations.

*Each year that passes  
over us says,  
"Surely I come quickly."*

Just so ought the Church to reason regarding the Lord's appearing. He came not in the first watch of the night; but what of that? We may more confidently reckon on his arrival in the second. He came not in the second; but what of that? We may surely expect him in the third. He came not in the third; but what of that? Shall we weary of watching? Shall hope deferred make our hearts

sick? Shall expectation give way, and our longings be quenched? Shall we conclude that he cannot come in the fourth? In that fourth and last watch of the night we seem now to be. And what shall we say? My Lord delayeth his coming? He has been so long behind the appointed time, and has so often disappointed us, that perhaps he may not come at all? Shall we give birth to such thoughts, or utterance to such words as these? Nay; let us lift up our heads, knowing that now our redemption must be drawing nigh. We are surer than ever that he is near, even at the doors. If this be the fourth and last watch of the night, then beyond that his stay cannot be prolonged, for he comes as the star of morning, the herald of the dawn. He must be nigh. He was near eighteen hundred years ago. He must be much nearer now. "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

If the warning words, "Behold, I come quickly," sounded with such solemnizing power in the Church's early days, how much more loudly ought they to peal upon us now! If they broke like threatening thunder upon the slumbers of a careless world in these times, how appalling, how overwhelming now! If in the primitive age they carried with them such a potent spell to nerve and animate the Church with more than human vigour and endurance; to fill her soul with more than mortal joy; to bear her far above this earth, as upon eagles' wings; to disenchant the principalities and powers of darkness of all their power to harm; what ought they not to do now, when the revolution of so many centuries has brought us so much nearer the expected time?

Are these words of warning, then, consistent with the fact of so long an interval having to elapse before the coming of the Lord? So far as God is concerned, it is not hard to understand how there should be entire consistency between these two; for "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." But in so far as man is concerned, it may not seem so easy to establish the consistency. Let us consider the difficulty. It is simply this: A far longer interval has taken place than the words of Christ seem to imply. How, then, could he intend to forewarn us, and stir us up to watchfulness?

On this I remark, that though the word "quickly" is used, the time is not fixed. Had the time been precisely given, and had the interval overpassed the appointed time, then truly we might have wondered. But no date is given. It is merely said, "I will not be long." How long he does not say. In like manner the command to "watch" is to be explained. Suddenness of arrival is that which it speaks of; and it is the suddenness that is made the motive to contin-

## *Though the word "quickly" is used, the time is not fixed.*

ual vigilance. Had a date been given, however, the idea of suddenness would have been entirely withdrawn. When he says, "Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth!" He is calling on the Church to prepare for his *unexpected* return, a return which would not be long, and would be very sudden. The words, then, which the Lord used were such as to keep his Church ever awake; to prevent her from saying, "He is not near." There was no deception here. It was simply dealing with man according to his finite nature and his limited knowledge, instead of dealing with him according to God's infinite nature and unlimited knowledge. When, for instance, God speaks of our days as an handbreadth, and warns us by their brevity, he is dealing with us according to our ignorance, and not according to his knowledge. He knows that yon little child, whom he is calling to consider life's briefness and uncertainty, is to live perhaps to fourscore. Yet he sends him the warning, "Thou mayest die tomorrow." Is there deception here? He is speaking to him after his nature. He is turning to good account man's utter ignorance of the future. He is shewing us one of the many ways in which it may be made a blessing. This may be called a deceptious warning, founded on our shortsightedness; but who is there that feels in his conscience that there is any deception in this matter? Do we not rather feel that this is the only way in which we could be treated, unless we were to be made partakers of Jehovah's omniscience, and thus cease to be capable of human responsibilities, or acted upon by human motives?

It is precisely so with the Church, in reference to the Advent of the Lord. It must be taken for granted that we are ignorant of the future; and the question is, in what way shall that ignorance be dealt with? Shall it be removed, and man let entirely into the secrets of God? That would be impossible, as well as inconsistent with his responsibility. If, then, the ignorance is to remain, is it not to be turned to profit? Is it not to be acted upon so as to be the medium of blessing? Surely it must be so. And this is what God has done. He has addressed Himself, if one may so speak, to our ignorance, and converted that into a mighty lever for acting most beneficially upon our motives and responsibilities.

But could this have been done had a date been given, and a time fixed, on which we could calculate? I answer, No, it could not. A fixed interposing period, made known to us, removes the very *fulcrum* on which this lever was acting. It puts man in possession of a fact which will enable him to make calculations as to the exact time when preparation will be necessary, and meanwhile to say, "Take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." If it had been said to the primitive Church, Your Lord is to come in the year 1000, would not this have removed all necessity for *watching*? I do not say it would have destroyed the necessity for being prepared, though it would have weakened the motive; but it would have taken away all necessity for *watching*. For how is it possible that I can watch for an event which I am positively assured is not to take place for a thousand years hence? It does not remove the difficulty to say that faith can overleap the thousand years. I know that it can, and that it ought. But that is not the question. The point is, Can faith *watch* for an event which, it is assumed, shall not arrive for a whole millennium? Can faith say, "I know that Christ's coming shall not be for a thousand years, but yet I do not know but that it may be tomorrow?" If the word *watch* means anything, it must mean that the time is *not* known, that the interval is not *ascertained*. The moment it is positively ascertained, that moment *watching* ceases. I can *wait* in such a case, but I cannot *watch*. Now, it is not mere waiting for Christ that is demanded of us; it is not mere preparation; it is not mere looking for it; it is not mere longing for it; all these, I admit, are quite consistent with an ascertained interval of one thousand years. It is *watching* that is incompatible with such an interval. To bring it into harmony you must alter the meaning of the word. It is no longer *watching*. It is simply waiting, but nothing more.

If so, I ask, How is it possible that the Millennium can precede the Advent? How can I *watch* for that which I positively know to be a thousand years distant? And especially if these thousand years be so marked that I cannot mistake either their beginning or end, there can be no *watching* at all. None just now, for I know that one thousand years must elapse before he comes. None when these one thousand years are closing, for I shall know exactly the day when he cometh.

***If the word watch means anything, it must mean that the time is not known, that the interval is not ascertained.***

There is but one answer to this. It is founded on the apostle's caution to the Thessalonians in his Second Epistle. He tells them that the day of the Lord shall not come "Except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.\* It is argued that, as the apostle did not reckon the interposition of this event between him and the Advent to be inconsistent with the command to watch, so the interposition of the millennial age cannot be inconsistent with it.

On this, I remark that the interposition of an *event* is very different from the interposition of a *period*. The latter seems to be incompatible with watchfulness, but not the former; more especially when that event is declared to be already in progress, as is done by the apostle when he says "the mystery of iniquity doth already work." For thus no *time* is given, and it is the *absence of time* that is the foundation of watchfulness. It is the presence of *time*, as an element, that destroys the possibility of watching; and it is the absence of that element that produces the watchful spirit. The event which the apostle interposes is one which he declares to be already begun. It is an event which might be consummated within a very short space; so short, that when known to be commenced, no man could say of it that it might not be brought to a crisis without delay. Time is a thing on which a man can calculate with precision; an event or a crisis is a thing on which he cannot pronounce. Its development may be with the unexpected suddenness of the lightning. We have, in our own day, witnessed so many instances of the rapid development of events; events which we should have judged to be the product of ages; that we, of all others, should be cautious of affirming that length of time must be allowed for an event which is frequently alluded to as one of startling celerity, alike in its "shooting forth" and in its passing away. "Behold at evening-tide trouble, and before the morning he is not."

It is no answer to this to say, that the development of the Antichristian apostasy has already occupied ages and therefore it is impossible to speak of it as an event of the kind referred to. For Scripture declares that it *is* just such an event of sudden crisis. Apart from this, however, is it not plain that we are measuring the prophetic aspect of the event by the historical one? We are supposing that because so long an interval has actually elapsed, therefore that interval must have been foreshewn: and that

\*This argument of our opponents takes, of course, for granted, that the day of the Lord spoken of is really the Second Advent. If so, then they must admit that this is the same coming that is to destroy Antichrist; for the coming is only postponed, if we may so speak, until Antichrist shall arise. That which was "not to come" until the falling away should take place, must be that very same thing which does come as soon as that apostasy has taken place.

because we now see that the Antichristian leaven has taken so long to develop, therefore the early Christians must have foreseen this with equal clearness. If this could be proved to be the case, then the element of time would necessarily be introduced, and my argument overthrown. But I believe this *cannot* be shewn; and until it be so, the argument stands good. And does not the apostle's language seem as if intended to exclude the element of time, and to fix attention upon the event itself, as one which was on the very edge of bursting forth, and which, like a pent-up river, would *in an instant burst forth* so soon as a certain barrier should be removed? And further, was it not the intention of the Spirit of God, even in predicting *dates*, to exclude this element as much as possible? Was it not for this end that we read always of times, and days, and months? The shortest periods are selected, as if to prevent man from introducing an element which would have the effect of ungirding his loins, and saying, "My Lord delayeth his coming." Are not all the prophecies so worded as to prevent any age of the Church from saying, "The crisis cannot be in our day?" And does not this peculiar construction of prophetic language proceed upon the principle that an interposed *period* must destroy vigilance, but that an interposed *event* does not? That event was so predicted, that being known to be already in motion, its crisis might arrive at any time. And thus, while the Church was kept ever watchful for her coming Lord, she was also kept with her eye fixed upon the workings of that apostasy, not knowing but that in a moment the explosive and combustible materials might kindle, and with their hellish blaze wrap Christendom, if not the world, in flame.

Is not this the *position* in which we now stand? The apostasy has been working these eighteen hundred years. It has more than once in successive ages appeared to come to a crisis; yet *the* crisis has not yet arrived. The Papal apostasy is by far the likeliest thing to the predicted Antichristianity that the world has yet seen; but here is something beyond it, more fearful than any hitherto: in which shall be concentrated not merely *many* of the elements of evil that have formerly shot up in other days, but *all* the different forms of evil, apostasy, rebellion, idolatry, superstition, infidelity, that have broken loose upon the earth since the days of Cain. It is for this that we are now looking. We see the intermingling elements. We mark the rapid fermentation. We are startled with the swift career of action in each event, starting from the goal but yesterday, and finishing its race tonight. We are horrified at the giant stature which every form of sin reaches in a single day. It would seem as if some tropic sun of hell were glaring down upon us, ripening evil before its time; and

## *If these things be so, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*

preparing for us a vintage of iniquity, almost before "the sour grape is seen ripening in the flower."

But, besides all this, let us remember, that it is before the last mighty crisis that the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Christ's first action after leaving the Father's throne, is to raise his dead saints and change his living ones. He comes no doubt to destroy Antichrist, and to pour out the terrors of fiery judgment upon an apostate and blaspheming earth. But in these acts of final vengeance his saints are associated with him: for "this honour have all the saints;" Psalm 149:6-9, and this is that to which our Lord refers when he tells us, that "two shall be together in the field, one shall be taken (caught up) and the other left" Matt. 24:40. These scenes of vengeance we shall behold; but only afar off. Among them we shall not be. We shall have already entered our chambers and have shut our doors about us until the indignation be overpast. Safe hidden in the clefts of the rock, we shall look out and see far beneath us the havoc of the wasting storm, and mark the swellings of the fiery flood as it rolls its red billows over earth, swallowing up city and village, tower and temple, in the advancing current, hushing alike the roar of its tumult and the "noise of its viols," till, as, amid the deep vapour, we discern the smoke of "that great city Babylon," we take up the song of Moses and of Miriam, and call on heaven and earth to rejoice with us over the ruin of that habitation of devils whose power and pomp and glory in one hour have perished, laid waste like Sodom, swallowed up in that abyss out of which no second Babylon shall arise.

If these things be so, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? For what is there now between us and the coming of the Lord? What is there to lead us to suppose that he is not nigh, even at the doors? If, even before the last crisis bursts upon the amazed earth, we are to be caught up out of it and taken away from the evil to come, then it is high time to awake out of our sleep. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." The judge standeth before the door. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."

*(Binar: continued on page 16)*

## Date Fixing

A.W. Pink



We have decided to write, or rather compile, this article, as an appendage to the recent ones on *Conditions in the Past*, that our readers may be furnished with a sample of the thoughts and opinions of men in previous generations respecting the coming of our Lord and the end of the age. Not only hysterical sensationalists, but some of the most sober minded and spiritual servants of God have attempted to draw conclusions and forecast the future from the "signs of the times" which appeared in *their* sky. The state of the world in their day, the corruption and apostasy of Christendom, and the calamitous judgments sent by God on an evil and adulterous generation, convinced them that such things were most certainly the immediate prelude to the appearing of Christ in Person. Others averred that Divine Prophecy intimated the very year in which the Papacy would be overthrown or the Day of Judgment would occur.

