

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY PART II

BOOK V

ESCHATOLOGY

NOTES COMPILED

by

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Eschatology

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EDITORIALS

THE LURE OF THE APOCALYPSE

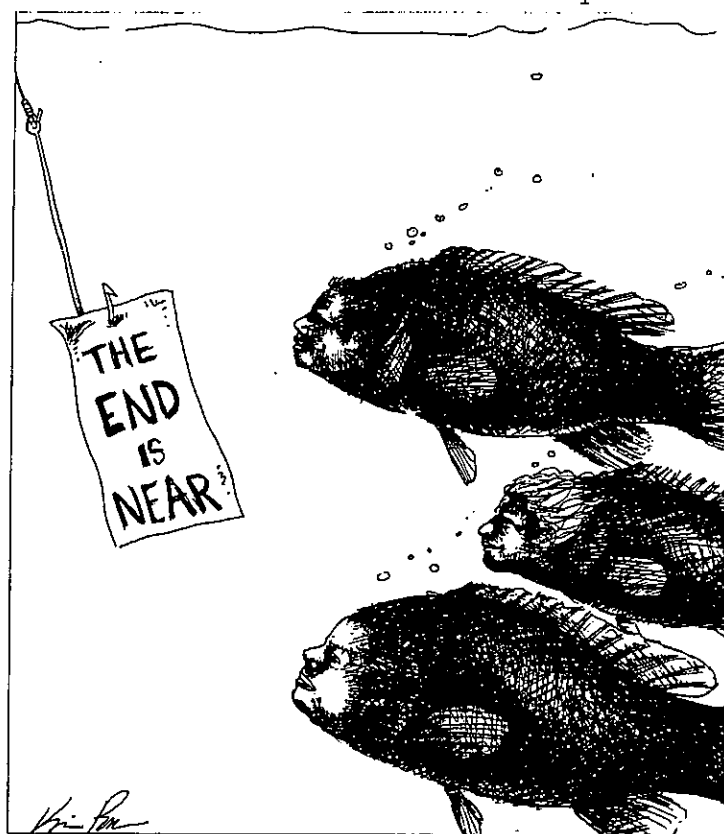
Christ's second coming is not just fodder for fanatics, but a nonnegotiable truth.

One hundred years ago, Christians anticipated this century with the unbridled optimism that echoed their slogans: "ever onward and upward," "the evangelization of the world in our generation," "the absoluteness of Christianity." A new journal launched by some broad-minded believers in 1900 was dubbed *The Christian Century*. In those days, talk about the imminent return of Jesus Christ was relegated to fringe movements and fiery fundamentalists who seemed out of sync with the spirit of the times.

Now, at the end of an era of unparalleled brutality and moral meltdown, perhaps the most un-Christian century since Jesus' time, we are awash in a sea of apocalypticism. End-times hysteria rules the airwaves and repeatedly surfaces as a distinctive feature of such bizarre and deadly tragedies as the Branch Davidian killings in Waco, the recent subway attack in Tokyo, and the even more recent carnage in Oklahoma City.

Yet evangelical Christians, beset by unfulfilled prophecies and extremist predictions, tend to shy away from any serious engagement with the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. That would be a real loss, for the "blessed hope" of Jesus' return in glory is a vital wellspring of biblical faith. To guard against this understandable reaction to end-times discussions, we need to remember three things:

First, date setters and place namers have been with us since Jesus first promised, "If I go away, I will come back." Based on special revelations they had received, second-century Montanists were sure that Jesus would come back to Pepuza, a village in the Phrygian region of Asia Minor. During the Reformation, the radical prophet Hans Hut predicted the return of Christ for Pentecost 1528 and set about gathering 144,000 elect saints to prepare for this event. Another prophet, Melchior Hoffmann, set a different date (1534) and place (Strasbourg). Both Hut and Hoffmann died in prison with their prophecies unfulfilled and their disciples disillusioned. At the turn of a new millennium, we



should not be surprised by new predictions.

Second, evangelical, Bible-believing Christians honestly differ with one another over the details of the end of time. Neither Luther nor Calvin wrote a commentary on the Book of Revelation. We should not sweep reasonable differences under the rug nor pretend that they are unimportant for a fuller understanding of the history of redemption. But neither should we promote them as a test of evangelical identity or biblical fidelity. One of the patriarchs of the Southern Baptist tradition in which I was nurtured used to tell us that when the doctor asked us to open our mouths and say "Ah" we were to reply "pre"! I am still a premillennialist, but I have learned to live in more tranquil equipoise with brothers and sisters who interpret the ten horns, the seven trumpets, and the bottomless pit in other ways. This is all the more important because prophetic understandings, even within established traditions, are in a state of flux. The resurgence of postmillennialism, once thought to be extinct, and the rise of "progressive dispensationalism," two words not usually spoken in the same breath, are evidence of the hermeneutical ferment among serious students of God's Word.

Finally, the certainty and reality of Christ's *parousia* remains what it has always been for true believers everywhere: a nonnegotiable truth of divine revelation and an urgent expectation of the people of God. Seduced by modern doctrines of progress, Christians are apt to forget that the kingdom of God is promised as something other than a mere human possibility. We are seeking that city with foundations whose architect and builder is God, not a contrived community pieced together out of

utopian illusions and fuel-oil-and-fertilizer solutions.

This eschatological itch is endemic to Christianity and has occasionally induced escapism and a retreat from responsible engagement with culture. But the greater temptation faced by Christians today is that we will become so cozy in our accommodation to the world that we lose any prophetic distance from it. Consequently, we become so "earthly minded that we are of no earthly good." For it is only one who engages the world from the perspective of God's overcoming grace and ultimate triumph in Jesus Christ who will be able to live and work with joy and pur-

pose in an era marked by death and destruction, a world that "in its present form is passing away," as Paul told the Corinthians.

In the aftermath of Oklahoma City, we serve our Savior and our neighbors best when we truly live in the light of Christ's second advent, remaining faithful here and now, working within history, but also from beyond it, toward overcoming the demons of this world. **CI**

By Timothy George, senior editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY and dean of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, in Birmingham, Alabama.

Catechism for Our Time

GENE FENDT

Who made you?

Desire made me.

Why did desire make you?

To know its power,
to serve it and never be satisfied.

What is the kingdom of desire?

Time,
and all of space.

Where is its capital?

In each heart.

Who is its king?

No one.

Is this kingdom rich or poor?

It is very rich. Having one product,
that it has in infinite supply.

What product has it?

Despair.

How is despair produced?

It is eternal, the only begotten
of desire itself. Whatever desire imports,
despair is exported; whatever desire exports,
this it imports.

Is this economy universal?

It holds only within the kingdom,
and in each capital.

Does desire have a temple?

Many in each capital,
so, an infinite and ever-growing number.

What are the names of God?

They are uncountable and various,
but his people are all one.

What is the name of his people?

Each one is called Narcissus.

In what does worship consist?

To drown oneself
and not to die.

What does God promise?

Never to answer.

Gene Fendt is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. His poems have appeared in numerous journals, including *Theology Today*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Aethlon*, and *Anglican Theological Review*.

Summarizing Eschatology Notes

Lecture 1 Historical Eschatology

- I. Early Fathers: 1. no systematic treatment
 2. emphasize a) bodily resurrection
 b) imminent return
 c) a literal earthly kingdom

* The patristic church was virtually united in its premillennialism until the time of Origen, Augustine and Eusebius

- II. Alexandrian Shift: Platonic/allegorical emphasizes in Origen, Eusebius and Augustine brought a shift from premillennialism to amillennialism (though Augustine is sometimes viewed as postmillennial)

- III. Luther and Calvin continued in Amillennialism

- IV. In the 1600's ff premillennialism was reborn (Alsted and Mede), of which the Fifth Monarchy was a radical expression

- V. The Modern period

- A) Postmillennialism reigns in Whitby, Cotton Johnathan Edwards and Charles Hodge
 B) Premillennialism is advocated by Edward Irving, Powerhouse Conferences, John N. Darby (dispensational pretribulationism) and the Bible conference movement.

Lecture 2 The Covenants

- see definition and types.
- * see summary

Lecture 3 OT Eschatology (esp. Daniel)

Lecture 4 Contemporary Eschatology

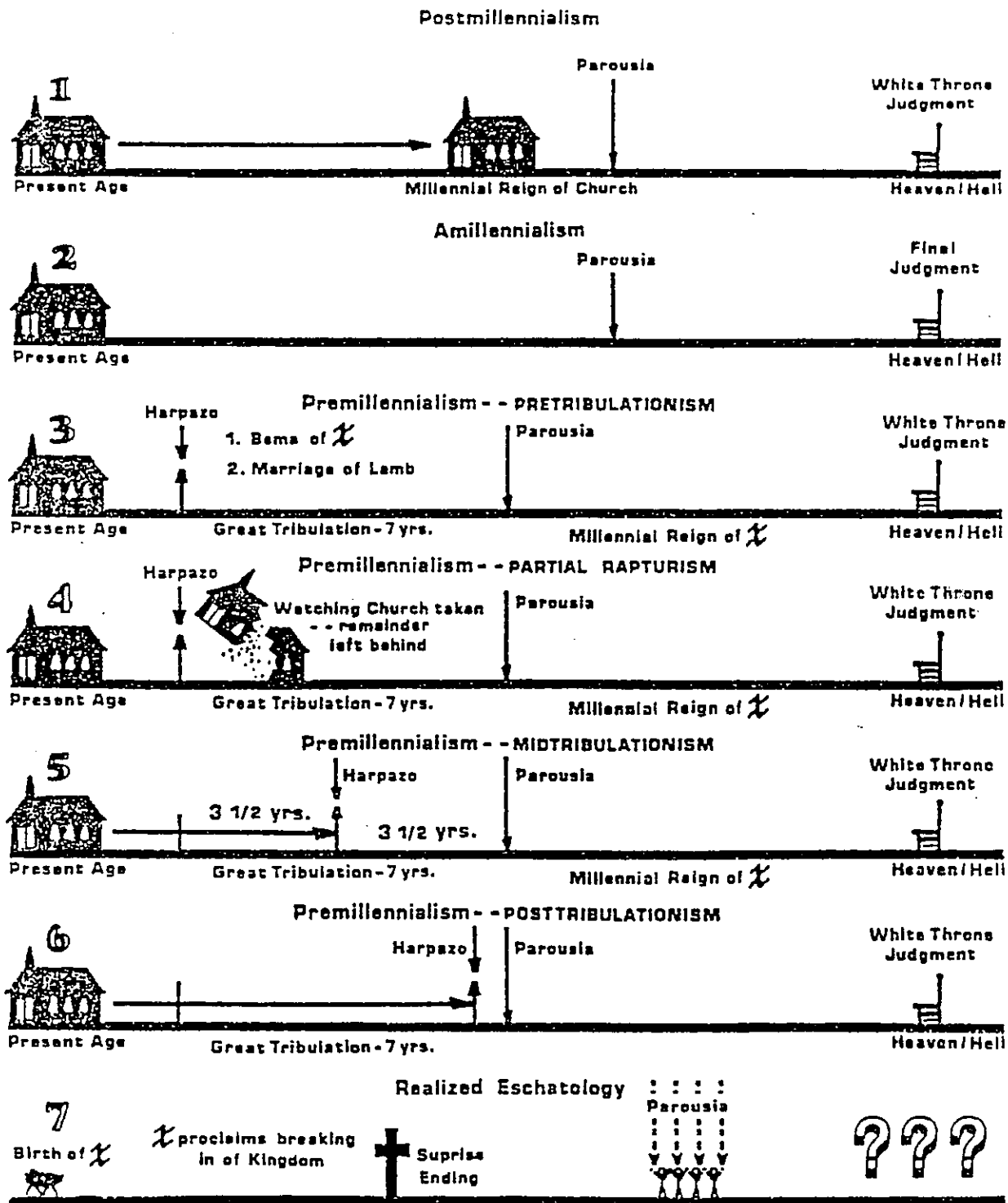
Note: classic liberal eschatology Albert Ritschl/ Johannes Weiss
 consistent eschatology Albert Schweitzer
 realized eschatology C.H. Dodd
 demythologized eschatology Rudolf Bultmann

“True faith is always honest, and does not shut its eyes to reality. We must become increasingly aware of our ever present tendency to use the mercy of a loving God, and His readiness to forgive, as an excuse for careless living.”

—Fred C. Renich, When the Chisel Hits the Rock

Diagram of Major Eschatological Systems

5



1. Allegorical interpretation - a method of interpretation which finds a sense higher than the literal sense in otherwise apparently historical statements.
2. Amillennialism - the belief that there is no millennial reign of Christ on earth.
3. Apocalupsis - unveiling, uncovering, or manifestation.
4. Apocalypse - the correct title for the book of Revelation.
5. Bema - the judgment seat or reward seat before which each Christian must appear.
6. Chilia - Greek word for one thousand (1,000).
7. Chiliasm - a better term for the school of thought usually designated millennarianism.
8. Covenant - a contract into which one enters and by which his course of action is bound.
9. Epiphaneia - revelation or appearance.
10. Eschatology - the study of last things.
11. Gehenna - place of eternal suffering which is properly translated hell in the New Testament.
12. Hades - the abode of the dead (Greek), or the grave.
13. Harpazo - to catch up or snatch away. This word is used of the translation of believers at the Lord's Coming.
14. Kingdom - may refer to (1) the reign of Christ in man's hearts, (2) the heavenly kingdom, or (3) the earthly kingdom of Christ.
15. Israel - except in rare instances, reference to the literal national group designated Israel.
16. Millennium - Latin word for one thousand (1,000) years.
17. Mystery - a known fact ascertained by direct revelation.
18. Natural interpretation - the interpretation of Scripture which takes the natural sense of the word to be the right one.
19. Parousia - presence, and hence, the coming of the Lord to be with His own.
20. Postmillennialism - the belief that Christ will return at the conclusion of the millennial age.
21. Premillennialism - the belief that Christ will return prior to the millennial age.
22. Rapture - from Latin ratio, meaning "to snatch or seize"-non-Biblical word used for the removal of Christians from the world at appearance of X.
23. Sheol - the abode of the dead (Hebrew).
24. Tribulation - seven-year period of unparalleled distress on earth.

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE HARPAZO

1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-57; Matt. 24:30-31, 24:32-44; John 14:2-3; Col. 3:4; Rev. 20:6.

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE TRIBULATION

Rev. 6, 8-11; Isaiah 2:19, 24:1, 3, 6, 24:19-21; Jer. 30:7; Daniel 12:1; Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18, 20; Matt. 24:21-22; Luke 21:25-26; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 6:15-17; Zeph. 1:14-18.

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE MILLENNIUM

1 Cor. 15:24-28; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 20:1-3; Amos 9:11-15; Joel 3:17-21; Jer. 31:31-34; Isaiah 11:1-9, 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-5.

Blessed hope or Second Coming scam?

On the eve of the third millennium of the Christian era, the church of Jesus Christ is again beset by a barrage of apocalyptic speculators and doomsday predictors. In one of the more bizarre episodes of recent years, thousands of Korean Christians sold their property and left their families to await the return of Jesus on Oct. 28.

Reportedly, several expectant mothers in this group even had abortions so as to be more easily carried away in the Rapture! Lee Jang Lim, the preacher who predicted the world would end on this date, had collected from his followers thousands of dollars in bank notes and bonds, some of which were due to mature only in 1995.

Closer to home American evangelicals seem to have an insatiable appetite for end-time best sellers, from Hal Lindsay's *Late Great Planet Earth* to Harold Camping's *1994?*, which has gone through three printings since its release on Sept. 8. Camping's analysis of the biblical record leads him to believe that the world as we know it will end in 1994. In the meantime, all profits from his book will go to the Christian broadcast network, Family Radio, which presumably will be on the air for at least another year.

What are we to make of all this? As a convinced premillennialist who takes biblical prophecy seriously, I am wary of any attempt to over-explain the details of the end of time. Church history is littered with the tombstones of disappointed sky-watchers: second-century Montanists who predicted that New Jerusalem would descend upon the Phrygian town of Pepuza; the Saxon bishop Wulfstan who interpreted the Danish invasion of England (ca. 1010) as a sure sign that the end was imminent; Thomas Muntzer who led German peasants to revolt in 1525 because he saw the angels "sharpening their sickles" for a great harvest-time battle; William Miller who died disenchanted that the Lord had returned neither on March 21, 1843, nor on his second predicted date, Oct. 22, 1844.

There is a mystery about the Second Coming which we must respect if we are to honor the very One whom we eagerly await from heaven: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard. Be alert! You do not

know when the time will come" (Mark 13:32-33).

Still, for all the distraction and hysteria wrought by the prophecy-mongers of our time, they have at least kept faith with the fundamental biblical promise of the actual visible return of Jesus Christ. A more subtle and perverse temptation is

the overly realized eschatology of much mainline Protestant theology today. A noted biblical scholar within this tradition recently explained why the blessed hope rings hollow to many

God. "The problem is that end-time talk, which permeates the New Testament, is deeply incongruous with our intellectual world. We find such talk not only embarrassing but unconvincing. The world seems much too solid and stable to be ready for an ending."

Though couched in contemporary religious lingo, the genesis of such revisionist theology is very old indeed. It goes back to the last-days scoffers and skeptics of apostolic times, the Hellenistic demythologizers who asked, "Now where is this 'coming' he promised?" To which Peter, who had witnessed the Ascension and heard the angelic proclamation of the

Parousia (Acts 1:11), replied, "The

Lord is not slow in keeping his promise.... He is patient.... but the day of the Lord will come like a thief" (II Peter 3:3-10).

Bible-believing Christians have never abandoned this hope, although the intensity with which they have held it has waxed and waned with changing circumstances. We should not be surprised if in times of social and cultural distress some of God's people are misled by extreme or presumptuous teachings concerning our Lord's return.

The corrective to such distortions is a more faithful and a more obedient searching of what God has in fact promised concerning the consummation of all things. In speaking about predestination, another controverted *locus* of Christian doctrine, John Calvin put the balance nicely. "I desire only that we should not investigate what the Lord has left hidden in secret, nor neglect what he has brought out into the open,

so that we may not be convicted of excessive curiosity on the one hand, or of excessive ingratitude on the other."

The second coming of Christ will not cease to be embarrassing to those who are so invested in the values of this present *aeon* that they have forgotten that we are also probationers of an eternal world. Yet in a society whose solidity and stability is increasingly uncertain, the church's confession that Jesus Christ will come again to judge the quick and the dead has never been more relevant. *Veni Domine Iesu!*

—Timothy George is founding dean of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.

By Timothy George



"...You do not know when the time will come"

—Mark 13:33

theologians who live on this side of Bultmann, deconstruction and processmodels of

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

I. Meaning and scope of the word eschatology.

Meaning: eschatos - last; logos - word (study of)
 "Study of last things or the future in general".
 *Denotes the consummation of God's purpose in history and His overall plan.

Scope: a) Human/individuals (death, resurrection, judgement, the after-life).
 b) World (and its end absolutely).
 (cosmic)

*Biblical eschatology is neither cyclical nor purely linear but spiral, envisioning recurring patterns in which divine judgement and redemption interact until this pattern attains its definitive or climactic manifestation.

II. The rise of apocalyptic literature. { A genre of literature presenting revelations regarding the end of the world.

- Arose in approximately the 2nd century B.C. - 1st Century A.D.
- Had some influence on early Christian thought.
- Apocalypse means "unveiling".
- Contains real or alleged revelations of heavenly secrets or of the events which will attend the end of the age (world) and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God.
- Reason for its rise: a) emergence of righteous remnant, b) Problem of evil, c) Cessation of prophecy.

*Neither Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, nor Revelation are purely apocalyptic as to time of writing (in some cases) nor in genre. They partake of both apocalyptic and prophetic characteristics.

III. The eschatology of the Apostolic Fathers (A.D. 150)

A. Two important considerations

1. You do not find any systematic treatment of any doctrine, including eschatology in the Fathers. Their work is pastoral in concern and homiletical/devotional in genre.
2. During this period, doctrinal deviations begin to appear.
 - a) Salvation by works
 - b) Baptismal regeneration

B. Individual doctrines

Some information is present to reveal their eschatological concerns and emphases.

1. Bodily resurrection

Ignatius: "He [Christ] was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise up us who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart (c. 70-155 A.D.) from whom we do not possess the true life." Epistle to the Trallians 9. "But Christ invites you to [share in] His immortality, by His passion and resurrection, inasmuch as ye are His members." Ibid., 11.

Clement of Rome: Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the Lord Jesus Christ the firstfruits by raising Him from the dead. . . . For [the Scripture] saith in a certain place, 'Thou shalt raise me up, and I shall confess unto thee;' and again, 'I laid me down, and slept; I awaked, because Thou art with me;' and again, Job says, "Thou shalt raise up this flesh of mine, which has suffered all these things." 1 Clement 24-26.

2. An imminent second coming

Clement of Rome: "Far from us be that which is written, 'Wretched are they who are of a double mind, and of a doubting heart; who say, These things we have heard even in the times of our fathers; but, behold we have grown old, and none of them has happened unto us,' Ye foolish ones! Compare yourselves to a tree: take [for instance] the vine. First of all, it sheds its leaves, then it buds, next it puts forth leaves, and then it flowers; after that comes the sour grape, and then follows the ripened fruit. Ye perceive how in a little time the fruit of a tree comes to maturity. Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, 'Speedily will he come to His temple, even the Holy One, for whom ye look.'" 1 Clement 23.

Pseudo Barnabas: "It therefore befores us, who inquire much concerning events at hand, to search diligently into those things which are able to save us. . . . The final stumbling-block (or source of danger) approaches, concerning which it is written, as Enoch says, 'For for this end the Lord has cut short the times and the days, that His Beloved may hasten; and He will come to the inheritance.'" Epistle of Barnabas 4

3. A literal earthly kingdom (pre-millennial)

Pseudo Clement: "For the Lord said, 'I come to gather together all the nations, tribes, and languages. Herein He speaketh of the day of His appearing, when He shall come and redeem us, each man according to his works. And the unbelievers shall see His glory and His might: and they shall be amazed when they see the kingdom of the world given to Jesus, saying 'Woe unto us, for Thou wast,

and we knew it not, and believed not; and we obeyed not the presbyters when they told us of our salvation." 2 Clement 17.

Pseudo Barnabas: "We, then, are they whom He has led into the good land. . . . so also we, being quickened and kept alive by the faith of the promise and by the word, shall live ruling over the earth," Epistle of Barnabas 6.

(60-130?) Papius: There will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth. Referred to by Eusebius in Church History 3.59.12.

4. Israel and the Church Usually identified as one; but

A major work for consideration on this subject is Peter Richardson, Israel in the Apostolic Church (Cambridge, 1969). Cf. Alan Patrick Boyd, "A dispensational premillennial analysis of the eschatology of the post-apostolic fathers (until the death of Justin Martyr)" (ThMthesis, DTS, 1977).

"Nowhere from the close of the New Testament canon to Justin in the church explicitly said to be Israel." Richardson, p. 16.

IV. The eschatology of the Apologists (125-225)

A. Justin Martyr

1. Justin on Israel and the Church (Rejects a distinction between them)

"As therefore, Christ is the Israel and the Jacob, even so we, who have been quarried out from the bowels of Christ, are the true Israelite race." Dialogue with Trypho 135.

Justin's premillennialism

[Trypho speaking] "Tell me, do you really admit that this place Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt, and do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful with Christ and the patriarchs, and the prophets, both the men of our nation, and other proselytes who joined them before your Christ came? or have you given way, and admitted this in order to have the appearance of worsting us in the

controversies?" [Justin responds] "I admitted to you formerly, that I and many others are of this opinion, and [believe] that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware; but on the other hand, I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise. Moreover, I pointed out to you that some who are called Christians, but are godless, impious heretics, teach doctrines that are in every way blasphemous, atheistical, and foolish. . . . But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare." [After discussing Isaiah 65, he continues] "And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgement of all men would likewise take place." Dialogue with Trypho 80-81.

-general judgement-

The consensus

1. The resurrection

- a. Emphasis on the resurrection of the flesh (I Cl. 26; Ignatius to the Trallians 9) (i.e., body)
- b. Emphasis on the resurrection of believers (I Cl. 11.1; 12.7; 26.1; 27.1; 28.1; 51.1; 57.2; 58.1; II Cl. 19)
Best source of hope!
- c. Presumption of resurrection of unbelievers (Polycarp 11, II Cl. 17-18)
Unto life separate from God.

2. The second coming

- *a. The coming is imminent (I Cl. 23; II Cl. 11, 12; Didache 10)
- b. The coming is visible (Didache 16; II Cl. 17)
- c. The coming brings judgement and a kingdom (I Cl. 34, 35; II Cl. 17; Barnabas 15)

3. The Kingdom

- a. It comes with the second coming and resurrection (I Cl. 50; II Cl. 12; Barnabas 21)
- b. It brings ~~rest~~ for believers (II Cl. 6), worldwide rule by Christ (II Cl. 17) and a time of holiness in which Christians rule the earth (II Cl. 6).
(See also Didache 9; Ignatius to the Ephesians 16; to the Magnesians, 5) Thus Premillennial!!!

4. The church and Israel

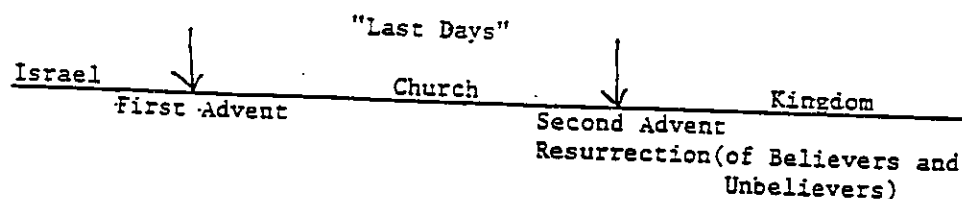
- a. Some believe the fathers identify the church and Israel. (I Cl. 29, 30; II Cl. 2, 3; Barnabas 2-7, 13-14; Didache 9, 14)
- b. Others dispute this: P. Richardson, Israel in the Apostolic Church, chapter 2. [He argues that the identification was first made by Justin Martyr, about 160 A.D., in the apology to Trypho.]

5. The "last days"

- a. Some emphasize this began with the incarnation (II Cl. 14; Ignatius to the Mag., 6; Barnabas, 2; Ignatius to the Eph. 11).
- b. Others nevertheless see special events in the future (Did. 16)
Now and not yet/Present and yet future

Conclusion

1. Their sketch of the future



2. Their lack of detailed system

Florovsky. "Eschatology in the Patristic Age," Studia Patristica (II. 250) writes: "The Fathers never attempted a systematic exposition * of eschatology, in a narrow and technical sense. But they were fully aware of that inner logic which had to come from the belief in Christ the Redeemer so the hope for the age to come: the end of the world, the final consummation, the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting." Lampe (Eschatology, pp. 17-18) says: "Consistency is not one of the characteristics of the Fathers." Certain themes do clearly emerge in the Fathers. Kelley writes (p. 462): "Four chief moments dominate the eschatological expectation of early Christian theology--the return of Christ, known as the Parousia, the resurrection, the judgment, and the catastrophic ending of the present world-order. In the primitive period they were held together in a naive unreflective fashion, with little or no attempt to work out their implications or solve the problems they raise."

John Hannah, class notes.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE EARLY CHURCH
(continued)

IV. The eschatology of the Apologists (continued)

B. Ireneaus (d. 202)

1. Ireneaus on Israel and the Church
 - Human history is to be divided into 7 eras of 1000 yrs. each (saw himself in the 6th)
 - He accepts Justin's equation that the Church is the New Israel.
 - He refutes Gnosticism.
2. Ireneaus' premillennialism

a. A future bodily resurrection will occur

"For as the Lord 'went away in the midst of the shadow of death,' where the souls of the dead were, yet afterwards arose in the body, and after the resurrection was taken up [into heaven], it is manifest that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event; then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God." AH 5.31.2

b. For the purpose of inheriting the earth

"Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham. Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.'" AH 5.32.2

c. This is the promised kingdom

"For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one. For it is in reference to them that the prophet says: 'And those that are left shall multiply upon the earth.' And Jeremiah the prophet has pointed out, that as many believers as God has prepared for this purpose, to multiply those left

post trib.?

upon earth, should both be under the rule of the saints to minister to this Jerusalem, and that [His] kingdom shall be in it. . . . AH 5.35.1

"But in the times of the kingdom, the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above. . . . AH 5.35.2

- d. After the times of the kingdom, the New Jerusalem will be transferred to the new earth.

"And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth. For after the times of the kingdom, he says, 'I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them.' And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgement, mentioning 'the dead, great and small'. . . . When these things, therefore, pass away, John, the Lord's disciple, says that the new Jerusalem above shall [then] descend, as a bride adorned for her husband; and that this is the tabernacle of God, in which God will dwell with men. Of this Jerusalem the former one is an image -- that Jerusalem of the former earth in which the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation. And of this tabernacle Moses received the pattern in the mount. . . ." AH 5.35.2

- e. These things cannot be allegorized (against Gnostics)

". . . and nothing is capable of being allegorized, but all things are steadfast, and true, and substantial, having been made by God for righteous men's enjoyment. For as it is God truly who raises up men, so also does man truly rise from the dead, and not allegorically, as I have shown repeatedly. And as he rises actually, so also shall he be actually disciplined beforehand for incorruption, and shall go forwards and flourish in the times of the kingdom, in order that he may be capable of receiving the glory of the Father. Then, when all things are made new, he shall truly dwell in the city of God. For it is said, 'He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And the Lord says, Write all this; for these words are faithful and true. And He said to me, They are done.' And this is the truth of the matter." AH 5.35.2

- f. The overall theological integration of Ireneaus' views.

"John, therefore, did distinctly foresee the first 'resurrection of the just.' and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth; and what the prophets have prophesied concerning it harmonize [with his vision]. For the Lord also taught these things, when He promised that He would have the mixed cup new with His disciples in the kingdom. The apostle, too, has confessed that the creation

shall be free from the bondage of corruption, [so as to pass] into the liberty of the sons of God. And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned man, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers, who brought it (the creature) forth [from bondage] at the resurrection of the just, and fulfils the promises for the kingdom of His Son; subsequently bestowing in a paternal manner those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has [thought concerning them] arisen within the heart of man. For there is the one Son, who accomplished His Father's will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are wrought, 'which the angels desire to look into;' and they are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which His handiwork, confirmed and incorporated with His Son, is brought to perfection; that His offspring, the First-begotten Word, should descend to the creature (facturam), that is, to what has been moulded (plasma), and that it should be contained by Him; and, on the other hand, the creature should contain the Word, and ascend to Him, passing beyond the angels, and be made after the image and likeness of God." AH 5.36.3

- C. Tertullian - Spiritualizes somewhat, but holds to same 7-fold millennial theory.
(Also Premillennial)

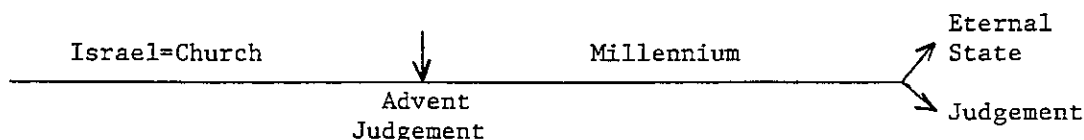
1. Marcion's amillennial solution to the problem of Jewish expectations.
He objects to Tertullians premillennialism.

"I hope for the kingdom of God, with an eternal heavenly inheritance: whereas your Christ promises the Jews their former estate, after the restitution of their country, and, when life has run its course, refreshment with those beneath the earth, in Abraham's bosom. Such a very good God, if whencalmed down he gives back what he took away when angry: your God, who both smites and heals, who creates evil and makes peace: a God whose mercy reaches even down to hell."
AM 3.24

2. Tertullian's premillennial solution to this problem.

"As for the restoration of Judaea, which the Jews, misguided by the names of towns and territories, hope for exactly as described, it would be tedious to explain how the allegorical interpretation of it is spiritually applicable to Christ and the Church and to the

possession and enjoyment of it. I have discussed this in another work, which I entitle Of the Hope of the Faithful. At present too it would be superfluous, not least because we are not discussing as earthly but a heavenly promise. For we do profess that even on earth a kingdom is promised us: but this is before we come to heaven, and in a different polity -- in fact after the resurrection, for a thousand years, in that city of God's building, Jerusalem brought down from heaven, which the apostle declares is our mother on high: and when he affirms that our politeuma, our citizenship, is in heaven, he is evidently locating it in some heavenly city. This is the city Ezekiel knows, and the apostle John has seen. . . ." AM 3.24



D. Summary

There is a premillennial scheme which is prominent in the early church! By the end of the 3rd century, Chiliasm held a strong (yet not unanimous) position in the church.

The eschatology of the Theologians

A. Origen (The Alexandrian shift!)

Movement towards
a non-mill/amill position

1. The basis of Origen's amillennialism

"Now some men, who reject the labour of thinking and seek after the outward and literal meaning of the law, or rather give way to their own desires and lusts, disciples of the mere letter, consider that the promises of the future are to be looked for in the form of pleasure and bodily luxury. . . . All this they try to prove on prophetic authority from those passages of Scripture which describe the promises made to Jerusalem. . . . and they quote from the Scriptures many other illustrations, the force of which they do not perceive must be figurative and spiritual." De Prin 2.11.2

- a) Allegorizing/spiritualizing hermeneutic
- b) Platonic and thus negative on the body and earthly/material
- c) He reacts against a prominent and well-defined view: premillennialism

2. Origen's amillennialism

- No place for a future millennial reign of Christ on earth.
- No millennium other than the one which exists now (Christ reigning in heaven over hearts of men).

- B. Eusebius (4th Century) (c.265 - c. 339)
- Major proponent of amillennialism
 - Saw the world being Christianized
 - Church had moved from the persecuted to power

C. Augustine (354-430) (5th Century)

1. The City of God

- Written as a polemic against pagan charges who were criticizing Christianity for the pillage of Rome in 410.
- Seeks to express a Christian view of world history
- Says there exists two contemporaneous, yet incompatible, societies:
 - 1) The City of God and
 - 2) The City of Man

2. His rejection of chiliasm.

"Those who, on the strength of (this passage) have suspected that the first resurrection is future and bodily, have been moved, among other things, specially by the number of a thousand years, as if it were a fit thing that the saints should thus enjoy a kind of Sabbath-rest during that period, a holy leisure after the labors of the the sixthousand years since man was created, and was on account of his great sin dismissed from the blessedness of paradise into the woes of this mortal life, so that thus, as it is written, 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,' there should follow on the completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day Sabbath in the succeeding thousand years; and that it is for this purpose the saints rise, viz., to celebrate this Sabbath. And this opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God: for I myself, too, once held this opinion. But as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them are called by the spiritual Chiliasts, which we may literally reproduce by the name Millenarians." CG 20.7

*Platonism influential in his rejection of premillennialism

*Possible abuses in some lead to his rejection of premillennialism

3. Augustine's amillennialism [his interpretation of the events of Rev. 20]

a. The two resurrections

"[There are] two resurrections,--the one the first and spiritual resurrection, which has place in this life, and preserves us from
i.e., regeneration

coming into the second death: the other the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the world, and which is of the body, not of the soul, and which by the last judgment shall dismiss some into the second death, others into that life which has no death." City of God 20.6

b. The 1000 years

"Now the thousand years may be understood in two ways, so far as occurs to me: either because these things happen in the sixth thousand of years or sixth millennium (the latter part of which is now passing), as if during the sixth day, which is to be followed by a Sabbath which has no evening, the endless rest of the saints, so that, speaking of a part under the name of the whole, he calls the last part of the millennium--the part, that is, which had yet to expire before the end of the world--a thousand years; or he used the thousand years as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fullness of time. For a thousand is the cube of ten." CG 20.7

c. The binding and loosing of Satan

"But the binding of the devil is his being prevented from the exercise of his whole power to seduce men, either by violently forcing or fraudulently deceiving them into taking part with him. If he were during so long a period permitted to assail the weakness of men, very many persons, such as God would not wish to expose to such temptation, would have their faith overthrown, or would be prevented from believing; and that this might not happen, he is bound. . . . For the Almighty does not absolutely seclude the saints from his temptation, but shelters only their inner man, where faith resides, that by outward temptation they may grow in grace. And He binds him that he may not, in the free and eager exercise of his malice, hinder or destroy the faith of those countless weak persons, already believing or yet to believe, from whom the Church must be increased and completed. . . . Now the devil was thus bound not only when the Church began to be more and more widely extended among the nations beyond Judea, but is now and shall be bound till the end of the world, when he is to be loosed. Because even now men are, and doubtless to the end of the world shall be, converted to the faith from the unbelief in which he held them. And this strong one is bound in each instance in which he is spoiled of one of his goods. . . ."