"Towards the close of the tenth and at the beginning of the eleventh centuries the passion for pilgrimages was greatly increased by an opinion which prevailed all over Europe, that the thousand years mentioned by John in Revelation 20:2-4 were nearly accomplished, and the end of the world at hand. A general consternation seized the minds of men. Numbers relinquished their possessions, deserted their families and friends, and hastened to the Holy Land, where they imagined Christ would suddenly appear to judge the living and the dead" (From "A History of the Church" by Charles Goodrich, 1835, p. 104). Perhaps some of our readers are inclined to smile at the credulity of those who lived a thousand years ago, but we can assure them that human nature is still the same. The writer is personally acquainted with a lawyer of considerable repute, who thirty years ago was so convinced by "the signs of the times" that the coming of Christ was at the very doors, that he abandoned all thoughts of provision for old age and gave away his fortune to the promotion of missionary work. Recently, when past three score and ten, he has been obliged to take up again the practice of law to provide for his daily needs. Nor is this by any means an isolated case.

In his work on the Thessalonian Epistles, John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, (1583 A.D.), in his comments on 1 Thessalonians 5:1 said, "What may we think then, of them that write books and almanacs, and say such a year and at such a time Christ shall come; and with their fine speeches tray (frighten) and mock the world? These two hundred years past, there have ever been some which have adventured to tell such news. They have appointed many such years, and days; only to give witness to their folly" (p. 123).

William Perkins informs us (Vol. 3, p. 473), "A Jew prophesied that in the year 1364 Messiah should come and deliver his own nation," and that a celebrated astrologer, by the name of Albumazar, "prophesied that in the year of our Lord 1460 an end should be made of the Christian religion." In his piece on "The End of the World" (which the printer in 1604 says "was written many years ago") Perkins represents one saying, "All the signs of the coming of Christ are fulfilled: O what terrible earthquakes have there been! What famine! What flashing in the air! What blasting stars! Surely, surely the world cannot last long" (Vol. 3, p. 470).

In the same piece Perkins went on to quote the following, as something which deeply stirred many in his early days:

"When after Christ's birth there be expired,  
of hundreds fifteen, years eighty and eight,  
Then comes the time of dangers to be feared,  
and all mankind with terrors it shall freight:  
For if the world in that year do not fall,  
if sea and land then perish nor decay:  
Yet empires all, and kingdoms alter shall  
And man to ease himself shall have no way."

Again we say, such silly doggerel may now raise a smile (but for many years thousands were terrified by it), yet we well recall that in our early boyhood many in this country were rendered uneasy by the prophecies of "Mother Shipston," two of which were: "Carriages without horses shall go, and accidents fill the world with woe," and "The world to an end shall come, in eighteen hundred and ninety one."

"If any age had cause to think Christ would come, certainly we have. It was not far off in the Apostles' days—they were called 'the last days' but ours are the very dregs

**A.W. Pink (1886-1952) was a pastor and best known for his monthly magazine, *Studies in Scriptures*. His writing sparked a revival of expository preaching & focused readers' hearts on biblical living.**



of time. When we see an old man weak and feeble, aches and diseases of the present life increasing upon him, we say, Certainly he cannot live long: so if we look upon the temper of the world, surely it cannot endure long; Christ will come to set all things at rights" (Thomas Manton, Vol. 16, p. 215). Yet, almost three hundred years have passed since that able expositor drew his conclusion: and for all we know another three *thousand* years may yet run their course before human history expires.

After referring to a number of different ones who had prophesied the exact year in which Popery was to be totally destroyed, Thomas Goodwin went on to say, "I find also Mr. Mede in his *Clavis*, to pitch upon 1656, though tacitly and implicitly, yet clearly enough, as the time he is most inclined unto for the expiration of Antichrist's kingdom. For in his 'Synchronisms,' he makes the first trumpet and the Pope's 1260 days to begin together; and in his 'comment' he makes the beginning of the first trumpet to be in the year 395. So that if the reign of Antichrist begins at the year 395 A.D., then his 1260 days or years will end in 1655. And thus there will be so many years from Christ unto the beginning of the new world, as there was from the beginning of the world until the days of Noah, unto which Christ compares His coming, even 1645 years" (Vol. 3 p. 196).

In 1655 the Church of France thus addressed itself to brethren abroad: "Inasmuch as by these overturnings of the world, 'tis visible that its last end *cannot be far off*, and that our long-looked and long-hoped for redemption and the coming of the eternal kingdom of the Son of God draweth night' (J.G. Lorimer, "Protestant Church of France," 1842, p. 199). In a letter to General Fleetwood, Oliver Cromwell said (August 22, 1653): "If the Day of the Lord be so near, as some say, how should our moderation appear!" (from J. H. D'Aubigne's "Vindication of the Protector," p. 159).

Well did John Owen (V. 17, p. 552) warn people of his day, "But in the meantime what things may come, I know not. Those who pretend to a clearer inspection into future things, may not do amiss to strictly examine the grounds whereon they proceed. For many have been ashamed of their predictions that within such or such a time the yoke of Babylon (Rome) should be broken." The only difference in our day is that modern prophets (?) are devoid of shame, for when the flight of time refutes their fancies, instead of acknowledging they were wrong, they manipulate their premises and draw new conclusions, always fixing their dates

just a few years in the future, thus keeping their dupes continually on the tiptoe of expectation.

"But this same revelation informs us that it shall not always be so: the time is coming, and *is now just at hand*, when God will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations, by causing the Gospel to be preached to them all, in giving them a heart to discern and understand the truth. Then 'the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days.' And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear, shall hearken. The heart also of the rash or foolish, shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (S. Hopkins, 1772, a contemporary and intimate friend of Jonathan Edwards in New England, Vol. 1, p. 56).

"There are certain very memorable events, the dates of which are peremptorily fixed: as the treading of the Holy City forty-two months, the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth and under discouragements a thousand two hundred and three-score days; during which term of days also the Church is to be nourished in the wilderness even for a time, and times, and half a time; and power is given to the beast, or Antichrist, to continue forty and two months (Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). All which began, and will end together; for these dates are exactly the same; and could we be certain when these dates begin, we should have no difficulty about the expiration of them, or how long it is to be. Good men have been mistaken in their calculations for want of this: however though we can come at no certainty as to the precise time these things shall be, yet some degree of understanding of these times may be come at; and from the circumstances of things it may be concluded, that these dates cannot reach beyond an hundred and fifty years more, and it may be they may expire much sooner" (John Gill's sermon on Is. 21:11, 12, preached December, 1750).

***"For all we know another  
three thousand years  
may yet run their course before  
human history expires."***

“Why cannot you pray along with the faithful for Christ’s *speedy* coning? Surely you do not doubt of the fact. That he will come to judge the world is as certain as that he did come at the first time to judge the Jewish nation: ‘For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.’ The matter of fact upon Scriptural principles is undeniably clear and certain. Why then are you not so prepared for it as to make it the subject of your prayers? Is it because you put it at a great distance, and therefore think yourselves safe? Consider attentively what the Scripture says upon this point, Our Lord has given us several marks or *signs* of His coming, by which we might know as *certainly* when it was at hand, as we could know when the fig-tree puts forth her green figs that summer is nigh. There were to be wars and rumours of wars, pestilences, earthquakes in divers places, very little true faith left upon the earth, and yet as great security among careless sinners as there was in the days of Noah, when the flood came and swept them all away.

“Do you think these cannot be the forerunners of our Lord’s *speedy coming* because there always have been such things in the world? But when all these signs are at once upon the earth and in a manner they never were before, then they become loud calls to an immediate preparation. Were there ever greater wars, or more rumours of war? Has not an uncommon pestilence raged among the cattle for several years, in this and in other countries? Were there ever such earthquakes, so universal, and of so long continuance, as have been for some years past? And does not the present state of the world as to religion greatly resemble our Lord’s description of the men upon whom that day shall come unawares as a thief in the night? And when could the account which St. Paul gives us in several of his Epistles, of the men of the latter times be more true, than it is at present? Have they not the name and form of Christianity without the power of it? Are they not worldly minded, sunk into carnal security, and so entirely influenced by the love of pleasure, that the love of God and of the things of God is not only waxed cold, but quite frozen up?

“Was there ever any age wherein our Lord’s words could be more strictly fulfilled, ‘When the Son of man cometh

shall he find faith on the earth?’ By these signs our Lord is alarming a sinful world with notices of His *speedy* coming, and if sinners are not at all alarmed, but continue still secure in their sins, this is a Scripture proof that he will *soon* come as a thief in the night and surprise them; for when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them, and they shall not escape” (W. Romaine, Discourses on Solomon’s Song, 1771, p. 368 to 370). Note well, dear reader, that this most godly man spoke repeatedly of the “*speedy* coming of Christ” a hundred and fifty years ago!

At the end of his “Notes on the New Testament” (about 1780) John Wesley fixed the following dates for the fulfillment of prophecies in the Revelation: 1614: an everlasting Gospel promulgated (14:6). 1810: the end of the forty-two months of the Beast; after which and the pouring out of the vials, he is not, and Babylon reigns queen (15 and 16). 1832: the Beast ascends from the bottomless pit (17 and 18). 1836: the end of the non-chronos, and of the many kings; the fulfilling of the Word and of the mystery of God; the repentance of the survivors in this great city; the end of the ‘little time’ and of the three times and a half; the destruction of the Beast; the imprisonment of Satan (19 and 20).”

There seems no need for us to make citations from those who have lived nearer our own times and give quotations from such men as Edward Irving, Richard Baxter, Gratton Guinness and others, who set dates for the destruction of the Papacy, the end of the age, and the appearing of Christ. We could quote from the early writings of the Plymouth Brethren and show that eighty and ninety years ago they were just as convinced that Christ would return in their *own* lifetimes, as many of their followers are today. Nor will we burden the reader by exposing the date-fixing fallacies of the “Seventh Day Adventists,” Russellites, and Christadelphians. Sufficient has been advanced to indicate that throughout the centuries one and another has arisen posing as prophets by forecasting coming events, only for the passage of time to make evident their folly, and to exemplify the fact that “thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pr. 27:1).

And what is the moral to be drawn from all of this? What is the practical lesson—for it is a *practical end* we have had in view, and not the amusing of the curious or the entertaining of those who have an idle hour to pass away. Surely it is this, “For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt” (Job 11:12); yes, wise in his own conceits, wise above that which God has revealed, wise in the esteem of his fel-

***“When the Son of man  
cometh shall he  
find faith on the earth?”***

lows. He would pose before others as possessing a spiritual light and discernment which lifts him above the rank and file; he pretends unto light received from the Word which is denied those who walk not so closely with God as *he* does. The Spirit has shown *him* "things to come," only for the passing of time to demonstrate it was some other spirit than the Spirit of God.

When the disciples asked Christ, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6), He did not say whether he would or would not, neither did he tell them that they entertained an erroneous conception of "the kingdom." No, he struck more deeply, and made answer which applies to *all* his followers till the end of time: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (v. 7). That is definite and it is final. Shun, then, my reader, those who controvert the Son of God by seeking to persuade that you *may*, "know the times and the seasons," that if you will accept their interpretations (?) of Prophecy you will be granted a spiritual insight into those things of which the world is ignorant. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 3:8): it is ever drawing nearer, but for any man to affirm that the coming of the Lord is now at the very doors, is to affirm what Scripture nowhere warrants, and is a piece of bombastic impertinence.

Our pressing duty is to set bounds to an unholy curiosity, and rest content with the blessed fact that the future is entirely in the hands of the Most High. It is the present which limits the boundaries of our responsibility. God is working all things after the counsel of His own will, so that there is no cause for alarm or fear. Not only cannot the forces of evil go one inch farther than what has been Divinely ordained, but, even now,

## *Speculations about future history are not only futile, but impious.*

God is making them to subserve his own wise and holy purpose. Nothing we do, or fail to do, will either hasten or retard by a single hour the consummation of God's counsels. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28) provides a sure resting-place for the renewed heart.

Speculations about future history are not only futile, but impious. An itching mind that craves information about coming events is a hindrance and not a help to present godliness. Leave the future with God, and seek grace to discharge your present duty. Part of our present duty, as well as our precious privilege, is to be "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13), but that is a vastly different thing from occupying our minds with the evil that is at work in the world. To be "looking for that blessed Hope" is entirely an attitude of the heart—the soul being engaged with the person of Christ Himself, anticipating that glad moment when he will perfectly conform us to His image. But as to when He will appear, the angels in Heaven know not, much less can we on earth ascertain it. To be prepared for His coming is the great thing, and not to be curiously prying into the how and when of it. ✨

From *Studies in the Scriptures*  
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### *Seven "Till He Comes"*

1. "Be Patient." (James 5:8).      *Suffering.*
  2. "Occupy." (Luke 19:13).      *Service.*
  3. "Hold Fast." (Rev. 2:25).      *Steadfastness.*
  4. "Remember Him." (1 Cor. 11:23-26).      *The Supper.*
  5. "Wait for your Lord." (Luke 12:36).      *The Servant.*
  6. "Looking" for Him. (Titus 2:13).      *The Saviour*
  7. "Be Faithful." (Rev. 2:10).      *Sincerity.*
- "A Little While." (Heb. 10:37).*

John Meak

## The Personal Return of Jesus Christ

Laurence A. Justice



Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

This present age is not going to end with a nuclear holocaust or an environmental disaster! According to the word of God this age is going to end with the second coming of Jesus Christ and all things in history are building toward this climax. The birth of Jesus Christ as a man on this earth 2,000 years ago was not his last appearance on this earth! The scriptures speak of one more appearance by him.

The second coming of Jesus Christ is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. It is a part of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. This is *an important doctrine* because ultimately it is tied to all the other great doctrines of God's word. Christ's second coming is also *a controversial doctrine* but then, what doctrine in God's word has not been controversial through the centuries?

A lot of Christians teach that Christ's second coming means that each time a Christian dies Christ comes for him and takes him to heaven. But we do not believe and God's word does not teach that Christ returns for each individual believer when that believer dies. The death of a saint is not the second coming of Christ! The death of a saint is *a departure* of the saint to be with Christ but not a coming of Christ for the saint. Saints by the millions have departed to be with Christ but *Christ's second coming* will only occur *once*. God's word teaches that Jesus Christ will have only two advents or comings into this world, the first and the second. Our text for this message clearly and incontrovertibly teaches that Jesus Christ will return personally to this earth some day.

The background of our text is this: Forty days after the Lord's resurrection the apostles went with him out to the

Mount of Olives on the east side of Jerusalem. After he had given them the Great Commission in verse 8 the Lord Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives into heaven. As the disciples stood there looking up longingly into heaven, two angels appeared and told them that this same Jesus whom they had just seen ascend in the clouds of heaven would someday come back just like they had seen him go into heaven. Since his ascension into heaven the Lord Jesus has been hidden from our physical sight and is now seated at the right hand of God.

### The Scriptures Teach That Jesus Christ Will Return

The return of Jesus Christ is not a theory or a speculative principle but a truth clearly and plentifully revealed in God's word. The scriptures from beginning to end are saturated with the truth of Christ's second coming. Christ's return is taught in 23 of the 27 books of the New Testament. Someone has calculated that one in 20 verses in the New Testament refer either directly or indirectly to the second coming. Someone else has pointed out that there are ten times as many verses dealing with Christ's second coming as those dealing with his first coming.

The Lord Jesus himself promised that he would return to this earth. When I was a boy my parents called my attention to the promise of the great General Douglas MacArthur when he had to leave the Philippines before the onslaught of the Japanese invaders. Upon his departure he said to the Philippine people, "I shall return!" and General MacArthur did return and he returned with great pomp and glory! *The Lord Jesus promised that he would return to this earth someday.* In John 14:3 the Lord said to his disciples, "...I will come again!" He did not say, *I intend to come again or I may come again but I will come again!*

The Lord promised on many different occasions that he would return to this earth someday. He thought his return was important enough that he devoted whole sermons to the subject that are preserved in his written word. Matthew 24-25 record for us the Lord's Olivet Discourse. Another such sermon can be found in Luke 17. The Lord Jesus has given us the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to get us to show the Lord's death until he comes back. Many of the Lord's parables are devoted to the subject of his return. There is the parable of the tares and the parable of the dragnet and the parable of the ten virgins and the

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parable of the talents to mention but a few. In the book of Revelation the Lord Jesus promises no less than six times to come again. The Lord's last words in scripture are found in Revelation 22:20 where he said, "Surely I come quickly!"

*The apostles* taught often that Christ would return. Paul had much to say about the return of Christ. In both First and Second Thessalonians Paul refers to the second coming of Christ at least once in every chapter. John speaks of Christ's return in I John 2:28 when he says, "And now little children abide in him; that when *he shall appear* we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him *at his coming*." In the book of Revelation John often mentions the second coming of Christ. In the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter John gives a detailed description of the second coming and the last prayer in God's word is a prayer for Christ to return. It's found in Revelation 22:20 and it says, "Even so: come, Lord Jesus."

Scriptures such as Matthew 24:30 tell us that Christ's second coming will be with power and great glory. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven *with power and great glory*." Christ's first coming as described in II Corinthians 13:4 was in weakness and humiliation. In that first coming he laid aside his glory and came in humiliation. His first coming ended in the shameful death of the cross but the last we shall see or hear of Christ was not when he hung on the cross or was laid lifeless in the tomb!

His *second* coming will be *with power*! The power of his coming will be seen in his raising of the dead saints to life. His second coming will also be with great glory. Luke 9:26 says that the glory in which he will come will be his own, his Father's and the angels'. "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in *his own glory* and in *his Father's* and of *the holy angels*." Christ's own glory is the glory of his divine nature and the perfections of it. Christ is God and God is glorious! One scripture says that Christ is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his Father's Person. Christ is coming in great glory in that his divine majesty will then be revealed for all to see. This time he's not coming as the man of sorrows, despised and rejected of men but in the clouds of heaven with great glory. Jesus Christ is coming back in unimaginable splendor and majesty. The glory in which he shall come shall also be great because of the circumstances that will surround that

coming. These circumstances we shall consider next as we look at some things that will happen when Christ returns.

One of the things that will happen is that *the dead in Christ shall be raised*. I Corinthians 15:22-23 says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ *shall all be made alive*. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward *they that are Christ's at his coming*."

Another thing that will happen when Christ returns is that *living saints will be changed*. Believers who are alive when Christ returns shall have their bodies changed, glorified. Look at I Corinthians 15:51-52. "Behold I show 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed."

A third thing that will happen when Christ returns is that all the saints will be reunited. At Christ's coming there will be a blessed reunion of all the saints. I Thessalonians 4:17 says, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together with them* in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and *so shall we ever be with the Lord*."

A fourth thing that will happen when Christ returns is that *justice will be meted out*. Jesus Christ will come to bring judgment and in this judgment he will destroy his enemies. II Thessalonians 1:7-9 says, "And to you who are troubled rest with us *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power*."

II Thessalonians 2:8 says that at the second coming Christ will destroy the Antichrist. "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and *shall destroy with the brightness of his coming*."

***Jesus Christ is coming  
back in unimaginable splendor  
and majesty.***

At this time Christ will reward his people. Many verses tell us about this. Let's look at just two. First there is II Timothy 4:7-8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing." I Peter 5:4 says, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Romans 11:25-32 tells us that when Christ comes back *all Israel shall be saved*. Romans 8:21 says that when Christ comes back the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption. "...The creature (or literally the creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Truly Christ's coming will be the day of days for this old world!

We need to look for a few moments at the matter of when the Lord Jesus will return. According to God's word we cannot know the date when Christ will come back. The Lord Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 24:42, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." In verse 36 of this same chapter the Lord had said that no man and not even the angels know the hour of his return. In Mark 13:32 the Lord Jesus said that even he himself did not know when he would come back. The many date-setters in history have brought disgrace to the coming Savior because their predictions and prophecies have failed. When will the Lord Jesus return? Hebrews 10:37 says it will be in the last days. The same verse says he will not tarry and James 5:8 says it is drawing near.

The scriptures do say that there are some signs by which men can know that Christ's coming is near. In II Thessalonians 2:2-3 Paul says that two specific things must happen before the Lord comes back. He says the great apostasy must come and the Antichrist must be revealed. "That ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter as from us as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come except there come*

***The many date-setters in  
history have brought disgrace  
to the coming Savior.***

*a falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*" The falling away or apostasy mentioned here will be the entire renunciation of all that is divine.

The man of sin who shall be revealed is the son of perdition or the Antichrist. The Antichrist is a real person who will live on this earth near the time of Christ's return and he is described in Revelation 13 and elsewhere in scripture. The pope is not the Antichrist although it is easy to see how our Baptist forefathers could think that he was when he tortured and murdered millions of them during the middle ages and during the Reformation. Paul says here that the coming of Christ will not take place until the apostasy has come and the Antichrist has been revealed and neither of these has yet taken place. When these two things come to pass they are signs that Christ's coming is near. The second thing we shall consider is the fact that

### **Christ's Return Will Be Personal**

The spiritual presence of Christ is a blessed reality that brings comfort to each believer. He is present with us by and in his Holy Spirit. But Christ's promise in John 14 and other passages to come again was a promise to return *in person!* It is not something to be taken figuratively or spiritually. Jesus Christ is coming back *in person!* The angels said in our text that "this same Jesus" will come again and I Thessalonians 4:16 says, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven..." It is *impossible* to miss the meaning and force of these words!

When we say that Christ's coming will be personal we mean that it will be visible, bodily, local and everything else that can be contrasted with what is spiritual and figurative. The angels said that he shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. He came the first time in person and he's coming the second time in person. He ascended into heaven in person and he will descend from heaven in person some day. His ascension was visible and his descent will also be visible. He ascended from the Mount of Olives and he will return to the Mt. of Olives according to Zechariah 14:4-5.

He ascended in the clouds and he will come back in the clouds. Many scriptures tell us that he will come back in the clouds, verses like Matthew 26:64. "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and *coming in the clouds of heaven.*" His coming in the clouds will be majestic and thus will display his glory. Psalms 104:3 says that the Lord makes the clouds his chariot and Nahum 1:3 says that the clouds are the dust of the Lord's feet. I have often sat outside

and gazed up into the clouds and tried to visualize my Lord bursting through the clouds, riding on a white horse and followed by myriads of saints and angels!

There are a number of other descriptions of Christ's coming presented in God's word. Matthew 24:27 says his coming will be like lightning. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Like lightning Christ's coming will be swift, sudden, unexpected, local and visible. He will swiftly move from one end of the heaven to the other. He will come suddenly, instantly like a flash of lightning. He will come unexpectedly like a flash of lightning.

Revelation 1:7 says that when Christ comes everyone will see him. "Behold he cometh with clouds and *every eye* shall see him..." He's coming back visibly. He will appear personally in the sky so that all men will see him. This will truly be a glorious *appearing* as Titus 2:13 describes it. No one will be unaware of Christ's coming!

According to 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Christ's coming will be a noisy affair. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a *shout*, with the *voice* of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God..." Paul says here that there will be three great sounds at Christ's coming: there will be a shout, the voice of the archangel will be heard, and the trumpet will sound. 1 Corinthians 15:52 calls this trumpet the *last trumpet*. Clouds, a shout, the voice of an angel, the sound of the last trumpet, appearing; these and other terms applied to Christ's return certainly do not picture a secret or private coming! Christ's coming will be noisy and public and visible to all! It will be anything but secret with all this noise and visual glory! Finally we need to consider

### What Christ's Personal Return Should Cause Us to Do

Christ's personal return is the Christian's hope. Titus 2:13 calls the second coming, the blessed hope. "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Our hope of Christ's return is radically different than the "I hope so" that people answer to any number of questions. This hope is far more than the greatest optimism. The hope of the Christian is not a nebulous, uncertain, speculative, indefinite hope. This type of hope has two aspects. One is expectation and the other is desire. The Greek word translated hope here in Titus 2:13 occurs 50 times in the New Testament, always meaning a sure and certain expectation. Our

## *The hope of the Christian is not a nebulous, uncertain, speculative, indefinite hope.*

hope of Christ's return is a sure and certain expectation based on the unchanging word of God.

We expect Christ to return because he has promised to do so but we also *desire* him to return! Christ himself is the object of our affections. We want to see him, to be with him, to be like him. Faith in his word and love toward his person, these are the elements of the blessed hope. Our blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our Lord Himself, not deliverance from the tribulation, not escape from suffering or anything else but seeing and being with Christ forever!

The hope of Christ's personal return someday should cause you to do at least three things: first *it should cause you to repent of your sin and place your faith in this coming Christ* today. Trust him now my friend and you will meet him with joy in that day! If you won't believe in him and submit to his Lordship now, you will be forced to submit in that day when he comes again.

Second, Christ's second coming should cause you to *give careful attention to the truth of Christ's return*. Revelation 1:7 says "Behold, he cometh..." Behold means look and note well! Give close attention! Pause and ponder! Linger and look! Look at this! Here is a scene that has no parallel! The King of kings is coming in glory! Behold! is for those who say that Christ's coming is not important! If you are such a person are you going to turn away from this great truth when God's word tells you to Behold?

Thirdly, this great fact of the personal return of Jesus Christ should cause you to *live your life in expectancy of his return*. Get your life in order! Seek more earnestly than ever before to be conformed to the image of Christ. Purify yourself as 1 John 3:3 says. "And every man that hath this hope in him *purifieth himself*, even as he is pure." Get busy about the business of serving Christ. In Luke 19:13 Christ commands his people to "Occupy till I come." Pray and work in his cause instead of sitting back and waiting in inactivity. Ask yourself: Am I occupying? How can I best use the abilities the Lord has given me for his glory? How should I use my time and money for him?