But when the short time comes he shall be loosed. For he shall rage with the whole force of himself and his angels for three years and six months; and those with whom he makes war shall have power to withstand all his violence and stratagems. . . . But it is a question whether, during these three years and six months when he shall be loose, and raging with all his force, any one

Satan is bound at the beginning of the church era (kingdom)

who has not previously believed shall attach himself to the faith. For how in that case would the words hold good, 'Who entereth into the house of a strong one to spoil his goods, unless first he shall have bound the strong one?' Consequently this verse seems to compel us to believe that during that time, short as it is, no one will be added to the Christian community, but that the devil will make war with those who have previously become Christians, and that, though some of these may be conquered and desert to the devil, these do not belong to the predestinated number of the sons of God." CG 20.8

d. The reign of the saints with Christ in the millennium.

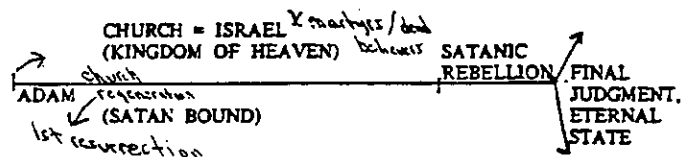
"But while the devil is bound, the saints reign with Christ during the same thousand years, understood in the same way, that is, of the time of His first coming. . . . Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter. . . ."

Church reigning
on earth

"For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the Church in those days, in the words, 'And I saw seats and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given.' It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment. but to the seats of the rulers and to the rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed. And no better interpretation of judgment being given can be produced than that which we have in the words, 'What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'. . . . 'And the souls,' says John, 'of those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God,' -- understanding what he afterwards says, 'reigned with Christ a thousand years,' -- that is, the souls of the martyrs not yet restored to their bodies. For the souls of the pious dead are not separated from the Church, which even now is the kingdom of Christ; otherwise there would be no remembrance made of them at the altar of God in the partaking of the body of Christ. . . . For why are these things practised, if not because the faithful, even though dead, are His members? Therefore, while these thousand years run on, their souls reign with Him, though not as yet in conjunction with their bodies. . . . The Church, then, begins its reign with Christ now in the living and in the dead. For, as the apostle says, 'Christ died that He might be Lord both of the living and of the dead.' But he mentioned the souls of the martyrs only, because they who have contended even to death for the truth, themselves principally reign after death; but, taking the part for the whole, we understand the words of all others who belong to the Church, which is the kingdom of Christ." CG 20.9

Martyrs reigning
in heaven

"The rest of them,' he says, 'did not live.' For now is the hour when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; and the rest of them shall not live. The words added, 'until the thousand years are finished,' mean that they did not live in the time in which they ought to have lived by passing from death to life. And therefore, when the day of the bodily resurrection arrives, they shall come out of their graves, not to life, but to judgment, namely, to damnation, which is called the second death. For whosoever has not lived until the thousand years be finished, i.e. during this whole time in which the first resurrection is going on, -- whosoever has not heard the voice of the Son of God, and passed from death to life, -- that man shall certainly in the second resurrection, the resurrection of the flesh, pass with his flesh into the second death." CG 20.9



e. The new heavens and new earth

"For as soon as those who are not written in the book of life have been judged and cast into eternal fire, -- the nature of which fire, or its position in the world or universe, I suppose is known to no man, unless perhaps the divine Spirit reveal it to some one, -- then shall the figure of this world pass away in a conflagration of universal fire, as once before the world was flooded with a deluge of universal water. And by this universal conflagration the qualities of the corruptible elements which suited our corruptible bodies shall utterly perish, and our substance shall receive such qualities as shall, by a wonderful transmutation, harmonize with our immortal bodies, so that, as the world itself is renewed to some better thing, it is fitly accommodated to men, themselves renewed in their flesh to some better thing." CG 20.16

D. Summary

The purpose of this lesson has been to trace the development of the rubrics of eschatology from the Fathers through Augustine. Prior to the Alexandrian theologians, principally Origen, a stress on a literal hermeneutic caused the Apologists to be both premillennial and Chiliastic. The Fathers, although vague, felt that they were in the "last days" expecting the immediate second advent of Christ to bring final judgment and the eternal kingdom. The Apologists prior to Origen, like Irenaeus, Tertullian and Justin, were clearly Chiliastic. With Origen and the allegorical method a millennial future kingdom was spiritualized to mean the present church age from Adam (A-Millennialism). Augustine popularized the same eschatological perspective through The City of God which became the undisputed eschatology until the Reformation era.

The Doctrine of "Last Things"

Part II: The Reformation Church

I. Introduction

In the Ancient Church prior to Origen (185 - 254) the church treated prophetic subjects with a literal hermeneutic and set forth a premillennialism (though not as taught by modern premillennialists); after and in Origen the almost universal trend was to allegorize prophetic passages and in Augustine's (354-430) *City of City* a systematic amillennialism emerges. Augustine's views dominated the entire medieval period. Sheldon writes (I. 405): "Scarcely any place was given to chiliasm proper in medieval thought." There was, indeed, in the tenth century, a wide-spread reference to a thousand years reign of Christ. But the thousand years were regarded as dating from the beginning of the Christian era. The belief entertained, therefore, was quite unlike the chiliastic theory of a visible reign of Christ upon the earth; it was simply a popular conviction that the year 1000 would witness the end of the world (expect more of the same as the year 2000 approaches). In general the medieval mind seems to have imitated Augustine in looking to the past, rather than to the future, for the beginning of the millennial reign." In essence the major reformers perpetuated Augustine's construct.

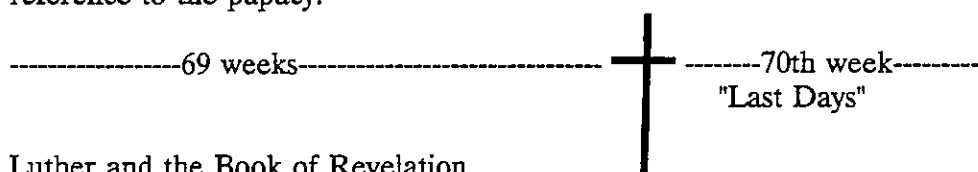
II. The Doctrine of "Last Things" in Martin Luther (1483-1546)

A discussion of Luther's eschatology must be prefaced with some general comments. First, in terms of futuristic events, Luther focused on the Great Tribulation and the bodily return of Christ. He believed that he was in the midst of the first one and hoped for the second. Second, Luther did not attempt to develop a synthesis of his eschatology views; his stress was soteriological. Third, Luther interpreted Scripture with an immediatist hermeneutic to apologetical and polemical value.

A. Luther and the Book of Daniel

Luther's identification of the "Little Horn" (Dan. 7:8) was not always consistent. At first he favored identification with the Papacy (1521), but he later distinctly expounded the Little Horn as the Turks (1538). Luther seems to have interpreted the seventy weeks of Daniel nine on a day-year principle or as equalling 490 years. For Luther the 69th week ended with the death of Christ which instituted the final week wherein the Gospel was preached with power.

The "willful king" of Daniel 11:36 is unmistakably rendered as a prophetic reference to the papacy.



B. Luther and the Book of Revelation

Luther translated the Apocalypse prior to translating Daniel, yet Luther found the book to be confusing because of the symbolism. In fact, Luther questioned the authenticity of the book and mentioned his doubts freely in his first introduction to the book. However, in 1545 he wrote a synopsis of the book with a new preface. A summary of Luther's thoughts on key chapters is as follows:

Revelation 13 - 17

- 13 In chapter 13, the papacy receives its world power to rule both the state and the church. The two beasts of the same chapter represent the power of imperial Rome and the papacy.
- 14 Babylon in chapter 14 can only be associated with Rome. Herein is the decline of spiritual Babylon prophesied.
- 17 The imperial papacy and the papal imperium are again pictured from origin to end. A trial scene is created as the Papacy is on trial before everyone to reveal their evil deeds and face condemnation.

The key to understanding Luther on Revelation is twofold. First, he symbolized Revelation to fit into his century. Luther felt that was perhaps the proper way to understand the book. Secondly, he admitted that he could not understand the book in parts and that one must wait until the prophecy is fulfilled to really understand it. Revelation was a vague book for him and he handled it as best he could.

C. Luther and the Meaning of History.

Luther considered himself to be living in the final years before the Advent. II Thess. supplied the clues to identify the Pope as Antichrist, and the Book of Revelation offered a preview of history including his own time. Rather than deny the Great Tribulation, he believed that he was in the midst of it while battling with Rome. The Reformer felt Antichrist's kingdom (Papal Rule) was characterized under the persecuting beast of Revelation 13.

The next event in the Reformer's eschatological mind was the return of Christ at the last judgment. For Luther, the hope of the Advent of Christ was a very imminent reality.

III. The Doctrine of "Last Things" in John Calvin (1509 - 1564)

In essence John Calvin was eschatologically a-millennial as is the entire Reformed Tradition. It is essential that one understand that :

ISRAEL = CHURCH

A. Calvin's Concept of Eschatology

For Calvin the culmination of redemption is the resurrection at the second advent of Christ. At the advent of Christ, the day of resurrection, Christ will separate the sheep from the goats, assigning each to their eternal destiny.

B. Calvin's Criticism of Millennialism

Calvin classifies Chiliasm under such titles as "fiction," "error," "insult," and "dream." He attacks this "intolerable blasphemy" because he understands the Chiliasts teaching that the joys of heaven for the saint or the torments of hell for the wicked are limited to only one thousand years! Hence he attacks, it would appear, a straw man.

IV. The Doctrine of "Last Things" and the Rebirth of Millennialism

This rebirth came about after some thirteen centuries, since the time of Origen and Augustine.

A. The Background for the Rebirth of Millennialism

1. The birth of Hebrew studies in Protestant universities was pivotal beginning at Cambridge in 1549.
2. The optimistic eschatology of Reformationist Triumphalism resulted in a vague developing postmillennialism.
3. The rise of eschatological revisionists and biblical commentators. Thomas Brightman (1562-1607), a Calvinist presbyterian in England, produced the first major revision of Origen-Augustinian eschatology, in his *A Revelation of Revelation*. Although his interpretation borders at points on the fantastic (post-millennialism) he does

postulate a literal earthly reign. First, he dropped the equation of the millennium with the whole age in which the Gospel is preached and adopted instead the scheme of two millennia, the first of which corresponds with the notion of the one millennium found in many sixteenth century writers. Secondly, unlike Augustine, but in accordance with current thinking, he has taken a historical view of the contents of the Apocalypse making them portray the whole history of the Church from the time of the Apostles until the Second Coming of Christ, and having special reference to God's dealings with Rome, the Turks, and Roman Catholicism. Thirdly, following a growing conviction in Reformed circles, he held an optimistic view of the last period of world history with Jerusalem the center of a restored, converted Jewish nation and of a world 'filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.' Augustine felt that the age would end with a short period of tribulation for the Church, but Brightman placed this tribulation at the time of the destruction of the Papacy and the Turks and thus before the latter-day glory of the second millennium."

Brightman's influence became immediately apparent in Henry Finch's *The Calling of The Jews* (1621) and the writings of America's John Cotton (1584 - 1652) and later Jonathan Edwards (1703 - 1758).

B. The Rebirth of Millennialism

In the 1620's not a few English Puritans were moving both by the logic of their biblical exegesis and the signs of the times in the direction of Chiliasm. Yet they hesitated to take the final step and to advocate the ancient doctrine of the future millennium since they were conscious that it had often been branded as heretical by reformers. But when Chiliasm received support from a leading German Calvinist divine, Johann Heinrich Alsted, they began to forget their inhibitions.

1. Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588 - 1638) was the first major Calvinist scholar to advance a premillennial eschatology. Clouse writes of his views (pp. 49-50):

"Alsted considered his method of Bible study to be applicable to every chapter and every verse of Scripture. When applied to Revelation 20, one must notice first that the author of the Book of Revelation is Jesus Christ working through the Apostle John and the subject is the Church. The Church to Alsted consisted of all people who have trusted in the true God. It was limited to Abraham's seed throughout the Old

Testament and again branched out to the Gentiles in the New Testament.

There were four periods of Church history in the administration of the New Covenant. The first was from the time of John the Baptist to the Jerusalem Council (A.D. 50); the second lasted from the year 51 to the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ. There are four divisions within this second period: one under heathen Rome which lasted until the time of Constantine the Great (51-323); another from Constantine the Great until Phocas (323-606); a third under the Popes of Rome (606 -1517); and the final period under the papacy after the time of the Reformation (1517 - 1694).

The third period of Church history was to be the thousand years when the martyrs for Christ will be resurrected and will reign on earth. The Church would increase greatly through the conversion of the Gentiles and the Jews during this time. There was to be no persecution during this period and this happy condition would be accompanied by a reformation in life and in doctrine. The fourth period of Church history would last from the end of the thousand years until the Last Judgment and would be a time of misery for the Church because of the war of God and Magog which will only end by divine intervention (Rev. 20: 7-10). After this judgment those who are members of the Church will share Christ's company and happiness in heaven forever."

The reasons for a shift from the earlier Reformationist optimism of postmillennialism are important to grasp - they are social/environmental! Clouse writes (p.49): "As the Thirty Years' War was devastating his land (1618 - 1648), Alsted felt that he was witnessing the horrors of the end of the age.... Indeed, the horrors of the war seemed to hold the key for the shift of Alsted's thought from that of an Augustinian eschatology to a strong premillenarian position.

"It must have seemed to those who left and to those who were able to remain behind that there was little hope of England and Europe becoming the kingdoms of the Lord Jesus Christ and experiencing the full blessings of God's grace unless God Himself did something dramatic to root out the influence of Antichrist. Perhaps the personal appearance of Christ to establish His kingdom was the only answer."

2. Joseph Mede (1586 - 1638) was the first English Puritan millenarian who strongly defended his views in his 1627 book, The Key of Revelation. Indeed, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to claim that Mede was the father of the premillennialism (which has still many disciples) in the English-speaking churches. For the seventeenth century we may mention the names of John Milton, Samuel Hartlib, Jeremiah Burroughes, Nathaniel Holmes, Henry More, William Sherwin, Issac Newton, and virtually every Independent minister in England and Wales. Not a few Presbyterians also followed Mede's exegesis of Revelation 20. As an example of a Congregational divine who followed Mede's general viewpoint we may note Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)

C. A Radical Expression of Millennialism - The Fifth Monarchy

1. A radical exception to the reserve of Mede is the now-infamous Fifth Monarchy Men that emerged after the execution of Charles I in 1649 and flourished prior the Restoration. The movement derived its name from Daniel Seven and the four empires-the last to be destroyed by the reign of Christ and the advance of the Fifth and last monarchy. It was the fusion of millennial theology and political extremism (the millennium was seen in political and social terms; not spiritual, ecclesiastical terms!).
2. The Protectorate of Cromwell and the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660 sounded the decline and later the deathknell of these radical politico-millenarians.

V. Conclusion

Both Luther and Calvin continued the amillennial Origen-Augustinian tradition, advocating the allegorization of prophecy with a present reign of Christ in the hearts of the saints (and/or in heaven). The positive triumph of Protestantism coupled with a renewal of attention to semitic studies lead to a renewed stress on a literal eschatology resulting in the rebirth of millenarianism: First of an immediatist postmillennialism then through Alsted and Mede in premillennialism. Chiliasm was returned to orthodoxy!

Notes summarized and edited from those of Dr. John Hannah, Dallas Seminary.

The Doctrine of "Last Things"
Part III: The Modern Church

I. The Rise and Development of Postmillennialism

A. Postmillennialism and Daniel Whitby

1. Daniel Whitby (1638-1726), the popularizer of the Postmillennial theory. Not only was he a popular preacher and writer (39 volumes), he was also primarily a controversialist. His most noted work: Paraphrase and Commentary on the N.T. (2 vols. 1703).
2. Whitby and Postmillennialism. In the latter part of the Paraphrase he wrote a twenty-six page essay on a "new hypothesis" that "I shall now offer it to the consideration of the learned."
3. Whitby begins by spiritualizing the resurrection prior to the millennium, making it a doctrine of individual resurrections upon death. He writes (p. 687) the title of the work: "A Treatise of the True Millennium: showing that it is not a reign of persons raised from the dead, but of the church flourishing gloriously for a thousand years after the conversion of the Jews, and the flowing-in of all nations to them thus converted to the Christian Faith."
4. Whitby argues that the fall of Anti Christ precedes the millennium as does the binding of Satan.
5. Of the earthly millennium he writes in glowing terms (p. 700):
 - * Of the conversion of the Jews.
 - * It shall be a time of universal peace and freedom.
 - * It shall be a kingdom of righteousness.
 - * It is to resemble the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost.
6. After this literal reign of saints in peace, Christ returns (pp. 707-8): "Since Christ is to continue in heaven till the completion, or consummation of all things, spoken by the holy prophets, if the millennium were any of them, Christ must continue in heaven till the consummation of that also, and therefore is not to come down from heaven to reign on earth till the millennium be ended; nor can that be contemporary with our Lord's second coming, which is from heaven.

B. Postmillennialism and Conservative Theology in America

The impact of Whitby's eschatological scheme was profound both in England and America. The point to be made is that Whitby's teachings

were strongly imbibed by the Puritans, who through Jonathan Edwards of Northampton passed it on to such Presbyterian stalwarts as Charles Hodge.

1. John Cotten (1585-1652), becomes the giant among early colonial clergy. He argued a Whitby eschatology.
 - a. The resurrection (Rev. 20) is not literal but rather the appearance of men who possess the same spirit as the martyred saints by the Antichrist. The resurrection is a quickening, an awakening of the church from apostacy and Israel of blindness.
 - b. Christ does reign for the subsequent one thousand years, but though the instrumentality of the saints and the church. He notes for example that during the millennium wickedness will be held in check, "chiefly by Church censures, and partly also by punishment from civil magistrates as need shall be."
2. Johnathan Edwards (1703-1758) argues strongly for a postmillennial eschatology. He understood that the millennial kingdom would be preceded by a very dark period of religious interest. It is quite obvious that to Edwards the next scheduled event was the fall of Antichrist-this he felt would be accomplished by the preaching of the gospel.
 - a. He argues for an imminent kingdom by identifying the drying of the Euphrates as a judgment on the papal Antichrist (loss of revenues); the sixth vial (broke to history within the last twenty years) as the ruin of French and Spanish commerce by England and the cutting off of revenue to the pope from Spain and Portugal.
 - b. Thus a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit will bring about a renewal of religion on a universal level. Christinaity's victory thereby will be universal in extent. Heresy will be abolished, the papcy overthrown, Islam destroyed and Jewish and pagan infidelity vanished-this is the just resurrection. Above all else the millennium is chiefly the time of the church's prosperity-the principal fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.
 - c. The end of the "glorious reign of righteousness" will result in a general apostasy (Gog and Magog). Christ will return, put down the rebellion, judgment follows and the world destroyed. Christ delivers up the kingdom to the Father.

3. Princeton and Charles Hodge. Postmillennial eschatology became dominate through Edwards in the New England divines- Congregationalists-(Bellamy, Hopkins, Taylor), among baptists such as A.H. Strong (p. 1014 of Systematics). Charles Hodge, since he has given us a Systematic Theology, is perhaps a good example of Presbyterian Postmillennial Eschatology.

For Hodge, the events which will precede the 2nd coming are:

1. The universal diffusion of the Gospel; the ingathering of the elect,
2. The conversion of the Jews, which is to be national, and
3. The coming of the Antichrist.

Thirdly, the the events which are to attend the second advent are:

1. The resurrection of the dead, of the just and of the unjust.
2. The general judgment.
3. The end of the world. And,
4. The consummation of Christ's kingdom."

*N.B.-It must also be noted that the German Liberals of the nineteenth century (the Ritschlians particularly) were postmillennial, but of a different ilk! This, in fact, helps explain the decline of this eschatological opinion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries!

II. The Rise and Development of Premillennialism

Events of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth did not make postmillennialism appear so consistent with world history. A pessimism began to develop that subverted prevalent optimism and resulted in a renewal of prophetic interested excitement.

A. The Development of Premillennialism in Britain

1. Edward Irving (1792-1834), a Scottish preacher and disciple of Thomas Chalmers, he was deeply influenced by the emerging English Prophetic movement, and he pushed the emerging Bible prophetic conferences (the Albany Conferences, 1826-28). Irving's notoriety as a result of "tongues" in his London church was detrimental to millenarianism and fatal to his person.
2. Interest in prophecy in the 1820's grew with the founding in

1826 of the Society for the Investigation of Prophecy, followed by the Albany Park Conferences (Horatius Bonar came to premillennial convictions after hearing Irving there in 1828). The eschatological scheme set forth at Albany is:

- "1. This 'dispensation' or age will not end 'insensibly' but cataclysmically in judgment and destruction of the church in the same manner in which the Jewish dispensation ended.
2. The Jews will be restored to Palestine during the time of judgment.
3. The judgment to come will fall principally upon Christendom.
4. When the judgment is past, the millennium will begin.
5. The second advent of Christ will occur before the millennium.
6. The 1260 years of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 ought to be measured from the reign of Justinian (c. 525) to the French Revolution (c. 1790). The vials of wrath (Revelation 16) are now being poured out and the second advent is imminent."

The Powercourt Conferences continued prophetic investigations into the 1830's where the emerging Brethren Movement became heavily involved.

3. John Nelson Darby, an early leader among the Brethren Movement (1831), participated at the Powerscourt Prophetic Conferences in the 30's and solidified his opinions on eschatology by 1840. Darby adopted not only premillennialism but put forth the concept of a "secret rapture."

N.B.-At this point the secularist Sandeen writes: "Darby never indicated any source for his ideas other than the Bible- indeed, he consistently affirmed that his only theological task was explicating the text of Scripture. The secret rapture was a distinctive development, however, and considerable interest has been aroused about the source of the doctrine. As late as 1843 or possibly even 1845, Darby was expressing doubts about the secret rapture. In later years he seemed to have felt that he was convinced about the doctrine as early as 1827. Darby's opponents claimed that the doctrine originated in one of the outburst of tongues in Edward Irving's church about 1832. This seems to be a groundless and pernicious charge. Neither Irving nor any member of the Albury group advocated any doctrine resembling the secret rapture. As we have seen, they were all historicists, looking for the

fulfillment of one or another prophecy in the Revelation as the next step in the divine timetable, anticipating the second coming of Christ soon but not immediately."

Darby's organizational and oratorical gifts brought both himself and his doctrines to a place of prominence, and his incessant travels both in Europe and America (seven trips, 1826-77) brought many influential pastors and teachers to his opinions.

B. The Development of Premillennialism in America

The impact of British Premillennialism was not felt in this country until after 1845 although Premillennialism is nowhere more evident than in the elaborate teachings and fatal error of William Miller (1782-1834). After his conversion to Christ from Deism, Miller became a zealous student of prophecy. His study led him to the exact day of the premillennial advent which, of course, failed to be realized. On October 22, 1844 the sun sank as it had every other day since creation and Christ had not come. In retrospect the Millerite movement appears to have virtually destroyed premillennialism in America for a generation!

1. In the 1840's some periodicals of a millennialist orientation emerged such as the Literalist (1840), the American Millenarian and Prophetic Review (1842) and Millenarianism Defended (1843).
2. The incessant travels of J.N. Darby and the post Civil War era with its more realistic view of man provided a basis for the renewal of studies in premillennialism. Darby had a definite impact on James H. Brooks of St. Louis (disciple of Cyrus Ingerson Scofield), D.L. Moody of Chicago, Robert Cameron of New York, and Adoniram Judson Gadon of Boston.
3. In 1863 The Prophetic Times was begun and was destined to have a major leadership role in the renewal of Premillennialism. In the first edition this creed was set forth by the editors.
 - "1. That we are living in the last periods of the present dispensation.
 2. That Christ will soon reappear upon earth, to avenge His elect, and fulfill His covenant to them.
 3. That the expectation of a Millennium of universal righteousness and peace before the return of the Saviour, is an unchristian delusion.
 4. That the Church will remain under the cross until Christ comes; and that the present dispensation is only preparatory to another.

5. That the personal return of the Lord Jesus is the great hope of the Church, to which, and not to the triumph of present institutions, we are to look for the fulfilment of the great promises of the world's ultimate blessedness."
4. It was the emergence of the great Bible conference movement in America that brought premillennialism a degree of acceptance here.
 - a. The Believers Meetings for Bible Study (Niagara Bible Conference) began in New York in 1869 and continued until 1900. The idea of such meetings originated in Ireland, likely with Darby, and through George C. Needham. The annual meetings stressed the "imminent advent of Christ" and became widely popular.

N.B.-The conference declined over a rift among the Premillenarians over the time of the Rapture ("pre" or "post" tribulationism).

At the 1884 Conference it came to be the 'fashion' of every speaker to 'ring the changes' on the possibility of Christ coming any moment-before the morning dawned, before the meeting closed, and even before the speaker had completed his address. Some felt that this was utterly unscriptural and dangerous.

They were strongly reprovved by C.I. Scofield and Arno C. Gaebelin and with the popularity of the Scofield Reference Bible the "post" position lost favor. The "post trib" position would later be revised by the likes of Robert Gundry & George E. Ladd.

- b. The American Bible and Prophetic Conferences met periodically (1878, 1886, 1895, 1901, 1914) with wide interest but kept to the major features of premillennialism.

III. Conclusion

Although Amillennialism was advocated by the great reformers (Luther, Calvin), the traditions that they initiated did not remain in their Augustinian Construct. Postmillennialism was popularized through the influence of Daniel Whitby and his writings after 1703 with a significant impact being made upon American Congregationalism (Cotton, Edwards) and Presbyterianism (Hodge). In the nineteenth century interest in Premillennialism experienced a resurgence through

Irving and Darby in England, and Brookes and Scofield in America in the context of the popularity of the Bible Conference Movement. The Scofield Bible (and later the Ryrie Study Bible) was a major influence in fostering a pretribulational premillennialism, especially with lay students of Scripture, who came to revere the notes of these Bibles as the correct and final understanding of prophetic text.

Our minds are always itching and there often creeps in the doubt why He does not come more quickly. But when we hear that, when he delays, God is having regard for our salvation, and delays because He is concerned for us, there is no ground for further questioning His tardiness. He is said to be slack who allows opportunity to slip by his laziness, but there is nothing like this in God, who knows best how to accommodate the pattern of time to our salvation. We must think in the same way about the duration of the whole world as of any simple human life. God sustains men by prolonging each man's time for him to repent. Likewise He refrains from bringing forward the end of the world, so as to give *everyone* time for repentance.

John Calvin, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of Peter, trans. William B. Johnston, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), 364. (Italics mine).

Dr. Craig Blaising

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Part One: Models of the Kingdom in the History of Christian Thought

- I. Four Early Interpretative Models of the Kingdom of God in Christian Thought (adapted from B. Viviano, *The Kingdom of God in History*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988. For a more extensive discussion of models, see H. Snyder, *Models of the Kingdom*).

A. An Eschatological Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is a future act of God, instituted at the coming of Christ, bringing renewal to the earth, bodily resurrection of human beings from the dead, and the gathering of the people of God under the political rule of Christ (often in both millennial and eternal forms).

Example - Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130–c. 200)

B. A Spiritual - Mystical Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is the spiritual state of the redeemed human soul, consisting in qualities such as knowledge, contemplation, virtue, illumination, or as the future blessedness of the vision of God in Heaven.

Example - Origen of Alexandria (c. 185–c. 254)

Excursus: The contrast between the eschatological and spiritual-mystical models with respect to material creation has been expressed by Paul Santmire in terms of two metaphors: a journey to a good land and the metaphor of ascent (see P. Santmire, *The Travel of Nature* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985]).

C. A Political Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is a present political reality, state or empire, self consciously Christian, organized as an earthly image of Christ's rule in heaven, as seen in particular examples such as Byzantium, The Holy Roman Empire, Czarist Russia, England, and generally designated as Christendom.

Example - Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260—c. 340)

- D. An Ecclesiastical Kingdom
The kingdom of God is the institutional church with its hierarchical structure, officers, and sacramental authority and power.

Example - Augustine (354—430)

II. Views on the Kingdom of God from the Middle Ages to Early Modern Times.

- A. The Eclipse of the Eschatological Model in favor of the Spiritual-Mystical model.

- B. The Uneasy Tension Between Political and Ecclesiastical Models

- C. Representatives of a present/eternal kingdom scheme.
(Here we see representative medieval and reformation theologians drawing upon the early interpretative models to define the kingdom of God in its present-temporal and future-eternal aspects. The consistent assumption is the equivalency of distinctions between time/eternity, earthly/heavenly, and for all practical purposes, material/spiritual).

- 1. Thomas Aquinas (1225—74) - The Kingdom of God has four forms: (1) an inner spiritual reality; (2) Scripture; (3) Church on earth; (4) Heaven after death.

- 2. Albert the Great (1206—1280) - The Kingdom of God has three realities: (1) Life of virtue in the soul; (2) Life of the saints in heaven; (3) God.

- 3. Martin Luther (1483—1546) - Two present kingdoms: (1) Kingdom of God - consists of all true believers in Christ governed and maintained by the Gospel; (2) Kingdom of the World - includes all who are not true Christians, governed by the Law.

4. Martin Bucer (1491–1551) - The Kingdom of God is an ideal Christian society.
 5. John Calvin (1509–1564) - The Kingdom of God is true spirituality. Sometimes he identifies it with heaven or the Reformed church.
- D. Representatives of present/future/eternal or future/eternal kingdom schemes. (The difference from the above is that these theologians expect a future-temporal form of the kingdom to occur between the present-temporal and the future-eternal. Again the early interpretation models are used [or modified] to explain these phases of kingdom.)
1. Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202) - The present ecclesiastical kingdom will be replaced by a mystical - contemplative kingdom prior to eternity.
 2. Frederick II (1194–1250) - Conquered Jerusalem in 1229, proclaimed himself an instrument of Davidic kingship and attempted to reform the church. He inspired expectations of a future king who would bring into existence a utopian kingdom. He thus contributed to the hope that the present kingdom will be replaced by a more perfect political kingdom prior to eternity.
 3. Reformers could possibly be classified here.
 4. Thomas Müntzer and the Radical Reformers - God's people are called to battle in the apocalyptic transition to a utopian political-ecclesiastical kingdom on earth.
 5. Daniel Whitby (1638–1726) - A Future Kingdom of God will appear on earth involving the triumph of the protestant church and political peace and justice on earth prior to a heavenly, eternal kingdom.
 6. Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) - A future age of Grace will soon dawn upon the world. The Great Awakening was seen as the prelude to that spiritual transformation which would bring about a renewal of the whole world.
- E. The Partial Restoration of an Eschatological Kingdom Model. (The key here is the interpretation of the future-

temporal form of the kingdom as an earthly kingdom established by Christ at his coming bringing resurrection, transformation, and renewal.)

1. Revival of Premillennialism in the Seventeenth Century - Christ will return to earth in a context of apocalyptic judgment and will establish a political-spiritual kingdom for one thousand years after which will follow the eternal kingdom of God in heaven.

Exs. Johann Alstedt, Johann Bengel, Joseph Mede

2. Historicist Premillennialism in the Nineteenth Century - Focused on reading the apocalyptic signs of the times emphasizing a numerology focused on the year - day theory.

Exs. Wm. Miller

3. Classical Dispensational Premillennialism - Conjoined a present/future-eternal spiritual-mystical kingdom for the church with a past/future-temporal/future-eternal political eschatological kingdom for Israel and Gentile peoples. In Scofieldian eschatology, the former was designated by the term kingdom of God while the latter was called the kingdom of heaven.

(The kingdom of heaven did have a present mystery form—The political kingdom of Christendom.)

The transition to the future in both schemes (whether future-temporal or future-eternal) is the return of Christ - a pretribulational rapture for the church and a (posttribulational) premillennial advent for Jews and Gentiles.

Exs. John Nelson Darby, James Hall Brookes, C. I. Scofield, Lewis S. Chafer

Dr. Craig Blaising

CONTEMPORARY VIEWS OF
SYNOPTIC ESCHATOLOGY

I. Background

Essence of Christianity: Kingdom of God and Personal Redemption/Justification (Two foci).

Christian Ethical Lordship: Moral organization/reformation of humanity through actions inspired by love.

A. The (1822-89) Ritschlian concept of the Kingdom -- moral and ethical and social

1. 19th Century - classic liberalism.
2. A progressive/teleological Kingdom of a corporate nature (not individual).
3. A liberal optimistic post-millennial emphasis.

B. Johannes Weiss (1863-1914) - Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes 1892 (Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, 1971). Son-in-law/student of Ritschl.

1. The Kingdom is apocalyptic in nature (contra Ritschl).
 - A future break with history via catastrophic judgement.
 - No transformation of the world, but an act of God.
2. Jesus taught the Kingdom as future.
 - Was His expectation up to His death.
 - Jesus' message was entirely futuristic/eschatological.
3. The ethics of Jesus are means of entrance into the Kingdom.
 - They are not the means of bringing in the Kingdom.

C. Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) Vom Reimarus zu Wrede, 1906. (The Quest of the Historical Jesus, 1910) - exposed weaknesses of the "Search for the Historical Jesus" theologians (they simply reconstructed a liberal Jesus in their own image/likeness).

1. Consistent Eschatology - Followed Weiss and popularized his views.
 - a. Christ's teaching was totally apocalyptic.
 - b. He saw the kingdom as future.
 - c. He taught interim ethics.
 - d. The New Testament can be understood as the attempt to deal with the delay of the parousia.

2. Jesus believed the kingdom of Dan. 7 was imminent; since it did not come, The N.T. explains why the delay! The problem of the delay of the parousia and the development of the New Testament;

- The New Testament develops a hope of a second parousia.
- This did not happen, so the concept is Hellenized (not future, but a present, spiritual blessing).

D. Types of responses to Weiss and Schweitzer.

1. The transformation of apocalyptic (Sanday and Burkett).

- Agree Christ used apocalyptic language, but that He transformed the concept into a non-apocalyptic idea. He really meant a present Kingdom.

2. The denial of apocalyptic.

- Mostly American liberals.
- Christ taught a moral/ethic kingdom.
- Based in the O.T.

3. The triumph of apocalyptic.

- Views of Weiss and Schweitzer are accepted.
- Kingdom is apocalyptic.
- Jesus is apocalyptic preacher.

II. C.H. Dodd (1884-1973) and realized Eschatology - eschaton is realized now in our subjective experience of conversion.

A. Jesus' use of apocalyptic language.

- A form of accommodation: Jesus used it to turn His hearers away from an ~~an~~future. ~~apocalyptic~~
- Jesus sought to reorient their thought to a "present, transcendent order."

B. The presence of the Kingdom of God.

- In the Christ event it has broken into the present order. Kingdom is now here to be enjoyed and experienced.

C. The contribution of the early church.

- Misunderstood the nature of Jesus' eschatology and sought to explain the delay of the parousia (See D.4. below).

D. Summary of Realized Eschatology.

1. The kingdom is an inbreaking of the transcendent into the present.

2. Christ's teaching was meant to transform apocalyptic expectations.
3. The ethics of Christ are not to be seen as interim ethics but as the way in which the Kingdom is realized in the present.
4. The problem of the delay of the parousia is due to a false apocalyptic interpretation of Christ's life and message which gradually begins to be resolved in Paul and ultimately in John.

E. Criticism of Dodd.

1. Liberal critical presuppositions (dating, inspiration, words of Jesus being authoritative).
2. Hermeneutical method and selectivity of passages he emphasizes.
3. Blatant denial of futuristic eschatology in N.T., and thus a misreading of Paul and John.

III. R. Bultmann (1884-1976).

A. Bultmann's view of synoptic eschatology.

1. The kingdom is presented in Scripture as apocalyptic in nature; i.e., end of history, cataclysmic, judgement motif.
2. Christ proclaimed the kingdom as imminent in the future.
 - a. Forced hearers to crisis decisions (existential emphasis).
 - b. Future determines the present; as man considers the future he experiences the eschatological now! God's Kingdom breaks in on man in the crisis of decision.
3. The delay of the parousia is due to a failure of world-view.
 - a. Apocalyptic language is pre-scientific, belonging to the mythical world-view of first century.
 - b. Apocalyptic language is useful, however, to bring man to an eschatological decision based on the future. The eschaton is existential not eschatological or futuristic.
4. The ethics of Jesus are kingdom ethics.

- His radical demands are for crisis decisions now in real existence.

B. Critique of Bultmann

1. Some excellent, exceptional work (of an exegetical nature).
2. Antisupernaturalism colors all of his theology and biases him against the miraculous.

3. Reduces eschatology to an existential moment; leaving out history, society, the world.
4. Misses central Christological element of eschatology: The future parousia of Christ.