*(Justice: continued on page 16)*

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*(Justice: continued from page 15)*

What can I do to warn sinners that Christ is coming and witness to them for Him? Are *you* ready for his return? Is the personal return of Jesus Christ *your* blessed hope? Are you expecting and longing for his return? Are you busy about the things Christ has given you to do in his service? ✪

*Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.*

*(Baxter: continued from page 7)*

But a few years, it may be less, and we shall be beyond the circle where sorrow enters, beyond the ebbing and the flowing of human vicissitude, seeing him face to face whom not having seen we loved; our battles fought, our wounds all healed, our toils forgotten, and our tears all wiped away.\*

\*"Would it not rejoice your hearts if you were sure to live to see the coming of the Lord, and to see his glorious appearing and return? If you were not to die, but to be caught up thus to meet the Lord, would you be averse to this? Would it not be the greatest joy that you could desire? For my own part I must confess that death, as death, appeareth to me as an enemy, and my nature doth abhor and fear it; but the thoughts of the coming of the Lord are most sweet and joyful to me, so that if I were but sure that I should live to see it, and that the trumpet should sound and the dead should rise and the Lord appear before the period of my age, it would be the joy-fullest tidings to me in the world." Baxter's Works, vol. 17 p. 555. ✪

From *Prophetical Landmarks*



# Premillennial Baptist Journal



## Inside This Edition

- ◆ Was Dr. John Gill a Premillennialist? *Wayne Camp* .....p. 3
- ◆ The Jewish "Wastepaper Basket," *S.P. Tregelles* .....p. 7
- ◆ The Second Coming of Christ, *Dan Cozart* .....p. 8
- ◆ Israel's Contributions to the World, *Laurence A. Justice* .....p. 9
- ◆ Index by Author.....p.12
- ◆ Index by Title .....p.14

**"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."**

**"...the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem..."**

## Purpose of the Premillennial Baptist Journal

- To disseminate the Scriptural doctrine of the Premillennial coming of Jesus Christ as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments
- To emphasize the grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture
- To refute the so-called *spiritualization* of the prophetic Scripture
- To meet Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Preterism and Dispensationalism with Biblical Premillennialism



J.C. Settlemoir

### FINAL Edition

This will be the final issue of the Premillennial Baptist Journal. Our first edition appeared in July of 2006 and since then we have published twenty three issues. We have enjoyed a circulation that hovered around 1,200 for the five years of the magazine's existence.

Hopefully we accomplished our four purposes as stated on the inside of the front page of every edition.

We are discontinuing publication for one reason only and that is the lack of funds to continue. We have not had enough paying subscribers and the cost of paper and printing has risen continually during the entire life of the magazine. Our intention from the beginning has been to never go into debt and the Lord and our faithful subscribers have made this possible. As of the release of this issue all bills are paid thanks to the monthly checks received from several churches and the generous donations of three individuals as well as the yearly donations of many individuals across the country.

A very limited number of bound volumes of all issues of the Premillennial Baptist Journal are available for \$25.00 each on a first come first served basis. To obtain your copies please contact Brother J.C. Settlemoir through the address on the magazine printed near the mailing label. These will hopefully be of great value as reference works for preachers in preparing their sermons and for all lovers of Bible prophecy.

A word of special thanks to those who served as the publishing staff including Lyndy Justice, Assistant Editor, J.C. Settlemoir, Consulting Editor, and Scott McDaniel, Technical Editor & Graphics Designer. These people labored long and hard to produce this magazine and meet the deadlines each quarter. Thanks also to Ben Gardner our proof reader.

Laurence Justice, Editor



Laurence Justice



Scott McDaniel



Lyndy Justice



## Was Dr. John Gill a Premillennialist?

Wayne Camp

Was Dr. John Gill a Premillennialist? This is a question with an answer that will doubtless be disputed regardless of how one answers it. I have no desire to start a dispute with anyone over this question. But, I once preached a series of sermons at Pilgrim's Hope Baptist Church on the book of Revelation and, as usual, I consulted Dr. Gill. Whether I agree with him or not, I like to check with Bro. Gill on nearly any verse or passage I use in a message. I especially do this when I have even the slightest question about the meaning of a verse.

When I went to Bro. Gill on some verses which I will consider in a moment, I fully expected to find a post-millennial view presented. By post-millennial I mean the doctrine that says that we are now living in the one thousand year reign of Christ, Satan is bound, and at the end of this reign Jesus Christ will return for a general resurrection and a general judgment and the New Heaven and the New Earth will begin.

Let me quickly say that the view of a spiritual kingdom and a spiritual reign is not foreign to my thinking. I believe Jesus reigns now. I believe he has always reigned. I Chronicles 16:31, "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth. Psalm 99:1 "The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved." Daniel 4:17 "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."

His people reign with him spiritually. We have power over sin and over Satan. The denial of this is tantamount to denying that Jesus is Lord and that he is Sovereign. I have no time for that form of ultra-dispensationalism that says that because the Lord will yet reign in a literal kingdom on earth for a literal thousand years he cannot be reigning now and his people cannot be reigning with him.

While I do believe he reigns as Sovereign now, I believe he will reign in a visible kingdom of a literal thousand years on this earth. I believe this earth will be returned to a state superior to what it was in Eden before the fall of Adam and the subsequent curse on the material creation. I believe in a literal fulfillment of Scripture that relates to this time. Revelation 20:1-7, "And I saw an angel come

down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. and I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

### Gill's Own Answer to Our Question

When I started studying in the book of Revelation thinking about preaching a series on the book, I looked through my library and found that I have several good books on the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. Of course, I have Gill's Commentary on the book. Now I will share with you some of the things I found in that commentary:

First, however, let me remind the readers that Bro. John Gill died on October 14, 1771, still sharp of mind. I do not know when, during his ministry, that he wrote his commentary on the Apocalypse, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. I do know that when he wrote it he was apparently premillennial.

### Some Indisputable Facts About Gill's Position on the Millennial Reign

At the outset I will tell you that I will show some indisputable facts from Gill's commentary on the book of Revelation.

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1. I will show that Gill did not believe that the one thousand year reign of Christ had started at the time he was writing.

2. I will show that Gill believed in a spiritual reign of Christ and believers and that he also believed in a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on this earth.

3. I will show indisputably that Gill did not believe that Satan was bound and in the bottomless pit at the time he was living and writing.

4. I will show that Gill believed that Satan would be bound and in the bottomless pit for a literal thousand years.

5. I will show that Gill held that the 1,000 year reign during which Satan is bound would not begin until three principle religious powers were destroyed from the earth—pagan religions, the papacy, and the Moham-medan (Muslim) religion. This had not happened when Gill was writing his commentary on Revelation and it has not happened at the time I am writing this article.

**Postulate 1:** John Gill did not believe that the one thousand year reign of Christ had started at the time he was writing his commentary on Revelation.

Gill held that the saints are kings and reign now but will be even more kingly when they reign on earth with Christ a thousand years. On a discussion of Revelation 1:6 he wrote, "The saints are made 'kings' by Christ; they are so now; they have received a kingdom of grace, which cannot be taken away; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world, and all their enemies; and they live and fare like kings, and are clothed like them, in rich apparel, the righteousness of Christ; and are attended as kings, angels being their lifeguards; *and they will appear much more so hereafter, when they shall reign on earth with Christ a thousand years, shall sit upon the same*

### ***Gill declares that there is a future reign that is more than spiritual; it is a literal reign on the earth.***

*throne.*" (Emp. mine, RWC), (Taken from a CD of Gill's Work but found also in Vol. 9, P. 685, 1809 AD Edition reprinted in 1979 by Primitive Baptist Library, Streamwood, Illinois).

Please note the following from this quote:

1. Gill believed that the saints during the time he lived and wrote enjoyed a reign of grace and that they had received a kingdom of grace. "They have received a kingdom of grace, which cannot be taken away; and they have

the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world, and all their enemies."

2. Gill believed that there was a time that was yet future in which the saints would enjoy an even greater rule as kings, "and they will appear much more so hereafter."

3. Gill held that this time in which the saints would appear much more like kings was for a time after that in which he was writing and would be when the saints rule and reign with Christ during the earthly millennium, "when they shall reign on earth with Christ a thousand years, shall sit upon the same throne."

**Postulate 2:** Gill believed in a spiritual reign of Christ and believers; he also believed in a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on this earth that was yet future.

This premise is clearly proven from the quote above so I should not need to repeat it. It will also be proven from other quotes that I will shortly give. It is so obviously proven from the quotes above that one would have to be blinded by prejudice to not see it.

But let us consider another quote from Gill. Commenting on Revelation 5:10 He wrote, "And we shall reign on the earth"; meaning not merely in a spiritual sense, through grace reigning over sin and corruption, through Satan being bruised under their feet, and through the victory they have in Christ over the world, but in the millennium state, in the thousand years' reign with Christ in the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Note the two senses in which the saints reign according to Bro. Gill.

1. Gill declares that there is a spiritual reign of the saints in the time in which he wrote. "And we shall reign on the earth"; meaning not merely in a spiritual sense, through grace reigning over sin and corruption, through Satan being bruised under their feet, and through the victory they have in Christ over the world."

2. Gill declares that there is a future reign that is more than spiritual; it is a literal reign on the earth. It is "not merely in a spiritual sense . . . but in the millennium state, in the thousand years' reign with Christ in the new earth."

The earth will be new during this reign in a similar sense as it was new after the flood. There will be a renovation by fire at the end of the millennial reign. The point that should not be missed in this statement from the pen of Bro. Gill is that he held to a spiritual reign of the saints in his time and until the second coming of Christ and a reign that is not "merely in a spiritual sense" that will come during the millennium on earth. This latter reign of the

saints was a reign that was not going on at the time Gill wrote but was yet future in his thinking.

**Postulate 3:** Gill did not believe that Satan was bound and in the bottomless pit at the time he was living and writing.

Commenting on Revelation 20:1-2 Bro. Gill wrote: From the spread of errors and heresies of all kinds ever since, and especially in our age; and from the general profaneness and infidelity of the times, which, when considered, no man in his senses can ever think that Satan is bound; nor indeed will he be bound, or these thousand years begin, till after the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of all the antichristian powers, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, as appears from the order of this vision, and its connection with the preceding chapter.

From this we can see that Gill felt that no man in his senses could believe that the binding of Satan set forth in Revelation 20:1-2 was in effect at the time. He had gone back and discussed the heresies that came into the world during the early years of the Lord's churches on earth. He went on to mention heresies that came along later up to his own time. With those heresies in view he wrote, "From the spread of errors and heresies of all kinds ever since, and especially in our age; and from the general profaneness and infidelity of the times, which, when considered, no man in his senses can ever think that Satan is bound."

**Postulate 4:** Gill believed that Satan would be bound and in the bottomless pit for a literal thousand years.

First, space will not permit me to include all that Gill said on these matters. But, it is obvious that he believed the binding of Satan was for a literal thousand years. Of this thousand years he said, "These are to be understood literally and definitely, as before, of just such an exact number and term of years."

Gill taught also that there would be a literal one thousand years between the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked. "There will be such an exact term of years between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of the wicked."

Gill did not believe that the first resurrection was a resurrection from sin experienced in regeneration, as some hold. He held that it was a bodily resurrection at the second coming of Christ. Of the expression, "this is the first resurrection," Gill wrote,

*"This is the first resurrection; which is not to be connected with the living again of the rest of the dead at the end of the thousand years, for that will be the second and last resurrection; but with the witnesses of Jesus, and the true worshippers of God living again, in order to reign with Christ a thousand years; for this resurrection is not meant of a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace; though the work of grace and conversion is sometimes so represented, it cannot be designed here; for such a resurrection the above witnesses and worshippers were partakers of before their sufferings, and which was ante-*

### ***Gill believed that Satan would be bound and in the bottomless pit for a literal thousand years.***

cedently necessary to their witness and worship; besides, this resurrection was future in John's time, and was what was to be done at once, and was peculiar to the commencement of the thousand years; whereas the spiritual resurrection was before his time, and has been ever since the beginning, and is successive in all ages, and not affixed to any one period of time, though there may be more instances of it in one age than in another; nor is this ever called the first resurrection, nor can any reason be given why it should; for though one man may be converted before another, his conversion cannot be called the first resurrection, since there are many instances of this nature before, and many more after; besides, at this time, there will be none of God's people to be raised in this sense; they will be all quickened and converted before; the nation of the Jews will be born again, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; to which may be added, that if the first resurrection is to be understood in a spiritual sense, then the second resurrection of the wicked dead, at the end of the thousand years, must be understood in like manner."

Note particularly these words, "This resurrection is not meant of a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace; though the work of grace and conversion is sometimes so represented, it cannot be designed here."