IV. Oscar Cullmann. Christ and Time, 1951; The Christology of the New Testament, 1959; Salvation in History, 1967.

- A. The Biblical view of heilsgeschichte (Salvation history).
 - Eschatology is not future but historical/chronological. Salvation is an historical event as is the eschaton.
- B. Christ's view of the relationship between His present ministry and the parousia.
 1. Both will occur (one has/one will).
 2. Both are chronological/historical.
 3. They are separate, thus the delay of the parousia is not a problem in a sense.
- C. The problem of the delay of the parousia.
 - Jesus was in error in his expectation of the time of the end, but this does not negate his basic teaching. The Kingdom is really future, and thus the Future determines the present. His mistake as to time is inevitable as a result of the incarnation.

V. Present and Future Eschatology.

W.G. Kummel, Promise and Fulfillment. The Eschatological Message of Jesus.
 G.E. Ladd, The Presence of the Future and A Theology of the New Testament.
 L. Goppelt, Theology of the New Testament.

- A. The eschatological (non apocalyptic) nature of kingdom proclamation.
 1. Must distinguish eschatological and apocalyptic (literally and theologically).
 2. Eschatology emphasizes repentance/deliverance.
 3. Apocalyptic emphasizes judgement alone.
- B. The present and future comings of the Kingdom.
 1. The present coming.
 - a. In the form of salvation (subjective and personal).
 - b. Made present citizens of the Kingdom which has been inaugurated with the Christ event.

2. The future coming.
 - a. Established at Christ's return.
 - b. Goppelt acknowledges this is taught, but does not necessarily believe.
- C. Eschatological ethics.
 1. Eschatological ethics are the ethics of salvation.
 2. Eschatological ethics are not interim or that which brings in the Kingdom.
 3. Eschatological ethics are for the saved who await the manifestation of the Kingdom.
 4. There is a tension of the "already" and "not yet".
- D. The delay of the parousia.
 1. There is a distinction between redemption and parousia (ala Cullman).
 2. Some (liberal) see a problem in the delay.
 3. Other (Ladd) see no problem in the delay.
- E. Criticism.
 1. Destructive critical approach yields untenable conclusions.
 2. Definition of Kingdom a bit unclear.
 3. Essence of Kingdom is weak Christologically (He must be here/return).
 4. No acknowledgement of Jewish O.T. emphasis and thus Israel's part (although Marcus Barth accepts future Israelite redemption per Rom. 9-11).

Recovery of an Eschatological Model of the Kingdom in Contemporary Systematic Theology. Examples - Jurgen Moltmann (1926-); Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-); Gustavo Gutierrez (1928-).

A. The Future Kingdom of God

B. The Presence of the kingdom Working Toward its Future Fullness

1. God and History
2. Christ and Hermeneutics
3. Spirit, Church and Society

Recovery of an Eschatological Model of the Kingdom in Evangelical Theology

A. Factors in this development

1. The Present-Future Kingdom construct of New Testament Theology
2. The Holistic Scope of Eschatological Salvation

3. The Relationship of Church and Kingdom

- B. Examples: Stanley Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology; Theology For The Community of God*; Boyd Hunt, *Redeemed! Eschatological Redemption and the Kingdom of God*; Peter Beyerhaus, *God's Kingdom and the Utopian Error*; Thomas Finger, *Christian Theology, An Eschatological Approach*, 2 Vols.; Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*.

C. Features of an Evangelical Eschatological Theology

1. Salvation as a Particular Act of God vis-a-vis Creation
2. Salvation History and Universal History
3. The Personal Integrity and Future of Jesus Christ
4. The Hermeneutical Significance of the Future Kingdom for Present Kingdom Realities
 - A. Personal Salvation
 - B. Corporate Salvation
 - C. Church and Society

PART I: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. Dispensational and Non-dispensational Emphases

A. Resolved Issues

1. *Law and Grace*

The early belief of dispensationalism was Israel was under law, the church under grace.

Contention over this issue has been rendered passé.

Many scholars (Daniel Fuller, Curtis Crenshaw and Grover Gunn) observed that modern dispensationalism and covenant theology coalesce on the problem of law and grace.

2. *The Sermon on the Mount*

The debate over whom Christ's teachings in the Sermon were addressed is less and less a debate.

Modern dispensationalists hold that those teachings apply to the believer throughout this age, making this issue less a point of distinction vis-a-vis non-dispensationalism.

3. *The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God.*

Most recent advocates of a distinction between the two acknowledge that the two terms are often used synonymously yet are to be distinguished in certain contexts.

B. The Focal Issue

Gods' purpose and plan in biblical history.

God's purpose and plan within human history.

We must understand what God intends to do and how he intends to accomplish it.

II. The Non-dispensational System

A. The Purpose of History

The Kingdom of God. The debate is concerning the nature of "spiritual redemption": amillennial vs. premillennial.

B. The Emphasis on Unity

The unity of the people of God. There is no distinction between Israel and the Church in the future of God's economy.

III. The Traditional Dispensational System

A. The Purpose of History

Two-fold purpose for God's program in history:

1. Related to earth and worked out through Israel
2. Related to Heaven and worked out through the Church

B. The Discontinuity Within the Historical Program

Law, Grace and Kingdom. No part of the Old Testament kingdom predictions are being fulfilled in any way during this age.

IV. A Mediating Position

*Retains natural understanding of the prophetic Scriptures that assign a significant role to Israel in the future in accordance with a dispensational system.

* sees the program of God as unified within history (in accordance with non-dispensationalism)

* denies a radical discontinuity between the present church age and the messianic kingdom promises.

A. The Unified Purpose of History

"The Kingdom": "That program through which God effects his lordship on the earth in a comprehensive salvation within history."

Israel and the church both serve their function in the same mediatorial messianic kingdom program.

B. A Historical Unity with Distinctions

A natural understanding of biblical prophecies (i.e. Israel's true restoration to the promised land).

C. The Decisive Questions

Is this present age in any sense the beginning of the fulfillment of the messianic kingdom promises?

What is the eschatological time in which we are living, beginning with the first advent of Christ, related to the kingdom?

What is the meaning of the "mystery" concerning the union of Jews and Gentiles in the church, and is it dispensational or soteriological?

How are we to define the church and Israel and their relationship--are they two peoples of God or one? Finally -- and most significant for dispensationalists -- what is the distinctive role of Israel for the future, and what is her purpose in that role?

V. Some Hermeneutical Considerations

A. The Old Testament Prophecies Include the Eschatological Realities

The physical realities and spiritual realities can exist alongside one another in eschatological times.

The direct work of God by his Spirit in man does not rule out the reality and significance of the physical in God's eschatological plan. The present age is only the inauguration and part of the fulfillment of the prophecies.

B. The Bible Meaning and Use of Typology

Israel being a type of the church is questionable. "Type" is defined as a general historical and theological correspondence (David L Baker). Israel may be seen in ways as a type but that does not rule out their continued existence in the future.

C. The Finality of Christ

God's purpose in electing Israel may be said to be fulfilled in Christ, but this does not deny a time or place for Israel's participation in that fulfillment even as Christ perfectly fulfills his ministry through the church.

D. The Theology of New Testament Writers

The lack of details of Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament does not necessarily mean they are superseded or invalid. We should consider Old Testament prophecies valid unless there is explicit teaching to the contrary.

The Old Testament is foundational to understanding/interpreting the New Testament.

PART II: THE PRESENT AGE AND OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

CHAPTER TWO: THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Disagreement: the predictions about the messianic kingdom

1. Dispensationalists: deny that the messianic kingdom is fulfilled during the present age of the church. Those are for Israel, to be fulfilled in the time of the millennial kingdom.

2. Non-dispensationalists: These kingdom promises are fulfilled in the present age.

- a. Millennialists: promises fulfilled in the church age, millennium and eternal state
- b. Amillennialists: present age fulfillment only.

I. The Abrahamic Covenant in the Old Testament

A. The Promises of the Abrahamic Covenant

1. *The Seed*

Presented both as a benefit (for Abraham and the entire world) and as the beneficiary of divine blessing (temporal and spiritual)

2. *The Land*

Physical place for the "seed." No land, no national existence. It symbolized that God loves Israel and Israel's belonging to God.

3. *The Universal Blessing*

Israel called to be a channel of God's grace to all peoples.

B. The Continuity of the Abrahamic Covenant in the Old Testament

Regardless of the covenant (Sinai, Davidic), the Abrahamic was always present and foundational. Even in exile, it was the source of the hope of Israel's people.

II. The Abrahamic Covenant in the New Testament

A. The Seed

Continues in relation to ethnic peoples of Israel but expands to include all those in Christ.

Emphasis on the seed that actually follow after the pattern of Abraham's faith.

Fulfillment: Christ. Those in Christ are Abraham's seed as well. Abraham is the father of the people of Israel and the Gentiles (Ro. 4:9-12). Does not overrule a distinction of Israel in the future as fulfillment of a "great nation" (Ge. 12:2). Primarily future fulfillment.

B. The Land.

Though not explicit, one must infer in reference to Israel, land is involved. This is real, specific, territorial land. Also, those in Christ will inherit the "whole earth" (Mt. 5:5), the kingdom

rule of God, heavenly rest. Both are true. The fulfillment awaits the future, both in this earth and in the new "heavenly" earth to come.

There is no evidence of complete fulfillment historically. Nor is there evidence for re-interpretation spiritualizing the fulfillment in terms of a symbol of heaven or spiritual blessings in general.

Primarily future fulfillment.

C. The Universal Blessing

Present fulfillment (justification, Gal. 3:8; gift of the Spirit, Gal. 3:14) and future (Eph. 1:14). The "covenants" and "promises" still belong to the people of Israel (Ro. 9:4). Those dealing with "great nation" anticipate future fulfillment, also the final inheritance of spiritual salvation.

CHAPTER THREE: THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

Messianic and kingdom themes are central

I. The Davidic Covenant in the Old Testament

2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17

4 elements:

1. David's name will be made great (1 Sam. 7:9).
2. A "place" will be provided for Israel (v. 10).
3. Israel will be given undisturbed "rest" from her enemies (vv. 10-11).
4. A royal dynasty and kingdom will be given to David forever (vv. 11-16).

A. The Royal Dynasty

God is King; the Davidic king is ruler over Yahweh's kingdom, thus answerable to Yahweh (1 Chron. 17:14; 28:5; 29:23; 2 Chron. 9:8; 13:8).

B. The Everlasting Kingdom

Political and National. There is inseparable connection between the house of David, the people of Israel and the hereditary land.

C. The Messianic Fulfillment

1. The lasting dynasty finds fulfillment in one specific person (Jer. 23:5; 33:15).
2. The Davidic promise had universal dimensions (Ps. 32:8; 89: 25, 27).

These do not deny continual existence of a nation of Israel in the kingdom plan of God. Other nations will exist but Israel will enjoy an exalted position.

D. The Relationship Between the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants

The Davidic promise is an elaboration of the Abrahamic promises. The Abrahamic covenant mentions a future nation and the Davidic covenant emphasizes the kingly dynasty of that nation. The promise of land was repeated in the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:10ff; national security, Isa. 11:12-16; Jer. 23:6; 33:16; Amos 9:14-15; Mic. 5:4).

The universal blessing of all nations of the Abrahamic covenant appears also as the ultimate purpose of the Davidic covenant.

Both covenants are unconditional in nature (2 Sam. 7:13,16; 23:5; Ps. 89:4, 28, 36-37; cf. Ps. 110:4) as described by the word "eternal."

The statements of conditional fulfillment (Ps. 132:12; 1 Ki. 2:4; 8:25; 9:4,5) must be understood as relating only to personal and individual invalidation of benefits of the covenant.

II. The Davidic Covenant in the New Testament

2 elements stand at the center of the controversy:

1. A royal dynasty or house.
2. A kingdom with a universal blessing.

A. The Royal Dynasty

Jesus came as the promised descendant of David. The promises of an everlasting dynasty and kingdom were bound up in him (Acts 13:34-37; Rev. 22:16).

B. Jesus and the Messianic Kingship in Psalm 110

"Jesus at the right hand of God" (Peter on Ps. 110:1 in Acts 2:33-35).

Dispensationalism: session of Christ in heaven before his return to fulfill literal reign on earth.

Non-dispensationalism: New Testament has re-interpreted the Davidic prophecies. Jesus throne transferred from Jerusalem to heaven; he presently reigns as Davidic king.

1. The Meaning of Being Seated at the Right Hand

The position of Messianic authority. The throne of David. Not spatial but a symbol of authority in Acts 2. It does not suggest any present function of ruling.

2. Psalm 110 and Jesus' Messianic Kingship (Acts 2:30-36)

Peter speaks of Jesus' status, not present function. Acts is not a re-interpretation of Ps. 110.

Partial present and partially future fulfillment.

C. The Rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David

1. The Meaning of the Amos Citation (Amos 9:11-12)

"in that day" "after these things"

Amos looks for the restoration of a Davidic dynasty in the Messiah.

2. The Application of Amos 9:11-12 by James

James doesn't focus on the promise to restore Davidic kingdom. The Gentiles are blessed with messianic salvation presently but the complete fulfillment of the promise is still future, realized when Israel returns to God.

D. Conclusion

In Jesus the Davidic dynasty is fulfilled, but only initial fulfillment of the covenant promises. The rest awaits the future.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE KINGDOM

The establishment of the kingdom of God on earth is the ultimate goal of biblical history.

I. Jesus and the Kingdom

A. The Meaning of the Kingdom

1. *The Kingdom and the Coming of Jesus*

The coming Kingdom was the theme of Jesus' earthly ministry in both teaching and action. The Old Testament writers, the Magnificat of Mary, and John the Baptist all viewed the coming of Jesus as the beginning, at least, of the restoration of the Kingdom.

2. *What Jesus Meant by the "Kingdom of God."*

"Both spiritual and national, both universal and ethnic." Jesus proclaimed the Old Testament messianic kingdom; 3 evidences:

- a. The announcement of the kingdom without explanation.
- b. The call for repentance in relation to the kingdom by both Jesus and John.
- c. The limitation of the proclamation of the kingdom to Israel (cf. Mt 10:5-7; 15:24).
- d. Jesus' conflict over the temple and his predictions of its destruction.

His concept of "kingdom" included spiritual, physical, and political dimensions, especially the restoration of the nation of Israel. Aspects were present, but the full kingdom "near" awaits the future.

3. *The Place of the Cross.*

Question: could any type of kingdom be obtained or entered in to before the cross? The kingdom was proclaimed by Jesus before the cross. All persuasions of interpreters have a problem here.

B. The Time of the Kingdom

1. *The Imminence of the Kingdom.*

In Jesus' preaching, the kingdom had drawn near, but it's actual arrival had not yet occurred.

2. *The Futurity of the Kingdom.*

Examples from Jesus' teaching:

Pray for it's coming (Mt. 6:10).

Entered "on that day" (Mt. 7:21-22; cf. 25:34).

Parable of the nobleman (Lk. 19:11-26).

3. *The Presence of the Kingdom.*

Jesus cited a messianic prophecy from Isaiah (61:1-2) and declared it "fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21; cf. vv. 16-21). The miraculous power of Jesus was evidence of the manifestation of the kingdom (Mt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20). These were exertions of kingdom power but not yet the kingdom.

Summary.

Jesus' ministry opened with the kingdom as "near." The salvation blessings of the kingdom age were now present. The idea of the full present "reign" of Christ over the world or church is never taught. The actual rule of Christ over the world is still future.

II. The Kingdom of God in the Early Church

Luke used "kingdom" 39 times in his gospel. He uses it only 8 times in Acts. From Romans to Jude it's used 18 times.

A. The Futurity of the Kingdom

The kingdom of God was clearly present in the apostolic teaching and preaching (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31). However, in the epistles the dominant teaching concerning the kingdom is a future kingdom and not a present one. It is something inherited (1 Cor. 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:12-13; Jas. 2:5). It will be entered (2 Pet 1:11; 1 Thes. 2:12). Christians will one day reign with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12). Christ has been exalted as having kingly authority but is *not right now* exercising kingship in the sense of "reigning" nor are we.

B. The Presence of the Kingdom

The presence is described in terms of righteousness, peace, and joy (Rom. 14:17), the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13-14), and power (1 Cor. 4:20), but never in terms of a present "reign."

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NEW COVENANT AND THE SALVATION OF THE GENTILES

I. The Teaching of the Old Testament

A. The New Covenant

The concept of the new covenant held a central place in the hope of the Old Testament.

1. *The Addressees of the New Covenant.*

According to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the recipients were the people of Israel.

2. *The Provisions of the New Covenant.*

Includes both spiritual and material blessings. The focus is the spiritual.

a. *The foundational provision: forgiveness of sins. (Jer 31:34; cf. also 33:8; 50:20)*

b. *A new obedience by the indwelling Spirit. (Jer. 31:33; 24:7; Eze. 36:26-27; cf. 11:19)*

c. *A new relationship to God. (Jer. 31:33; cf. 24:7; 32:38; Eze. 36:28; 11:20)*

d. *Physical blessings.*

1) Gathering the people to the land (Jer. 31:8-11; 32:15, 37, 41)

2) Rebuilding of cities (Jer. 30:18; 31:38-40)

3) Cultivation and productivity of the land (Jer. 31:5, 12-14)

4) Increase herds and flocks (Jer. 33:12-13)

5) Population explosion (Jer. 30:20; 31:17)

6) Resulting in expressions of joy (Jer. 31:4, 7, 13; 33:11) and a state of blessing, rest, and peace (Jer. 31:23-25, 27-28; 32:42-44; 33:6). (See also Eze. 11:16-19; 36:8-12, 24-38).

3. *The Relationship of the New Covenant to the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants.*

The promise of a "New" Covenant is set in contrast to the Old Covenant enacted at Sinai.

It replaced the Mosaic one and rendered it obsolete in salvation history.

The Davidic covenant is founded in the Abrahamic covenant, and the final renewal of all things associated with the new covenant is fulfilled as the foundational promise to Abraham.

B. The New Covenant and the Salvation of the Gentiles

1. The Abrahamic Covenant and Gentile Inclusion in the New Covenant.

"all the peoples of the earth" (Gen. 12:2-3).

The "great nation" would bring blessing to the Gentiles. The distinction remains between Israel and the Gentiles.

2. The Promise of New Covenant Salvation to Gentiles.

Isaiah's Servant would bring "light for the Gentiles" and "salvation to the ends of the earth" (42:6; 49:6). The Old Testament overall teaches the salvation of the Gentiles alongside the nation of Israel (the "great nation"). Still, the Gentiles are not construed as becoming a part of Israel herself.

II. The Teaching of the New Testament

A. The New Covenant and the Gentiles

1. *The Inauguration of the New Covenant.*

The new covenant promise was fulfilled with the historical work of Christ (Lk. 20:22; Heb. 9:15-18; 12:24).

Paul, a minister of the new covenant (2 Cor 3:6).

2. *The Inclusion of the Gentiles in the New Covenant.*

The Gentiles are not the "new Israel."

a. *Jesus' teaching of the universality of the new covenant.*

b. *The new covenant as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.*

The Magnificat of Mary (Lk. 1:54-55).

Paul's teaching of forgiveness to spiritual descendant so of like faith (Rom. 4:9-25), and his teaching in Gal. 3:14. In Gal. 3:8, Paul quotes Gen. 12:2-3 of the Abrahamic promise and applies it.

Hebrews makes a clear connection (Heb. 6:13-20; cf. 8:6-7).

c. *The new covenant and the kingdom.*

The kingdom ultimately encompasses all the nations of the earth, and the kingdom is correlative to the new covenant.

3. *The Nature of the Present New Covenant Blessings in the Church.*

Nowhere in the N. T. are the material blessings applied to the church. The N. T. writers did not see the complete fulfillment of the new covenant in the church as happening during the present age. The church does not fulfill the new covenant in the place of Israel and there is not indication of future fulfillment of material blessings for the church according to the O. T. meaning.

B. The Fulfillment of Promises of Gentile Salvation

Gentiles are in the messianic age and are being saved along with Jews. But the evangelization of the nations during this present age is not the complete fulfillment of the O. T. hope, nor the N.T. hope.

III. Conclusion

All O. T. covenant promises pointed to the time of the Messiah for fulfillment. The first coming of Christ inaugurated the fulfillment. God's salvation is extended to both Jews and Gentiles who believe. What seemed in the O.T. as one coming of the Messiah is now separated into two appearances. The return of Christ will bring further fulfillment. The N.T. clearly envisions a future for historical Israel.

PART III: THE CHURCH AND SALVATION HISTORY

CHAPTER SIX: THE CHURCH AND THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERIES

I. Introduction

A. The Problem

1. Traditional Dispensationalists

Concerning the term "mystery" and its content: (1) The church is not found in the Old Testament. Rather it is a unique work of God related to the coming of the Spirit and the indwelling presence of the resurrected Christ; (2) the church is not the fulfillment of any revelation found in the Old Testament.

2. Non-dispensationalists.

The church is the new Israel and heir of the promises.

B. The Concept of Mystery in the New Testament

1. *The Biblical Concept of Mystery.*

Denoted a secret of God that he alone made known through revelation at the appointed time. Once hidden, now made known.

2. *The New Testament Concept of Mystery.*

Used 28 times; 21 Pauline. All refer to divine secrets, but three categories: (1) hidden meanings in symbols and types (Rev. 1:20; Eph. 5:31), (2) various divine secrets conveyed to designated persons (1 Cor. 15:51), (3) the divine plan of salvation now revealed in Christ (Eph. 3:4; Col. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:16).

3. *The Hiddenness and Revelation of a Mystery.*

a. Hidden in symbol or language with an inner meaning (Rev. 1:20; Eph. 5:32).

b. Hidden because it has not yet been revealed (i.e. change of believers at the coming of Christ, 1 Cor. 15:51).

c. Christ and divine plan of salvation. First, it is hidden and revealed with regard to its realization in God's historical plan of salvation. Though it was the subject of previous prophecy, it was hidden until the time came for its actualization. Second, it is hidden and revealed until the Spirit enlightens the human heart. In this sense, full knowledge of the mystery awaits the final day of perfection for the believer.

II. The Mystery of the Oneness of Jew and Gentile in Ephesians 3

A. The Content of the Mystery

1. *The meaning of Ephesians 3:6.*

The word "mystery" does not occur in the Greek text.

a. *"Heirs together."* signifies those who will receive or inherit something along with others. In 5:5, Paul speaks of an "Inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Other N.T. references, inheritance: salvation (Heb. 1:14), glory (Rom. 8:17), eternal life (Lk. 18:18; Tit. 3:7; 1 Pet. 3:7); blessing (1 Pet. 3:9); the promises (Heb. 6:12); and the kingdom of God (Mt. 25:34; 1 Cor. 6:19; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Jas. 2:5).

Gentiles will participate in the full blessings of the ultimate salvation God has prepared for all his people "in Christ" (cf. Col. 1:12).

b. *"Members together."* Jew and Gentile reconciled and united in one body. They all share together in all that is involved in membership of that body.

c. *"Shares together."* Gentiles are full partners with Israel in God's promise. Concerning promise, the gift of the Spirit is usually foremost in Paul's thinking (Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:13).

2. *The new Relationship of Gentiles and Jews in Ephesians 2:11ff.*

a. *The previous state of the Gentiles:*

- 1) "separate from Christ."
- 2) "excluded from the commonwealth of Israel"
- 3) "strangers to the covenants of promise"

b. *The new situation of the Gentiles in Christ.* Having been "far off" are now "brought near" (Eph. 2:13). These terms, "far" and "near" are used in the O.T. to describe the relationship of Jews to the temple at Jerusalem. The Gentiles are now near to God. They are "fellow citizens" with Israel, but not a "new Israel." Christ has made both group into one (Eph 2:14) and he calls this "one new man" (v. 15). Israel still has historical distinctives, though the barrier between Gentiles and Jews has been broken. Gentiles are made members of a new community but not incorporated into national Israel.

B. The Nature of the Mystery

Is this union a fulfillment of O. T. prophecy of a new revealed truth?

First, there are added dimensions to the messianic salvation now revealed, namely, that Christ's coming is in two stages. This was not seen in the O.T. Now it is clear.

Second, new truth is come to light as well as O. T. prophecies have been fulfilled. Paul's use of "mystery" in Ephesians 3:6 referring to the relationship of Jews to Gentiles is in reality part of the broad "mystery of Christ" clearly related to O. T. prophecy.

So, the union of Jew and Gentile in Christ is a fulfillment of O. T. prophecy but we cannot say that all the prophecies related to messianic salvation and kingdom are thereby fulfilled. Israel still holds a distinct place in the future of God's plan.

C. The Mystery and the Plan of Salvation

The present working of mystery in Ephesians 3 in the constitution of the church is the initial stage in the realization of the divine plan of salvation in Christ, which is the comprehensive mystery of God.

D. Conclusion

The unity of Gentile and Jew in Christ is the fulfillment of the divine salvation promised for the messianic times, during which both the nations and Israel would enjoy God's blessing. Jew and Gentile stand equal in their spiritual relation to God, nothing more. This does not rule out *functional* distinctions in the future.

The revelation of the mystery is a new action of God. Although present in the O.T. promise, it was hidden. The church as uniting Jew and Gentile is truly a new work.

The present manifestation of the mystery may be said to be the eschatological fulfillment of the promised salvation. However, it does not complete the mystery of God's salvation program for the world and the universe. The future work reflected in many O.T. prophecies remain yet unfulfilled.

III. The Mystery of the Indwelling Christ in Colossians 1

The proper application of "Christ in you" is held in question.

A. The Content of the Mystery

The free admission of the Gentiles on equal terms to the privileges of the covenant. Christ has been preached among them and he spiritually indwells them.

B. The Nature of the Mystery

It is similar to the union of Jew and Gentile in the Body of Christ, but more fundamentally is its content. The indwelling Spirit was prophesied in the O. T. (Joel 2:29; Isa. 44:3; Eze. 39:29). The indwelling Messiah was not directly spoken of in the O. T. but is directly related to the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8:9; Acts 16:7; 2 Cor. 3:17).

IV. Conclusion

The basic substance of the mysteries were revealed in O. T. promises, but we have a greater understanding revealed in the N. T. The mystery revealed is that Jews and Gentiles have equal standing with God; however, Israel still holds a future place as a nation in the service of God.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE BAPTISM WITH THE SPIRIT AND THE METAPHORS OF THE CHURCH

I. The Baptism of the Spirit

Traditional dispensationalism says that the baptism of the Spirit is absent from O. T. prophecy. It belongs to the mystery of the church, , for the purpose of forming the church. It is viewed by them as a new truth.

A. The Meaning of the Baptism With the Spirit

en pneumatii hagio ("in" "with" or "by" the Holy Spirit)

1. The Baptism with the Spirit in the Gospels.

It refers not to something particular of the church, but rather the coming of the Spirit promised for the messianic age. It marked the coming of a new age, and brought his permanent presence as the Life-Giver of the new creation.

John the Baptist: a Spirit-fire baptism, Christ is the baptizer (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33).

2. The Baptism with the Spirit in Acts.

Jesus predicted (1:5); fulfilled in Acts 2, 10, 11:15-16. It was the fulfillment of the O. T. promise of the outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2; Acts 2:5-13). It signaled the onset of eschatological fulfillment. Christ is still seen as the agent of the baptism (1:5; 11:15; 2:33).

3. The Baptism with the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13.

"baptized by one Spirit into one body"

Not that Christ simply immerses his people into his body, but rather that he pours out or deluges his people with the Spirit with the goal of forming one body, which is finally Christ's own body, of which he is the head.

4. Conclusion.

The baptism with the Spirit is nothing less than the fulfillment of the O. T. eschatological promises related to the new presence and ministry of the Spirit with the people of God.

B. The Application of the Baptism with the Spirit

It's application is ultimately for all people. It is not some unique ministry only for the people of the present church age, from Pentecost to rapture. There is common identity shared between Jew and Gentile in the fact that they both participate in the Spirit baptism. This does not remove all differences in their roles in the historical purposes of God.

II. The Metaphors of the Church

The "bride" metaphor: 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-26; Rev. 21:2.

The covenant people of Israel, the believers in the church, and the people related to the new Jerusalem are all in a relation to God that is symbolized by the picture of marriage.

The "body" metaphor: Eph. 4:15-16; 5:24; Col. 1:18; 2:28-19; Rom. 12:3ff; 1 Cor. 12:12ff.

All new covenant believers will be "in Christ" and vitally sharing his life. This image is applicable to others besides believers who are in the church. Members of the church share the same salvation in relation to Christ and the Spirit as other believers.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE PEOPLE OF GOD, ISRAEL, AND THE CHURCH

I. The Concept of the "The People of God"

The concept of "God's people" is extended to the gentile nations in the O. T. without their becoming part of Israel (Isa. 25:6-7; 45:18-25; 55:4-7; Jer. 16:19; Zeph. 3:9; Ps. 148:11-13).

Includes both Jews and Gentiles (Tit. 2:13; Rom. 9:25f; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:9-10).

The term formerly applied to only Israel but now the Gentiles and Israel share the term. It does not belong to the church exclusively.

II. The Identity of Israel

A. The Meaning of Israel in the Old Testament

"he who strives with God" or "God strives"

Jacob (Gen. 32:28). The southern kingdom (Isa. 5:7). Never includes Gentiles. It signifies a community of people with a special relationship to God. Literally, a nation among the nations of the world (Num. 23:9). The spiritual and nationhood were inseparable.

B. The Meaning of Israel in the New Testament

1. Overview.

"Israel" 68 times. All refer to the people and/or the land. It is never used to refer to the church.

2. The Disputed Passages About the Meaning of "Israel."

a. *Texts using "Israel" or "Jew"* (Rom. 9: 6; 2:28-29; Gal. 6:16). They retain their historical meaning for the ethnic people of the Old Testament. Exegetically inappropriate to apply "Israel" to the church.

b. *The "Israel of God"* (Gal. 6:16). Paul is asserting their equal participation with Jews in the new messianic salvation that came through Christ. The salvation of the Gentiles was not the fulfillment of the promise to the nation of Israel, according to the letter to the Galatians.

c. *The application of "the circumcision" to the church in Philippians 3:3*. "Spiritual circumcision" took preeminence over the physical rite and applied to Gentiles and Jews. For all in Christ, there is no outward distinguishing mark such as circumcision, but an inward circumcision of the heart. But the absence of a spiritual distinction does not mean that there is no distinction at all. Abraham was justified by faith, "circumcised in heart," and is the father of all who share the same faith (thus being "circumcised in heart as well"). See Jer. 9:25-26.

d. Similar language applied to Israel and the church.

"a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. Ex. 19:6).

"people of God" (1 Pet. 2:10; cf. Hos. 1:9-10; 2:23).

True, many aspects of Israel as the people of God apply to the Church. But the church is never explicitly called "Israel." The continuity between Israel and the church is only partial. The N. T. clearly affirms a future for Israel in the historic sense.

3. Conclusion

"Israel" retains its old meaning as the national ethnic people. The rejection of Christ does yield a division within the ethnic people of Israel; now there is a "remnant" which is the Israel of promise. With Israel's salvation is still in the future (cf. Rom 11:25-26), the church performs in a partial way the function originally given to Israel as God's witness to the world. So, yes, there are similarities, but they are only similarities. The N. T. never uses the name "Israel" in application to the church.

II. The Identity of the Church

A. The Similarity Between the Church and Israel

If "church" ultimately signifies all of God's people who are in Christ, then saved Israel will be part of that body. If church applies only to the present age, then it would not encompass the future Israel that will turn to God in faith.

They share similar identity in sharing the blessings of promised eschatological salvation.

B. The Distinction Between the Church and Israel

The church lacks national characteristics. There is still a distinct function of Israel as a nation in the future (Rom. 11:11-36).

III. The Post-Biblical Development of the Relationship of the Church and Israel

A. The Identification of the Church as "New Israel"

The post-apostolic church began the identification. Justin Martyr, Dialogue With Trypho, A.D. 160.

B. Factors Contributing to the Theology of Replacement

1. The Developing Antagonism Between Judaism and Early Christianity.

Serious persecution (cf. Acts 4:1ff; 5:17ff; 6:12ff; 9:1ff; 1 Thess. 2:14-16; Rev. 2:9). The second Jewish revolt (A.D. 132-135) brought the break between the two to a climax.

Other persecutions of believers by Jews brought antagonism, thus influencing the thinking of early believers in terms of how they viewed Israel.

2. The Destruction of Jerusalem.

Believers lost the hope of any restoration of Israel.

3. The Refusal of Jews to Accept the Christ.

Israel came to be viewed as opponents to the Gospel rather than potential converts.

4. The Increasingly Gentile composition of the Church.

5. Conclusion.

History reveals that at times the church allowed certain pressures to influence it toward unbalanced, unbiblical thought.

IV. Conclusion

Believing Israel and the Church are equally and together the "people of God." Their differences lie not on the spiritual plane in their relationship to God, but in their specific identity and corresponding function in God's historical kingdom program.

"Israel" is always a nation among nations.

"Church" is called out of *all* nations.

Scripture emphasizes what unifies the two: the salvation of God.

PART IV: THE PLACE OF ISRAEL

CHAPTER NINE: THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES ABOUT ISRAEL

I. The Basic Prophetic Themes

A. A Final Restoration From Exile

Moses, Dt. 30:3. Later prophets looked to time of Messiah for restoration (cf. Eze. 34-37).
 Isaiah 11:11-12; future restoration of the kingdom; the Northern and Southern kingdoms unified (cf. vv. 13-16). Isa. 41:1. Jer. 16:14-15; 23:3-8; 30:3,10-11; 31:8.
 Ezekiel's valley of dry bones (chapter 37)
 Zechariah 8:7-8.
 Isa. 60:4-9; 66:19-20 especially appear to teach that the restoration extends into Messiah's reign when the salvation of God flows to the nations.

B. Israel Restored as a Nation Under a Davidic King

Isa. 9:7; Jer. 23:5-6; cf. vv. 7-8; 33:14-17; Eze. 37:21-27.
 The promise of land is significant here (Eze. 20:39-42; 37:12,14).

C. Jerusalem (and Israel) as the Glorified Center of a Universal Kingdom

Jer. 3:17; Isa. 60:14; 62:12; Eze. 48:35.
 The Messiah himself will dwell there (Mal. 3:1). It will be a house of prayer "for all nations" (Isa. 56:6-7).
 Purpose: not Israel's pride; universal blessing for all peoples (Abrahamic promise).

D. The Spiritual Renewal of Israel

Ezekiel prophesies a changed heart (11:19-20).

E. Salvation for the Nations of the World

Eze. 36:22-23, 36; 37:28; 39:21-23; Isa. 54:14; 49:26.

F. The Return to Paradise

The transformation of nature. "New earth" (Isa. 65:17).

G. A Final State of Perfection Beyond a Millennial Kingdom

New heavens and a New earth (Isa. 65:17; cf. 66:22).

II. Some Basic Characteristics of the Old Testament Perspective

A. The Prophecies are Comprehensive

Its themes provide for the restoration of all things spiritual and material.

B. Some Prophecies Remain Unfulfilled

The promise of a holy nation, the possession of the land, the righteous rule of the seed of David, and a worldwide blessing of divine salvation remain an unfulfilled hope within the Old Testament.

C. The Prophecies Looked to a Historical Fulfillment

Real history; concrete earthly reality. The New Testament writers saw themselves in continuity with Old Testament faith.

CHAPTER TEN: THE PAULINE PROPHECIES ABOUT ISRAEL

I. The Nonforfeiture of the Promise

The firmness of God's promises to Israel undergird the entire discussion of that nation in the major section of Romans 9-11.

II. The Future Restoration of the Nation of Israel

Fullest Statement: Romans 11.

Romans 11:25-26 "All Israel will be saved"

A. The Identity of "All Israel"

Not "every Jew without single exception" but "Israel as a whole."

B. The Time of Israel's Salvation

Romans 11:25-26 The completion of the fullness of the Gentiles and the salvation of Israel do not occur simultaneously. Romans 11:26 is the last of a three part sentence: (1) the hardening of Israel, (2) the ingathering of Gentiles (which is occurring simultaneously with the hardening), and (3) the final salvation for Israel. The salvation of "all Israel" happens after the present time of salvation and riches for the world (v. 11) and the ingathering of "the full number of Gentiles" (v. 25).

C. The Nature of Israel's Salvation

Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:20-21; 27:9 and Jeremiah 31:34, referring only to spiritual salvation. There is, however, no reason for that to preclude an additional material blessing. God's gifts and call are irrevocable (11:29), so God will fulfill *all* His covenant promises to Israel, including a national restoration and subsequent blessings to all nations.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: OTHER NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

I. The Restoration of Israel

Mt. 23:37-39 Jesus taught the restoration of Israel along with the multitudes of nations.

Lk. 21:24 Coming temporary judgment -- hope of restoration.

THE CASE FOR PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:38 Enthroned disciples will judge (cf. Lk. 13:29; 14:15; Mt. 20:20ff). They will rule in the kingdom.

Acts 1:6-7 Hope for political restoration (cf. Lk. 1:23-33, 68-79) (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30).

Acts 3:19-21 Peter's invitation.

II. The Future Millennial Phase of the Kingdom

A. The Biblical Evidence

1. *The Restoration of Israel.*

The belief of the N. T. writers in a future restoration implies a millennial phase of the kingdom which must precede the eternal state.

2. *Revelation 20:4-6*

The early church held a millennial view. Prominent proponents: Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus. Three arguments for this interpretation:

a. *The teaching of two resurrections.* "Come to life" in vv. 4,5 meaning physical resurrection. There are two separated by a thousand years. (cf. 1 Cor. 15:23).

b. *The binding of Satan for a thousand years.* Presently, Satan is not bound (1 Pet. 5:7-8; Eph. 6:11-12; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 11:3-4,14). He will be bound in the future from the earth prior to the final elimination of evil.

c. *The reign of the saints with Christ.* Not present, but future. It is also earthly.

3. *Other Passages.*

1 Cor. 15, esp. vv. 20-28.

Luke 14:14, reward "at the resurrection of the righteous."

1 Thess. 4:13-18, no mention of the resurrection or judgment of the unsaved dead.

Philippians 3:11, resurrection "from the dead" always used of believers (cf. Lk. 20:35; Ac. 4:2).

Paul has a distinct resurrection in mind, John's "first" resurrection, the resurrection of the righteous.

There are no references which explicitly demonstrate that there is only one general resurrection of the saved and unsaved or that these happen at the same time. There are general statements which can be viewed as the resurrection of all people that will occur at different times in accord with the plain teaching of Rev. 20:4-5. There are also no explicit statements that the eternal state will commence with the coming of Christ.

B. The Rationale for a Millennium

The millennium provides a time when Christ's triumph in the resurrection will be manifest openly within world history. Christ will reign on earth in glory. The Old Testament prophets pictured a messianic salvation which was both personal *and societal*. The reign of Messiah on earth is necessary for the completion of all that God has promised through the Messiah.

III. The Future of Jerusalem

The New Testament looks ultimately to a new Jerusalem that will come down from heaven upon the new earth (cf. Rev. 3:12; 21:2; 10ff). The book of Revelation clearly retains significance for the historical city of Jerusalem in the eschatological understanding of the early church (cf. 11:2; 20:9).

The believer in Christ is already related to it in terms of having reached the eschatological salvation in Christ, but this salvation has yet to be fully realized in history. The city plays a central role in the future fulfillment of the O. T. prophetic hope. It is the holy city.

IV. Conclusion

The preaching of the gospel to all the nations of the world today is obviously not the complete fulfillment of the prophecies. There remains yet the work of the Messiah in bringing God's righteousness to human societies in an outward reign of peace -- a theme of great importance to the prophets. Christ will reign over the nations with a restored Israel fulfilling its assigned God-given role in the service of this salvation for the world.

CHAPTER TWELVE:

THE FUTURE PURPOSE OF ISRAEL

I. The Distinction of Israel

A. The Unique Status of Israel

Chosen and redeemed out of bondage by God, his treasured possession (Dt. 7:6; 10:15; 14:2; cf. 4:37; Lev. 20:26). They held special status among the nations (cf. 1 Ki. 3:8; Pss. 33:12; 105:6; 135:4; Eze. 20:5). Assured of restoration and the fulfillment of her mission (cf. Isa. 41:8-9; 43:20-21; 44:1-2; 45:4). The N. T. recalls and affirms this (Rom. 11:28).

B. The Nature of Israel's Distinction

1. A Distinction of Service

The choice of God contains a mission. The mission is to service God as a "kingdom of priests" (cf. Dt. 14:1ff). Israel's election is a means, not an ends; her service to God is for the good of all the nations.

2. No Distinction of Superiority.

Distinction *among* the nations. Any privileges enjoyed by Israel beyond the nations were related solely to their responsibility of service.

3. A Distinction of Exaltation Because of Service.

Service entailed responsibility and privileges, but also a place of honor and preeminence among the nations of the world (Dt. 26:19). Israel's reflection of God to the nations promotes the salvation of the nations (cf. 1 Thess. 5:12-13). They will recognize God and his servant people; they will honor Israel because of God's grace and work in them and through them to the nations.

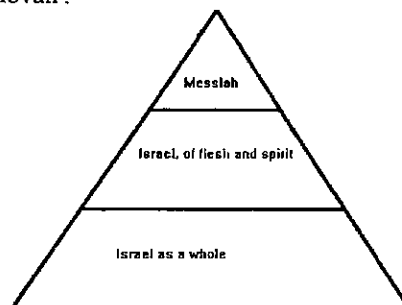
II. The Future Role of Israel

The idea that Israel has some role in the outworking of divine salvation for the world is gaining increasing recognition.

A. The Statement of Israel's Mission

At her founding Israel was given a mediatorial role on behalf of God: "You will be for me a kingdom and of priests and a holy nation." Priestly function within society. A showcase to the world as to what it means to be in covenant with God. Israel's mission is bringing the blessings of God to the rest of the nations: ultimately Messiah (Isa. 42:6; 49:6).

Franz Delitzsch on the 'servant of Jehovah':



The mission of the Servant is to enlighten the Gentiles. Messiah is the central figure but Israel cannot be separated from the concept of Servant and his mission as seen in Isa. 42:6 and 49:6.

B. The Future Fulfillment of Israel's Mission

1. Israel's Role as a Channel of Revelation.

God's "witness" (Isa. 43:10, 12; 44:8) and "a light for the Gentiles" (Isa 42:6; 49:6; cf. 51:4-5; 60:1-3).

a. *Revelation through God's acts of judgment* (cf. Eze. 21:5; 5:13; 6:14; 7:9; 12:15ff; 15:7; 39:21-24).

b. *Revelation through God's acts of restoration* (cf. Isa 40:1-5; 48:9ff; 52:9-10; Eze. 36:22ff; Dt. 32:37).

c. *The revelation of God through Israel's life.* Justice and righteousness are the foundations, the basic ordinances of the life of Israel. God's sovereign rule over her in her life as she merely exists is a witness to all nations.

d. *God's revelation in Christ and the revelation through Israel.* Christ is the complete and final revelation of God (cf. Heb. 1:3). However, it can still be argued that the O. T. prophecies are best understood as allowing for Israel's future service in divine revelation.

2. Israel's Mission in the Completion of Salvation.

There is a socio-political aspect of salvation promised in the O. T. that has not yet been fulfilled which can only be fulfilled in Israel. We must make room for prophecies which teach that God will bring societal salvation through a particular people, restored Israel. This aspect of salvation is not promised for this age, nor have we seen it, but is reserved for the future.

3. Conclusion.

God's election of Israel reveals a commission to the task of service in the divine blessing for all peoples. While few details are given as to the exact nature of the fulfillment of this task, in some way it involves bringing the fullness of God's salvation to the world.

Dr. Craig Blaising

DISPENSATIONALISM

- I. Classical Dispensationalism -
 Two Religions, Two Eschatologies in One Bible

- II. The Kingdom of Heaven vs. The Kingdom of God

- III. Revised Dispensationalism: Two Converging Eschatologies

- IV. Revisional Interpretations of the Divine Kingdom

- V. Progressive Dispensationalism

FUTURE TENSE

How do we live under the shadow of 'the end'?

WENDY
MURRAY ZOB

A local Christian television station hosted Hal Lindsey last spring for two evenings of lectures about his new book, *Planet Earth—1, 2000 A.D.* With chapter titles like “The Perilous Condition of the Human Race,” “The Rise of Deceiving Spirits,” and “The Coming Great Deception,” it is no wonder that, when the host opened the floor for questions, there was no want of inquirers:

- What leads you to believe that the Antichrist is alive, and in what part of the world is he living?
- Does the Bible specify any area of the world that will *not* be completely destroyed in the battle of Armageddon?
- What are some specific signs that believers can look for to distinguish Christ from the false prophets?
- What are your thoughts concerning crop circles and UFOs?
- Do you think the Antichrist will be completely human?

As planet Earth is poised on the threshold of a new millennium, and as global systems coalesce, there is rising speculation, and *angst*, among Christians as to what these changes might mean eschatologically.

Some of the beginning-of-the-end events Lindsey and others point to are difficult to ignore—no matter what end-times convictions you hold. For example, the proliferation of chemical and nuclear weapons sophistication on the part of terrorist groups (the “secret power of lawlessness” unleashed, 2 Thess. 2) *really has* transpired, as the subway sabotage in Japan has painfully revealed. The European Community *really has* become unified, to a degree, by means of the European Common Market and the Maastricht Treaty (the “revival” of the Roman Empire, the “ten toes/nations” in Daniel 7). At the

same time, the economies of other nations have become inextricably linked through the recent ascendance of the World Trade Organization. Laws and standards for economic interchange now exist at the international level, to which all local laws must, in theory, submit (the consolidation of “buying and selling,” Rev. 13). On the technological front, global networking in cyberspace has thrust businesses and economies into a cryptographic “brave new world” (the “increase of knowledge” in Dan. 12) where, according to Howard Fineman (*Newsweek*, Feb. 27, 1995), “even nationhood itself can seem irrelevant.” Add to this Lindsey’s statement on TV last March that “the day of the terrorist has come” to be validated so horrifically by the Oklahoma City bombing in April, and it is no wonder that the eschatological preoccupations of many have intensified.

But these speculations have antagonized other sectors of contemporary evangelicalism. Wheaton College professor Mark Noll, for example, writes in his recent book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Eerdmans) that modern-day end-times prophets tend to be “blown about by every wind of apocalyptic speculation,” even suggesting that they have become “enslaved to the cruder spirits of populist science.” These sentiments echo the thoughts of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who concluded, “It is unwise for Christians to claim any knowledge of the furniture of heaven or the temperature of hell,” and George Eckman, who wrote earlier this century, “Revelation is enough. Speculation is more than enough.”

The eschatological titillation of some has caused the disaffection of others and the confusion of many. How then are we to interpret the “signs of the times”—or should we at all?

A dynamic eschatology is vital to a living faith. The Scriptures address “the end” extensively: The

Old Testament prophets employed eschatological images vividly; Jesus entertained questions about it seriously; Paul reinforced those teachings authoritatively; the Book of Revelation "unveiled" the events of "the end" dramatically. Surely God intended to say *something* to us about it all.

So it matters. My hope is to find some meeting ground when it comes to reflections about "the end" so that, as evangelicals living in calamitous times, we may embrace an informed, vigorous eschatology. For, as historian Paul Boyer has concluded, "The most dynamic energized sector of religion has been the evangelical one and the eschatological vision is central."

SATAN'S RATTLING CHAINS

In A.D. 1147, Gerard of Poehle wrote to Evermord, prior of a monastery on the German frontier: "Look upon the conditions of the time and you will find it full of dangers. In Revelation, John prophesied that Satan would be freed after a thousand years (Rev. 20:3). Eight hundred and nine years have passed from the time of Constantine and Silvester when, in heavenly fashion, peace was granted to the Holy Church after the triumphant struggle of the martyrs. Thus, Satan, meditating on the long-desired end of this peace now almost completed, shakes the chains binding him."

Gerard assumed that the millennium outlined in Revelation 20 began with the ascent of Constantine. He likewise concluded (one of numerous eschatological viewpoints of that period) that the church would soon be overturned by Satan, who was champing at the bit as the thousandth anniversary of Christian dominance approached.

Gerard was not the first, nor the last, to divine eschatological signals in the dangerous "conditions of the time." From the time of the first Christians, who expected the Lord's return in their lifetime; to the turn of the first millennium, when the whole country of Iceland, according to Jeff Sheler in *U.S. News & World Report*, "converted to Christianity out of apocalyptic dread"; through the explorations of Columbus, who saw his endeavors as divinely ordained; to the sixteenth-century Reformers, who likened the papacy to the Antichrist; to the rise of the Millerites in the 1830s, who waited in vain—twice—for Christ's return; to the predictions of South Korean Lee Jang Rim, who convinced followers around the globe that Christ would return in October 1992—generation upon generation has believed that theirs was the moment in history when the victorious Savior would come with the clouds.

The problem was, he didn't.

The result has been inventive reinterpretations about what Christ must have meant when he spoke of his coming at "the end of the age."

TIME'S TRAJECTORIES

The genre of "the apocalyptic" originated in the Jewish Scriptures, especially in the books of Daniel and Ezekiel, and flourished in Palestine through A.D. 100. Judaism's linear concept of time departed from the more common ancient belief that time flowed in "fertility cycles," based on agricultural seasons. The idea that history has a "distinct beginning and follows a clearly defined forward trajectory," writes Paul Boyer in his book *When Time Shall Be No More* (Harvard), "encouraged an eschatological vision of history." The apocalyptic writings interpret history as a cosmic struggle between good and evil; history progresses in the context of a preor-

dated resolution, prior to which evil increases until the "appointed time" of the (imminent) end.

With this in mind, the first-century believers looked for the imminent return of Jesus, fully expecting that he would appear before "this generation" passed away (Matt. 24:34).

As time passed, they adopted a somewhat ill-defined premillennial outlook, called *chiliasm* (based on the Greek word in Rev. 20:3 denoting the number 1,000), which anticipated that the Lord would return and reign in Jerusalem for a thousand years before the final judgment. This outlook never found creedal expression, however, and only loosely summed up the eschatological beliefs of the early church.

In the fourth century, Augustine rejected the literal and materialistic notions behind chiliasm, concluding, instead, that the kingdom of God was already manifest in the presence of the church, that is, the community of believers. The thought of an imminent,

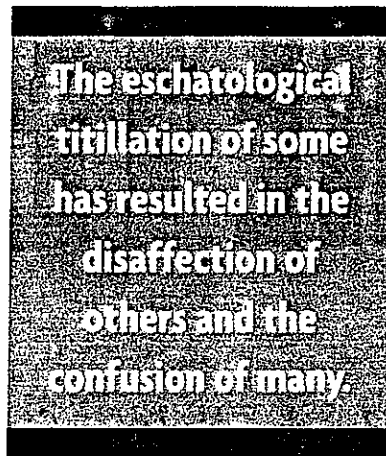
material millennial kingdom to be ushered in by Christ was replaced by a futuristic view of the return of the Lord (and accompanying events). The focus shifted away from the heavens to the church as the believing community now identified as the kingdom of God. The age between Pentecost and the return of Christ *was* the millennium, according to Augustine, and it would be marked by the ever-increasing influence of the church in overturning evil in the world before the Lord's return. This outlook predominated for the next 1,500 years.

Early American theologians like Jonathan Edwards in the eighteenth century and Charles Finney in the nineteenth adopted this millennial scheme, called postmillennialism: "the redemption of the world [by means of] a long, slow process extending through the centuries . . . approaching an appointed goal . . . a day of advancing victory," according to historian Loraine Boettner. And it is no wonder these revival preachers embraced postmillennialism, given the supernatural manifestations of spiritual renewal that accompanied their ministries. Finney proclaimed that "if [people] were united all over the world, the millennium might be brought about in three months."

Yet social hardship in the early nineteenth century, along with the rise of "Enlightenment thinking," precipitated the decline of postmillennialism. Secular eschatologies like Marxism replaced the concept of the kingdom of God with the hope of proletarian revolution setting up a utopian kingdom of man built on the ruins of the upper classes. Rationalism replaced revelation; reason overturned faith. As Paul Erb wrote in *The Alpha and the Omega* (Herald), "The age of science made biblical eschatology seem like a fairy tale."

DARBY'S DEBUT

At this time, a new kind of millennial thinking emerged that resembled the eschatological hopes of the early church. Premillennialism found a strong following after being meticulously delineated by Baptist lay preacher William Miller in the early and mid-1800s. He said, "I found, going through with the Bible, the end of all things was clearly and emphatically predicted, both as to time and manner . . . and immediately the duty to publish this doctrine, that the world might believe and get ready to meet the Judge and Bridegroom at



his coming, was impressed upon my mind."

Miller's view fell into disrepute, however, after the Millerites made not one, but two failed attempts to set a date for the Lord's return. Wrote one of his followers: "Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before." Timothy Weber noted in *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming* (Chicago): "To say the least, by 1845 premillennialism had fallen on hard times."

It did, that is, until it found rebirth under the inspiration of British pastor John Nelson Darby in the late 1850s in the form of dispensational premillennialism. According to Darby, God interacted with humanity in a series of epochs, or *dispensations*. The Bible addressed events past and future, but remained largely silent about the present age of the church (Darby's "great parenthesis"). The next epoch to commence would be that ushered in by the "Rapture," or the snatching away of the church out of the world. This, then, would set in motion a series of subsequent events that would culminate in the ascendancy of the Antichrist, who would rule the world for seven years (the latter half of which would coincide with the Great Tribulation). His rule would then be overturned with the victorious descent of Christ with the church to defeat him at the Battle of Armageddon and inaugurate a literal thousand-year reign. The Lord and his church would enjoy uninterrupted bliss during this time (which would be contiguous with the spiritual rebirth of Israel, acknowledging Christ as Messiah) until Satan would be "loosed" at the end for a season. Then, heaven and earth will give way to a new heaven and a new earth, the final judgment will commence, and Satan will be cast forever into eternal damnation.

"Darby wove these diverse strands into a tight cohesive system that he buttressed at every point by copious biblical proof texts, then tirelessly promoted through his writing and preaching tours," writes Boyer. Cyrus Scofield then popularized this system of belief with the publication of his Reference Bible (1909) and catapulted it into the Protestant mainstream. Boyers suggests that this work, "more than any other single work solidified the premillennial movement."

ESCHATOLOGICAL PLURALISM

But there has been no consensus on things eschatological among evangelicals. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that expert opinion varies both in general interpretation of the texts and in the understanding of details. For example, scholars debate whether in Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24 and parallel passages) he was speaking about cataclysmic events of that day—the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as verse 34 suggests—or about catastrophic events at the end of history. "Few chapters of the Bible have called forth more disagreement among interpreters than Matthew 24 and its parallels," writes biblical commentator D. A. Carson. Paul's meaning in his references to "the

coming of our Lord" in 2 Thessalonians evokes a similar cacophony of opinion. Some say, for example, when it comes to the "apostasy" referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 that Paul indicates the entire church will "fall away." Others suggest that it could refer to the Christians or Jews. Still others maintain the church will merely look on as only the Jews apostatize.

Interpreting the Book of Revelation is yet more complicated. Some argue the book can be understood from the point of view that it was intended for the first-century church only, that it is a "tract for hard times" for the suffering Christians in Asia Minor as they longed for liberation from the heavy hand of Rome (the "beast").

Others suggest that Revelation is a symbolic portrayal of the history of the church from its inception to its consummation. The symbols in the book designate various historical movements and events. The Roman church, in this view, was seen as the "false prophet" who served the purposes of "the beast" (the office of the papacy).

The "idealists" interpret Revelation in strictly symbolic terms, with the bizarre imagery allegorically representing the cosmic conflict between the forces of evil and the kingdom of God, while the "futurists" see Revelation largely as prophecy yet to be fulfilled.

But none is without an "Achilles heel." Those who apply Revelation's significance strictly to the first century are left to explain why the victory outlined in Revelation was not realized. Those who view the book as a strictly symbolic portrayal of church history leave themselves open to subjective conclusions since there are no specific indicators as to which historical events are represented. A strict "idealist" perspective denies the self-proclaimed intent of the book that it was directed to the churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 1:11). The same argument can be asserted for a strict futurist point of view.

So, where does that leave us? The variety of reasonable points of view negates, in part at least, the certainty of any one in particular. But if it is all so muddled and indeterminable, how can we know anything at all about these mys-



Certain that the Second Coming can't be long now, and faced with the prospects of another election year, Bob and Nellie Chambers of Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, decide they'll just wait.

terious passages that compose such a significant portion of the New Testament?

JESUS FORETELLS THE FUTURE

In Matthew 24 and 25, Jesus took plenty of time to answer his disciples' question: "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (24:3).

The "signs" he enumerated were many. They included such things as wars, rumors of wars, famines, and earthquakes. And he sprinkled his answer with warnings: his followers would be persecuted, and false messiahs would attempt to deceive them, claiming he had returned already. He spared no force of imagery in portraying the severity of those events before "the end."

He then reinforced these admonitions with successive parables: the fig tree, the antediluvians, the servants in the fields, the owner of the house, the faithful and unfaithful servants, the ten bridesmaids, and the talents. These parables bolster his point: that his coming will be swift and sure; it will intrude upon everyday life; and its time cannot be precisely calculated. The fig tree story (24:32-33) validated the expectation that signs will come—some of the strongest manifestations occurring in "this generation"—and that his followers should be alert to these. He enlarged this thought by referring to Noah's generation (24:37-39), which was oblivious to the signs of impending disaster—the "illusion of normalcy" as A. J. Conyers calls it in *The End* (IVP). The owner of the house (24:43-44), like those of Noah's generation, should have expected the unexpected. This negligence is contrasted to diligence of the servant (24:45-46) who ran his master's household assiduously while watching for the master's return. Next Jesus warned of delay (25:1-13): Only five of the ten bridesmaids were prepared when the groom finally arrived. The others should have reckoned with the possibility of his "tarrying." Similarly, the vigilant, enterprising servants in the parable of the talents (25:14-30) multiplied the talents left in their care and thus won the master's reward. In contrast, the passive, "worthless servant" sat idly with his single talent, until he met with his master's contempt.

Jesus prefaced his end-times narrative with the warning to "watch out that no one deceives you," which warned the disciples that these events may not transpire according to a well-plotted story line. There would be room for doubt and deceit. Jesus alerted his followers to the fact that the signs of his coming will be evident—keep alert; that his coming will be swift and sure—be ready; and that it might take longer than they think—don't give up.

This, however, is the surest of Jesus' predictions of the end: "No one knows about the day or the hour" (25:36).

HOW SHALL WE THEN LIVE?

If, as Jesus said, we cannot know the hour or the day, yet we also see the signs, how are we to be both ready to go and resigned to wait?

According to the apostle Peter, the scoffers say: "Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. . . . Where is this 'coming' he promised?" (2 Peter 3:4;

all Scripture quotations from the NIV). But he reminds us that the Lord's tarrying means salvation for more. Still, Peter poses the question: "What kind of people ought you to be . . . as you look forward to the day of God?" (3:11-12).

His answer: "You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God . . . looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth" (3:12-13).

Two stories can fill in what "looking forward" might mean.

When our middle son, Ben, was much younger, he had heard more than one sermon about the importance of surrendering our lives to Christ. And Ben seemed well-attuned to the heart of God; he exhibited the selfless and kind tendencies that would take some—like his mother—a lifetime of sanctification to acquire. So it disturbed my husband and me when Ben stubbornly resisted our invitations for him to give his life to Christ. He would offer no explanations; he would simply tell us in his preschool English that he wasn't ready.

He resisted for several months. Then, one morning as we sat around the kitchen table eating our Cheerios, little Ben announced that he was ready to give his life to Christ. He then got up from the table and went upstairs. My husband and I looked at each other and followed him. I guess we expected to find Ben on his knees in prayer. We didn't. Instead, we found him folding his Star Wars pajamas into his Sesame Street suitcase.

We said, "Ben, what are you doing?"

He answered, "Packing."

"Why?" we asked.

"To go to heaven," he said.

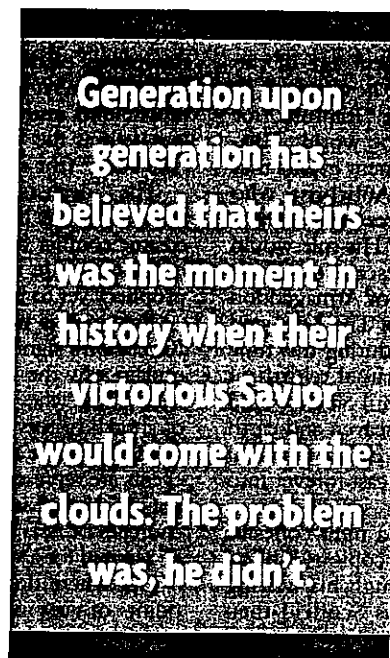
We then understood why our child hesitated to give his life to Christ. He thought that, in so doing, he would have to leave us and take up residence, literally, with Christ in heaven.

We should all possess the faith of little Benjamin: we should have our hearts so fixed on Christ's appearance that the attachments of our earthly life pale in comparison. For we are "aliens and strangers on earth . . . longing for a better country—a heavenly one" (Heb. 11:13).

But what about the meantime?

Perhaps there is a clue in the life of Jeremiah, who, while "confined to the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace of Judah"—even as Nebuchadnezzar's army was besieging Jerusalem—heard the word of the Lord to "buy [a] field in Anathoth" (Jer. 32:7). Anathoth, just outside of Jerusalem, was not the most stable real estate market at that moment. The Babylonian troops were razing the city and burning and pillaging the surrounding areas. Who needed a field at Anathoth? Wouldn't the money be better invested in some surer venture? But that is exactly the point: the field at Anathoth, given the conditions of the moment, may not have been a stable investment, but from Jeremiah's standpoint, it was an investment in the promise of God: "This is what the Lord says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I promised them. Once more fields will be bought in this land of which you now say, 'It is desolate'" (Jer. 32:42-43).

So when it comes to living under the shadow of the end, we find ourselves suspended between two seemingly contradictory realities. On the one hand, we need the faith to let go



of worldly attachments—like little Ben, who packed his bags to leave the only world he knew. On the other hand, we need to live fully, here and now, with assurance and abandon, like the weeping prophet who invested in smoldering real estate. Paul captures the essence of this tension when he suggests that “to live is Christ” (*this life is worthy of the best that we can give it . . .*) but “to die is gain” (*... joyfully relinquished for the better portion*). Both dispositions depend upon unremitting faith in the promises of God. As Paul Erb wrote, “We live in a tension between that which we already have received and that which we look forward to with hope.”


In recounting what we have already received, what God has already accomplished—his creating the universe and setting humanity at the pinnacle; his intention for humanity to enjoy unbroken fellowship with him; his orchestration of our rescue from our self-imposed captivity to the Devil and to sin; his setting up the reign of God in the heart of every believer; his bringing forth an outpost of the kingdom, his church—the details of the impending events related to “the end” tend to diminish in their consequence. “Eschatology is . . . concerned, not so much with the ‘last things,’” writes Erb, “as with Him who is ‘the first and the last.’”

So, as we live and breathe in this turbulent time, witnessing unprecedented global posturing and moral breakdown, nation rising up against nation, famines, earthquakes, rebellion, and the rise of false messiahs, who cannot help thinking of Jesus’ words: “When you see all these things you know that [the end] is near, right at the door” (Matt. 24:33)? That

is where “the end” should be in the heart and mind of every believer: at the door.

Where the Antichrist might reside or what might be the eschatological significance of crop circles are lesser questions. The greater question to be asked, as posed by Conyers, is: “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth” (Luke 18:8)? Indeed, the world scene is changing in ways never before experienced, and these events may well carry some eschatological import. But Conyers asserts, “Speculation . . . requires nothing from us. . . . As long as ‘No one knows about the day or hour . . . but only the Father’—then the end of history becomes equally important for every day in history . . . the judgment of every day and every action.”

Jesus’ verdict in his end-times discourse punctuates the imperative of service and action in the present. He concluded with the parable of the sheep and the goats. We will be judged, when that moment arrives, by the day-to-day actions performed in the shadow of the end—on whether or not we extended the glass of cold water to “one of the least of these.”

Every day *is* the last, just as it was for little Ben the morning he left his soggy Cheerios to pack his suitcase for heaven. At the same time, each day is born with promise and possibility and beckons us to invest each moment and opportunity with hilarity and abandon, with all the assurance of Jeremiah, who invested all in the promise of God. As we wait for the Lord’s return, we should, in the words of J. I. Packer, live “packed up and ready to go, and packed up and ready to wait.” 

Four Biblical Covenants

ABRAHAMIC
Genesis 12:1-3

LAND

SEED

BLESSING

PALESTINIAN

Deuteronomy 30:1-10

DAVIDIC

II Samuel 7:12-16

NEW

Jeremiah 31:31-34

THE CONCEPT OF COVENANT

THE BIBLICAL TERMS

The Old Testament term for covenant is בְּרִית (b^erit). The basic meaning of b^erit is a *legally binding obligation*¹. The obligatory nature of the covenant concept has been stated in this way, "The original meaning of the Heb. b^erit...is not 'agreement or settlement between two parties,' as is commonly argued. b^erit implies first and foremost the notion of 'imposition,' 'liability,' or 'obligation.'"²

The binding nature of the covenant can be seen in the way that covenants were made. The common expression was to כָּרַת בְּרִית (cut a covenant). This ceremony referred to the dismembering of animals and the parties making the covenant passing through the corpses. To do this was a symbolic way of saying that violation of the covenant meant the threat of similar dismemberment to the one violating the agreement. Jeremiah 34:18 speaks to this, "The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they have made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and walked between its pieces."

That a covenant was a binding obligation on the parties entering into it can also be seen in that the term "oath" can be used interchangeably with covenant (Genesis 26:28; 2 Chronicles 15:12, 15).

The New Testament term for covenant is διαθήκη (diatheke). This term is also translated as "testament." This term refers to "an irrevocable decision, which cannot be cancelled by anyone."³ It is stronger than συνθήκη (syntheke) - "agreement." The LXX (Septuagint - Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) consistently translates b^erit with diatheke. Eichrodt comments on this fact in this way, "...the covenant as the solemn, unbreakable expression and confirmation of his will, is more strongly preserved than by the term συνθήκη."⁴

¹ J. Barton Payne, "Covenant" in The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Volume 1: page 1000.

² M. Weinfeld, "בְּרִית" in The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol. 2: page 255.

³ J. Guhrt, "Covenant, Guarantee, Mediator" in The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Vol. 1: page 365.

⁴ Walter Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament Vol. 1: pages 65-66.

DEFINITION

Larry Richards offers this clear and concise definition for a biblical covenant: "a biblical covenant is a clear statement of God's purposes and intentions expressed in terms that bind God by solemn oath to perform what he has promised."⁵

TYPES OF COVENANTS

Parity Covenants

The parity covenant is an binding obligation between two parties of equal status. Examples of parity covenants are: marriage (Malachi 2:14; Proverbs 2:17); treaties and international trade agreements (Hosea 12:1; 1 Kings 20:34); agreements between friends (1 Samuel 18:3, 4).

Suzerainty Covenants

When the parties entering into a covenant relationship are not of equal status, the covenant is known as a Suzerainty covenant. This kind of covenant includes the type of relationship that would exist between a King and one of his subjects or subordinates. This is also the kind of covenant relationship that exists between God and man. God is the sovereign party and man is the subordinate party. J. Barton Payne says, "Scripture often employs *b'rit* in this sense to describe the legal relationships that exist between God the Lord and man the servant."⁶ Scripture never presents God and man in a parity covenant relationship.

There are two major types of Suzerain covenants:

- **Royal Grant** - "A king's grant (of land or some other benefit) to a loyal servant for faithful or exceptional service. The grant was normally perpetual and unconditional, but the servant's heirs benefited from it only as they continued their father's loyalty and service."⁷
- **Suzerain-vassal** - "A covenant regulating the relationship between a great king and one of his subject kings. The great king claimed absolute right of sovereignty, demanded total loyalty and service (the vassal must 'love' his suzerain) and pledged protection of the subject's realm and dynasty, conditional on the vassal's faithfulness and loyalty to him. The vassal pledged absolute loyalty to his suzerain - whatever service his

⁵ Larry Richards, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, page 194.

⁶ Payne, page 1003.

⁷ "Major Covenants in the Old Testament" (Chart), The NIV Study Bible, page 19.

suzerain demanded - and exclusive reliance on the suzerain's protection. Participants called each other 'lord' and 'servant' or 'father' and 'son.'"⁸

There is frequently other terminology used to distinguish between the Royal Grant and the Suzerain-vassal covenant. The Royal Grant covenant is primarily the "promisory" type of covenant while the Suzerain-vassal is "obligatory."

The most common way to distinguish the two major types of covenants in the Bible is to refer to them as **Unconditional** (Royal Grant) and **Conditional** (Suzerain-vassal).

• **Conditional (Suzerain-vassal)** - A proposal of God wherein He promises in a conditional contract with men with the formula, "If you will," to grant special blessings to men providing he fulfills perfectly certain conditions to God and to execute punishment in case of failure.

If ... Then

Obedience = Blessing

Disobedience = Withholding of Blessing

• **Unconditional (Royal Grant)** - A sovereign act of God whereby He establishes an unconditional or declarative contract with men obligating Himself in grace by the formula "I will" to bring to pass of Himself definite blessings with the covenanted one.

No conditions or "if."

NOTE: The Old Testament term that describes the relationship of the partners in covenant is **חֶסֶד** (hesed). This is one of the most significant terms used in the Old Testament. Psalm 136 is a celebration of God's hesed which endures forever. Scholars have written entire books written on this one term alone. The majority of the references refer to God's *faithfulness to His covenant obligations*. Our english versions translate this term in a variety of ways: "love"; "kindness"; "lovingkindness"; "mercy"; "constant love"; "steadfast love"; "unfailing love"; "grace"; "loyalty"; "covenant faithfulness." As can be seen by the various terms used to translate hesed, the basic ideas are love and loyalty. Perhaps the best way to render the full meaning of hesed would be "loyal love." God acts in love toward His covenant people because of His faithfulness to His covenant and covenant people.

⁸ Ibid.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

The scriptural record of the Abrahamic covenant is found in: Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17: 1-21; 22:15-18.

PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT

The Abrahamic covenant is basic to the other covenants made with the nation of Israel. The other covenants develop and amplify the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant. In the most basic terms there are three major areas of provision in the Abrahamic covenant:

- (1) LAND - Amplified in the Palestinian Covenant.
- (2) SEED/NATION - Amplified in the Davidic Covenant.
- (3) BLESSINGS - Amplified in the New Covenant.

More specifically, the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant can be categorized as follows:

♦ Personal Blessings

Abraham is promised that he would be the father of a great nation (12:2; 15:5; 17:2, 4-6, 20; 18:18); that his name will be great (12:2); that he will personally be blessed (12:2; 22:17); that he himself will be a blessing (12:2); that God will give Abraham a son/heir (15:4; 17:6); that God will give reciprocal treatment to those dealing with Abraham (12:3; 15:14); that Abraham will live to be old and will be buried in peace (18:15).

♦ National Blessings

Abraham is to be the father of many nations; hence the name change in 17:5. אַבְרָם (abram) means "exalted father" whereas אַבְרָהָם (abraham) means "father of a multitude", or "father of many nations." Through Ishmael and the descendants of his children with his other wife, Keturah, Abraham was the originator of many other nations (cf. Genesis 25:1-4).

The focus of the Abrahamic covenant is however on the special nation that is to proceed from Abraham through the chosen son. This son and his descendants will become the unique people of Yahweh through whom the covenant and blessings will be fulfilled.

The provisions for the nation are that Abraham's offspring will very numerous (12:16; 15:5; 22:17); that the descendants of Abraham will be given the land of Palestine (12:7; 13:14-15; 15:8-21; 17:7-8, 19; 22:17); that Abraham's descendants will enjoy the land forever (13:15; 17:7, 8).

• Universal Blessings

God promises that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (12:3). Abraham is then to be the mediator of blessing to the whole world. This promise is fulfilled through the Jewish nation who produced the Scriptures (cf. Romans 3:1-2) its ultimate fulfillment is through Jesus Christ (called the "son of Abraham" - Matthew 1:1) who brings salvation to all mankind.

NOTE: The material and physical blessings are given to and will be fulfilled for the nation of Israel. Gentiles and more specifically the New Testament Church (made up of both Jew and Gentile) enjoys the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic covenant - made possible through Jesus Christ.

THE NATURE OF THE COVENANT

The Abrahamic covenant is an **unconditional covenant**. That this is so can be seen in the following ways:

The Covenant Ceremony of Genesis 15 was Unilateral

When God officially "cut the covenant" with Abraham in Genesis 15, some significant observations are in order. Notice that after the animals are cut, Abraham falls into a deep sleep and immediately God makes his covenant promises to Abraham (15:12-16). It is also important to notice that only God (in the symbolic presence of the smoking firepot and blazing torch) passes through the pieces of the animals (15:17). Remember that Abraham is asleep. Only God is obligated to keep the covenant - He alone passed through the animals.