Gill argued that the first resurrection of which John wrote in Revelation 20:5 was still in the future at the time of John's writing. He said, therefore, that it could **not** refer to the work of regeneration as some argue because that has happened from the beginning of human history and had already happened to John when he wrote and to the suffering Christians before they suffered for Christ. "This resurrection was future in John's time, and was what was

to be done at once, and was peculiar to the commencement of the thousand years; whereas the spiritual resurrection was before his time, and has been ever since the beginning, and is successive in all ages, and not affixed to anyone period of time."

He also wrote that this first resurrection was "was peculiar to the commencement of the thousand years." This agrees with his comments on that well-known passage in I Thessalonians. I Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

On these verses Gill said, "These will rise 'first', before the wicked, which is the first resurrection, (Revelation 20:5, 6) even a thousand years before them; the righteous will rise in the morning of the resurrection, and so will have the dominion in the morning, (Psalm 49:14) even at the beginning of the thousand years, as soon as Christ will come; but the wicked will not rise till the evening of that day, or till the close of the thousand years: and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, who thought that some will rise before others."

**Postulate 5:** Gill held that the 1,000 year reign during which Satan was bound would not begin until three principle religious powers were destroyed from the earth—pagan religions, the papacy, and the Mohammedan (Muslim) religion.

Not only did Gill deny that Satan was bound during all those centuries of the church age to his day and time, he did not believe that the thousand years referred to six times in Rev. 20:1-7 had begun when he was writing. In his interpretation, they were yet future.

***He also wrote that  
this first resurrection "was  
peculiar to the commencement of  
the thousand years."***

Gill wrote, "No man in his senses can ever think that Satan is bound; nor indeed will he be bound, or these thousand years begin, till after the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of all the antichristian powers, Pagan, Papal, and

Mahometan, as appears from the order of this vision, and its connection with the preceding chapter.

This view of Gill is clearly pre-millennial. These three false religious powers are still around today, as I write the closing portion of this article. According to Gill, as long as these three false religious systems are still alive and functioning though they are dead while they live, Satan is not bound and the thousand years have not begun.

Paganism is alive and well in many parts of the world. Approximately 94% of the population of Thailand is Buddhist. Every time I preach in the men's prison in Chiang Mai there is a statue of Buddha behind and to the right of me. The same is true in the women's prison.

Roman Catholicism is active but struggling to deal with a priesthood that has a large percentage of its members that are bent on molesting young boys. It is just Christianized paganism. Its admitted unscriptural practice of demanding celibacy of its priests is a failure and has resulted in this influx of sodomizing priests. This is nothing new in the Roman Catholic Church. I could show that it goes back for several centuries. But that is not the import of this article. Since Gill held that Catholicism must be destroyed before the millennium begins or Satan is bound, it would be Gill's position that we are not yet in the 1,000 year reign of Christ and his saints.

Gill also held that the continued existence of Mohammedan (Muslim) religion at the time he was writing was evidence that Satan was not bound and that the millennium had not started. Has anyone heard about this religious group lately? Are they still around? Here in our own country this group is the second fastest growing religious group. They are only outstripped by the Mormons.

According to Gill's position, Satan is not bound today nor has the 1,000 year reign of Revelation 20:1-7 started. According to his position we are still in the pre-millennial time in prophetic history. The first resurrection at the second coming of Christ has not taken place.

### Conclusion

Before anyone gets a notion to tell me, "Bro. Camp, it makes no difference if Gill was premillennial, it is not what Gill taught that should govern our thinking. What we believe should be governed by the Word of God."

I say a hearty "Amen." But, since some quote Gill in favor of non-premillennial positions I think it is worthwhile to notice his pre-millennial position when he was writing

*(Camp: continued on page 16)*



## The Jewish “Wastepaper Basket”

S.P. Tregelles

But if things are so, to whom would the Scriptures apply which give warning of perilous times? To whom could signs be given? This consideration has led to the *Jewish* interpretation of Scripture. Whatever has been felt to be a difficulty has been deemed to be quite enough to show that it has nothing to do with the Church. On this principle the application of very much of the New Testament has been avoided. If Jewish circumstances of any kind are found in a passage, or if the persons addressed were Jews by nation, these particulars have been relied on as showing that it does not apply to the Church. But it must ever be borne in mind that, however differing in external circumstances, the Church is one body, dwelt in by one Spirit: the Jew and the Gentile, alike brought near to God by the blood of Christ, are one in Him; so that Jewish circumstances or Gentile circumstances do not affect the essential unity. The apostles were all of them Jews; nevertheless, it is on the twelve stones inscribed with their twelve names that the heavenly city is builded. It is quite true that there are Scriptures which treat simply of hopes and promises for Israel; these, too, shall be accomplished fully; but the acknowledgment that some portions of Holy Writ are such, does not at all warrant the avoidance of the force of any part of the Christian Scriptures. It is easy to see who are addressed—whenever the Lord or an inspired apostle speaks to believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, they are treated as part of the one Church. There are in the New Testament personal addresses, corporate addresses, and teaching which might have to do with more temporary or local circumstances. Just so do we find in the Pentateuch directions to Moses, as an individual, precepts for guidance while in the desert, and ordinances to be obeyed in the land. There is no difficulty in distinguishing these things, unless, indeed, we choose to raise it for ourselves.

If the application of the Jewish theory of interpretation of definite New Testament prophecies be carefully examined, it will be found to refute itself; for it will give to Jews as Jews what most certainly belongs to the Church of Christ, and it will assume that Jews in their unbelief are found using the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as a teacher. Thus, when Matt. 24 has been used as teaching how we are to expect the Lord, it has been repeatedly said

that it is entirely “Jewish.” Let this be granted. But what then? *Who* are to use it, or to take heed to its warnings? No one can acknowledge Jesus there as a *teacher* without owning Him as the Christ: “Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. (v.5). The persons who will use the warnings, and who will expect the manifest appearing of Christ, as here spoken of, must be believers in His divine mission, and thus their profession must simply be that of believers in His name; in other words, they must be a part of the Church of the firstborn, to which all belong who now accept the Lord Jesus as He is set forth by God.

An undefined term becomes an easy mode of explaining away distinct statements which cannot be reconciled to a theory; because in this manner no meaning whatever is assigned to the passages whose testimony has to be avoided. This has been the case with the word “Jewish” in connection with the Scriptures which teach the manifest appearing of the Lord in glory. In this manner the three first Gospels have been called Jewish, whenever any portion of their teaching was felt as a difficulty. So, too, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and those of James and Peter. And yet how very much of the most blessed teaching for the Church is contained in these so-called Jewish portions of the New Testament.

In order to avoid applications of certain Scriptures to us, doctrines have been called Jewish also; thus it has been said that Covenant, Priesthood, and Mediation, are altogether Jewish. To this it has been added that the Church, “the body of Christ”, stands altogether *above* everything of the kind; even “above dispensation” (whatever this may mean). It would have been difficult to suppose that these opinions would have found any acceptance, if such were not the known fact. What if the expression the *New Testament*, or Covenant, stands in opposition to the Old Covenant with Israel? It does not make the New Covenant a merely Jewish thing. Just as the Lord Jesus said the night before He suffered, “This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28); so, also, did the Apostle Paul teach as parts of His words, and as applied to converted Gentiles, “This cup is the *New Testament* in my blood.” (1 Cor. 11:25.) We might as well say that “the remission of sins” is Jewish, and that the shedding of the blood of Christ is Jewish; we might as well affirm that these have no relation to us, as explain away Covenant and its connected truths. ✨

From *The Hope of Christ's Second Coming*,  
The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony,  
Chiswick, UK

*Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875) English Presbyterian theologian & hymn writer, author of "Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon" and "Hope of Christ's Second Coming."*

## The Second Coming of Christ

Dan W. Cozart



"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you. 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 unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also" John 14:1-3.

The disciples were discouraged and frustrated. In earlier chapters our Lord had told them that Judas would betray Him, that Peter would deny Him, that His enemies would crucify Him, and that He would be leaving them. In chapter fourteen He begins dispelling their fears with hope and encouragement. Not only does He tell them He is leaving to prepare a place for them, but also that He would come back to get them.

One of the cardinal doctrines in the scriptures is the second coming of Christ. This teaching is essential in understanding the person and work of Christ. Every child of God should gladly and affectionately embrace this great truth. No one seems to question the ascension of Christ. Whether premillennial, amillennial, or postmillennial, all seem to be in perfect agreement that Jesus literally and bodily left planet earth for heaven. However, when one gets to His leaving heaven and returning to this earth, it seems "the fur begins to fly." Brethren, this should not be. Can we not all be in agreement that as our Lord left this earth, that in the same manner He would return? Can we not rejoice that Jesus Christ is coming again?

First, I would have you to see the certainty of His return. It has been said the two inevitable things in this life are death and taxes. That could be debated. Elijah and Enoch did not die, and taxes can be repealed. However, there is one thing that will without exception occur, and that is the second coming of Christ to this earth. The Bible is replete with this truth. The Lord's Supper sets it forth in I Corinthians 11:26, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." The Angels proclaimed it in Acts 1:11, "...this same Jesus, which is taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven". Enoch preached this truth according to Jude, verse 14, "...and Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these

saying, behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints." More is said in the scriptures about the Lord's second coming than is said about His first coming. It is mentioned more than the subjects of Heaven, Hell, the Cross, and the Resurrection.

Next, I would call to your attention the manner of His return. First, I will approach this negatively. Conversion is not the Second Coming of Christ. Some contend that Paul experienced the return of Christ on the road to Damascus when he was saved. But how is it that he preached to other converts that the Second Coming was still future in II Timothy 4:7-8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." Neither was the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the fulfillment of the Second Coming. The angel said in Acts 1:11, "...this same Jesus." Again, death is not the Second Coming. Death is silent, yet Christ returns with a shout. At death, we close the graves, yet when He returns, the graves will be opened. Enough of the negative; let's proceed to the positive... I Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The Second Coming of Christ will be literal, personal, powerful, and precious!

Third, what are we told about the time of His return? Down through the centuries, religious man has advertised his ignorance by trying to determine the time of the Second Coming. The Jehovah's Witness organization was founded on this very premise. Some have gone backward to determine the time. Some report it occurred in 70 A.D. when Titus invaded Jerusalem. Some push ahead to a future year, month and day, all to no avail. The truth is that no man knows when this glorious event will take place. Almighty God planned it, and only God knows when it will take place. It is recorded in Mark 13:32-37, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is...watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight, or at the cock

(Cozart, continued on page 16)

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## Israel's Contributions to the World

Laurence Justice

"Salvation is of the Jews" John 4:22b.

Many men who have made the greatest contributions to the world have been Jews, men like Abraham the father of the faithful, Moses the great lawgiver, and David the sweet Psalmist of Israel. No nation has ever produced such prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Elijah and John the Baptist. Jews have made many wonderful and important contributions to the modern world. Some of the great leaders of science have been Jews. Albert Einstein, one of the world's greatest intellects, was a Jew. J. Robert Oppenheimer, father of the atomic bomb, was a Jew. Jonas Salk, discoverer of the polio vaccine, was a Jew. Great writers, journalists and publishers include Jews like Boris Pasternak and Joseph Pulitzer. Jewish political leaders who have made great contributions to the world include Benjamin Disraeli, one of Britain's truly great Prime Ministers. His name, Benjamin Disraeli, means literally Benjamin of Israel. Judah P. Benjamin was a U.S. Senator from Louisiana and Secretary of State and Secretary of War in the Confederate States of America. Allen Greenspan, the economist, is a Jew. Many of the world's leading musicians have been and are Jews, men like Felix Mendelssohn and Jascha Heifitz and George Gershwin and Irving Berlin and Leonard Bernstein and Oscar Hammerstein. Some of the world's great entertainers such as Sarah Bernhardt, one of the history's greatest actresses and Al Jolson were Jews.

But the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ in our text today reminds us of an infinitely greater contribution Israel has made to this world: "Salvation is of the Jews!" A number of things are involved in the meaning of this important statement of our Lord. Salvation was promised to the Jews. God promised Abraham that in his seed which was Christ all nations of the earth would be blessed. This promise was repeated to Isaac, Jacob and their descendants a number of times in the book of Genesis. Salvation, God's redemptive program, is intended for people in all nations but it comes from or out of the Jews. The salvation of the Lord was typified in the tabernacle of Israel, its furniture, its ritual and its priesthood. The altar of burnt offerings pictured the coming sacrifice of Christ for the believer's sins. The candlestick spoke of Christ as our spiritual light. The table and the shewbread foreshadowed Christ as the food of our souls. The altar of incense signified Christ as our intercessor with the Father. The blood sacrifices of animals spoke of the death of Christ, an innocent substitute, in the place of the guilty sinner. The high

priest of Israel typified Jesus Christ who would as our Great High Priest make atonement for sin and intercede with God on behalf of sinners.