No Conditions are Stated

In the many records of the giving of the covenant, conditions are not cited. This covenant is clearly an "I will" covenant, not an "If you - I will" covenant. The form of the covenant is an argument for its unconditionality. This covenant is of the **Royal Grant** form and is thus unconditional. M. Weinfeld writes,

"Although the grant to Abraham and David is close in its formulation to the neo-Assyrian grants and therefore might be late, the promises themselves are much older and reflect the Hittite pattern of the grant. "Land" and "house" (= dynasty), the objects of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants respectively, are indeed the most prominent gifts of the suzerain in the Hittite and Syro-Palestinian political reality, and like

the Hittite grant so also the grant of land to Abraham and grant of "house" to David are unconditional.¹

The Covenant is Called "Everlasting"

In Genesis 17: 7, 13, 19 the covenant is called "an everlasting covenant." Only an unconditional covenant could be called everlasting. This is especially true when the disobedient history of the nation of Israel is considered.

The Covenant is Confirmed After Disobedience

If conditional, one would expect the promises to be withdrawn upon disobedience. This is not the case. In spite of clear acts of disobedience to God, the covenant is confirmed. In Genesis 13 Abraham journeys to Egypt because of a famine in Canaan. This in itself may be a lack of faith, since it follows upon God's promise of land and blessing in Genesis 12. In any case, while in Egypt, Abraham lies to Pharaoh about Sarah being his wife - he clearly intends to deceive Pharaoh by telling him Sarah is his sister. The covenant is not discarded because of this. It is confirmed in Genesis 15. In Genesis 16 Abraham has a great lapse of faith and has Ismael through Hagar. Again, immediately following this disobedience and lack of faith, God confirms the covenant and establishes the sign of the covenant in Genesis 17. In Genesis 20 Abraham again lies about Sarah being his wife. The covenant is confirmed in Genesis 22. So, despite disobedience on the part of Abraham, the covenant remains intact.

THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

In Genesis 17 God institutes **circumcision** as the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham's descendants. All males were to be circumcised and this was to be an outward sign of their unique relationship to God through the covenant.

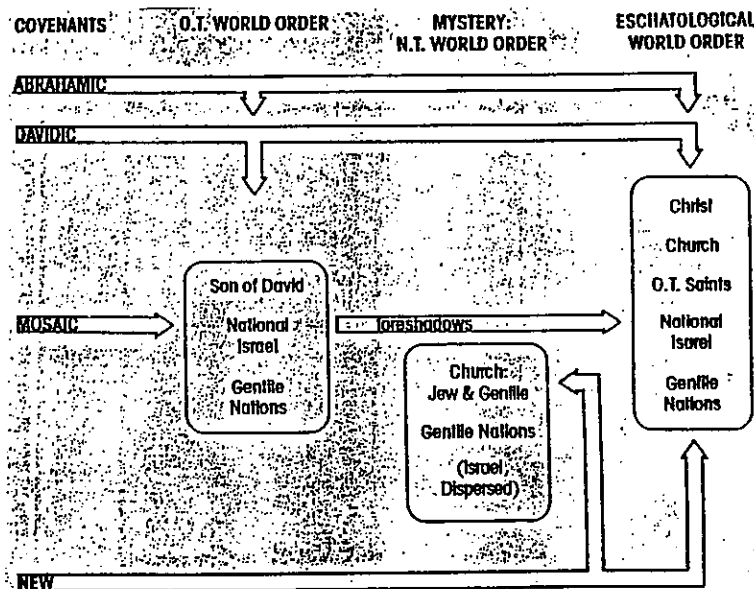
On the significance of circumcision being the sign of the covenant, the following quotations are helpful:

"The rite of circumcision was appropriate to the nature of the covenant. With this symbol God instructed his people regarding the joining of faith with the act of reproduction. The sign was sexual - the promise was for a seed. The covenanters would be reminded (1) that human nature alone was unable to generate the promised seed if God was not willing to grant such fruitfulness, and (2) that impurity must be laid aside, especially in marriage. The sign formed a constant reminder for the people to

¹ M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East," Journal of the American Oriental Society 90 (1970): 184-203.

preserve the purity of marriage in order to produce a godly seed (Malachi 2:10-17)."²

"Given within the setting of Abraham's failure to have children by Sarah, circumcision may have meant symbolically: I am yielding my powers of procreation, my stake in the future to Yahweh. I am becoming totally dependant upon Him. If I have descendants enough to be a great nation it will be Yahweh's doing, not my own."³



----- In Adam ----- ----- To Christ -----								
Before Christ						After Christ		
Past Ages						Present age	age to come	
Pre-sin	Sin Pre-law			Law		grace		
Pre-flood earth		post-flood earth						new earth
pre-Israel				Israel		Gentiles	Israel	
pre-Israel				Israel		Gentiles politically	Israel	
			Abrahamic	Davidic		NEW		
			mosaic					
Innocence	Con-science	Author-ity	Promise	law		grace	kingdom	new heavens, new earth

² Allen P. Ross, Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis, page 333.

³ G.E. Farley, "Circumcision" in Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol. 1: page 866.

COVENANTS	REFERENCE	TYPE	PARTICIPANT	DESCRIPTION
Noahic	Ge 9:8-17	Royal Grant	Made with "righteous" (6:9) Noah (and his descendants and every living thing on earth—all life that is subject to man's jurisdiction)	An unconditional divine promise never to destroy all earthly life with some natural catastrophe; the covenant "sign" being the rainbow in the storm cloud
Abrahamic A	Ge 15:9-21	Royal (land) Grant	Made with "righteous" (his faith was "credited to him as righteousness," v. 6) Abram (and his descendants, v. 16)	An unconditional divine promise to fulfill the grant of the land; a self-maledictory oath symbolically enacted it (v. 17)
Abrahamic B	Ge 17	Suzerain-vassal	Made with Abraham as patriarchal head of his household	A conditional divine pledge to be Abraham's God and the God of his descendants (cf. "As for me," v. 4; "As for you," v. 9); the condition: total consecration to the Lord as symbolized by circumcision
Sinaitic	Ex 19-24	Suzerain-vassal	Made with Israel as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and as the people the Lord has redeemed from bondage to an earthly power	A conditional divine pledge to be Israel's God (as her Protector and the Guarantor of her blessed destiny); the condition: Israel's total consecration to the Lord as his people (his kingdom) who live by his rule and serve his purposes in history
Phinehas	Nu 25:10-31	Royal Grant	Made with the zealous priest Phinehas	An unconditional divine promise to maintain the family of Phinehas in a "lasting priesthood" (implicitly a pledge to Israel to provide her forever with a faithful priesthood)
Davidic	2Sa 7:5-16	Royal Grant	Made with faithful King David after his devotion to God as Israel's king and the Lord's anointed vassal had come to special expression (v. 2)	An unconditional divine promise: to establish and maintain the Davidic dynasty on the throne of Israel (implicitly a pledge to Israel) to provide her forever with a godly king like David and through that dynasty to do for her what he had done through David—bring her into rest in the promised land (1Ki 4:20-21; 5:3-4).
New	Jer 31:31-34	Royal Grant	Promised to rebellious Israel as she is about to be expelled from the promised land in actualization of the most severe covenant curse (Lev 26:27-39; Dt 28:36-37, 45-68)	An unconditional divine promise to unfaithful Israel to forgive her sins and establish his relationship with her on a new basis by writing his law "on their hearts"—a covenant of pure grace

Major Types of Royal Covenants/Treaties in the Ancient Near East

Royal Grant (unconditional)
A king's grant (of land or some other benefit) to a loyal servant for faithful or exceptional service. The grant was normally perpetual and unconditional, but the servant's heirs benefited from it only as they continued their father's loyalty and service. (Cf. 1Sa 8:14; 22:7; 27:6; Est 8:1.)

Parity
A covenant between equals, binding them to mutual friendship or at least to mutual respect for each other's spheres and interests. Participants called each other "brothers." (Cf. Ge 21:27; 26:31; 31:44-54; 1Ki 5:12; 15:19; 20:32-34; Am 1:9.)

Suzerain-vassal (conditional)
A covenant regulating the relationship between a great king and one of his subject kings. The great king claimed absolute right of sovereignty, demanded total loyalty and service (the vassal must "love" his suzerain) and pledged protection of the subject's realm and dynasty, conditional on the vassal's faithfulness and loyalty to him. The vassal pledged absolute loyalty to his suzerain—whatever service his suzerain demanded—and exclusive reliance on the suzerain's protection. Participants called each other "lord" and "servant" or "father" and "son." (Cf. Jos 9:6,8; Eze 17:13-18; Hos 12:1.)

Commitments made in these covenants were accompanied by self-maledictory oaths (made orally, ceremonially or both). The gods were called upon to witness the covenants and implement the curses of the oaths if the covenants were violated.

THE PALESTINIAN/MOSAIC COVENANT

DESIGNATION

Biblical scholars differ among themselves regarding what to call the covenant which God established through Moses with the nation of Israel after their exodus from Egypt. Some refer to this covenant as the "Palestinian" covenant because it concerns the occupation of the land of Palestine. Some refer to it as the Mosaic covenant because it came through the agency of Moses and concerned itself with the Mosaic law.

Some even see two separate covenants: the Mosaic covenant which is the law given at Mount Sinai and restated in the book of Deuteronomy; the Palestinian covenant which is given in Deuteronomy 27 and 28. It seems best however to see only **one covenant** with distinct, inter-related parts. The following explanation will hopefully make this matter clear:

- The designation "**PALESTINIAN**" best refers to this covenant since it concerns the nation's relationship to the land of Palestine (or Canaan).
- The law of Moses is the **conditional, covenantal stipulation** that the nation must obey in order to enjoy the blessings of the Palestinian covenant. The law was the rule of life for the nation of Israel. Obedience to this law assured occupation of the land.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

The Palestinian covenant is found in two primary places: Exodus 20 - 31 and Deuteronomy 1-31. The passage in Exodus contains the specifics of the law of Moses. Almost the entire book of Deuteronomy is a record of the covenant and in fact it can be viewed as a document of the covenant.

FORM OF THE COVENANT

The Palestinian covenant is in the form of a **conditional, Suzerain-Vassal Treaty**. Conditions are laid upon the nation. If she will obey the law of God, given through Moses, she will prosper and possess the land. If she is unfaithful to God and disobedient to the law, she will not prosper and she will be dispossessed from her land and scattered.

The Palestinian covenant as found in the Bible is very similar in form to the treaties of the Ancient Near East. The following chart highlights these similarities.

THE MOSAIC [PALESTINIAN] COVENANT COMPARED WITH SUZERAINTY TREATIES

Parts in the Near Eastern Suzerainty Treaties	Given on Mount Sinai	Given in the Transjordan	Given in Canaan
Preamble	Ex. 20:2a	Deut. 1:1-4	Josh. 24:1-2a
Historical Prologue	Ex. 20:2b	Deut. 1:5-4:43	Josh. 24:2b-13
General Stipulations	Ex. 20:3-17	Deut. 4:44-11:32	Josh. 24: 14-15, 23
Specific stipulations	Ex. 20:22-23:33	Deut. 12:1-26:15	
Deposit and periodic reading	Ex. 25:16, 21	Deut. 31:9-13, 26	Josh. 24:25-26a
Invocation of witnesses		Deut. 30:19; 31:28	Josh. 24:22, 26b, 27
Curses and Blessings	Lev. 26	Deut. 27-28	Josh. 24:19-20
Vassal's oath of allegiance	Ex. 24:3		Josh. 24:16-18, 21, 24
Solemn ceremony	Ex. 24:4-11 ¹		

The form of this covenant then designates it as a conditional covenant, with Yahweh being the suzerain party and the nation of Israel being His vassal state. The covenant stipulations are the commandments of the law of Moses. If Israel obeys, Yahweh will bless her. If she disobeys, Yahweh will withhold blessing and Israel will experience discipline.

PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT

The provisions of the Palestinian covenant are found in the "blessings and cursings" section of the book of Deuteronomy. The stipulations of the covenant are found in the Mosaic law. The blessings and cursings outline what will occur as a result of obedience or disobedience.

- * Israel will enjoy possession of the land and prosperity in the land if she is obedient (Deut. 28:1-14).
- * Israel will suffer discipline in the form of misfortune in her land (Deut. 28:15-63a).

¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 137.

* Israel will be uprooted from her land and scattered for unfaithfulness (Deut. 28:63b-66; 30:1-3).

- Subjection (Judges)
- Captivity (Assyria/Babylon)
- Dispersion (Present)

* Israel will be restored to the land when she repents (Deut. 30:1-5).

* Israel will experience a spiritual regeneration (Deut. 30:6).

(Romans 11:25-27 tells us that there is still a future salvation for Israel when their sins are taken away. This refers to the New Covenant in which Israel will be regenerated).

* Israel's enemies will be judged (Deut. 30:7).

A simple way to remember the basic provisions of the Palestinian covenant:

Obedience = Blessing
Disobedience = Discipline
Repentance = Restoration

RELATIONSHIP TO THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The Palestinian covenant enlarges upon the LAND aspect of the Abrahamic covenant. In the Abrahamic covenant, the land of Canaan was "deeded" or given to Israel. The land is hers by virtue of a grant from God. In the Palestinian covenant, Israel is told what she must do to **possess the land she owns**. Ownership is assured because of the Abrahamic covenant. Present possession is contingent because of the Palestinian covenant.

The Palestinian covenant **does not** annul or negate the Abrahamic covenant. **Galatians 3:15-18** makes this very clear. The promises of the Abrahamic covenant are intact. **Deuteronomy 4:26-31** is an important passage to consider regarding this.

Craig Blaising of Dallas Theological Seminary comments on the relationship of the two covenants,

The Mosaic [Palestinian] Covenant does not replace the Abrahamic (Gal. 3). Rather, it provides a structure through which any individual Israelite and any generation of Israel (which would constitute the nation at any particular time in history) could participate in the Abrahamic promise of blessing. In other words, it was a means through which any generation of Israel could realize that promise of blessing in their own day. The Abrahamic Covenant speaking of everlasting blessing would confront each generation (of faith) as an eschatological reality. The Mosaic

[Palestinian] Covenant would make participation in that blessing an historical possibility.

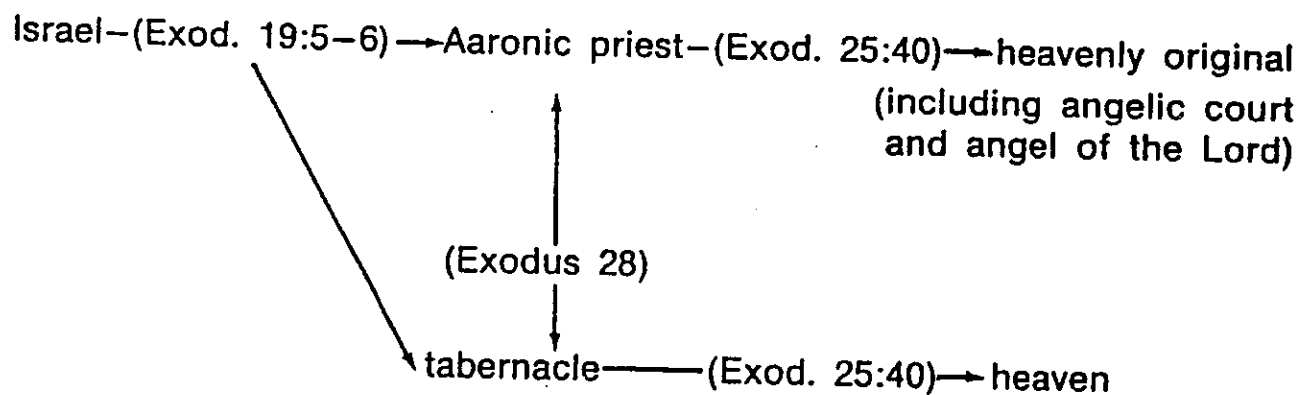
The Abrahamic covenant remains unchanged regardless of how Israel fares under the Mosaic [Palestinian] Covenant. Thus, even though a certain generation completely fails under the Mosaic [Palestinian] Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant guarantees that the future for Israel remains unchanged (Deut. 4:26-31; 30:1-10).²

A good way to remember the relationships between the covenants and their provisions is:

ESCHATOLOGICAL (Future) Blessings are FIXED;
PRESENT Blessings are CONTINGENT.

INTERPRETIVE VIEWPOINT IN OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL

Israel's Understanding of Its Priestly Existence



² Dr. Craig A. Blaising, "Eschatology 406" Class notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, Spring 1985.

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

The primary references to the Davidic covenant are found in 2 Samuel 7:4-16; 1 Chronicles 17:3-14 and Psalm 89. There are also various scriptures which confirm or allude to the covenant between God and David. Among them are: Jeremiah 23:5-6, 30:8-9; 33:14-17, **20-21**; Ezekiel 37: 24-25; Daniel 7:13-14; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 9:11; Zechariah 14:4, 9. (New Testament mention and ultimate fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ will be cited below).

FORM OF THE COVENANT

The Davidic covenant is in the form of a "ROYAL GRANT." It is an unconditional covenant. It is clearly **unconditional** for the following reasons:

- The "I will" formula of Royal Grant and the lack of "conditions" or "stipulations."
- The covenant is repeatedly called "eternal." (See especially 2 Samuel 7:13, 16, 23:5; Isaiah 55:3 and Ezekiel 37:25).
- The covenant is reaffirmed after repeated acts of disobedience.
- God's **חֶסֶד** (hesed) is said to be **forever** with David and the covenant will never fail (Psalm 89:28; also 2 Samuel 7: 14, 15).

PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT

The Context of the Provisions

In 2 Samuel 7 David has come to power and authority in the kingdom and he had rest from his enemies. David settled down in his palace and came to the realization that he dwelt in a house of cedar while the ark of God (which represented His presence) remained in a house of animal skins. David thought this to be an unthinkable situation, so he determined to build a more adequate sanctuary for God's presence to dwell in.

God sent Nathan, the prophet, to David to inform him that he, David, was not to be the one to build the temple. In the midst of this disappointing news, God established His eternal covenant with David. Instead of David building a "house" for God, God promised to build an eternal "house" for David.

The Content of the Provisions

The basic provisions of the Davidic covenant are three eternal things:

- ♦ An eternal house (seed).
- ♦ An eternal throne.
- ♦ An eternal kingdom.

More specifically, the provisions of the covenant are:

- ♦ After David's death, David's offspring will inherit the throne. This is a reference to Solomon. (2 Samuel 7:12)
- ♦ This son, Solomon, will build the house that David had determined to build. (2 Samuel 7:13a)
- ♦ God will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Samuel 7:13b)
- ♦ Solomon will be punished for his sins, but the kingdom will remain in the royal line of David forever, because God's *hesed* (hesed) will never be removed. (2 Samuel 7:14-15)
- ♦ God promises to establish an eternal "house", "kingdom", and "throne" for David. (2 Samuel 7:16)

To what do these key terms (house, kingdom, throne) refer? John Walvoord speaks to this question by writing,

...By David's "house" it can hardly be doubted that reference is made to David's posterity, his physical descendants. It is assured that they will never be slain *in tota*, nor displaced by another family entirely. The line of David will always be the royal line. By the term "throne" it is clear that no reference is made to a material throne, but rather to the dignity and power which was sovereign and supreme in David as king. The right to rule always belonged to David's seed. By the term "kingdom" there is reference to David's political kingdom over Israel. By the expression "forever" it is signified that the Davidic authority and Davidic kingdom or rule over Israel shall never be taken from David's posterity. The right to rule will never be transferred to another family, and its arrangement is designed for eternal perpetuity.¹

¹ John F. Walvoord, "Millennial Series," Bibliotheca Sacra, 110:98-99, April, 1953.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COVENANT

The Davidic covenant amplifies the "SEED ASPECT" of the Abrahamic covenant. The focus is on the special and specific individual who will come from the line of both Abraham and David. That person of course, is Jesus Christ who is identified in the New Testament as "the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1).

The provisions of the Davidic covenant are fulfilled through the person of Solomon (the immediate son of David) and through Jesus Christ (the distant son of David). The New Testament plainly refers to Jesus Christ as the son of David through whom the covenant will be fulfilled. Luke 1:32, 33 is clear, *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.* Hebrews 1:5 also applies the references in 2 Samuel 7:14 and 1 Chronicles 13:7 to Christ.

NOTE: This "double fulfillment" of the covenant is an application of one of the principles for interpreting prophecy - "The Law of Double Reference." J. Dwight Pentecost describes this law in this way, "Two events, widely separated as to the time of their fulfillment, may be brought together into the scope of one prophecy. This was done because the prophet had a message for his own day as well as for a future time...It was the purpose of God to give the near and far view so that the fulfillment of the one should be the assurance of the fulfillment of the other."²

Jesus Christ, as Messiah, the son of David, will reign forever over His people. He alone, as the God-man, can fulfill the promise to reign forever. He is the "eternal descendant" necessary for the provisions to become reality.

Craig Blaising explains the significance of the person of Christ to the Davidic covenant,

All orthodox theologians are agreed that the final fulfillment of this covenant is in Jesus Christ. The synoptic gospels establish His genealogy as a descendant of David with the legal right to rule. Thus the promise concerning the endurance of David's house is fulfilled in the eternal endurance of His Person. Luke 1:32 gives Him the right to David's throne. Luke 1:33 give Him the eternal reign of the kingdom.³

² J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, pages 46-47.

³ Dr. Craig A. Blaising, "Eschatology 406" Class notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, Spring 1985.

THE NEW COVENANT

I. THE NEW COVENANT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The New Covenant is mentioned and described in both the Old and New Testaments. In this study we will examine the covenant as found in the OT and NT separately and then correlation of the two will be made.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Old Testament sources for the New Covenant are: Isaiah 59:20-21; Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:37-42; Ezekiel 11:17-21; 16:60-63; 36:24-34; 37:21-28.

NATURE OF THE COVENANT

The New Covenant is **unconditional** as can be verified for the following reasons:

(1) The "I will" formula and lack of stipulations for the nation. "I will" is used 7 times in Jeremiah 31:31-34; and "I will" is used 10 times in Jeremiah 32:37-42.

(2) The covenant is specifically said to "not be like" the Palestinian/Mosaic covenant which was made with the forefathers after the exodus from Egypt (Jeremiah 31:32). That covenant was conditional - this one being "not like" it is unconditional.

(3) The covenant is called "eternal" (Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26) and the basic promises of the covenant are said to last "forever" [existence as a nation (Jeremiah 31:35-37); occupation of the land (Ezekiel 37: 25-28)].

(4) The fact that God will cause Israel to be obedient guarantees the meeting of a condition should one exist.

PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT

The Context of the Provisions

The prophet Jeremiah wrote at a dark time in the history of the nation. The promise of a new covenant was given when Judah was in captivity. People in the nation must have no doubt wondered if their national existence and identity were forever destroyed. "Is it all over?" must have run through their minds. It is in this setting that God promises them an eternal "new covenant". One Old Testament scholar describes the situation,

The days in which Jeremiah the prophet carried on his ministry were filled with uncertainty and foreboding. The citizens of Judah, like drowning men, grasped at every straw of hope, until at last all failed and Judah succumbed to the might of Babylon.

Jeremiah laid the fault for Judah's demise not primarily with weak leaders or unwise international policies, but with the people whom he regarded as having forsaken the Lord (2:1-3:5).

Jeremiah was to flee the Babylonian onslaught to live out his days in Egypt. But toward the close of his prophetic ministry he foresaw the ratification of a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). It was a prophecy that would bring a ray of hope to those unsettled times. It would find its ultimate realization in Christianity.¹

The Content of the Provisions

An examination of the texts describing the New Covenant provides the following picture of the provision of this covenant:

- ♦ Spiritual renewal which assures obedience. This spiritual renewal is found in the text in the language of figures of speech: writing the law upon the heart; singleness of heart and action; an undivided heart; removal of a heart of stone - granting of a heart of flesh; cleansing - sprinkling of clean water.
- ♦ Forgiveness of sin. (Jeremiah 31:34; Ezekiel 16:63; 36:33)
- ♦ Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit. (Isaiah 59:21; Ezekiel 37:27)
- ♦ Perpetual obedience of the nation. (Isaiah 59:21; Jeremiah 31:33; 32:39-40; Ezekiel 36:27; 37:24)
- ♦ Regathering of Israel from her scattered existence among other nations. (Jeremiah 32:36-37, 41; Ezekiel 11:17-21; 36:24; 37:21)
- ♦ Eternal existence as a single nation. Note that in Jeremiah 31:31 the covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In Ezekiel 37:22 the promise is given that they will never be split again.
- ♦ Eternal occupation of the land. (Ezekiel 36:28; 37:25-28)
- ♦ Eternal reign of Messiah as Israel's one king. (Ezekiel 37:22, 24 ff.)
- ♦ Rebuilding and permanent existence of Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 31:38-40)

¹ Thomas E. McComiskey, The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants, pages 80-81.

INAUGURATION OF THE COVENANT (OT)

The promises of the new covenant will be fulfilled for Israel in the future - specifically at the inauguration of the millennial kingdom, when Jesus Christ, the Messiah, establishes His righteous rule. Several scriptures point to this conclusion.

- ♦ Isaiah 59:20 tells us the covenant will occur when the Redeemer comes to Zion.
- ♦ The provisions of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and 32 in context with Jeremiah 33 which speaks of these blessings being realized with the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (see especially 33:14 ff.).
- ♦ Ezekiel 37: 24 ff. states explicitly that one of the provisions of the New Covenant is that "David" (Jesus Christ, the Messianic ruler and descendant of David) will be the one king and shepherd of Israel.
- ♦ Romans 11:25-27 (quoting Isaiah 59) clearly tells us that the fulfillment of the New Covenant is a future expectation, awaiting the fullness of Gentile believers and the removal of hardening upon Israel. From a NT perspective then, fulfillment is still being awaited.

II. THE NEW COVENANT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

SCRIPTUREAL REFERENCES

New Testament scriptures pertinent to the New Covenant are: Luke 22:20 (Compare Matthew 26:28 and Mark 14:24); 1 Corinthians 11:25; Romans 11:25-27; 2 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:15-18; 10:15-18; 12:22-24.

PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT

Several of the NT references to the New Covenant are quotations of the references found in the OT. Apart from those quotations there are two primary provisions or blessings that the NT has in common with the OT: **forgiveness of sins and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.**

When Jesus ate the Last Supper with His disciples, He referred to the cup (which represented His death) and specifically said that the blood of the covenant is poured out for "the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Hebrews 9:15 mentions the death of Christ which sets us free from sin. Hebrews 10:15-18 also mentions the reality of forgiveness of sin due to the sacrifice of Christ.

The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the New Covenant is vividly seen in 2 Corinthians 3. Terminology similar to that found in the OT is found in this chapter: "written on their hearts...not on tablets of stone but on

tablets of human hearts." 2 Corinthians 3 contrasts the law (the tablets of stone which condemns and kills) with the Spirit (who liberates, gives life, and brings righteousness).

So, the basic provisions of the New Covenant as found in the NT are the forgiveness of sins and provision of the indwelling Holy Spirit which are made possible through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

INAUGURATION OF THE COVENANT (NT)

The NT gives clear indication that (at least some) New Covenant blessings are presently bestowed and in effect. In 2 Corinthians 3:6 Paul considers himself a minister of the New Covenant. Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24 all tell us that Jesus Christ is the "mediator of a new covenant." This New Covenant is said to be superior to the Old Covenant and is currently in effect.

The NT references also are clear as to when this New Covenant and the bestowal of its blessings was made effectual. The New Covenant was inaugurated at the death of Christ. Hebrews 9:15-18 states the necessity of a death in order for a "will, covenant" (διαθήκη -diatheke) to take effect. The death of Christ put the New Covenant into effect. The references in the gospels - "this cup is the new covenant in my blood" (symbolic of the death of Christ) also show that New Covenant blessings are made possible through the sacrificial death of Christ.

CORRELATION

Both the OT and NT mention the New Covenant. While it is clear that some of the OT blessings are currently in effect (forgiveness of sins; indwelling Spirit), there are other blessings which are awaiting fulfillment (regathered Israel, occupation of land, reign of Messiah).

There are two major theological attempts at correlating the "some - not all" or "already - not yet" reality of the New Covenant.

- (1) The church has replaced Israel as the recipient of the New Covenant. (Amillennialism)

The amillennial solution is to "spiritualize" several things. The church is "spiritual Israel"; the physical promises of land and regathering made to ethnic Israel become "spiritual blessings" to the new Israel (the church); the reign of Messiah (the Davidic ruler) is currently in effect in a spiritual sense as Jesus Christ reigns in the hearts of men from His throne in heaven.

- (2) The New Covenant will be fulfilled eschatologically (in the future) with Israel, but is participated in soteriologically (through salvation) by the church. (Premillennialism)

Several things make this second solution the better alternative.

♦ The use of a consistent, literal interpretation. When God made promises to Israel (both houses in Jeremiah 31) it seems evident that ethnic Israel is in view. It seems certain that Israel would understand that the promises were meant for them as a nation. There is no warrant for spiritualizing God's promise to Israel and making it apply to the church. When God promised land, it seems evident that land is meant. Only a consistent, literal interpretation provides a sensible way to understand the scriptures.

♦ The New Covenant amplifies the **blessings aspect** of the Abrahamic covenant, through whom all families of the earth will be blessed. This would then include the church, which is comprised of Jew and Gentile. Galatians 3:14 tells us that these blessings come through faith in Jesus Christ... *He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*"

♦ The NT indicates that there is still a unique future for Israel and that blessings from the New Covenant will be bestowed in the future when Christ returns:

- Romans 11:26-27. Paul quotes Isaiah 59 and predicts a future deliverance of Israel at the time of Christ's return. Israel will then experience the blessings of the New Covenant. In commenting on this passage, McComiskey writes,

This verse [Romans 11:27] need not be understood as teaching that the new covenant of Jeremiah is not now in force because it must be ratified in the future when the nation of Israel is converted. In the previous verses Paul referred to that event. He wrote, "Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved." It is the nation of Israel which is in view here. The covenant is now in force, but one day Israel will be admitted to that covenant. It will be ratified with the people, and they will enjoy the blessings of complete forgiveness and unfeigned obedience. This passage does not clearly indicate that the new covenant will be ratified only in the eschaton.²

- Luke 22:15-20. Christ identifies the Passover cup (representing His death) as the the New Covenant in effect presently, and He also directs attention to the future fulfillment of that Passover in the future kingdom of God.

In conclusion, the church currently enjoys the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant which are based on the death of Christ. The full blessings of the

² McComiskey, page 161.

New Covenant will be literally fulfilled in the future when God keeps His promises to ethnic Israel.

CONCLUSION

We have examined four major covenants of the Bible. These covenants are basic to an understanding of the Bible - Israel's past history; the present; the future. Understanding the covenants helps us understand what has happened and why; helps us understand our current blessings; and helps us understand what must and will take place in the future as fulfillment of the covenant promises is finally realized.

In concluding this study, it will be helpful to close with two quotations by J. Dwight Pentecost as he summarizes the covenants and their significance.

Summary

In these four covenants, then, it can be seen that God has set apart the nation Israel to be His chosen people. He has promised the perpetuity of the nation. He has given continuing national rights to the land originally called Canaan. He has promised the people that they will be ruled over by a Davidic king whose throne rights are established forever. He has warned that a disobedient people will be disciplined, but the disobedience will not cancel their covenants. They cannot enjoy the blessings of the covenants until they acknowledge their sin, turn to the Lord, and walk in obedience. God has promised that someday their iniquity will be removed and they will become an obedient people who will serve God's purpose to be lights to the world.³

Significance

At the second advent all...the covenants will be fulfilled; and the remnant from Israel will enter into the blessings and benefits provided by those covenants. They will have been preserved as a nation. They will have been redeemed. They will be installed in their own land under the beneficent, righteous reign of their Davidic king. Israel's hope rests on the promises and covenants of God. The fulfillment of those promises and covenants demands a literal, physical, visible return of Jesus Christ to this earth, the enthronement of Christ as king, the subjugation of all Israel's enemies to the authority of her king, and Israel's experience of the benefits of the salvation provided through the New covenant enacted at the cross. As Christ came the first time in fulfillment of the covenants, so He will come the second time to complete all that was covenanted.⁴

³ J. Dwight Pentecost, "The Biblical Covenants and the Birth Narratives" in Walvoord: A Tribute, page 261.

⁴ Pentecost, Walvoord: A Tribute, page 269.

FOUR MAJOR OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

Abrahamic	Palestinian (Mosaic)	Davidic	New
<p>Genesis 12:1-3</p> <p>Basic to the other covenants</p> <p>The other covenants develop and amplify the provisions of the Abrahamic</p> <p>Three major areas of provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Land (see Palestinian) ✓ Seed/Nation (see Davidic) ✓ Blessings (see New) <p>Personal Blessings</p> <p>National Blessings</p> <p>Universal Blessings</p> <p>Unconditional Covenant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ unilateral ✓ no conditions stated ✓ everlasting covenant ✓ confirmed after disobeyed. <p>Sign of the Covenant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ circumcision 	<p>Deuteronomy 30:1-10</p> <p>concerns the nation's relationship to the land of Palestine (or Canaan)</p> <p>Conditional/Suzeran-Vassal Treaty</p> <p>Obedience = Blessing</p> <p>Disobedience = Discipline</p> <p>Repentance = Restoration</p> <p><small>The Mosaic (Palestinian) Covenant does not replace the Abrahamic. Rather, it provides a structure through which any individual Israelite and any generation of Israel (which would constitute the nation at any particular time in history) could participate in the Abrahamic promise of blessing. In other words, it was a means through which any generation of Israel could realize that promise of blessing in their own day. (Craig Blaising, Dallas Theological Seminary)</small></p> <p>Romans 11:25-27 tells us that there is still a future salvation for Israel when their sins are taken away. This refers to the New Covenant in which Israel will be regenerated.</p>	<p>2 Samuel 7:12-16</p> <p>Royal Grant/Unconditional covenant</p> <p>the "I Will" formula</p> <p>no conditions required</p> <p>repeatedly called "eternal"</p> <p>reaffirmed after repeated acts of disobedience.</p> <p>God's <i>hesed</i> is said to be <i>forever</i> with David and the covenant will never fail</p> <p>Basic provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ an eternal house/seed ✓ an eternal throne ✓ an eternal kingdom 	<p>Jeremiah 31:31-34</p> <p>Unconditional covenant</p> <p>the "I will formula"</p> <p>lack of stipulations</p> <p>specifically said "not to be like" the Palestinian/Mosaic Covenant.</p> <p>Called "eternal"</p> <p>Provisions</p> <p>Spiritual renewal which assures obedience</p> <p>Forgiveness of sin</p> <p>Indwelling presence of H.S.</p> <p>Perpetual obed. Of nation</p> <p>regathering of Israel from scattered existence</p> <p>Eternal existence as a single nation</p> <p>Eternal occupation of the land</p> <p>Eternal reign of Messiah as Israel's one king.</p> <p>Rebuilding and permanent existence of Jerusalem</p>

ESCHATOLOGY OF DANIEL: AN EXPANSION

I. Observations

1. Daniel is both prophetic and apocalyptic.
2. Daniel prophecies events which are both near and far.

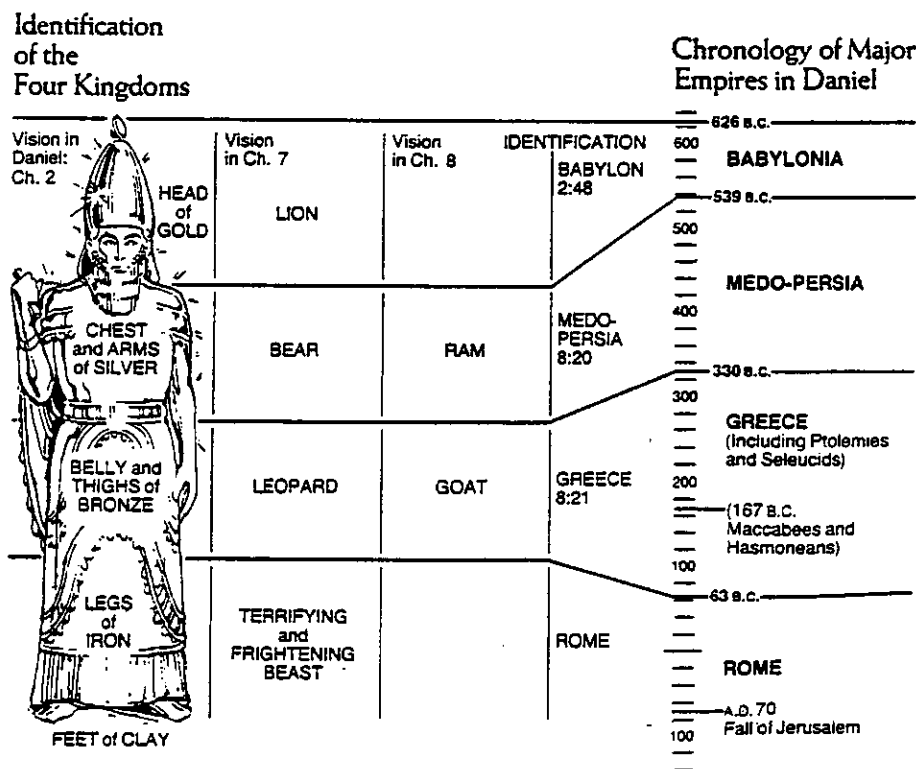
"In most respects, Daniel gave the most comprehensive and detailed picture of the times of the Gentiles of any book of the Bible as well as the future history of Israel from Daniel's time to the second coming of Christ. Accordingly, the Book of Daniel is the key to prophetic interpretation, and proper understanding of its revelation would do much to help the interpretation of other prophetic portions."

John Walvoord

3. Daniel is crucial to our understanding of the Book of Revelation.

II. Exposition

- A. In Chapters 2, 7 and 8, Daniel receives a number of visions. The three visions and their meaning is straightforward as the following comparative chart reveals:



In Chapter 7, the fourth kingdom is especially significant and the comments of Walvoord are again helpful:

The fourth kingdom was not named but was historically fulfilled by the Roman Empire. As described in 7:7 it crushed and devoured the countries which it conquered. The ten horns represented a future Roman Empire which will reappear in the end time.

The little horn represented a ruler who would come up last in the fourth kingdom who would be a world conqueror. Just as the image was destroyed in Daniel 2, so the fourth beast was destroyed by fire (7:11). The first three beasts were distinguished from the fourth in that instead of being cut off, they were allowed to continue for a time, that is, each was absorbed in the kingdom that followed in contrast to the fourth kingdom which will be suddenly destroyed (v. 12).

The coming of the Son of man (v. 13) could be understood to refer to the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah in His second coming, as Christ Himself used this expression "a Son of man" in many references to Himself in the New Testament (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 32, 40; etc.).

Daniel 7:23-28. Daniel was given this explanation, "The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on the earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress His saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a "time, times and half a time" (vv. 23-25).

In this interpretation Daniel was told that the final kingdom described by the fourth beast will

"devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it" (v. 23). This was an advance over anything that had been revealed before. In the vision in chapter 2 the stone destroyed the image but it did not go into detail concerning the end time form of the empire as this did.

Daniel was told that the ten horns represented ten kings (7:24). The little horn, representing "another king" (v. 24) will differ from the ten horns and will, in fact, conquer three of the horns (v. 24). He will not only be a world ruler who eventually will conquer the whole earth (v. 23), but he will also speak against God and will oppress His saints (v. 25). He will attempt to change long-accepted laws and times (v. 25), and for a time he will be able to persecute saints.

The time factor was represented as "time, times and half a time" (v. 25). Though this time factor was not transparent, by comparing this with other Scriptures it was evident that what he was talking about was a period of three-and-a-half years, a time representing one year, the plural "times" representing two, and then adding "half a time" (v. 25) representing a half a year. This will be seen to correspond to the last half of the seven-year period described in Daniel 9:27, the forty-two months described in Revelation 13:5, and the 1,260 days spoken of in Revelation 11:3. The fact that the word "time" represented a year was also illustrated in Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32. The similar expression "a time, times and half a time" was indicated in Revelation 12:14, also representing three-and-a-half years. In all these cases the probability was that it referred to the last three-and-a-half years preceding the second coming of Christ to the earth.

The description of the final ruler as one that ruthlessly "crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left" (Dan. 7:19) was characteristic of the Roman Empire historically and was here applied to its final form when it comes to the status of a world

dictatorship in the last three-and-a-half years before the Second Coming.

The minute description given here of the end time, the fourth beast, and the ten horns followed by the eleventh horn that gained control of three has never been fulfilled in history. Some expositors have attempted to find ten kings of the past and the eleventh king who would arise to somehow fulfill this prophecy, but there is nothing corresponding to this in the history of the Roman Empire. The ten horns do not reign one after the other, but they reign simultaneously. Further, they were not the world empire, but they were the forerunner to the little horn which after subduing three of the ten horns will go on to become a world ruler (v. 23; Rev. 13:7).

It is obvious to many expositors that the first three kingdoms have come and gone in history, represented by Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The fourth empire, though not named here, has been identified as the Roman Empire as it was historically. The last stage of the Roman Empire, described here as the ten-horn stage and becoming a world empire, has never been fulfilled. In fact, the whole present age intervenes between the Roman Empire and this future world empire, a factor characteristic of the Old Testament in revealing the future. The present age is passed over in its foreview.



'During the church meeting following the morning service and lunch, the children will be catechised by Brother Bernard.'

1. In the Old Testament there are 6 great Gentile empires, each of which had a particular mission in relation to Israel:
 - a. Egypt: the cradle of the nation Israel.
 - b. Assyria: took the 10 tribes into captivity.
 - c. Babylon: captured Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, carried Daniel off.
 - d. Three remaining world empires preceding the empire of Christ are:
Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.
2. Daniel 2:32-33 records Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a huge statue, revealing four kingdoms.
3. Daniel 7 presents God's viewpoint of the same governments as ravenous beasts:

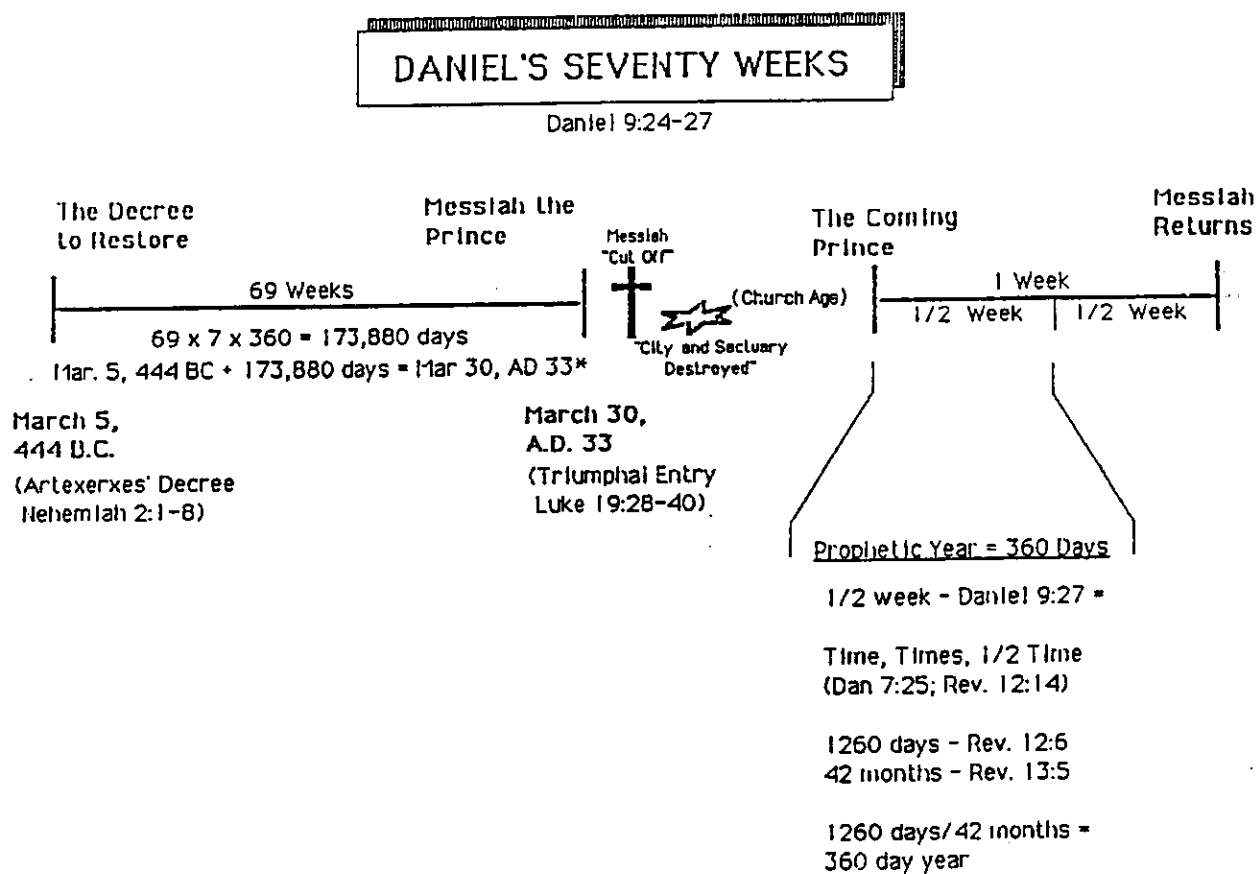
GOD'S VIEW (Dan. 7)	EMPIRE (fill in)	DANIEL'S VIEW (Dan. 2)
Winged lion	<u>Babylon</u>	Head of gold
Bear	<u>Medo-Persia</u>	Shoulders/arms of silver
Winged leopard with four heads	<u>Greece</u> (Alexander the Great)	Stomach/thighs of bronze or brass
Mongrel empire	<u>Rome</u>	Legs/feet of iron & clay

4. The final stage of the fourth empire is described in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 as a 10-horned beast, which indicates 10 Kings ruling simultaneously. Since this has not yet happened in the world, it is seen as being fulfilled by a 10-nation confederacy, a revival of the Roman empire.
5. Daniel 7:8 anticipates the rise of the little horn, called the beast in Revelation 13, and often called the Antichrist. (See also Daniel 8:23; 9:26; 11:36; 12:11).
6. This little horn, according to Revelation 17:13, will be given authority over the 10 nations, and eventually become a world dictator.
7. When Christ returns, Israel will be delivered as a nation by the Lord.

In Daniel 8:9-12 and 23-25 there may also be a foreshadowing of Antichrist. The reasons are as follows:

1. Verses 17-19 speak of the time of the end.
2. The characteristics of the man in chapter 7 with the man in chapter 8 are very similar.
3. 8:26 implies the distant future.
4. The description exceeds that of Antiochus Epiphanes.

B. Daniel's 70th Week (9:24-27)



In Daniel 9 three important segments are presented: first, the approaching fulfillment of Israel's return to the land (vv. 1-2); second, the remarkable prayer of Daniel in view of the approaching fulfillment of prophecy (vv. 3-19); and third, the important prophecy concerning the seventy sevens of Israel's future, culminating in the Second Coming.

In trying to reconstruct the prophecy and fulfillment, it should be borne in mind that a prophetic year is 360 days, not 365 and, accordingly, the years were somewhat shorter than in the modern calendar. Though the seventy years were literal, it is obvious that the Bible does not attempt to prove that it was to the exact day or even to the exact year, but that it was approximately in round numbers seventy years, not an indefinite period of time.

Daniel is informed that God has appointed seventy weeks upon the Jewish people to finish all transgressions. After this, everlasting righteousness will follow. These "weeks," however, are not seven-day weeks, but rather each of the seventy weeks represents seven years. Seventy weeks of years (seventy times seven years) will equal 490 years.

From the time of the decree to restore and build Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah will be seven weeks (49 years) and threescore and two weeks (62 weeks or 434 years). Adding 49 and 434, one arrives at a figure of 483 years, all but seven of the 490 years involved in the seventy weeks. Note the following table:

606 B.C.	Nebuchadnezzar takes the first captives from Jerusalem.
539 B.C.	The decree of Cyrus for the return of the Jews exactly seventy years after Daniel was taken captive (cf. Ezra 1:1-2).
538 B.C.	The taking of Babylon by Darius and Daniel's visitation by Gabriel.
457 B.C.	The decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus in the seventh year of his reign to build the city of Jerusalem (cf. Ezra 7:13-26).
444 B.C.	The decree of Artaxerxes to restore and build Jerusalem in the twentieth year of his reign (cf. Neh. 2:1-8).
4 B.C.	The birth of our Lord.
33 A.D.	The crucifixion of Christ.

Calculating from 444 B.C. to A.D. 33, one arrives at 478 years rather than the 483 years required. However, this is due to our reckonings, which are based upon the solar year of 365 days; whereas the Jewish calendar was based upon lunar years of 360 days. When the two calendars are adjusted, and one must do so for accuracy, a difference of about eight years will be discovered. Allowing an additional year for the transition from B.C. to A.D., the date of A.D. 33 is the date at the end of the sixty-ninth week when Christ is cut off (v. 26).

According to Daniel 9:24, six major events characterize the 490 years" (1) "to finish transgression," (2) "to put an end to sin," (3) "to atone for wickedness," (4) "to bring in everlasting righteousness," (5) "to seal up vision and prophecy," and (6) "to anoint the Most Holy" (v. 24).

Verse 26 then discusses the cutting off of Messiah at week sixty-nine (as discussed above). Then the seventieth week is addressed. Contextually it should be noted that it is separated from the other sixty-nine weeks. Further a new personality is introduced: "The Prince," who should not be identified as Messiah. Note the comment of Dr. Paige Patterson:

The seventieth week is the subject of discussion here (vv. 26-27). The "prince that shall come" is the beast from the sea (cf. Rev. 13) and the "little horn" of 7:8, who is the Antichrist. After making a covenant with Israel for one week or seven years, he will break it in the midst of the week, cause sacrifice to cease, and reduce the city of Jerusalem and the temple to destruction. Between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week there is an uncharted lapse of time not revealed to Daniel or to any other of the O.T. prophets. This intervening time span incorporates the age of the Church in which we now live and work. The events of sixty-nine weeks, including the cutting off of Messiah are behind. The events of the seventieth week remain for the future and will be realized during the age of the Great Tribulation of seven years just prior to the bringing in of "everlasting righteousness" (v. 24).

The seventy weeks thus are a time of retribution, redemption, and restoration. Sixty-nine are past, the seventieth is yet to come and will primarily be related to Israel. Walvoord notes concerning the seventieth week and verse 27:

The interpretation of "he" which begins verse 27 is crucial to understanding this prophecy in its fulfillment. In normal laws of reference a pronoun refers back to the last preceding person mentioned. In this case it is the "ruler who will come" of verse 26 rather than "the Anointed One" of the earlier portion of that verse. Because the fulfillment was never literally accomplished by Christ in His first coming, and even the New Covenant which some claim is referred to here cannot be related to a seven-year covenant because it is eternal, leaves the identification of the covenant-maker as the future world ruler, or Antichrist of the end time, a Roman related to the people who destroyed the city.

This is in keeping with other prophecy which indicates that he will stop sacrifices in the middle of the last seven years, the conclusion confirmed later in Daniel 12:7 in reference to the last three and a half years and the revelation of daily sacrifices being abolished and the abomination set up in verse 11.

The concept that there is a time gap between 9:26 and verse 27, though opposed by many amillenarians, has a great deal of scriptural confirmation. One of the most important confirmations was the fact that the Old Testament presents the first and second coming of Christ as occurring at the same time as Isaiah 61:1-2. If the entire Inter-advent Age can be interposed between references to the first and second coming of Christ in the Old Testament, it certainly sets a precedent for having a time gap between the sixty-ninth "seven" and the seventieth "seven" of Daniel 9:24-27.

C. Daniel 11:36-12:9

This text is debated as to the identity of the King of the North. Some see him as a godless and evil Jewish ruler. Others again see Antichrist. Some of course, have argued Antichrist will be Jewish. It is our view that

Antichrist is in view, but that his race is undetermined in Scripture. In this text Antichrist and Israel in contrast stands out:

ANTICHRIST

Self willed, v. 36

Exalts and magnifies himself, v. 36

Blasphemes God, v. 36

Temporarily prospers, v. 36

Rejects God, v. 37

Materialistic, v. 38

Ultimately defeated, vv. 40-45

ISRAEL

Time of troubles, 12:1

Time of deliverance,
12:1

Resurrection 12:2

A sealed revelation
until the end 12:4

A 3 1/2 year period at
the end will
consummate, 12:11

SEVENTY SEVENS OF DANIEL DANIEL 9:24-27

Babylonian Captivity 605-444 B.C.	Decree to Build Jerusalem 444 B.C. Neh. 1:5-8		Messiah Cut Off Dan. 9:26	Church Age Pentecost to Rapture	Rapture 1 Thes. 4:13-18	Period of Preparation 10- Nation Kingdom	Seven-year Covenant Signed 7 Years—70th Seven Dan. 9:27		Second Coming Resurrection Tribulation Saints Rev. 20:1-6	New Heaven New Earth New Jerusalem Rev. 21-22
	49 Years 7 Sevens Dan. 9:25	434 Years 62 Sevens Dan. 9:25					3½ Years of Peace	3½ Years Great Tribulation Covenant Broken World Government Armageddon Rev. 16:16		
			After 62 Sevens	Jerusalem Destroyed A.D. 70					Millennium Rev. 19:11-20 Judgment of Unbelievers	Judgment of Great White Throne

ESCHATOLOGY: VIEWS OF MILLENNIALISM

<p>THE PREFIX BEFORE "MILLENNIUM" REFERS TO THE "TIME OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING AS IT RELATES TO THE MILLENNIUM"</p> <p>Definition</p>	<p>PREMILLENNIALISM</p> <p>"SECOND COMING BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM"</p> <p>also referred to as CHILALISTS refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth PRIOR TO the 1000 year reign - or the millennium</p>	<p>POSTMILLENNIALISM</p> <p>"SECOND COMING AFTER THE MILLENNIUM"</p> <p>Christ's second coming will occur after the millennium.</p>	<p>AMILLENNIALISM</p> <p>"NO SECOND COMING AT ALL!"</p> <p>There will be no literal reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years</p>
<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>1. Christ will return at the end of THIS AGE with His saints to the earth for 1000 years as King</p> <p>2. In the millennium the nation Israel will experience the blessings God promised to Abraham and David pertaining to Israel's ✓ Land, ✓ nationality or (seed), and ✓throne</p> <p>N.T. believers will likewise share in some measure in the covenant blessing having been engrafted into the one people of God (Romans 11)</p> <p>Summary found in Rev. 20:4-6</p>	<p>The church is not the kingdom but it will bring in the kingdom (a utopian, Christianized condition) to the earth by preaching the gospel.</p> <p>Evolutionary process - "New age" idea that we are getting better and better and better!</p> <p>Christ will not be on the earth during the kingdom. He will rule in the hearts of people, but will return after the millennium.</p> <p>Not a literal 1000 year millennium. The church - not Israel will receive the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and David in a spiritual sense.</p>	<p>The kingdom reign of Christ and His saints is in existence for the period of time between Christ's two advents. (Actually happening now)</p> <p>The kingdom is either the church on earth (Augustine's view now perpetuated by the Roman Catholic church) and/or the saints in heaven (Warfield's view)</p> <p>The promises to Israel about a land, seed and throne are thus completely fulfilled now in a spiritual sense in the church.</p>
<p>Important Advocates</p>	<p>Clemet, Polycarp, Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Tyndale, some Anabaptists, Moravians, Mennonites, John Wesley, Ryrie, Walvoord, Graham, Criswell, Patterson, and Erikson</p>	<p>Daniel Whitby, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Wesley, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, Augustus Strong, B.H. Carroll, G.W. Truett.</p>	<p>Origen, Augustine, Roman Catholic Church, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, BB Warfield, L. Berkhof.</p>

MILLENNIALISM

The Millennium

The millennial kingdom is the 1,000-year period in which Jesus Christ rules over the earth as the promised Messiah, the seed of David (2 Sam. 7:14 ff). This kingdom will be inaugurated at His second coming and therefore at the end of the tribulation (Rev. 19:11-21). This is an intermediate kingdom of 1,000 years before the eternal state (Rev. 20:1-6; 21-22).

I. What are the Basic Systems of Millennialism?

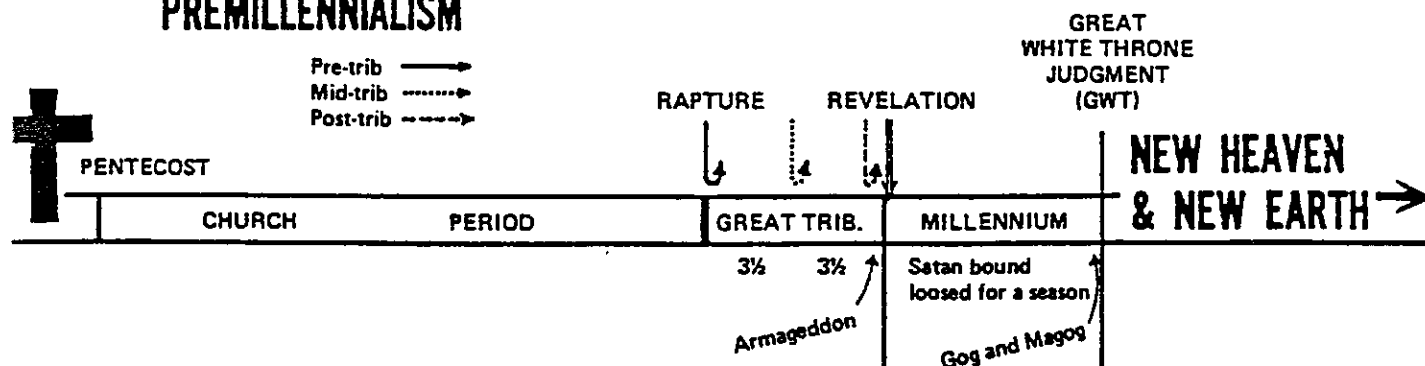
A. Premillennialism

The word "millennium" comes from the Latin words "mille" (thousand) and "annus" (year). The word "pre" before the word "millennialism" refers to the time of Christ's second coming as it relates to the millennium, and thus the term "pre-millennialism" refers to the millennium (1,000-year period) being preceded by Christ's return to the earth. Sometimes premillenarians are referred to as chiliasts. (The word "chiliasm" comes from the Greek word "chilioi" meaning a thousand.)

Premillennialism holds to the following points.

1. Christ will return at the end of this age with His saints to the earth for 1,000 years as King.
2. In the millennium the nation Israel will experience the blessings God promised to Abraham and David pertaining to Israel's (a) land, (b) nationality (seed), and (c) king (throne). N.T. believers will likewise share in some measure in the covenant blessing having been engrafted into the one people of God (Rom. 11).
3. Therefore the church today is not completely fulfilling these promises made to Israel as a nation. Certain aspects of these covenants have been inaugurated, but other await future eschatological fulfillment.

PREMILLENNIALISM



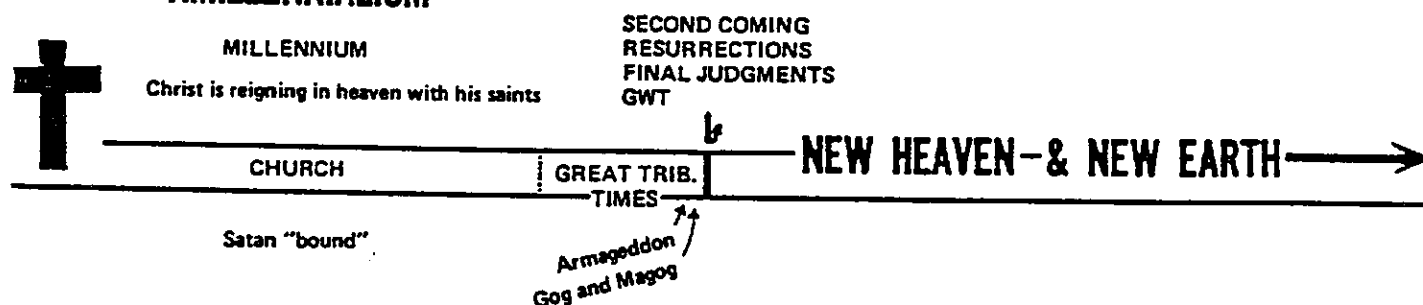
B. Amillennialism

The prefix "a" means "no," and thus amillennialism holds that there will be no literal reign of Christ on earth for 1,000 years.

The basic tenets of amillennialism are these:

1. The kingdom reign of Christ and His saints is in existence for the period of time between Christ's two advents.
2. The kingdom is either the church on earth (Augustine's view now perpetuated by the Roman Catholic Church) and/or the saints in heaven (Warfield's view). Thus there will be no future reign of Christ on the earth, and the word "thousand" is a symbolic number indicating a long period of time.
3. The promises to Israel about a land, seed, and throne are thus completely fulfilled now in a spiritual sense in the church.
4. God's promises to Israel were conditional and have been transferred to the church because the nation did not meet the condition of obedience.
5. Christ is ruling now in heaven where He is seated on the throne of David, and Satan is presently bound between Christ's two advents.

AMILLENNIALISM

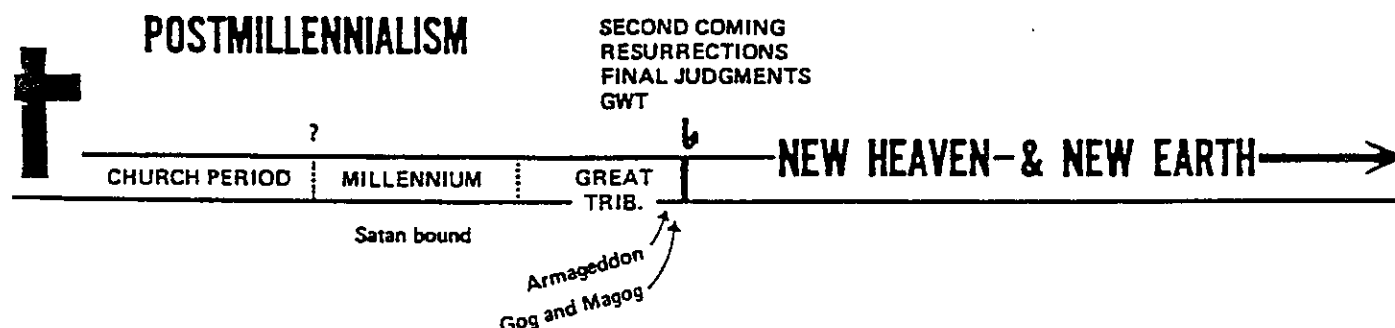


C. Postmillennialism

The prefix "post" means "after" and thus postmillennialism means that Christ's second coming will occur after the millennium. The tenets of this view are these:

1. The church is not the kingdom but it will bring in the kingdom (a utopian, Christianized condition) to the earth by preaching the gospel. (Liberals of this position believe the millennium will come through human effort and natural process, i.e., evolutionary progress.)

2. Christ will not be on the earth during the kingdom. He will rule in the hearts of people, but He will return to the earth after the millennium.
3. The millennium will not last for a literal 1,000 years.
4. The church, not Israel, will receive the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and David in a spiritual sense.



II. Who Has Held These Systems?

Premillennialism was the dominant view in the early church held by Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian, Commodianus, Nepos, Lactantius, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, Tyndale, some Anabaptists, the Moravians, the Mennonites, Latimer, the Hugenots, Bengel, John Wesley, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, and many nineteenth-and twentieth-century exegetes (Ryrie, Walvoord, Graham, Criswell, Patterson).

Amillennialism has been held by Origen, Augustine, the Roman Catholic Church, Wycliffe, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zwingli, and several in the modern era including B.B. Warfield, L. Berkhof, and O.T. Allis.

Postmillennialism was first taught by Daniel Whitby (1638-1725), and has been held by Jonathan Edwards, Charles Wesley, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, Augustus H. Strong, James Snowden, Lorraine Boettner, B.H. Carroll, and G. W. Truett. Some would identify Augustine as a postmillennialist.

For more on this, see Charles Ryrie, The Basis of the Premillennial Faith, pp. 17-33.

III. What Are the Hermeneutical Bases of These Systems?

A. Amillennialism and Postmillennialism

1. The kingdom and the church The hermeneutics (science of interpretation) of amillennialism begins with the assumption that God's kingdom is manifest today in the church, (or in the future by the church extending its influence into the world), as first advocated by Augustine.

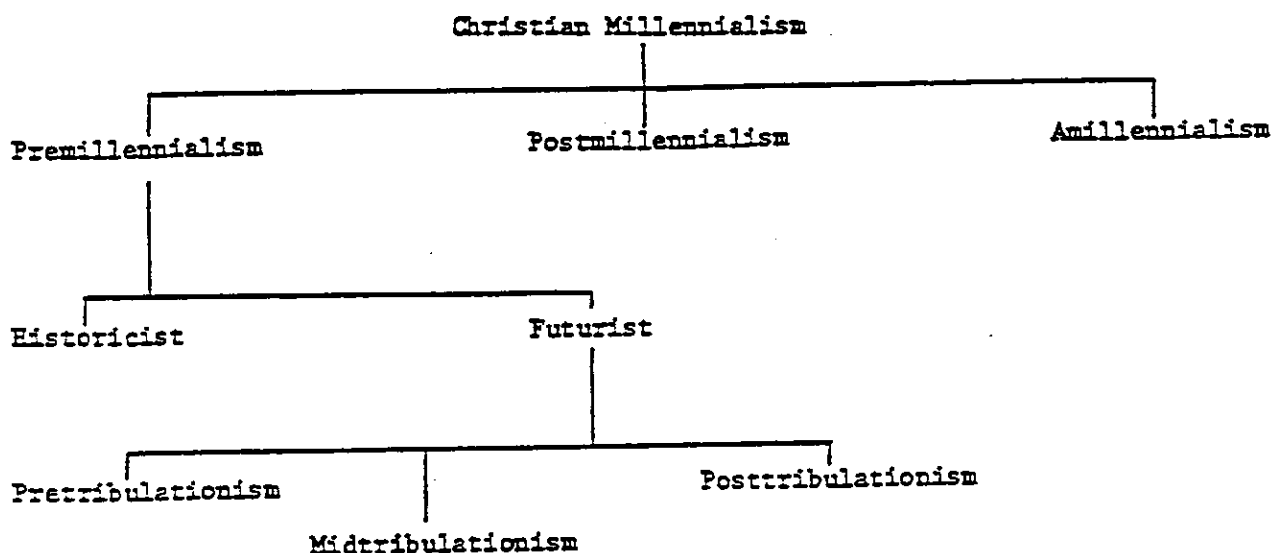
2. The unity of the people of God Since God has always ruled in His kingdom and since His kingdom is now evident in the church, it is concluded that God has a single overall program in all ages. That program is to provide salvation for the people of God, whether they are in the days of Moses or earlier or in the present age. This program is worked out in three theological covenants: the covenant of works (an agreement between God and Adam in which God promised him life if he obeyed and death if he disobeyed), the covenant of redemption (an agreement among the persons of the Trinity in which they decided because of Adam's failure to provide redemption), and the covenant of grace (an agreement between God and the elect sinner in which God provides grace for salvation).
3. Israel and the church Since there is one "program" (salvation) for a single "people of God" throughout all ages, Israel and the church do not have distinct "programs" in God's economy. They share in one continuous program. Thus the promises to Israel are applicable to the church. "The millennium is to be interpreted spiritually as fulfilled in the Christian Church" (O.T. Allis, Prophecy and the Church, p. 3).
4. "Spiritualizing" of prophecy But how can promises to Israel (about a land, a nation, and a king) and promises about God's kingdom be relevant to the church? The answer is by "spiritualizing" these prophecies. "Spiritualizing" means taking the spiritual sense of a passage (e.g., the promise in Isaiah 11:6-9 that ferocious animals will be tame refers to spiritual transformation as in Saul of Tarsus who was changed from a vicious wolf-like persecutor to a lamb-like follower of Christ, Boettner, The Millennium, p. 90). Since seeing a "spiritual," church-related sense in prophetic passages is viewing those passages in a way that is other than the normal sense, spiritualizing becomes synonymous with allegorizing. Amillennialists argue, though, that the New Testament takes Old Testament passages non-literally, that prophecy can be spiritualized because it contains much figurative and symbolic language, and that the great teachings of the Bible are spiritual not earthly (Allis, pp. 17-18). Postmillennialism basically agrees with this perspective, with only slight modification.

B. Premillennialism

1. Normal, grammatical interpretation of Scripture

According to premillennialists, the normal approach to Scripture means that the promises about Christ returning to establish on earth His millennial reign of 1,000 years are to be taken in the normal sense. His kingdom is in existence now (John 3:3, 5; Acts 28:31) in heaven and in the hearts of men, but will be present on the earth during the millennium. Thus His kingdom is both "now" and "not yet," realized and yet future.

2. Israel in the land with the King Since the promises to Israel (about being a nation and being re-gathered to and having possession of the land with the Messiah-King ruling over them) are unconditional and have not yet been fulfilled, they are therefore yet to be fulfilled. This is seen in the nature of the three biblical covenants--the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New.
3. Israel and the church Since Israel is yet to possess the land under her Messiah-King, the promises to the nation have not been transferred to the church. However, the church has been engrafted into the promises made to Israel. Therefore the church and Israel though distinct, are related to each other in God's plan of redemption personally, nationally, and cosmically. Since the church began on the day of Pentecost, the church is in some sense separate from the nation Israel. Normal grammatical interpretation thus makes a warranted distinction between Israel and the church.
4. Consistency in interpretation Premillennialism maintains that its hermeneutic is consistent (since the prophecies about Christ's first advent were fulfilled literally, the prophecies about His second advent can be expected to be fulfilled in the same way), and therefore amillennialism and postmillennialism is inconsistent, for it approaches non-prophetic Scripture in the normal sense but it approaches prophetic passages in a spiritualized, non-literal sense.



IV. Biblical Basis and Anticipation of the Millennium

A. The Covenants of Israel

1. The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 18:17-19; 22:15-18)

- a. Personal blessing to Abraham.
 - 1) Great nation (12:2, 4-6; 15:5; 18:18; 22:17)
 - 2) Great name (12:2)
 - 3) Great blessing (12:2; 22:18)
 - 4) Great reward (15:1)
 - 5) Receive the land (13:15; 17:8)
 - b. National blessing
 - 1) Great nation (12:2; 13:17; 15:5; 17:2; 18:18)
 - 2) Receive the land (12:7; 13:5; 15:18-21; 17:8; 22:17)
2. The David Covenant (2 Sam. 7:4-16; Ps. 89; 1 Chr. 17:3-14)
- a. Eternal seed (Ps. 89:4, 29, 36)
 - b. Eternal kingdom (2 Sam. 7:13, 16; 1 Chr. 17:14)
 - c. Eternal throne (2 Sam. 7:13; Ps. 89:4, 29, 36; 1 Chr. 7:12, 14)
3. The New Covenant (Is. 59:20-21; Jer. 31:31-34; 32:37-42; Ez. 11:17-21; 16:60-63; 36:24-34; 37:21-28)
- a. God will cause Israel to repent and be obedient. (Is. 59:20; Ez. 36:27, 31; 37:24)
 - b. God will cleanse and forgive Israel. (Ez. 16:63; 36:25, 29; 37:23)
 - c. The Holy Spirit will permanently indwell all His people. (Is. 59:21; Ez. 36:27; 37:14)
 - d. Israel will be permanently established forever in their land as a nation. (Jer. 31:35-37; 32:41-44; Ez. 36:28; 37:25)
 - e. God will be worshipped by Israel and will fix His presence among them forever. (Jer. 32:38; Ez. 37:26-28)

B. Predictions of the Eschatological Kingdom of God and His Messiah (OT)

In the Psalms and Prophets, a future, eschatological kingdom patterned after but surpassing the model of the Davidic kingship is predicted. This kingdom is a universal kingdom of peace and prosperity with the Anointed Messiah ruling over the whole earth. (Ps. 2, 21, 45, 72, 96, 98, 110; Amos 9:11-15; Is. 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 24-25; 40:3-11; 43:15; 44:6, 22-23; 65:17 ff; Micah 4:1-8; 5:1-5; Jer. 23:1-6; 33:14-26; Ez. 34:23-31; 37:24-28; Zech. 9:9-10; 14:9, 16-17; Mal. 1:11, 14; Dan. 2, 7)

C. Anticipation of an Intermediate Kingdom

The Scriptures regarding the kingdom seem to indicate that there is a period of time when an intermediate kingdom will function before the final eternal kingdom is established. This is consistent with the premillennial view of the 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth before the eternal state.