The knowledge of salvation, the word of salvation and the means of salvation were enjoyed by the Jews when others were ignorant of these things. "Salvation is of the Jews!" Let's take a closer look even yet at what our Lord's statement about this contribution of Israel to the world means. First of all, "Salvation is of the Jews" includes the fact that

### Israel Gave the World the Holy Scriptures

Israel has given the world God's eternal word, the Bible, in which God has revealed his will for all men, both Jews and Gentiles. In Romans 3:1-2 the apostle Paul asks, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

The oracles of God are the communications of God. They are called the oracles of God because they are inspired by God and contain the mind and will of God. The scriptures are words from the mouth of God Himself! God spoke to Israel the words that are recorded in the Bible. God gave his word to every writer of the Bible. In Exodus 34:27 God said to Moses "Write thou these words..." In Jeremiah 30:2 God said to Jeremiah, "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book." And with every writer of scripture it was the same. He wrote down the words of God. The moral law, the Ten Commandments, was given to Israel at Mt. Sinai and they were the only nation on earth so distinguished by God. There is no law that can parallel God's moral law that came to the world through Israel!

The oracles of God of which Paul speaks in Romans 3:2 include all the books of the Old Testament and everything in them. God gave the law, the Psalms and the prophecies to the Jewish nation. Every prophet in the Old Testament was a Jew. In these oracles Israel had knowledge of the way in which God could be worshipped acceptably to Him. The Gentiles were ignorant of this. These oracles

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contained the great promise that God would send the Messiah Jesus Christ into this world. In these oracles of God the Jews had knowledge of the Sonship and Deity of the Messiah, his sacrifice, his satisfaction, his righteousness which God would accept.

In Isaiah 49:6b God told how the Gentiles would someday be saved through this Messiah. Here God says to the Messiah, "...I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Psalms 22 graphically pictured Messiah's sacrificial suffering and death on the cross that brings salvation to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Some of the thoughts of the Savior as he suffered on the cross were prophesied here 1,000 years before they actually took place. They include; "...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?...All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him...all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death...the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet...They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture..."

Isaiah 53 spoke of the meaning of the death of Messiah with such statements as "...He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

The New Testament as well as the Old is a Jewish book written by Jews. Israel produced the oracles of God. The scriptures were entrusted to the Jews when not to other nations. Israel was for many centuries the guardian of the oracles of God. Century after century Jewish scribes preserved and copied God's word. They had the honor of being the keepers of the sacred books, these divine oracles and of transmitting them to their posterity for the use of others. Ultimately Israel transmitted God's word to the rest of the world. Israel had the oracles of God for their own use and by the oracles the Jews had a clearer knowledge of God than the Gentiles had by the light of nature. What incalculable value to the world is Israel's contribution of producing the scriptures, God's holy word! But

alas! What good does it do the Jews to have produced and preserved the oracles of God when they do not believe them! The most important of all the contributions Israel has made to this world is the fact that

### Israel Gave the World the Savior, Jesus Christ

"Salvation is of the Jews!" means that Jesus Christ the Messiah came from Israel. "Salvation" in our text is equivalent to the Savior or the Messiah. Simeon used the word this way in Luke 2:30. You remember the story how that when Joseph and Mary had taken the child Jesus to the Temple and while they were there Simeon saw the child. Look at Luke 2:28-30 here. "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." What had Simeon seen when he said he had seen the Lord's salvation? He had seen Jesus.

John the Baptist used the word salvation in this same way in Luke 3:6 when he heralded the soon coming of Jesus Christ. Look at Luke 3:6. "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." What was it that all flesh would see when they would see the salvation of God? They would see Jesus Christ whose coming John was heralding here.

"Salvation is of the Jews!" then means that Christ the Messiah is of or from Israel. The Lord Jesus referred to himself as "salvation" in our text because he was dealing with the woman at the well about her sin. Her mind was occupied with arguments about where to worship when what she needed was salvation that could only be had in Christ. The Lord was saying that the Savior, the Messiah, will arise among the Jews and therefore the true worship of the Lord is to be found among them. The Messiah came from them, was born of them and among them.

In Romans 9:3-5, the apostle Paul lists the great advantages Israel had and has as far as spiritual things are concerned. "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption (their adoption by God as his chosen nation), and the glory (the Shekinah over the ark which was a symbol of God's presence among them), and the covenants (the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenants God made with Israel), and the giving of the law (God gave the moral law through Israel to the world), and the service of God (the whole worship of God in the tabernacle, the priesthood and the sacrifices), and the promises (both temporal and spiritual which God made to them); Whose are the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Their descent from these patriarchs was a privilege), and (best of all) of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

The Messiah was not only prophesied and promised to them in their scriptures, he came of them and from them and to them. The Messiah came to this world in the flesh of a Jew. His mother was a Jewish virgin as Isaiah 7:14 had prophesied. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Jesus Christ the Messiah was born in the royal bloodline of Israel, David's line. In Luke 1:31-33 the angel said to Mary when announcing the birth of Christ to her, "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Jewish blood flowed in the veins of our Lord Jesus Christ. Israel gave the world the Savior who in the flesh died on the cross for sin, arose from the grave and is coming again to this earth.

Returning to Romans 4:5 for a moment, Paul says that Jesus Christ who is of or from the Jews according to the flesh "is overall God blessed forever..." In Isaiah 35:4 God had long before spoken to Israel through whom and to whom Messiah would come telling them that this Messiah would be One who is God. "Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not...Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."

It is not because Jesus Christ is a Jew but because he is God manifest in the flesh that he is our salvation. The coming of God manifest in the flesh as the foundation on which the whole work of redemption rests was through Israel, through the Jews. What would this world be without this Savior, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who is of the Jews? What would this world be like without the Lord's Sermon on the Mount as a model for ethical behavior? What would this world be like without the wonderful teachings of the Savior in his parables of the Good Samaritan and the Sower and the Talents? What would this world be like without the Lord's teachings about forgiving those who trespass against us and having compassion on the needy? Most of all what would this world be like without the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, how he died for our sins according to the scriptures and was buried and was raised again the third day according to the scriptures? What would this world be without our Lord's clear revelations concerning the resurrection and the judgment and the eternity that lies ahead? What real hope could there possibly be in a world without such knowledge?

When we think about the fact that "Salvation is of the Jews" we must not, of course confuse the channel with the source. The channel through which Jesus Christ who is our salvation came is Israel, the Jews, but the source of our salvation is the God of Sovereign Grace! In Revela-

tion 7:9-10 the scene is in heaven where John saw a great throng of people who had been saved out of the great tribulation. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation (or the glory for salvation or the credit for salvation belongs) to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." This multitude that John saw recognized the source of their salvation and victory and not one of them remained silent. When sovereign grace brings salvation to any man there is great cause to praise God and the Lamb! "Salvation is of the Jews" means that of the Jews, of Israel came Christ the Messiah/Savior according to the flesh. The problem is Israel rejected this Savior when he came! How horrendous and unfathomable have been the results of that rejection! Now we shall look briefly at some other contributions of Israel to the world.

### **Israel Gave the World the Apostles, the Church and the First Martyrs**

The apostles of Jesus Christ who spread the gospel of God's grace throughout the earth and who wrote most of the New Testament were all Jews. Paul the apostle was a Jew. He was the apostle to the Gentiles but nevertheless he was a Jew. Peter was a Jew and all the apostles were Jews. The first Christians, the first church members, the first preachers and the first missionaries were all Jews. The first church was the church at Jerusalem, a congregation of Jews whom Christ Jesus had saved. Paul, Barnabas, Silas and John Mark, the first Missionaries, were all Jews. The first martyrs of Jesus Christ in this world were Jews; Stephen who was stoned to death for preaching Christ before the Sanhedrin and James the brother of John who King Herod killed with the sword were Jews.

So, what are Israel's most meaningful contributions to the world? 1. The Bible, God's holy word, that reveals God's will and God's Redeemer is of or from the Jews. 2. The Messiah, the Savior of sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ, is of or from the Jews. 3. The apostles, the first church and the first martyrs were all of or from the Jews. We owe a lot, more than we can ever repay, to Israel! "Salvation is of the Jews!"

But to say that Salvation is of or from the Jews does not mean that all Jews or any Jew thereby possesses salvation! Let's not make that mistake. It is only those Jews who believe God's word and bow to Jesus Christ as the Messiah who possess this salvation. In Isaiah 49:6b, God foretold how the Gentiles (that's you and me who are not Jews) would be saved through this Messiah, the Lord Jesus

*(Justice: continued on page 16)*

2006

- Bonar, Horatius. "Horatius Bonar on The First Resurrection." Vol. II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 10.  
 "The Book of the Last Days." Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 9.  
 "The Interval." Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 11.  
 "The Advent." Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 3.  
 "The Purpose of God." Horatius Bonar. Vol. III Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2008: p 6.
- Blaising, Craig. "Book Review." Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 12.
- Brown, William L. "Errors of Dispensationalism." Vol. III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 8.
- Camp, Wayne. "A General Introduction to Revelation." Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 6.  
 "Postmillennialism." Vol. VI Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2011: p 3.  
 "Preterist Or Futurist?" Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June, 2009: p 6.  
 "The Kingdom of Stone." Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept, 2007: p 3.  
 "Was Dr. John Gill a Premillennialist?" Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012: p 3.
- Cozart, Dan. "The Abrahamic Covenant." Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 3.  
 "The Church and the Kingdom." Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p 3.  
 "The Second Coming of Christ." Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012: p 8.  
 "What is the Kingdom of Heaven?" Vol. 1 Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 3.
- Cohen, Gary G. "Preterit". Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June, 2009: p 13.
- Crisp, Ron. "The Last Days." Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 3.
- Dalling, W.E. "Is Satan Now Bound?" Vol. II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007: p 9.
- Daniel, John T. "The Book of Revelation." Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 3.
- Feinberg, Charles Lee. "The Prospect for Israel." Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 14.
- Gill, John. "Proofs of the Millennium." Vol. 1 Issue 1, July-Sept, 2006: p 4.
- Gordon, A.J. "A.J. Gordon on The First Resurrection." Vol. II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 12.
- Griffiths, C.W.H. "Spurgeon's Eschatology." Vol. III Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2008: p 3.
- Half, Charles. "The Mystery of the Jew." Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 7.
- Havner, Vance. "A Preacher Without a Bible." Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 14.
- Hillard, Dan. "Amillennialism and Revelation 20:4, 6-7", Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2009: p 9.
- Horner, Barry E. "God's Dealings With Israel-By Grace or Law?" Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept: 2008 p 12.  
 "Israel and Christian Anti-Judaism In Contrast." Vol. IV Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2009: p 9.
- Johnson, S. Lewis. "Paul and 'The Israel of God.'" Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2009: p 3.
- Jones, G.E. "What is Taught About the Reign of Christ." Vol. 1 Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 6.  
 "The First Resurrection." Vol. II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 7.  
 "The Nature of the Reign." Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 12.
- Justice, Laurence A. "Christ, the Spirit of Prophecy." Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 12.  
 "Dispensationalism Wrongly Divides God's Word. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 3.  
 "Israel's Contributions to the World." Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012: p. 9.  
 "Israel's Hope." Laurence A. Justice Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 3.  
 "Should Bible Prophecy Be Interpreted Literally?" Vol. 1 Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 3.  
 "Preposterous Preterism?" Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June, 2009: p 3.  
 "The Personal Return of Jesus Christ." Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 12.
- Kiffin, William. "The Millennium—Literal or Spiritual?" Vol. III Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2008: p 11.
- King, Leon. "Ammillennialist Proof Texts for Binding of Satan", Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2009: p 12.
- Lee, Bill. "The Binding of Satan." Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 3.