- 1. Old Testament references (Is. 65:17-20; Zech. 14:17; Amos 9; Micah 7:14-20; Is. 11:4; Ps. 2; Is. 24-25)
- 2. New Testament references (Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 15:22-28; Rev. 20:4-6)

D. Proclamation of the Kingdom by Jesus

1. The future nature of the kingdom (Matt. 13:41-43; 16:27; 24:29-31; 25:31-33; 26:63-64)
2. The delay of the appearance of the kingdom (Lk. 19:11-13)
3. The present presence of the kingdom in the person of Christ (Matt. 11:11-19; 12:28; Lk. 17:21)
4. The nearness of the kingdom (Matt. 4:17; 6:33; 10:7; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 11:2; 12:31)
5. The mystery form of the kingdom (Matt. 13:1-52)

E. The Future Kingdom in the Apostolic Teaching

1. The kingdom coming when Christ comes (1 Cor. 15:23-27; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 19:15)
2. Believers having an inheritance in the kingdom (Acts 14:22; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:12; 4:18; Heb. 12:28; Ja. 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:11)
3. Israel having a special place in the kingdom. (Acts 1:6-7; Rom. 11:25-29)

V. A Summary of the Arguments for a Premillennial Perspective in Rev. 20:4-6

A. It harmonizes historically with the beliefs of

1. Jewish apocalyptic literature
2. The early church
3. Much modern evangelical scholarship

B. It is expected contextually by the futurity of Rev. 4-22 based on

1. Revelation's outline of itself
2. Its chronology grounded in Daniel's 70th week
3. The futurity of events and persons in Rev. 4-22
4. The harmony of the reign of the saints with this futurity

C. It is substantiated exegetically in the passage by

1. The method of natural interpretation
2. The meaning of first resurrection

3. The literalness of time references
4. Natural chronology of 19:11-20:15
- D. It is consistent biblically with the corpus of Scripture.
 1. O.T. anticipates a kingdom
 2. N.T. anticipates a kingdom
 3. Jesus predicted a kingdom

VI. A summary of the premillennial perspective in Rev. 20:4-6

- A. John sees the saints sharing the millennial reign of Christ (v.4).
 1. He sees the saints of other ages reigning with Christ.
 2. He sees the tribulation martyrs come to life and reign with Christ.
- B. John describes the resurrection of the saints (5-6)
 1. It precedes the resurrection of judgment by 1000 years (5a).
 2. It is called the first resurrection (5b).
 3. It is a great blessing to its participants (6a).
 - a. They triumph over the second death (6b).
 - b. They are priests of God and Christ (6c).
 - c. They share the reign of Christ (6d).

VII. The Millennial Reign of the Saints (A Summary)

- A. The purpose of the millennial reign
 1. To fulfill prophecies of the O.T. of a future Davidic kingdom on earth (2 Sam. 7:14 ff)
 2. To fulfill the covenant promises of the O.T.
 3. To demonstrate that even in a perfect environment with no Satanic temptation, man is capable of rebellion against God
- B. The nature of the reign (Is. 11, 65; Rev. 20:1-6)
 1. Worldwide
 2. Jerusalem the capital
 3. A theocracy (Dan. 7:14; Rev. 19:15)
 4. Just
 5. Spiritual
 6. Physically positive (death is limited)
 7. Prosperous
 8. Righteous
 9. Ethical

- 10. Religiously pure
- 11. Socially beneficial (animal and social conditions are transformed)
- 12. Peaceful

C. Opposition to the reign (Rev. 20:7-8)

Comes from those born during the millennium to PARENTS WHO ENTERED THE MILLENNIUM as believers without resurrected glorified bodies who reject CHRIST AS LORD (cf. possibly Ezk. 38-39)

D. Vindication and deliverance of the saints (Rev. 20:9-10)

By God in swift, certain and climatic judgment, followed by the Great White Throne Judgment and eternity (Rev. 20:11-15; 21-22).

* A portion of this material was gleaned from unpublished notes by Craig Blaising and Roy Zuck.

PROPHETIC VIEWS

Postmillennialism	Amillennialism	Premillennialism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the church age the triumphs of the gospel will gradually eliminate evil and thus usher in a golden age. The church will bring in the kingdom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No millennium Conditions will worsen Christ will come and in a crisis of divine judgment will end history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ will return to earth to destroy His enemies and to establish His kingdom. Christ's kingdom on earth will be marked by peace, prosperity, and righteousness.

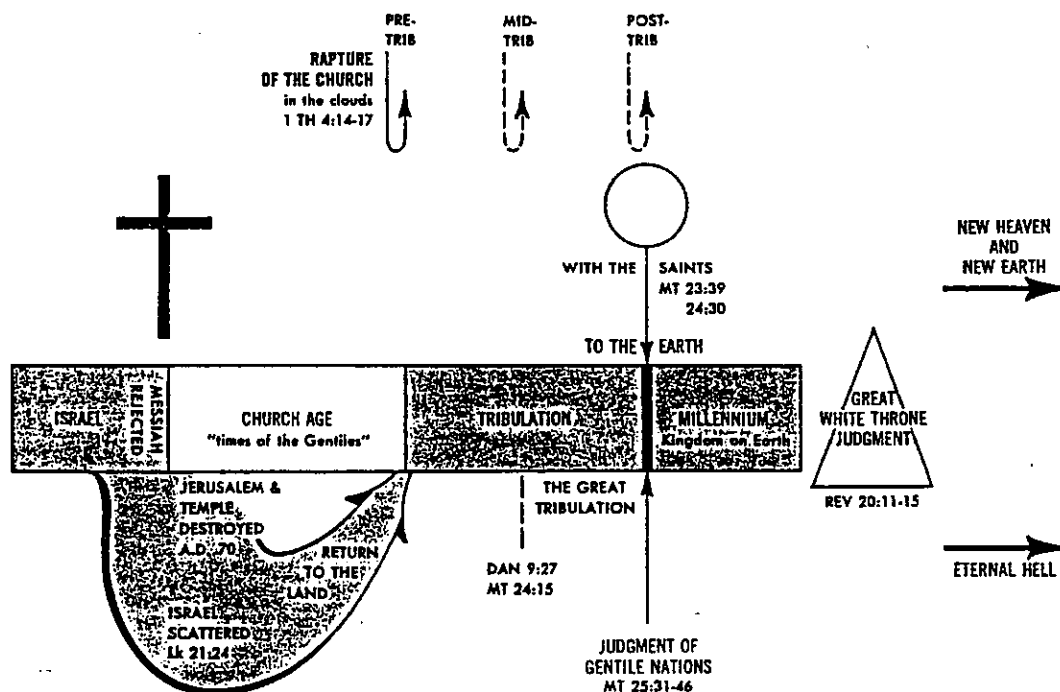
Dispensational premillennialists consistently distinguish the church from Israel. Because the church does not fulfill the yet-unfulfilled promises made to Israel, there must be a time when they will be fulfilled, and that time is in the Millennium.

The extent to which a theological system consistently distinguishes Israel and the church will reveal its eschatological position. Observe the following chart.

O.T.	N.T.	MILLENNIUM
Israel = Church	Israel = Church	No Millennium = Amillennialism
Israel = Church	Israel = Church	Israel ≠ Church = Covenant Premillennialism
Israel ≠ Church	Israel ≠ Church	Israel ≠ Church = Dispensational Premillennialism

ISRAEL IN THE PREMILLENNIAL SEQUENCE OF WORLD EVENTS

Israel shown in shaded areas



ARGUE FOR PREMILLENNIALISM FROM REVELATION 20.

[The bulk of this material is from Jack S. Deere's Article]

Outline of Answer

- A. Background of the passage
- B. Context of the passage - a Chronological sequence, all future.
- C. Exegesis of the Passage
 - 1. The Saints are on the throne
 - 2. The Martyrs are from the Tribulation
 - 3. The Martyrs are "brought to life." (four options).
 - 4. "Until." means a change is implied.
 - 5. The place of the Messiah's rule is on earth.
 - 6. The subjects of the rule are tribulation saints
 - 7. The length of the reign is 1,000 literal years.
 - 8. The quality of the reign is "with X" (perfect).
 - 9. The first resurrection is a kind of resurrection.
 - 10. The beatitude in v.6 recapitulates and is in the future tense.

***NOTE: Remember at each point to tie this to the idea of premillennialism.

THE ANSWER:

Introduction:

An essential element in establishing Premillennialism is the teaching of a intermediate Kingdom ruled by the Messiah to be established before the eternal state. [Intermediate Kingdom = a Kingdom inaugurated by Christ at His 2nd coming and terminated or merging with the eternal state]. In Revelation 19:11-20:15 we are able to show the presence of such an intermediate Kingdom. This is especially true of Rev. 20:4-6.

Background:

John is not describing some Rabbinic teaching for the source of the teaching is a vision from God (kai eidon). Yet the teaching of an intermediate Kingdom would not be unknown to his readers for other books such as 2 Enoch, Psalms of Solomon and Sibylline Oracles as well as the Rabbis had taught an intermediate rule of Christ on earth before the eternal state.

Context:

In Rev. 19:11-20:15 we find a chronological sequence. This sequence is seen to be chronological in that it parallels the chronology of Dan. 7

- 1. 19:11-21 = 2nd coming with cataclysmic judgment on enemies.
 - 2. 20:1-3 = the binding and imprisonment and cut off from earth of Satan.
(This cannot be taking place now for this is more than binding but is imprisonment and no activity on earth. i J 5; i P 5; 2 Cor. 4 all speak of the present activity of Satan on earth).
 - 3. 20:4-6 [OUR PASSAGE].
 - 4. 20:7-15 - Last Battle and final judgment
- EVERY FEATURE OF THIS IS FUTURE SO OUR SECTION MUST BE ALSO, AND IT FITS IN THE PROGRESSION.

It should be noted that a literary connection is seen in that we have the future glory of Messiah (Christ) in 19:11-21 and the future glory of the saints in 2:4-6.

It should also be seen that a syntactical relationship can be appealed to in seeing the use of "kai eidon" with each of these section throughout the passage. (19:11, 20:1, 20:4, 20:11)

Exegesis:

1. The identity of the ones on the throne.

3 Options:

- a. the 24 elders - (but these are likely angelic beings? ch. 7 and 19)
- b. The Martyrs - (but in the chronology they are not yet raised)
- c. God, X, angels and the apostles (problems above and God and Christ do not need to have judgment given to them)
- **d. Representative of all the saints (cf. similar promises 2:26ff; 3:21 5:10)(1 Cor. 6)

2. Who are the Martyrs?

These are put to death by the state (beheaded) because of 2 positive and 2 negative reasons; 1) witness for Christ, 2) obedience to God, 3) would not worship beast or image, and 4) would not receive the mark. These are obviously tribulation events. THEREFORE TRIBULATION MARTYRS.

3. What does it mean to be "ezesan" (brought to life)?

- 1. Regeneration of soul (Allegorical)
- 2. symbolic of triumph of principles (allegorical)
- 3. The soul's entrance into heaven
- **4. A literal resurrection.

Question is between # 3 and # 4. IS THIS CONSTATIVE OR INGRESSIVE AROIST????

- a. "bring to life" can be ingressive w/ reign as constative (Turner, Robertson)
- b. "bring to life" is used ingressive in other passages (Rev. 2; 13; Lk. 15; Rom. 14; Ezek. 37 [LXX])
- c. "soul" can be a wholistic reference (Acts 2;3; Rev. 18).
- d. Ez. 37 and Lk 15 ezasan is parrallel to "anazao" (bring to life again)
- e. ezasan in v. 4 and v.5 must mean the same thing and the second must be a literal resurrection

4. "Until" - Does it mean 1) through the millennium only or 2) through the Millennium and then the change does take place?

"achri" is not a preposition but a conjunction here used with aroist subjunctive. Thus it has the meaning of "until that time then the condition changes." (cf. BAG and Thayer).

5. Where will the Messiah reign?

Must be the EARTH

- a. Christ is personally present on earth following return (19:11-16)
- b. At end of 1,000 years the saints are still on earth when Satan attacks (20:6)
- c. Rev. 5:10 claims Saints will reign on the earth.
- d. Of expectation was for Earthly reign in accord w/ prophecy.

6. Who will be the subjects?

(process of elimination)

- a. Somebody must be the subjects.
- b. Unbelievers are judged before the reign (19:15,21)
- c. This leaves only believers from the trib.
(This is in accord w/ promises Mt. 19, I cor. 6. Rev. 2)

7. How long will the reign last?

1,000 years*****

- a. must have a reason to take something symbolic (they have none)
- b. there is no symbolic meaning for 1,000
- c. numbers are always literal when used with "year".
- d. Ps. 90, 2 Peter 2 "day as 1,000 years does not apply.

8. What will the reign be like?

It will be with Christ, thus perfect and peaceful.

9. What is the first resurrection?

IT IS A KIND OF RESSURECTION (to life) (not judgment)

- a. anastasis always = resurrection of body
- b. The resurrection takes place at different times (Jn. 5; Lk 14; Heb 11; Rev 20)
- c. It consists of those who enter the Millennium.

10. What about the Beatitude of v.6???

This beatitude is obviously looking at vv. 4-5 and pronouncing a blessing on these people (cf. "first resurrection repeated) and blessing is given because of the things they will do in the future (i.e. "will be priests" and "will reign.")

Conclusion:

Both the general context and exegetical details show that Rev. 20: 4-6 speak of an intermediate Kingdom. This is only compatible with the Premillennial system which posits such a Kingdom before the eternal state.

FOUR BASIC INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES TO REVELATION

Interpretive Method	Basic Thesis	Major Advocates	Evaluation
PRETERIST <u>POSTMILLENNIALISM</u> THE BELIEF THAT CHRIST WILL RETURN AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIAL AGE.	All the events of Revelation were fulfilled during the days of either Nero or Domitian. The Book is concerned with only the events of the first century.	This view was developed by the JESUITS and is still held by many in the Roman Church and some Protestants	The message of the book is primarily for believers of the first century with no message for later generations.
HISTORICAL <u>POSTMILLENNIALISM</u> THE BELIEF THAT CHRIST WILL RETURN AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIAL AGE.	Revelation is a panorama of church history from the initiation of the apostolic era to the consummation of the age.	This position was espoused by Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, and most of the Reformers, except for the Anabaptists.	The multiplicity of interpretation of metaphors and symbols quickly becomes subjective and therefore, problematic.
IDEALIST <u>AMILLENNIALISM</u> THE BELIEF THAT THERE WILL BE NO LITERAL MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST ON EARTH	The Apocalypse is not to be seen as a representation of actual events, whether past or future. The book is viewed as a symbol or metaphor to depict the great struggle between good and evil.	This concept was spawned in the Alexandrian school of philosophy and theology by Origen and is maintained by a host of liberal, and some conservative Bible students today	The wedding of Greek philosophy to Christian theology has seldom created a fruitful union. This seems to be the case in this method. The early Fathers of the church are overwhelming in their support of Revelation as representing actual history in some sense.
FUTURISTIC <u>PREMILLENNIALISM</u> THE BELIEF THAT CHRIST WILL RETURN TO USHER IN THE MILLENNIAL AGE	Beginning with chapter four or six, the events described belong to the future age and constitute a marvelous prophecy of God's program for the consummation of the age.	This view has wide acceptance among evangelicals around the earth. Anabaptists of the Reformation era were futurists. Numerous Church Fathers from the initial Christian centuries also were advocates.	The futuristic perspective is harmonious with the message of the entire Bible. Far fewer interpretive enigmas are engendered by this approach.

- I. Introduction: The Christ of Communication (1:1-8)
(He is the God who reveals His will to His people.)
- II. Vision 1: The Christ of the Churches (1:9-3:22)
(He is the God who rebukes and refreshes His churches.)
- A. To Ephesus He says, "remember your first love." (2:1-7)
 - B. To Smyrna He says, "remain faithful to your God." (2:8-11)
 - C. To Pergumum He says, "repent of false teaching." (2:12-17)
 - D. To Thyatara He says, "remain fast among false teachings." (2:18-29)
 - E. To Sardis He says, "repent from incomplete service." (3:1-6)
 - F. To Philadelphia He says, "rest in the promise of God." (3:7-13)
 - G. To Laodicea He says, "repent from your indifference." (3:14-22)
- III. Vision 2: The Christ of the Cosmos (4:1-16:21)
(He is the God who reclaims the earth for His kingdom.)
- A. The Vision in Heaven (4:1-5:14)
 - B. The Destruction on the Earth (6:1-16:21)
 - 1. The seal judgments (6:1-17)
Detailed Explanation (7:1-17)
The 144,000 Jewish Evangelist
 - 2. The trumpet judgments (8:1-9:21)
Detailed Explanation (10:1-15:8)
 - The two witnesses (10:1-11:18)
 - The war in heaven (11:19-12:17)
 - The beast and false prophet (13:1-18)
 - A description of the end (14:1-15:8)
 - 3. The bowl judgments (16:1-21)
- IV. Vision 3: The Christ of Conquest (17:1-21:8)
(He is the God who repays the ungodly for their sin.)
- A. Judgment on false religion (17:1-18)
 - B. Judgment on evil commercialism (18:1-24)
 - C. Justice in Christ return to the earth (19:1-21)
 - D. Justice in Christ reign on the earth (20:1-6)
 - E. Justice in Christ consignment of Satan and sinners to the Lake of Fire. (20:7-15)
 - F. Joy in Christ's call of His saints to the new heaven and new earth. (21:1-8)
- V. Vision 4: The Christ of Consummation (21:9-22:5)
(He is the God who reigns for all eternity.)
- A. The description of eternity (21:9-27)
 - B. The delights of eternity (22:1-5)
- VI. Conclusion: The Christ of Challenge (22:6-21)
(He is the God who request all to come to Him.)
- A. He invites the church. (22:6-9)
 - B. He invites the world. (22:10-19)
 - C. He invites the individual believer. (22:20-21)

Dr. Craig Blaising

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF REVELATION

I. Comments on the Structure of the Book of Revelation.

A. In Rev. 1:19, John is instructed to write concerning:

- 1) The things which he has seen
- 2) The things which are, and
- 3) The things which will take place after these things.

This seems to parallel a natural structure in the book:
ch. 1, 2-3, 4-22.

- #### B.
- After chronicling successive series of judgments in chs. 6-10, John is told in 10:11, "You must prophecy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." This seems to signal the shift in the book away from the series of judgments to a description of the activities of certain individuals and groups of peoples during the time of tribulation. Already, the discussion of the 6th seal (the second woe) in 11:1-13 takes on the nature of such description. The 7th seal (third woe) is recorded in 11:15-19. Then in chs. 12-18 we have a catalogue of persons and movements apparently functioning somewhat contemporaneously (rather than sequentially as in the series of chs. 6-11). The last personage of the time to be discussed is Christ who returns in ch. 19 (here the language and thought of the 7th seal, 11:15-19, is picked up) and reigns millennially (ch. 20) and eternally (21-22).

II. The Great Day of the Wrath of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16-17).

- #### A.
- The Throne Room of Heaven (Rev. 4-5; cf. Dan. 7:9-12; John 5:22-27). The Sovereign Creator entrusts the Judgment to the Redeemer. He is just and worthy to judge. (The justice of His judgment is also seen throughout its narration in His care of His own, the exhortations to mankind to repent, the gradual increase of the severity of the judgment and the steadfast refusal of many to repent.)

THE TRIBULATION IN REVELATION (Chapters 6-19)

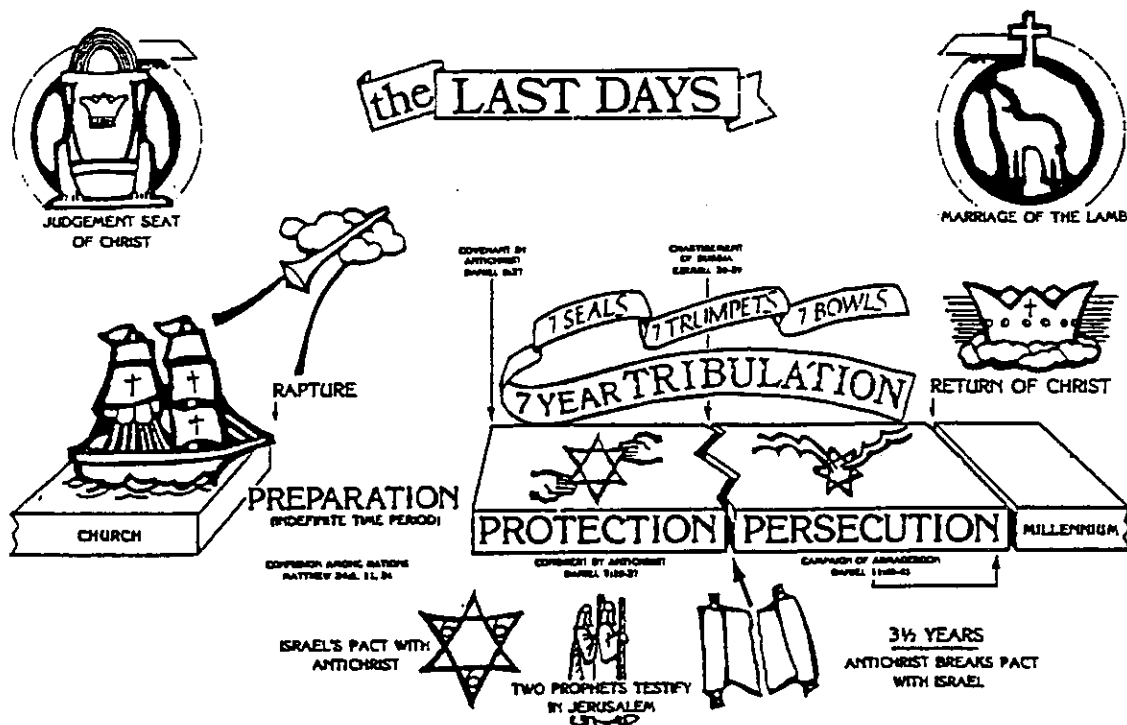
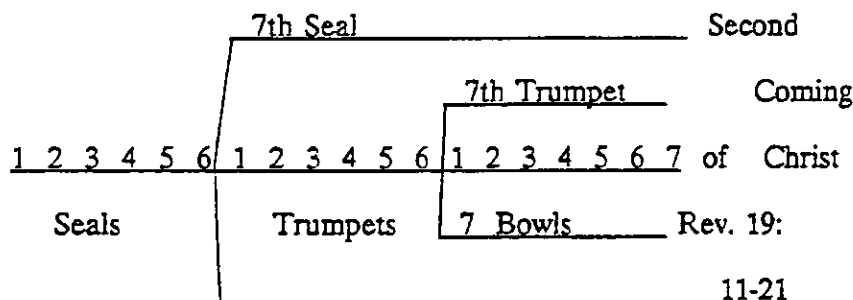
These chapters record the horrifying events of what is called "The Great Tribulation." Though this seven-year period of time is one of retribution upon a world that has rejected the Lordship of God, it is also a time of redemption personally (ch. 7) and cosmically (cf. chs. 20-22). The events of the tribulation center or focus primarily upon three series of seven judgments:

The Seals 6:1-17

The Trumpets 8:1-9:21

The Bowls 16:1-17

These series of judgments are best interpreted in their relationship to one another as partially concurrent. This is sometimes called the telescopic view. This approach understands the seventh seal to introduce and contain the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet to introduce and contain the seven bowls. The seven trumpets, therefore, are the seventh seal, and the seven bowls are the seventh trumpet. This would indicate both an increase in intensity and a greater rapidity of the judgments as the end of the period approaches. The diagram below is helpful in understanding this arrangement.



Theories of Literary Structures of Revelation

LITERARY CONSTRUCTION: 6:1-17; 8:1-9:21 and 11:15-19; 15:1-16:12 and 16:17-21:27												
	SEALS			TRUMPETS				BOWLS				
	1-6	()	7	1-6	()	7	()	1-6	()	7	()	
A parenthesis between 6th and 7th judgments in each series:		7:1-17			10:1-11:14				16:13-16			
A parenthesis between the trumpet judgment and the bowl series:							12:1-14:20					
A parenthesis between the bowl series and the description of the second coming of Jesus											17:1-19:10	
SUGGESTED INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF THE SEALS, TRUMPETS, AND BOWLS:												
Judgments are seen as occurring simultaneously, with repetition showing the intensification of the judgments.	Seals											
	Trumpets											
	Bowls											
This consecutive arrangement envisions a total of twenty-one judgments.	Seals			Trumpets			Bowls					
This telescopic arrangement has the seventh seal introducing the trumpet series and being explained by it, and the seventh trumpet introduces the bowl series and is explained by it. So, the seven bowls equal the seventh trumpet and the seven trumpets are the seventh seal.	7th Seal											
	1 2 3 4 5 6						7th Trumpet					
	Seals						Trumpets					
							Bowls					

REVELATION 6-19

Content and Correlation of the Judgments of Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls

NUMBER	SEALS Opened by the Lamb	TRUMPETS Blown by seven angels	BOWLS Poured by seven angels
1.	White horse: conqueror	Hail and fire; 1/3 of vegetation burnt	Sores
2.	Red horse: war	Mountain of fire; 1/3 of creatures in sea destroyed	Sea becomes blood; all marine life dies
3.	Black horse: famine	Star called wormwood falls; 1/3 of fresh water poisoned	Fresh water turned to blood
4.	Pale horse: death	Partial darkness; 1/3 of sun, moon, and stars	Scorching sun burns men
HIATUS: Last three trumpets announced as woes			
5.	Martyrs reassured	Woe #1: Angel releases locusts from abyss	Darkness on beast's kingdom
6.	Great day of wrath; earthquake, signs in heaven	Woe #2: Four angels loosed at Euphrates; they slay 1/3 of earth's population	Euphrates dries up; kings assemble for war at Armageddon
HIATUS: Sealing of 144,000		HIATUS: Mystery of God to be concluded with seventh trumpet	
7.	1/2 hour of silence: introduction of trumpets	Announcement of the Lord's victory	Severe earthquake and great hail

B. The Day of Judgment on Earth

1. The Serial Judgments

- a. Described as Seals (Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1) and Trumpets (8:2-11:19), the judgments directed by Christ begin the day of wrath and lead directly to the climax, the coming of Christ (the 7th seal). Other series judgments are mentioned—the 7 thunders (contents not revealed) in 10:1-4, and the 7 bowls in 16:1-21. Briefly summarized, the judgments are as follows:

<u>The Seven Seals</u>	<u>The Seven Trumpets</u>
1. A Conqueror burned	1. 1/3 of the earth
2. War	2. 1/3 of sea creatures and vessels
3. Famine	3. 1/3 of fresh water polluted
4. Death heavenlies	4. 1/3 of the darkened
5. Martyrdom unbelievers	5. 1st Woe: Demonic Torture of
6. Disturbances in heavenlies	6. 2nd Woe: 1/3 of humanity dies
7. The Trumpet Judgments	7. 3rd Woe: The coming of Christ

The Seven Bowls of Wrath (15:1, "and then the wrath of God is finished").

1. Loathsome, malignant sores
2. Sea turns to blood
3. Fresh water turns to blood
4. Scorching heat
5. Darkness
6. Gathering for Armageddon
7. Shaking the earth, huge hailstones
The Destruction of Babylon

- b. Acts of grace during the serial judgments

- 1) Sealing the 144,000 (7:1-8)

- 2) Reception of Martyrs into heaven (7:9-17)
 - 3) Exclusion of those unmarked by the Beast from some of the worst judgments
- c. Human response
 - 1) Some do repent (7:9-17; 11:13)
 - 2) Most do not repent, but harden themselves against God (9:20-21; 15:9, 11, 21)
- 2. Persons and Movements during the Day of the Lord (until the Return of Christ)
 - a. The Time of Gentile occupation of the Temple (11:1-2)
 - b. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (11:3-13)
 - c. Satan (12:1-17; 13:2-4, 11; 20:1-3, 7-10)

THE COMING WORLD RULER

Key Text: Dan. 7:8; 9:27; 11:36-45; Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:3-12, 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7; Rev. 11:7; 13:1-10; 17:1-18; 19:19-21; 20:10.

Key Designations:

- 1) The Little Horn Dan. 7:8
- 2) The Prince (Ruler) who is to come Dan. 9:24-27
- 3) The King of the North Dan. 11:36
- 4) The Antichrist 1 John 2:18
- 5) The Man of Lawlessness (Sin) 2 Thess. 2:3-12
- 6) The Beast Rev. 13:1-10

Key Description:

- 1) Antichrist is a present impersonal presence (force or spirit of the age) 1 John 4:3
- 2) Antichrist is a future literal person 2 Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 13:1-10 (The coming world ruler)
- 3) Antichrist is a future political power Rev. 13:1-10; 17:1-18 (A revived Roman empire)

EVENTS OF UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

Rapture of the church (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thes. 4:13-18).
Revival of the Roman Empire; ten-nation confederacy formed (Dan. 7:7, 24; Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 12-13).
Rise of the Antichrist: the Middle East dictator (Dan. 7:8; Rev. 13:1-8).

The seven-year peace treaty with Israel: consummated seven years before the second coming of Christ (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 19:11-16).

Establishment of a world church (Rev. 17:1-15).

Russia springs a surprise attack on Israel four years before the second coming of Christ (Ezek. 38-39).

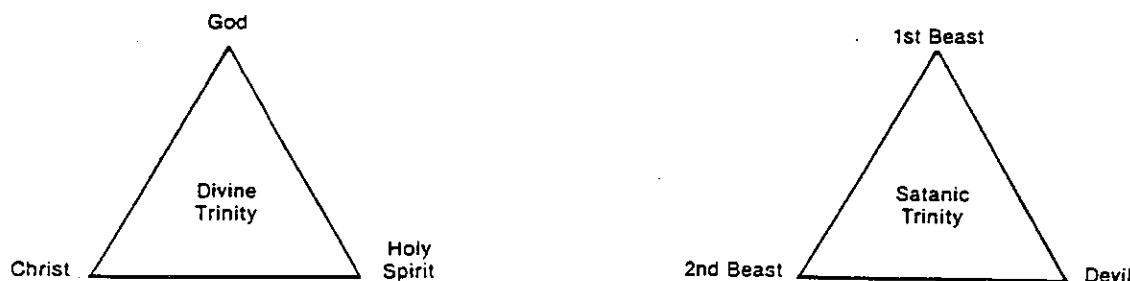
Peace treaty with Israel broken after three-and-a-half years: beginning of world government, world economic system, world atheistic religion, final three-and-a-half years before second coming of Christ (Dan. 7:23; Rev. 13:5-8, 15-17; 17:16-17).

Many Christians and Jews martyred who refused to worship world dictator (Rev. 7:9-17; 13:15).

9. Catastrophic divine judgments represented by seals, trumpets, and bowls poured out on the earth (Rev. 6-18).
10. World war breaks out focusing on the Middle East: Battle of Armageddon (Dan. 11:40-45; Rev. 9:13-21; 16:12-16).
11. Babylon destroyed (Rev. 18).
12. Second coming of Christ (Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 19:11-21).
13. Judgment of wicked Jews and Gentiles (Ezek. 20:33-38; Matt. 25:31-46; Jude 14-15; Rev. 19:15-21; 20:1-4).
14. Satan bound for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).
15. Resurrection of Tribulation saints and Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4).
16. Millennial kingdom begins (Rev. 20:5-6).
17. Final rebellion at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-10).
18. Resurrection and final judgment of the wicked: Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).
19. Eternity begins: new heaven, new earth, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-2).

Key Definition

- 1) One who is against Christ
- 2) One who is in the stead of (in place of) Christ



The Antichrist

While the Tribulation period from a divine viewpoint will be a period of judgment on the earth, it will also be a period in which the prince of the kingdom of darkness will be permitted to manifest his kingdom in that realm over which Christ will ultimately triumph and reign. Satan intends to present the world with his masterpiece of deception. He will offer the world a substitute for Jesus Christ who, by Satan's power, will appear to give the world everything that Jesus Christ will give when He assumes His rightful role as King.

The instrument whom Satan will empower and through whom he will work to establish his kingdom here on the earth is described in Revelation 13. This one referred to as the beast, whom we popularly nickname the Antichrist, will seek to imitate the reign of Christ and provide those in his kingdom with the benefits only Christ can truly provide when He establishes His kingdom. By Satan's power (v. 2, cf. 11:7), Antichrist will be given political power over all the earth (v. 7). By establishing a one-world government, he will imitate the worldwide authority that will belong to Jesus Christ in His kingdom. Further, he will introduce a one-world religion which will be an imitation of that authority which Jesus Christ will exercise as King-Priest when He reigns. In addition he will introduce a one-world economy.

ANTICHRIST: THE COUNTERFEIT CHRIST

Rev. 13:1-18

- I. His Portrait 13:1-2
(A counterfeit Christ/Son)
- II. His Power 13:2 (cf. 11:7)
(Dragon = Satan: A counterfeit Father)
- III. His Plan 13:3-4
- IV. His Pride 13:5 (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3-4)
- V. His Period 13:5 (cf. Dan. 9:24-27; Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14)
- VI. His Perversion 13:6
- VII. His Persecution 13:7 (cf. Rev. 12)
- VIII. His Possession 13:7-10
- IX. His Prophet 13:11-18 (cf. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10)
(A counterfeit Holy Spirit)
- X. His Punishment 19:19-20; 20:10

WORLD EMPIRES OF THE BIBLE IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

EGYPT	ASSYRIA	BABYLON	MEDO-PERSIA	GREECE	ROME	MILLENNIAL KINGDOM FINAL WORLD EMPIRE
Gen. 46-Deut. 34	722 B.C.-605 B.C.	605 B.C.-539 B.C.	539 B.C.-331 B.C.	321 B.C.-63 B.C.	63 B.C.-A.D. 70	
Jacob and Family in Egypt Until Exodus	10 Tribes of Israel in Captivity	2 Tribes in Captivity	Captives of Israel Return 536 B.C.	Israel under Control of Syria	Israel under Rome Jerusalem Destroyed A.D. 70 Decline of Rome in Church Age Rome to Be Revived after the Rapture	

- (1) He will appear on the scene in the latter times of Israel's history (Dan. 8:23)
- (2) He will not appear until the Day of the Lord has begun (2 Thes. 2:2-3).
- (3) His manifestation is being hindered by He who restrains (vv. 6-7).
- (4) This appearance will be preceded by a departure (v. 7), which may be interpreted either as a departure from the faith or a departure of the saints to be with the Lord (v. 1).
- (5) He will be a Gentile. Since he will arise from the sea (Rev. 13:1), and in Scripture the sea depicts Gentile nations (17:15), he will be of Gentile origin.
- (6) He will rise from the Roman Empire, since he will be a ruler of the people who destroyed Jerusalem (Dan. 9:26).
- (7) He will be the head of the last form of Gentile world domination, since he is like a leopard, a bear, and a lion (Rev. 13:1; compare Dan. 7:7-8, 20, 24; Rev. 17:9-11). As such he will be a political leader. The seven heads and ten horns (13:1; 17:12) will be federated under his authority.
- (8) His influence will be worldwide, for he will rule over all nations (13:8). This influence will come through the alliance he will make with other nations (Dan. 8:24; Rev. 17:12).
- (9) In his rise to power, he will eliminate three rulers (Dan. 7:8, 24). One of the kingdoms over which he will have authority will be revived, for one of the heads—representing a kingdom or a king—will be healed (Rev. 13:3).
- (10) His rise to power will come through his peace program (Dan. 8:25).
- (11) He personally will be marked by his intelligence and persuasiveness (7:8, 20; 8:23), and also by his subtlety and craft (Ezek. 28:6), so that his position over the nations will be by their own consent.
- (12) He will rule over the nations in his federation with absolute authority (Dan. 11:36). He is depicted in Scripture as doing his own will. This authority will be manifested through a change in laws and customs (7:25).
- (13) His chief interest will be in might and power (11:38).
- (14) As the head of the federated empire he will make a seven-year covenant or treaty with Israel (9:27), which will be broken after three and a half years (v. 27).
- (15) He will introduce an idolatrous worship (v. 27) in which he will set himself up as god (11:36-37; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:5).
- (16) He will bear the characterization of a blasphemer because of his irreverent assumption of Deity (Ezek. 28:2; Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:1, 5-6).
- (17) This one will be energized by Satan (Ezek. 28:9-12; Rev. 13:4), will receive his authority from him, and will be controlled by the pride of the devil (Ezek. 28:2; Dan. 8:25).
- (18) He will be the head of Satan's lawless system (2 Thes. 2:3), and his claim to power and to Deity will be proved by signs effected through satanic power (vv. 9-10).
- (19) He will be received as god and as ruler because of the blindness of the people (v. 11).
- (20) This ruler will become the great adversary of Israel (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; Rev. 13:7).
- (21) There will come an alliance against him (Ezek. 28:7; Dan. 11:40, 42) which will challenge his authority.
- (22) In the ensuing conflict, he will gain control over Palestine and adjacent territory (v. 42) and will make his headquarters in Jerusalem (v. 45).
- (23) This ruler, at the time of his rise to power, will be elevated through the instrumentality of the "harlot," the corrupt religious system, which consequently will seek to dominate him (Rev. 17:3).
- (24) This system will be destroyed by the ruler so that he might rule unhindered (vv. 16-17).
- (25) He will become the special adversary of the Prince of princes (Dan. 8:25), His program (2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 17:14), and His people (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; Rev. 13:7).
- (26) While he continues in power for seven years (Dan. 9:27), his satanic activity will be confined to the last half of the seven-year period of the Tribulation (7:25; 9:27; 11:36; Rev. 13:5).
- (27) His rule will be terminated by a direct judgment from God (Ezek. 28:6; Dan. 7:22, 26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45; Rev. 19:19-20). This judgment will take place as he is engaged in a military campaign in Palestine (Ezek. 28:8-9; Rev. 19:19), and he will be cast into the lake of fire (v. 20; Ezek. 28:10).
- (28) This judgment will take place at the second advent of Christ (2 Thes. 2:8; Dan. 7:22) and will constitute a manifestation of His messianic authority (Rev. 11:15).
- (29) The kingdom over which the beast ruled will pass to the authority of Messiah and will become the kingdom of the saints (Dan. 7:27).