2012

I  
N  
D  
E  
X

- "Will There Be a Literal Antichrist?" Vol. V Issue II, Apr-Jun, 2010: p 3
- Lord, David N. "The Coming & Reign of Christ." Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 6.
- "The Coming & Reign of Christ." Vol. VI Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2011: p 13.
- MacArthur, John. "The Removal of Satan." Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 12.
- McCoskey, Michael. "Signs of the Last Days." Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 8.
- "Some Errors of Postmillennialism." Vol. III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 11.
- "The Kingdom of Heaven." Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p 6.
- Meldau, Fred J. "The Seven Sevens of Prophetic Wonders." Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 11
- Mercer, Arthur Jr. "Israel." Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 2
- Murray, John. "The Fullness of the Gentiles and the Salvation of Israel." Vol. VI Issue II, Apr-June, 2011: p 14
- Newton, B.W. "Millennium: Distinctions Which Make Difficulties Disappear." Vol. I Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 15.
- Pache, Rene. "The Times of the Gentiles." Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 15.
- Park, David. The Antichrist—A Particular Person, Vol. V Issue II, Apr-Jun, 2010: p 13.
- Peters, George N.H. "Literal Grammatical Interpretation." Vol. I Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 6.
- Pink, Arthur W. "Date Fixing." Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 8.
- "Dispensationalism." Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 8.
- "Dispensationalism and the Law of God." Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 10.
- "The Papacy Not the Antichrist" Vol. V Issue II, Apr-Jun, 2010: p 8.
- Price, Randall. A.D. 70: "Preterism's Prophetic Dead End." Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June, 2009: p 10.
- Robinson, Dean. "The OT Prophecies of the Millennium." Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 3.
- Settlemoir, J.C. "A Study of Revelation 2:-4-6." Vol. II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 3.
- "Amillennial Errors." Vol. III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 2.
- "Did the Church Replace Israel?" Vol. IV Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2009: p 3.
- "The Church and the Kingdom Contrasted." Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p 8.
- "The Fullness of the Gentiles, Vol. VI Issue II, Apr-June, 2011: p 3.
- Smith, Oswald J. "When Daniel Saw the Kingdom." Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 13.
- Smith, Royce. "An Exposition of Romans 2:28-29", Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2009: p 14.
- "Errors of Preterism." Vol. III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 14.
- "Is God Finished With Israel." Vol. II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 5.
- Spurgeon, Charles. "Gleanings in Spurgeon." Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 15.
- "On the Literality of Prophecy." Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 10.
- "Quotes from C.H. Spurgeon." Vol. III Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2008: p 5.
- "Spurgeon Quotes." Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 7.
- "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews." Vol. II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 3.
- "Watching for Christ's Coming." Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p 11.
- Strauss, Lehman. "The Removal of Satan." Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 15.
- Toms, Stephen A. "Israel Means Israel." Vol. II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 8.
- Tregelles, S.P. "The Budding of the Fig Tree." Vol. I Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 5.
- "The Image (Daniel 11)." Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 6.
- "The Jewish 'Wastepaper Basket.'" Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012: p 7.
- Walvoord, John F. "The Binding of Satan." Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 6.
- "The Fifth Kingdom From Heaven." Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 14.
- "The Promise of the Land to Israel." Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008 p 6.

2006

I  
N  
D  
E  
X

- "A General Introduction to Revelation." Wayne Camp. Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p.6.
- "A Preacher Without a Bible." Vance Havner. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 14.
- "A.D. 70: Preterism's Prophetic Dead End". Randall Price. Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June., 2009: p 10.
- "Advent. The," Horatius Bonar. Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 3.
- "First Resurrection. The", A.J. Gordon. Vol. II Issue II Apr.-June, 2007: p 12.
- "Abrahamic Covenant. The", Dan Cozart. Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 3.
- "Amillennial Errors." J.C. Settlemoir. Vol. III Issue II, Apr-June, 2008: p 2.
- "Amillennialism and Revelation 20:4, 6-7." Dan Hillard. Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2009: p 9.
- "Amillennialist Proof Texts for Binding of Satan." Leon King. Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2009: p 12.
- "An Exposition of Romans 2:28-29." Royce Smith. Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2009: p 14.
- "Antichrist—A Particular Person. The", David Park. Vol. V Issue II, Apr-June, 2010: p 13
- "Binding of Satan. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol. II Issue IV Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 6.
- "Binding of Satan. The", Bill Lee. Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 3.
- "Book of Revelation. The", John T. Daniel. Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 3.
- "Book of the Last Days. The", Horatius Bonar. Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 9.
- "Book Review". Craig Blaising. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 12.
- "Budding of the Fig Tree. The", S.P. Tregelles. Vol. I Issue I, July-Sept., 2006: p 5.
- "Church and the Kingdom. The", Dan Cozart. Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p.3.
- "Church and the Kingdom Contrasted. The", Royce Smith. Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p.8.
- "Christ, the Spirit of Prophecy." Laurence A. Justice. Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 12.
- "Coming & Reign of Christ. The", David N. Lord. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 6.
- "Coming & Reign of Christ. The", David N. Lord. Vol. VI Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2011: p 13.
- "Date Fixing." A.W. Pink. Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 8.
- "Did the Church Replace Israel?" J.C. Settlemoir. Vol. IV Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2009: p 3.
- "Dispensationalism." Arthur W. Pink. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 8.
- "Dispensationalism and the Law of God." Arthur W. Pink. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 10.
- "Dispensationalism Wrongly Divides God's Word." Laurence A. Justice. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 3.
- "Errors of Preterism." Royce Smith. Vol. III Issue II Apr-June, 2008: p 14.
- "Errors of Dispensationalism." William L. Brown. Vol. III Issue II Apr-June, 2008: p 8.
- "Fifth Kingdom From Heaven. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 14.
- "First Resurrection. The", G.E. Jones. Vol. II Issue II Apr-June, 2007: p 7.
- "First Resurrection. The", Horatius Bonar. Vol. II Issue II Apr-June, 2007: p 10.
- "Fullness of the Gentiles. The", J.C. Settlemoir. Vol. VI Issue II, Apr-June, 2011: p 3.
- "Fullness of the Gentiles and the Salvation of Israel. The", John Murray. Vol. VI Issue II, Apr-June, 2011: p 14.
- "Gleanings in Spurgeon." Charles H. Spurgeon. Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 15.
- "God's Dealings With Israel-By Grace or Law?" Barry E. Horner. Vol III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 12.
- "Image (Daniel 11). The", S.P. Tregelles. Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 6.
- "Interval. The", Horatius Bonar. Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 11.
- "Is God Finished With Israel?" Royce Smith. Vol. II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 5.
- "Is Satan Now Bound?" W.E. Dalling. Vol. II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007: p 9.
- "Israel." Arthur Mercer, Jr. Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept., 2009: p 2.

2012

- "Israel and Christian Anti-Judaism In Contrast". Barry E. Horner. Vol. IV Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2009: p 9.
- "Israel Means Israel." Stephen A. Toms. Vol. II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 8.
- "Israel's Contributions to the World." Laurence A. Justice. Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012. p 9.
- "Israel's Hope." Laurence A. Justice. Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept., 2009: p 3.
- "Jewish 'Wastepaper Basket'. The". S.P. Tregalles. Vol. VII Issue I, May, 2012. p 3.
- "Kingdom of Heaven. The", Michael McCoskey. Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p.6.
- "Kingdom of Stone. The", Wayne Camp. Vol. II Issue III July-Sept., 2007: p 3.
- "Last Days. The", Ron Crisp. Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011:p 3.
- "Literal Grammatical Interpretation." George N.H. Peters. Vol. 1 Issue 1 July-Sept., 2006: p 6.
- "Literality of Prophecy. On the", Charles Spurgeon. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 10.
- "Mystery of the Jew. The", Charles Half. Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept., 2009: p 7.
- "Millennium: Distinctions Which Make Difficulties Disappear." B.W. Newton. Vol. 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 15.
- "Nature of the Reign. The", G.E. Jones. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 12.
- "Old Testament Prophecies of the Millennium. The," Dean Robinson. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 3.
- "Papacy Not the Antichrist. The", A.W. Pink. Vol. V Issue II, Apr-June, 2010: p 8.
- "Paul and 'The Israel of God.'" S. Lewis Johnson. Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2009: p 3.
- "Personal Return of Jesus Christ. The", Laurence A. Justice. Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 12.
- "Postmillennialism." Wayne Camp. Vol. VI Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2011: p 3.
- "Preterist or Futurist?" Wayne Camp. Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June., 2009: p 6.
- "Preterit." Gary G. Cohen. Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June., 2009: p 13.
- "Preposterous Preterism?" Laurence A. Justice. Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June., 2009: p 3.
- "Promise of the Land to Israel. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 6.
- "Proofs of the Millennium." John Gill. Vol. 1 Issue 1 July-Sept, 2006: p 4.
- "Prospect for Israel, The," Charles Lee Feinberg. Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept., 2009: p 14.
- "Removal of Satan. The", John MacArthur. Vol. II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007: p 12.
- "Removal of Satan. The", Lehman Strauss. Vol. II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007: p 15.
- "Restoration and Conversion of the Jews. The", Charles Spurgeon. Vol. II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 3.
- "Second Coming of Christ. The", Dan Cozart. Vol. VII Issue I, May, 2012. p 8.
- "Seven Sevens of Prophetic Wonders. The," Fred J. Meldau. July-Sept., 2009: p 11.
- "Should Bible Prophecy Be Interpreted Literally?" Laurence A. Justice. Vol. 1 Issue 1, July-Sept. 2006: p 3.
- "Signs of the Last Days." Michael McCoskey Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011:p 8.
- "Some Errors of Postmillennialism." Michael McCoskey. Vol. III Issue II, Apr-June, 2008: p 11.
- "Spurgeon Quotes." Charles H. Spurgeon. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 7.
- "Study of Revelation 20:4-6. A", J.C. Settlemoir. Vol. II Issue II, Apr-June, 2007: p 3.
- "Times of the Gentiles. The", Rene Pache. Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 15.
- "Was Dr. John Gill a Premillennialist?" Wayne Camp. Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012. p 3.
- "Watching for Christ's Coming." C.H. Spurgeon. Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p.11.
- "What is Taught About the Reign of Christ." G.E. Jones. Vol. 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 6.
- "What is the Kingdom of Heaven?" Dan Cozart. Vol. 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 3.
- "When Daniel Saw the Kingdom." Oswald J. Smith. Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 13.
- "Will There Be a Literal Antichrist?" Bill Lee. Vol. V Issue II, Apr-June, 2010: p 3.

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J.C. Ryle on the Olivet Discourse:

Let us leave [this] passage with a thorough conviction of the truth of every jot of its predictions. Let us believe that every word of it shall prove at last to have been fully accomplished. Above all let us strive to live under an abiding sense of its truth, like good servants ready to meet their Master.

*From Expository Thoughts on The Gospels Mark 13:24-31*

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*(Camp: continued from page 6)*

the commentaries on Revelation and First Thessalonians. I am convinced that he was decidedly pre-millennial at that time, if not all his ministerial life, and that I have successfully proven this in my five postulates.

**EDITORS NOTE:** Since writing this article I have continued my studies in Revelation. I found another statement by Gill that further indicates that at the time of the writing of his commentary on Revelation he held to views that were distinctly pre-millennial. Commenting on Revelation 1:9 he said concerning the saved that they are "in the kingdom of grace now, being all of them made kings and priests unto God, and in the kingdom of Christ on earth, where they will

all reign with him a thousand years, and in the kingdom of glory, where they shall reign together to all eternity."

Gill said the saints are in the kingdom of grace now. The saved will be "in the kingdom of Christ on earth, where they will all reign with him a thousand years."

It would be hard to find statements more premillennial than these by Bro. Gill. This just further demonstrates what I have already proved in this article—at the time of writing this commentary Gill was clearly a premillennialist. ✪

*(Cazari: continued from page 8)*

crowing, or in the morning. Lest coming suddenly He shall find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch". A final word of caution is given us in Matthew 24:44, "therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh". I do not believe I have ever seen a time when people are looking less for our Lord's return than they are today. Many of God's people will shout when He appears, but others will be shocked. My friends, we will be someplace and doing something when that great day arrives. It behooves us to give sober thought to these things. His second coming should motivate us to live faithful

and godly lives, lest we have to meet Him in shame. *Think of it: we shall meet Him!*

In conclusion, we find these words in Revelation 22:16, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star". Only those who are up early and are watching see the morning star. I believe it is almost morning! Let us join the beloved John on the Isle of Patmos in saying, "He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus". ✪

*(Justice: continued from page 11)*

Christ. God is speaking to the Messiah here when he says, "...I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior? Whether you be Jew or Gentile, is Jesus Christ your Savior? If he is not repent of your sins and trust him today for salvation. ✪



2006

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E  
X

- Bonar, Horatius. "Horatius Bonar on The First Resurrection." Vol. II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 10.  
 "The Book of the Last Days." Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 9.  
 "The Interval." Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 11.  
 "The Advent." Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 3.  
 "The Purpose of God." Horatius Bonar. Vol. III Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2008: p 6.
- Blaising, Craig. "Book Review." Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 12.
- Brown, William L. "Errors of Dispensationalism." Vol. III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 8.
- Camp, Wayne. "A General Introduction to Revelation." Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 6.  
 "Postmillennialism." Vol. VI Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2011: p 3.  
 "Preterist Or Futurist?" Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June, 2009: p 6.  
 "The Kingdom of Stone." Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept, 2007: p 3.  
 "Was Dr. John Gill a Premillennialist?" Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012: p 3.
- Cozart, Dan. "The Abrahamic Covenant." Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 3.  
 "The Church and the Kingdom." Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p 3.  
 "The Second Coming of Christ." Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012: p 8.  
 "What is the Kingdom of Heaven?" Vol. I Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 3.
- Cohen, Gary G. "Preterit". Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June, 2009: p 13.
- Crisp, Ron. "The Last Days." Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 3.
- Dalling, W.E. "Is Satan Now Bound?" Vol. II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007: p 9.
- Daniel, John T. "The Book of Revelation." Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 3.
- Feinberg, Charles Lee. "The Prospect for Israel." Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 14.
- Gill, John. "Proofs of the Millennium." Vol. 1 Issue 1, July-Sept, 2006: p 4.
- Gordon, A.J. "A.J. Gordon on The First Resurrection." Vol. II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 12.
- Griffiths, C.W.H. "Spurgeon's Eschatology." Vol. III Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2008: p 3.
- Half, Charles. "The Mystery of the Jew." Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 7.
- Havner, Vance. "A Preacher Without a Bible." Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 14.
- Hillard, Dan . "Amillennialism and Revelation 20:4, 6-7", Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2009: p 9.
- Horner, Barry E. "God's Dealings With Israel-By Grace or Law?" Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept: 2008 p 12.  
 "Israel and Christian Anti-Judaism In Contrast." Vol. IV Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2009: p 9.
- Johnson, S. Lewis. "Paul and 'The Israel of God.'" Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2009: p 3.
- Jones, G.E "What is Taught About the Reign of Christ." Vol. 1 Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 6.  
 "The First Resurrection." Vol. II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 7.  
 "The Nature of the Reign." Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 12.
- Justice, Laurence A. "Christ, the Spirit of Prophecy." Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 12.  
 "Dispensationalism Wrongly Divides God's Word. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 3.  
 "Israel's Contributions to the World." Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012: p. 9.  
 "Israel's Hope." Laurence A. Justice Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 3.  
 "Should Bible Prophecy Be Interpreted Literally?" Vol. 1 Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 3.  
 "Preposterous Preterism?" Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June, 2009: p 3.  
 "The Personal Return of Jesus Christ." Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 12.
- Kiffin, William. "The Millennium—Literal or Spiritual?" Vol. III Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2008: p 11.
- King, Leon . "Ammillennialist Proof Texts for Binding of Satan", Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2009: p 12.
- Lee, Bill. "The Binding of Satan." Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 3.

2012

- “Will There Be a Literal Antichrist?” Vol. V Issue II, Apr-Jun, 2010: p 3
- Lord, David N. “The Coming & Reign of Christ.” Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 6.
- “The Coming & Reign of Christ.” Vol. VI Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2011: p 13.
- MacArthur, John. “The Removal of Satan.” Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 12.
- McCoskey, Michael. “Signs of the Last Days.” Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 8.
- “Some Errors of Postmillennialism.” Vol. III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 11.
- “The Kingdom of Heaven.” Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p 6.
- Meldau, Fred J. “The Seven Sevens of Prophetic Wonders.” Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 11
- Mercer, Arthur Jr. “Israel.” Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept, 2009: p 2
- Murray, John. “The Fullness of the Gentiles and the Salvation of Israel.” Vol. VI Issue II, Apr-June, 2011: p 14
- Newton, B.W. “Millennium: Distinctions Which Make Difficulties Disappear.” Vol. 1 Issue II, Oct-Dec., 2006: p 15.
- Pache, Rene. “The Times of the Gentiles.” Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 15.
- Park, David. The Antichrist—A Particular Person, Vol. V Issue II, Apr-Jun, 2010: p 13.
- Peters, George N.H. “Literal Grammatical Interpretation.” Vol. 1 Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 6.
- Pink, Arthur W. “Date Fixing.” Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 8.
- “Dispensationalism.” Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 8.
- “Dispensationalism and the Law of God.” Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 10.
- “The Papacy Not the Antichrist” Vol. V Issue II, Apr-Jun, 2010: p 8.
- Price, Randall. A.D. 70: “Preterism’s Prophetic Dead End.” Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June, 2009: p 10.
- Robinson, Dean. “The OT Prophecies of the Millennium.” Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 3.
- Settlemoir, J.C. “A Study of Revelation 2-:4-6.” Vol. II Issue II, Apr.-June, 2007: p 3.
- “Amillennial Errors.” Vol. III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 2.
- “Did the Church Replace Israel?” Vol. IV Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2009: p 3.
- “The Church and the Kingdom Contrasted.” Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p 8.
- “The Fullness of the Gentiles, Vol. VI Issue II, Apr-June, 2011: p 3.
- Smith, Oswald J. “When Daniel Saw the Kingdom.” Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 13.
- Smith, Royce. “An Exposition of Romans 2:28-29”, Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2009: p 14.
- “Errors of Preterism.” Vol. III Issue II, Apr.-June, 2008: p 14.
- “Is God Finished With Israel.” Vol. II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 5.
- Spurgeon, Charles. “Gleanings in Spurgeon.” Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011: p 15.
- “On the Literality of Prophecy.” Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 10.
- “Quotes from C.H. Spurgeon.” Vol. III Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2008: p 5.
- “Spurgeon Quotes.” Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 7.
- “The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews.” Vol. II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 3.
- “Watching for Christ’s Coming.” Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p 11.
- Strauss, Lehman. “The Removal of Satan.” Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 15.
- Toms, Stephen A. “Israel Means Israel.” Vol. II Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2007: p 8.
- Tregelles, S.P. “The Budding of the Fig Tree.” Vol. 1 Issue 1, July-Sept., 2006: p 5.
- “The Image (Daniel 11).” Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 6.
- “The Jewish ‘Wastepaper Basket.’” Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012. p 7.
- Walvoord, John F. “The Binding of Satan.” Vol. II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 6.
- “The Fifth Kingdom From Heaven.” Vol. III Issue I, Jan.-Mar., 2008: p 14.
- “The Promise of the Land to Israel.” Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008 p 6.

B  
Y  
  
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2006

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X

- "A General Introduction to Revelation." Wayne Camp. Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p.6.
- "A Preacher Without a Bible." Vance Havner. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 14.
- "A.D. 70: Preterism's Prophetic Dead End". Randall Price. Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June., 2009: p 10.
- "Advent. The," Horatius Bonar. Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 3.
- "First Resurrection. The", A.J. Gordon. Vol. II Issue II Apr.-June, 2007: p 12.
- "Abrahamic Covenant. The", Dan Cozart. Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 3.
- "Amillennial Errors." J.C. Settlemoir. Vol. III Issue II, Apr-June, 2008: p 2.
- "Amillennialism and Revelation 20:4, 6-7." Dan Hillard. Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2009: p 9.
- "Amillennialist Proof Texts for Binding of Satan." Leon King. Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2009: p 12.
- "An Exposition of Romans 2:28-29." Royce Smith. Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2009: p 14.
- "Antichrist—A Particular Person. The", David Park. Vol. V Issue II, Apr-June, 2010: p 13
- "Binding of Satan. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol. II Issue IV Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 6.
- "Binding of Satan. The", Bill Lee. Vol .II Issue IV, Oct.-Dec., 2007: p 3.
- "Book of Revelation. The", John T. Daniel. Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 3.
- "Book of the Last Days. The", Horatius Bonar. Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 9.
- "Book Review". Craig Blaising. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 12.
- "Budding of the Fig Tree. The", S.P. Tregelles. Vol. I Issue I, July-Sept., 2006: p 5.
- "Church and the Kingdom. The", Dan Cozart. Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p.3.
- "Church and the Kingdom Contrasted. The", Royce Smith. Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p.8.
- "Christ, the Spirit of Prophecy." Laurence A. Justice. Vol. V Issue III, July-Sept, 2010: p 12.
- "Coming & Reign of Christ. The", David N. Lord. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 6.
- "Coming & Reign of Christ. The", David N. Lord. Vol. VI Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2011: p 13.
- "Date Fixing." A.W. Pink. Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 8.
- "Did the Church Replace Israel?" J.C. Settlemoir. Vol. IV Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2009: p 3.
- "Dispensationalism." Arthur W. Pink. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 8.
- "Dispensationalism and the Law of God." Arthur W. Pink. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 10.
- "Dispensationalism Wrongly Divides God's Word." Laurence A. Justice. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 3.
- "Errors of Preterism." Royce Smith. Vol. III Issue II Apr-June, 2008: p 14.
- "Errors of Dispensationalism." William L. Brown. Vol. III Issue II Apr-June, 2008: p 8.
- "Fifth Kingdom From Heaven. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 14.
- "First Resurrection. The", G.E. Jones. Vol. II Issue II Apr-June, 2007: p 7.
- "First Resurrection. The", Horatius Bonar. Vol. II Issue II Apr-June, 2007: p 10.
- "Fullness of the Gentiles. The", J.C. Settlemoir. Vol. VI Issue II, Apr-June, 2011: p 3.
- "Fullness of the Gentiles and the Salvation of Israel. The", John Murray. Vol. VI Issue II, Apr-June, 2011: p 14.
- "Gleanings in Spurgeon." Charles H. Spurgeon. Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011:p 15.
- "God's Dealings With Israel-By Grace or Law?" Barry E. Horner. Vol III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 12.
- "Image (Daniel 11). The", S.P. Tregelles. Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 6.
- "Interval. The", Horatius Bonar. Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011:p 11.
- "Is God Finished With Israel?" Royce Smith. Vol. II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 5.
- "Is Satan Now Bound?" W.E. Dalling. Vol. II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007:p 9.
- "Israel." Arthur Mercer, Jr. Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept., 2009: p 2.

2012

- "Israel and Christian Anti-Judaism In Contrast". Barry E. Horner. Vol. IV Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2009: p 9.
- "Israel Means Israel." Stephen A. Toms. Vol. II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 8.
- "Israel's Contributions to the World." Laurence A. Justice. Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012. p 9.
- "Israel's Hope." Laurence A. Justice. Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept., 2009: p 3.
- "Jewish 'Wastepaper Basket'. The". S.P. Tregalles. Vol. VII Issue I, May, 2012. p 3.
- "Kingdom of Heaven. The", Michael McCoskey. Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p.6.
- "Kingdom of Stone. The", Wayne Camp. Vol. II Issue III July-Sept., 2007: p 3.
- "Last Days. The", Ron Crisp. Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011:p 3.
- "Literal Grammatical Interpretation." George N.H. Peters. Vol. 1 Issue 1 July-Sept., 2006: p 6.
- "Literality of Prophecy. On the", Charles Spurgeon. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 10.
- "Mystery of the Jew. The", Charles Halff. Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept., 2009: p 7.
- "Millennium: Distinctions Which Make Difficulties Disappear." B.W. Newton. Vol. 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 15.
- "Nature of the Reign. The", G.E. Jones. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 12.
- "Old Testament Prophecies of the Millennium. The," Dean Robinson. Vol. III Issue I, Jan-Mar., 2008: p 3.
- "Papacy Not the Antichrist. The", A.W. Pink. Vol. V Issue II, Apr-June, 2010: p 8.
- "Paul and 'The Israel of God.'" S. Lewis Johnson. Vol. IV Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2009: p 3.
- "Personal Return of Jesus Christ. The", Laurence A. Justice. Vol. VI Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2011: p 12.
- "Postmillennialism." Wayne Camp. Vol. VI Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2011: p 3.
- "Preterist or Futurist?" Wayne Camp. Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June., 2009: p 6.
- "Preterit." Gary G. Cohen. Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June., 2009: p 13.
- "Preposterous Preterism?" Laurence A. Justice. Vol. IV Issue II, Apr-June., 2009: p 3.
- "Promise of the Land to Israel. The", John F. Walvoord. Vol. III Issue III, July-Sept., 2008: p 6.
- "Proofs of the Millennium." John Gill. Vol. 1 Issue 1 July-Sept, 2006: p 4.
- "Prospect for Israel, The," Charles Lee Feinberg. Vol. IV Issue III, July-Sept., 2009: p 14.
- "Removal of Satan. The", John MacArthur. Vol. II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007: p 12.
- "Removal of Satan. The", Lehman Strauss. Vol. II Issue IV, Oct-Dec., 2007: p 15.
- "Restoration and Conversion of the Jews. The", Charles Spurgeon. Vol. II Issue I Jan-Mar., 2007: p 3.
- "Second Coming of Christ. The", Dan Cozart. Vol. VII Issue I, May, 2012. p 8.
- "Seven Sevens of Prophetic Wonders. The," Fred J. Meldau. July-Sept., 2009: p 11.
- "Should Bible Prophecy Be Interpreted Literally?" Laurence A. Justice. Vol. 1 Issue 1, July-Sept. 2006: p 3.
- "Signs of the Last Days." Michael McCoskey Vol. VI Issue III, July-Sept, 2011:p 8.
- "Some Errors of Postmillennialism." Michael McCoskey. Vol. III Issue II, Apr-June, 2008: p 11.
- "Spurgeon Quotes." Charles H. Spurgeon. Vol. V Issue I, Jan-Mar, 2010: p 7.
- "Study of Revelation 20:4-6. A", J.C. Settlemoir. Vol. II Issue II, Apr-June, 2007: p 3.
- "Times of the Gentiles. The", Rene Pache. Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 15.
- "Was Dr. John Gill a Premillennialist?" Wayne Camp. Vol. VII Issue I, May 2012. p 3.
- "Watching for Christ's Coming." C.H. Spurgeon. Vol. V Issue IV, Oct-Dec, 2010: p.11.
- "What is Taught About the Reign of Christ." G.E. Jones. Vol. 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 6.
- "What is the Kingdom of Heaven?" Dan Cozart. Vol. 1 Issue II Oct-Dec., 2006: p 3.
- "When Daniel Saw the Kingdom." Oswald J. Smith. Vol. II Issue III, July-Sept., 2007: p 13.
- "Will There Be a Literal Antichrist?" Bill Lee. Vol. V Issue II, Apr-June, 2010: p 3.

B  
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