PREDICTED EVENTS RELATING TO THE NATIONS

1. United Nations organized as first step toward world government in 1946.
2. Israel is formed as a recognized nation in 1948.
3. Europe is rebuilt after World War II, setting stage for its role in future revival of the Roman Empire.
4. The rise of Russia as a world military and political power.
5. World movements such as the Common Market and the World Bank set the stage for future political and financial events.
6. Red China becomes a military power.
7. The Middle East and the nation of Israel become the focus of worldwide tension.
8. The Arab oil embargo in 1973 results in world recognition of the power of wealth and energy in the Middle East.
9. Lack of a powerful political leader prevents the Middle East from organizing as a political power.
10. The Rapture of the church removes a major deterrent to expansion of political and financial power of the Mediterranean world.
11. The rise of a new leader in the Middle East who later is identified as the Antichrist who secures power over first three, and then all ten nations, uniting them in a Mediterranean confederacy.
12. The new Mediterranean leader imposes a peace settlement for seven years on Israel.
13. Russian army accompanied by several other nations invades Israel and is destroyed by judgments from God.
14. Peace settlement in the Middle East is broken after three-and-a-half years.
15. Middle East ruler as the Antichrist becomes a world dictator.
16. Middle East ruler claims to be God and demands that all worship him at the pain of death.
17. Middle East dictator defiles the temple in Jerusalem.
18. The beginning of the terrible judgments of the Great Tribulation described in the seals, trumpets, and bowls of the wrath of God in the Book of Revelation.

19. Worldwide discontent at the rule of the Middle East ruler resulting from many catastrophes causing rebellion and gathering of the world's armies in the Middle East to fight it out with Armageddon as the center of the conflict.
20. Second coming of Christ occurs accompanied by the armies from heaven.
21. The armies of the world attempt to fight the armies from heaven but are totally destroyed.
22. Christ's millennial reign is established, climaxing judgments on all the unsaved and the final disposition of Gentile political power.
23. Those saved from both Jews and Gentiles are placed in the New Jerusalem in the earth where they will spend eternity.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Pentecost	Rapture	70th Week	Second Coming of Christ	Great White Throne Judgment
Church Age	Period of Preparation Ten Nations United Seven-year Covenant Signed	Period of Peace 3½ Years of Peace Covenant Broken	Period of Persecution 3½ Years of Great Tribulation	Millennium New Heaven New Earth New Jerusalem
	Day of the Lord 2 Peter 3:10-11			Day of God - Eternity 2 Peter 3:12

THE FALSE PROPHET AND WORLD RELIGIOUS SYSTEM

Key Text

Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Rev. 13:11-18; 16:13; 17:1-18; 19:20, 20:10

Key Designations

1. The Beast (From the earth) 13:11-18
2. The False Prophet 16:13; 19:20; 20:10

Key Description

It will be through the instrumentality of a second person empowered by Satan that this one-world government, one-world religion, and one-world economy will be introduced and men will willingly submit to it. This individual, called in Revelation 19:20 the false prophet, will be given power by Satan to perform miracles (13:12-15). He will apparently duplicate the miracles of that one who comes in the spirit of Elijah (v. 13, cf. 11:5-6), perhaps to deceive the world into believing that he is the one who is to fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 4:5. Further, he apparently will cause some type of lifeless image of the beast to come alive and to speak.

Paul pointed out that God shall send them a powerful delusion so that they should believe the lie (2 Thess. 2:11). The lie is that this individual who will have instituted a one-world government, one-world religion, and one-world economy is actually the world's messiah, the world's god.

In close association then with the sea beast (the antichrist), the head of the federated empire, will be this land beast ("false prophet"). In Revelation 13:11-18, his fullest description is given. In that passage we find some important factors concerning this spiritual deceiver, including:

1. He will arise out of the earth or land (v. 11).
2. He will be influential in religious affairs (v. 12).
3. He will be motivated by Satan, just like the first beast (v. 11).
4. He will have delegated authority (v. 12).
5. He will promote the worship of the first beast and compel the earth to worship the first beast as god (v. 12).

6. His ministry will be authenticated by the signs and miracles he will do (vv. 13-14).
7. He will be successful in deceiving the unbelieving world (v. 14).
8. The worship he will promote will be an idolatrous worship (vv. 14-15).
9. He will have the power of death in order to compel men to worship the beast (v. 15).
10. He will have authority in the economic realm to control all commerce (vv. 16-17).
11. And he will have a mark that will establish his identity for those who live in that day (v. 18).

Finally, we can observe that the Book of Revelation, in relating the second beast to the first, presents him as subservient to the first. He is called "the false prophet" (16:13; 19:20; 20:10), who ministers in connection with the first beast as his prophet or spokesman.

What we are faced with, then, is a satanic "trinity," an unholy trinity comprising the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (16:13). The place occupied by God in His program is assumed by Satan; the place of Christ is assumed by the beast; and the ministry of the Holy Spirit is assumed by the false prophet.

Thus through this system of deception and through this deceiver, Satan will realize his ages-long purpose to bring this world under his authority and to institute his kingdom here on the earth.

Key Domain

The harlot of Rev. 17:1-18

PREDICTED EVENTS RELATING TO THE CHURCH

1. Rise of liberalism and rejection of fundamental biblical doctrines permeate the professing church.
2. The rise of Communism and atheism as major opponents of Christianity.
3. The ecumenical movement promoting a world church organized in 1948.
4. Increased moral chaos resulting from departure from biblical doctrines.
5. Increasing evidence of spiritism, the occult, and Satan worship.
6. The Rapture of the church.
7. Lifting of the restraint of sin by the Holy Spirit.

8. Super church movement gains power and forms a world church.
9. World church works with the Antichrist to secure world domination.
10. Super church is destroyed by the ten kings supporting the Antichrist to pave the way for worship of the world ruler as God.
11. Those who have come to believe in Christ as Saviour since the Rapture suffer persecution because they refuse to worship the world ruler.
12. Second coming of Christ occurs, and remaining Christians in the world are rescued and enter the millennial kingdom.
13. After the Millennium the church is placed in the New Jerusalem in the new earth.

THE COMING WORLD CHURCH AND ITS PROPHET

Revelation 13:11-18

- I. His Description 13:11-12; 16:13
- II. His Deception 13:13-14 (cf. Matt. 24:23-24)
- III. His Desecration 13:14 (cf. Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4)
- IV. His Destruction 13:15
- V. His Discrimination 13:16-17
- VI. His Designation 13:18
- VII. His Destination 19:20; 20:10

PREDICTED ORDER OF PROPHETIC EVENTS RELATED TO ISRAEL

1. The holocaust and suffering of Jews in Germany in World War II lead to worldwide sympathy for a homeland for the Jews.
2. United Nations recognizes Israel as a nation and allows 5,000 square miles of territory, excluding ancient Jerusalem in 1948.
3. Israel, though immediately attacked by those nations surrounding her, achieves increases in territory in subsequent wars.
4. Though Russia at the beginning was sympathetic to Israel, the United States becomes her principal benefactor and supplier of military aid and money.

5. Israel makes amazing strides forward in reestablishing her land, its agriculture, industries, and political power.
6. In the series of military tests, Israel establishes that she has a superior army to that of surrounding nations.
7. Arab power opposing Israel is sufficient to keep Israel from having peaceful coexistence with other nations in the Middle East.
8. Israel continues in the state of confusion and conflict until the church is raptured.
9. With the formation of the ten-nation confederacy by the Gentile ruler in the Middle East, Israel is forced to accept a seven-year peace settlement.
10. The world and the Jewish people celebrate what appears to be a permanent peace settlement in the Middle East.
11. Israel prospers and many return to Israel after the peace is settled.
12. Toward the close of the three-and-a-half years of peace, Russia accompanied by several other nations attempts to invade Israel but is destroyed by a series of judgments from God.
13. After three-and-a-half years of peace, the covenant is broken and the Middle East ruler becomes a world dictator and a principal persecutor of Israel.
14. The world dictator desecrates the temple of Israel and sets up an idol of himself to be worshiped.

13:11-18 From the earth there arises a second beast characterized by deceit, having two horns like a lamb but speaking like a dragon. This beast, the false prophet, is the world leader of an apostate religion. The vile false prophet lends his persuasive deception to the power of religion in order to deify the first beast (v. 12). A devastating union of church and state occurs in which the false prophet employs miracles to seduce the allegiance of men to the Antichrist. Economic boycott follows as the crowning procedure of coercion. Rather than a name, this beast is given a number, 666, indicating the thorough, permeating evil which is in his heart (v. 18).

15. Worldwide persecution of the Jews begins, and in the land two out of three perish.
16. A Jewish remnant emerges who puts their trust in Christ.
17. Though the world ruler massacres both Jews and Gentiles who fail to worship him as God, some survive from both Jews and Gentiles and are rescued by Christ.
18. The second coming of Christ rescuing persecuted Jews and Gentiles and bringing judgment upon all wickedness in the world and unbelievers.
19. The promised kingdom on earth with Jesus as Israel's Messiah and David as her regent prince begins with godly Israel being regathered from all over the world to inhabit her Promised Land.
20. For 1,000 years Israel experiences unusual blessing as the object of Christ's favor.
21. With the end of the millennial kingdom and the destruction of the present earth, godly Israel has its place in the eternal state and the new heaven and the new earth.
22. Those among Israel who are saved are placed in the New Jerusalem in the new earth.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS BABYLONIANISM
(Revelation 17)

- 1) It has worldwide influence 17:2
- 2) It promotes spiritual infidelity 17:3
- 3) It will for a time greatly influence the political Antichrist 17:3
- 4) It will be supported for a time by the political Antichrist 17:3
- 5) It is materialistic, this worldly and phenomenally wealthy 17:4
- 6) It is rooted in ancient times 17:5
- 7) It exalts secret mystical knowledge 17:5
- 8) It multiplies itself into various religious systems 17:5
- 9) Though professing religious tolerance, it is actually intolerant and actively persecutes worshippers of the true God 17:6
- 10) It has a relationship with the city of Rome or at least to a restored vestige of the Roman Empire 17:9, 18
- 11) It will be destroyed eschatologically by the personal and political Antichrist and his allies 17:16-17

17:1-18 Perhaps the most enigmatic of the visions of the Apocalypse is that of the great harlot. John himself registers considerable astonishment (v. 7). Nor is he able to comprehend the mystery. The angel explains that the woman sits on seven mountains (v. 9). She rides upon the political beast, which privately despises her. She has committed fornication with the kings of the earth. She is described as the mother of harlots, and she is drunk on the blood of the saints, indicating her intense involvement in persecution. She is further given the name Babylon the Great (18:2). Idolatry began in Babylon or Babel with Nimrod (cf. Gen. 10:9-10, note). The cult of mother and child, Semiramis and Tammuz, was there initiated. This cult, along with other constituent elements of the Babylonian mysteries, was conserved by Roman and Greek religious systems. By the end of the first century, elements of the mysteries had also been adopted by some advocates of the Christian faith. Constantine's actions between 313 and 323 A.D. brought about the marriage of church and state, and with this union came undiluted doses of those ancient idolatrous faiths. By the time of the Reformation, those ancient myths and mysteries had been thoroughly assimilated into the Christian faith. The scarlet woman of this chapter is, in effect, a resurgence of those same erroneous doctrines. The difference seems to be that the ecumenicity of this latter-day world church embraces virtually all religious faiths. Few still comprehend the nature of genuine Christianity, and they suffer at the hands of the drunken harlot as in eras past. This passage should provide for modern believers an intuitive wariness not only in the wake of organized ecumenism but also in the midst of movements which develop their entire thrust around one major doctrine, whatever that may be.

A COMPARISON OF RELIGIOUS BABYLONIANISM AND NEW AGEISM

Babylonianism	New Age
1) Polytheistic and idolatrous	1) Pantheistic and idolatrous
2) Salvation by mystical knowledge (spiritually deceptive)	2) Salvation by mystical knowledge (spiritually deceptive)
3) Deifies special humans	3) Deifies all humanity
4) Affirms reincarnation (esp. of nature & the salvation child Tammuz)	4) Affirms reincarnation
5) Promotes secret religious rites	5) Promotes secret religious rituals
6) Founded a mother/child cult	6) Worships mother earth and her offspring [Romanism fosters a mother/child doctrine]
7) Accepts evolution, at least implicitly	7) Accepts evolution explicitly
8) Amoral	8) Amoral
9) Utopian	9) Utopian
10) Humanistic	10) Humanistic
11) Uses religion to achieve political ends	11) Infiltrates political processes to achieve its own purposes
12) Behavioristic	12) Behavioristic
13) Emotionalism and ecstatic utterances prominent	13) Emotionalism and ecstatic utterances prominent
14) Astrology	14) Astrology
15) Sensually oriented	15) Sensually oriented

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS

Definition:

This refers to the bodily return of Jesus Christ to the earth. This return will be a great and glorious return in power. It will take place at the end of the tribulation period, and the millennial kingdom will immediately follow. The enemies of Christ will be defeated at this return.

Key Text:

Dan. 7:13-14; Zech. 14:1-11; Matt. 24:29-31, 36-44; 25:1-46; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 11:15-19; 14:14-20; 16:12-21; 19:11-21

Key Terms:

- 1) Parousia - presence, coming, or arrival
- 2) Apocalypse - revelation
- 3) Epiphany - manifestation

Nature of the Coming:

- 1) It will be personal (Zech. 14:3-5; Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11)
- 2) It will be historical (Zech. 14:3-5; Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11)
- 3) It will be visible (Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11)
- 4) It will be physical (Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11)
- 5) It will be victorious (Zech. 14:3-5; Rev. 19:11-21)
- 6) It will be cosmic in its benefits (Rom. 8:18-25)

Purpose of the Coming:

- 1) To judge Satan, sin, and the system of the world (Rev. 17-18; 19:11-21)
- 2) To establish the universal, visible manifestation of His kingdom (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 20:1-6)
- 3) To provide motivation for faithful service for the Christian community in every generation (Matt. 24:42-25:46; 2 Thess. 2:13-17; 1 John 3:1-3)

The Time of His Coming:

- 1) After the Tribulation period (Matt. 24:29-35)
- 2) Unknown (Matt. 24:36-44)

The Climactic Events of His Coming:

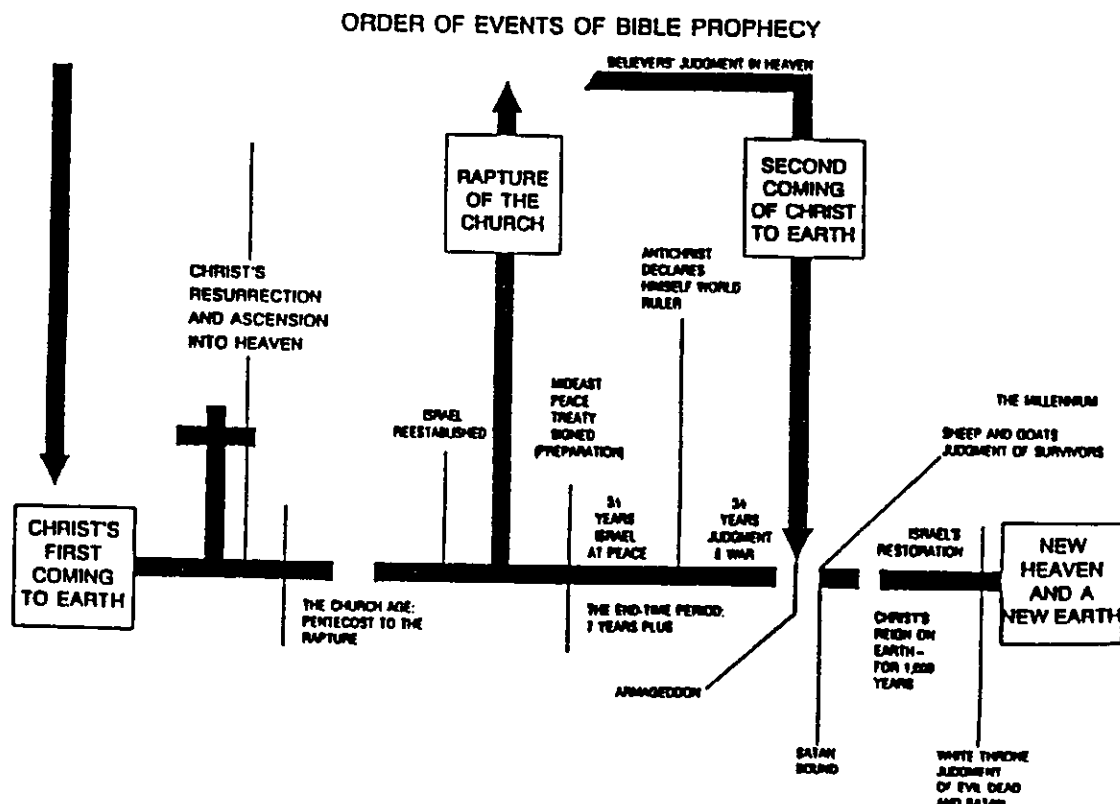
- 1) The battle of Armageddon (Rev. 14:14-20; 16:12-21)
- 2) The Sheep and Goats Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46)
- 3) The Resurrection of the Saints (Rev. 20:4)
- 4) The establishment of His millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6)

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

Revelation 19:11 - 20:6

When Jesus Comes Again:

- I. The Savior will have a glorious return. 19:11-16
 - 1) His *appearance* is radiant. vs.11-13
 - 2) His *armies* are ready. vs.14
 - 3) His *authority* is righteous. vs.15-16
- II. Sinners will experience tremendous remorse. 19:17-21
 - 1) Jesus will *confront* His enemies. vs.17-18
 - 2) Jesus will *conquer* His enemies. vs. 19-20
 - 3) Jesus will *condemn* His enemies. vs.21
- III. Satan will receive a righteous restraint. 20:1-3
 - 1) Our enemy is *identified* for who he is. vs.1-2
 - 2) Our enemy is *incarcerated* for 1,000 years. vs.3
- IV. The Saints will enjoy a victorious reign. 20:4-6
 - 1) They receive a *position*. vs.4
 - 2) They receive *power*. vs.4
 - 3) They receive *privileges*. vs.4-5
 - 4) They receive a *promise*. vs.6



CLOSING EVENTS



- 1) Return of Christ with His saints (19:11-16)
- 2) Destruction of the wicked (19:17-21)
- 3) Confinement of Satan (20:1-3)
- 4) The 1,000-year reign of Christ upon the earth (20:4-6)
- 5) The loosing of Satan and the final revolt (20:7-10)
- 6) The great white throne judgment (20:11-15)
- 7) The remaking of the heavens and earth (21:1)
- 8) The descent of the heavenly Jerusalem to the glorified earth (21:1-8)

4) The Judgment of Satan

5) The Judgment of the Wicked

C. The New Earth and Heavens, The New Jerusalem (21–22)

Dear Ann Landers: I am a divorced woman in my early 50s. An interesting and intelligent man I've been seeing for a year asked me, out of the blue, if I believed in hell.

I didn't know how to respond



**ANN
LANDERS**

because I had never thought seriously about it.

When I asked if he believed in hell, he said he did indeed but was sure he would never go there.

I then asked who he

thought would be there, and he said, without hesitation, "Hitler, for sure, and Mussolini and Josef Stalin." After a minute, he added, "I am positive that Charles Manson will be there, without a doubt."

My friend then pulled a newspa-

per clipping out of his pocket that said college-educated adults with incomes of more than \$50,000 a year were the most certain they were heaven-bound. It further said that of the six in 10 Americans who believe there is a hell, 77 percent do not believe they are going there. One in four believe it is a blazing inferno. Twenty-four percent described hell as a torture chamber. Ninety-two percent of Lutherans described hell as "separation from God."

The New Catholic Explorer, a newspaper of the diocese of Joliet, Ill., featured a chart based on an international survey of 19,000 people in 14 countries. It showed that in the United States, 86 percent of the people believe in heaven, and 71 percent believe in hell. In East Germany, it's 19 percent and 7 percent. In Great Britain, 54 percent and 29 percent. In Ireland, 87 percent and 53 percent. In Israel, 43 percent and 39 percent.

What do you think about all this, Ann? Do you believe in a heaven

and a hell? — Perplexed in Passaic, N.J.

Dear Passaic: It's a subject I haven't given much thought. I checked, however, with Martin Marty, a theologian at the University of Chicago, and he said more than half of the people in the United States do believe in heaven and hell, but very few people think they are going to end up in hell. He added, "It doesn't keep folks from behaving badly because they see hell as a place for others."

As for me, I think of heaven as a place where we will be united with our loved ones who have passed on.

A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE REVELATION AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Revelation 17:16-18
Revelation 12:7-13

Rapture of the Church"

Takes place between Chapters 3 and 4. Chapters 4 and 5 record a vision in heaven following the rapture.

Daniel 9:27B

"Battle of Armageddon"
"2nd Coming of Christ"
Revelation 19:11-21
(c.f. Matt. 24:27-31)

Satan's Final
Rebellion
Rev. 20:7-10
Judgement
Rev. 20:11-15

The Great
White Throne
Judgement
Rev. 20:11-15

The
Millennium
(Christ 1000
years reign)
Rev. 20:1-6

Eternity
Rev. 21-22

CHURCH AGE

Years 1

2

3

4

5

6

7

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

6:9-17

6

"Seals"
Rev. 6

Revelation 6:1-8

Revelation

"Trumpets"
(Rev. 8-9)

"Bowls"
(Rev. 16)

6 -- 19

REVELATION

6 -- 19

8 Compelling Reasons Why: Christ Is Coming "Very, Very Soon"

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How To Be Prepared For History's Greatest Event

The evidence for the soon return of Jesus Christ is overwhelming. It could be any moment. One scholar lists 167 converging clues just in the last few years of this millennium. The following are eight:

1. Israel's rebirth.

As Jesus prophesied, the Jews were scattered during the Jewish-Roman war of A.D. 70 (Luke 21:24). Also prophesied to occur before Christ's return, the nation of Israel was miraculously reborn on May 14, 1948. Israel is called "God's time clock."

2. Plummeting morality.

Studies show a shocking breakdown just since mid-century (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

3. Famines, violence and wars.

Like birth pangs that intensify, Jesus said that the days just before His coming would see increased famines, violence and ethnic wars, a clear picture of our planet (Matthew 24:6-8). One of six people on earth suffer from hunger. Violence is epidemic, and a study of wars since 500 B.C. shows a recent, dramatic increase. Of 82 world conflicts since just 1990, all but three have been civil or ethnic.

4. Increase in earthquakes.

From 1880 until Israel was reborn, there averaged only 2.3 earthquakes per decade worldwide above Richter 6.0. Also like increasing birth pangs, in the 1950s there were 9; in the 1960s, 13; in the 1970s, 51; in the 1980s, 86! The 1990s have already seen more than 100, with tens of thousands dead (Matthew 24:7).

5. Explosion of travel and education.

Two key conditions described about 2,500 years ago for the Second Coming are that "travel and education shall be vastly increased" (Daniel 12:5, Living Bible). In all of history, the vast increase in travel has come just since mid-century with the explosion of both ground and air transportation; in education, with the advance of science and computers.

6. Explosion of cults and the occult.

Counterfeit spirituality is everywhere with cults and false Christs (Matthew

24:24), psychic phenomena, spiritism, Satan worship, witchcraft, nature worship and the New Age movement (1 Timothy 4:1). What is a cult or the occult? See FREE REPORTS below.

7. The New World Order.

Increased centralization of world financial and political power is a prelude to the soon-coming world power system in the hands of "Antichrist," who will be the incarnation of Satan and who will deceive most of the world (Daniel 7-12, Matthew 24:15, Revelation 13).

8. Increase in both apostasy and faith.

The Bible predicts in the last days, "A form of godliness, although they have denied its power" (2 Timothy 3:5). Today many churches deny the eternal truths of Scripture and power of the Holy Spirit, replacing them with ungodly, temporal and "politically correct" values. But also, a prophesied outpouring of God's Spirit is causing hundreds of millions worldwide to come to true faith in Christ in record numbers, virtually unnoticed by the media.

► The "Angel Factor"

As an angel announced Christ's First Coming (Daniel 9:20-25; Luke 1:26), there have been recently reported visits from angels saying, "He is coming very, very soon." For a fascinating free, detailed account of two verified incidents, see below.

► The Escape Plan

Christ will soon come and rescue His people from the approaching "Great Tribulation" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). He will later rule and bring peace on earth—after He judges the world and every person (Matthew 25:31-46).

God's judgment is, indeed, coming on a world in rebellion. He cannot deny His nature. His attributes of perfect holiness and justice demand judgment for sin, of which we are all guilty. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The result of sin is death, or separation from God. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Wages are something we earn, or deserve.

But "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Is "love" in conflict with "judgment"?

Answer: God's wisdom reconciled the dilemma—The Son of God would take all our judgment upon Himself! "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

To escape God's judgment, we each must receive His free gift of forgiveness and love, "But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). A gift is something we do not earn, or deserve.

► How to receive Him

In any gift exchange, there has to be a giver and receiver. God has already given us the gift, His Son; now we must receive Him. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

We receive Him by faith. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

We receive Him by personal invitation. (Christ speaking) "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20). Do you hear His voice?

The following is a suggested prayer: "Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God and that you died on the cross for my sins to save me from eternal death. I open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. I give you my life. Help me to be what You want me to be. Amen."

FREE REPORTS

If you prayed this prayer, write for free, follow-up information. Anyone writing will also receive two free reports: (1) "What is a Cult or the Occult?" and (2) the special report on angels. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope today to:

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Alto to Jesus / Confession

6-12-95

PROPHECY TODAY

DR. TIM LAHAYE, veteran pastor, educator and church builder, now heads Family Life Seminars and the Pre-Trib Research Center, both based in Washington, D.C. He quotes perhaps the greatest scientist of this passing millennium, who was also a scholar of the Scriptures, with several commentaries to his credit:

"About the time of the end, a body of men will be raised up, who will then draw attention to the prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation in the midst of much clamor and opposition."

-Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727 A.D.)



Miscalculating the Second Coming

By Dr. Edward E. Hindson

In the summer of 1988, my telephone rang one Saturday afternoon. I was drinking a cup of coffee and contemplating mowing the grass when the disruption came. A preacher friend of mine in California was all excited about the Rapture happening soon.

"I've just read the most amazing booklet about Bible prophecy," Bill shouted all the way from the West Coast. "This guy has calculated the events of the end times and predicts the Rapture will occur on September 12, 1988!"

"You've got to be kidding," I responded. "Those things never work out the way they claim!"

"No, this is for real," Bill insisted. "This guy is an engineer and he has spent years working out a detailed calculation based on the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh HaShanah) symbolizing the Rapture."

"I've heard this before," I quipped. "Some guys were saying that back in 1975 and nothing happened. Who is this writer?" I asked.

Bill paused a moment while he scanned the cover of the booklet. "Edgar Whisenant," he stated somewhat cautiously. "The booklet is entitled, *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*."

Of course it did not happen. Time has passed. No serious word of caution has come forth on date-setting, and in the meantime, events like the Persian Gulf crisis, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the reunification of Germany, and the prospects of a global economy have brought forth a whole host of prophetic speculations. Dates have come and gone - 1969, 1992, 1994.

Everything old is new again
Eschatological excitement and prophetic panic tend to go

hand in hand. Every time a war heats up in the Middle East, there will be a number of "prophetic panhandlers" assuring us that this is the big one. Despite the church's twenty-century-long struggle to understand biblical prophecy, some modern-day "prophets" claim to have it all figured out - some to the very day!

In order to properly interpret Bible prophecy we must make a clear distinction between the:

Facts

The clearly stated biblical facts regarding future events. For example, the fall of Babylon (Rev. 17-18).

Assumptions

Informed conclusions as to how the predicted facts may be fulfilled. Example: "Babylon" is literal and refers to modern Iraq, or, the "Babylon" of the Apocalypse is figurative and refers to the world-wide Kingdom of the Antichrist.

Speculations

Calculated guesses based on one's assumptions. Example: that Saddam Hussein is rebuilding Babylon in Iraq and will one day rule the world from there.

An old habit

Date-setting and speculation about the end times is an old habit. Many of the Reformers believed they were living in the Last Days, that Satan had been loosed, and that the Antichrist sought to extend his rule over the whole world by means of the Roman Catholic papacy. The idea had been developed during the Middle Ages that Satan was bound for a thousand years, approximately A.D. 300-1300. During this time, from the reign of

Constantine until the time of the Reformation, the Gospel spread throughout Europe virtually unhindered, they thought.

Anselm of Havelburg (died 1154) was probably the first to assume that the seven seals of Revelation represent the seven ages of church history.

John Wycliffe (1329-1384), often called the "Morning Star" of the Reformation, identified the Catholic Pope as the Antichrist in his infamous work *De Papa*, published in 1379.

At the time of the Reformation, **Martin Luther** (1483-1546) discovered a late fifteenth-century commentary on the Apocalypse by John Hilten, a Franciscan monk who identified the Turks with Magog and predicted an invasion of Germany by the Turks - a prospect which seemed a very real possibility in Luther's day.

One of the most far-reaching predictions of the Puritan era was made by **Hugh Broughton** (1549-1612), who dated Creation at 3296 B.C. and added 6,000 years of human history, culminating in the return of Christ in A.D. 2072!

Needless to say here, Broughton's view was not very popular, because it put the Second Coming too far in the then-distant future. By the way, he is the only date-setter never yet proven wrong!

The dating game

Thomas Brightman (1557-1607) was a Puritan pastor and scholar. His *Revelation of the Revelation*, published in 1609 after his death, became the most popular prophetic tract of Puritan England.

Brightman believed that the last great "harvest" was brought about by Luther, the "avenging angel" was Thomas Cromwell, and the "soul under

the altar" was the martyred Thomas Cranmer. He pictured the seven vials beginning under Queen Elizabeth I in 1560 with the first blast of the seventh trumpet.

Setting dates for the second coming has been a favorite eschatological pastime. Many of the Puritans, like **Thomas Goodwin**, preferred 1666, for obvious reasons. **William Miller**, a Baptist pastor in Vermont, predicted the return of Christ in 1843, giving rise to the Adventist tradition. In the late nineteenth century, **Charles Russell** predicted Christ would return to establish His kingdom on earth in 1914. When nothing happened, Russell announced He had returned secretly, revealing His presence only to Jehovah's Witnesses.

Viewing prophecy through our own eyes

Perhaps the greatest problem for the church in the matter of interpreting biblical prophecy is the desire to view it through our own experience. The German theologians call this a *zeitgeist*, a current mood or response to certain existing conditions. Unfortunately, as we have seen in this brief history of eschatological speculation, this has happened more often than not. The great temptation in prophetic interpretation is to move from the facts to our own assumptions and speculations.

The twentieth century is loaded with examples of prophetic speculations which never came true. First, it was assumed that ours must be the last age and that in the last days the Antichrist will form an alliance of European nations and attack Israel. Here is just a sample of the proposals that were offered:

1. **Kaiser Wilhelm**
The German emperor's title meant "Caesar," and he intended to conquer all of Europe and reunite the old Roman Empire.

2. **Benito Mussolini**
Prophetic speculators tagged him as the Antichrist long before World War II began. After all, they reasoned, Mussolini is in Rome and wants to revive the Roman Empire; therefore, he will join hands with the Pope and rule the world.

3. **Adolph Hitler**
Hitler has come to be the ultimate personification of evil. What better candidate for the Antichrist? He persecuted and murdered 6 million Jews and tried to conquer all of Europe.

4. **Joseph Stalin**
Many American prophecy buffs had the atheistic leader of the Soviet Union tagged as the "Man of Sin," or the Magog of Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezekiel 38-39).

5. **Nikita Khrushchev**
Many still remember the outspoken, shoe-pounding, bald, fat man of the Soviet Union from his violent speech at the United Nations in which he threatened to bury us all. Surely, he could be the Antichrist. Right? Nope!

6. **John F. Kennedy**
Believe it or not - he was a top candidate among anti-Catholic fundamentalists in the early 1960s. They were sure he was going to deceive the world and form an alliance with the Pope, the blacks, and the communists to take over the world.

7. **Mikhail Gorbachev**
Before the collapse of the old Soviet Union, I had people ask me if the mark on his head might be the "mark of the Beast!"

8. **Ronald Wilson Reagan**
Yes, even the darling of the New Right and practically the entire evangelical church was targeted as a candidate for Antichrist, because his three names each contain six letters, thus 666.

9. **Saddam Hussein**
Some have tried to say he will rebuild ancient Babylon in Iraq and conquer the world.

10. **Bill Clinton**
He's the Antichrist and Hillary is the False Prophet. Don't believe it!

The problem with these identifications is that they are always tentative and viewed through the *zeitgeist* of our own times. Identifications, which now seem ludicrous, once held great popular appeal.

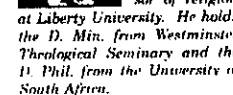
The Lord Jesus told us to watch, stay ready, and keep serving until He comes.

When you study the facts of prophecy, be sure that you distinguish them from the assumptions you draw or the speculations you make.

While we would all like to believe that our Lord will come in our lifetime, it is presumption to assume that we are, for sure, the terminal generation. He could come today, but He may not come for many years. That decision is up to God the Father, and He hasn't revealed the date to anyone.

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What on earth is God doing in these last days?

By Dr. Tim LaHaye

Every Christian's heart is thrilled at the reports that are coming from all over the world of millions of souls coming to Christ. The International Religious News Service just reported that so many people have come to Christ in Africa, Asia, the Orient and in the old Soviet Union, that today, more than half the world's Christians live outside the West. In view of such unprecedented conversions, the question is often asked, "Where in prophecy does it suggest there will be such a revival in the last days?"

That is a legitimate question in light of the well known prophecies that predict "a falling away" or "perilous times" for the last days.

The truth is, we are not experiencing a revival. Certainly not a moral/spiritual revival that starts with the children of God and sweeps out to include nations and peoples. It might come to that. We might see a movement

of national and international repentance that not only ushers millions into the kingdom of God, but also changes the moral culture of the world's society. That, however, is not what we are seeing today, for anyone with eyes to see can tell that society is getting worse not better.

What we are seeing today is one of those visitations of God's Holy Spirit in drawing millions to Christ worldwide - or as I like to call it, a *soul harvest*. There have been many such soul harvests in history and Revelation 7:9 tells us the greatest soul harvest is yet to come. It will result in an innumerable host of souls being swept into the kingdom, but that is after the Rapture of the Church and during the Tribulation period.

Although it is not required to fulfill Bible prophecy, don't be surprised if the present soul harvest isn't a prelude to that "shout from heaven," that results in the Rapture of a freshly expanded Church!

Synthetic Outline of Eschatological Events

I. THE RAPTURE AND FIRST RESURRECTION.

A. Definition. The capture means literally "to be caught up." It refers to the translating of believers in Jesus Christ when he returns for his Church. The first resurrection refers to the coming to life of those who are believers in Jesus Christ who are dead when he returns for his church (prior to the tribulation period and simultaneous with the rapture).

B. Scripture passages related to these events.

1. The rapture. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 2:1-8; Phil. 3:20,21; John 14:1-3.
2. The first resurrection. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:5.

II. THE REWARDS OF THE BELIEVER.

A. Definition. The believer will be judged according to his works and will receive rewards based upon those works. This takes place after the rapture and takes place before "the judgement seat of Christ".

B. Scripture. 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Rom. 14:10-12; James 5:7-9; 1 Pet. 4:17-18; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Pet. 1:9-11; 1 John 2:28.

III. THE RETRIBUTION OF UNBELIEVERS. (THE TRIBULATION)

A. Definition. This is a period of seven years when God's judgement on unbelieving man will be intense and fulfilled. It will be specifically related to Israel but will include all the earth. It is also known as "Daniel's seventieth week," and "Jacob's trouble." The beginning of the tribulation period is also the beginning of the "Day of the Lord."

B. Parenthesis - "Day of the Lord":

The "Day of the Lord" is a future period of time when the Sovereign Lord will judge Israel and nations of the earth for their pride and will establish His kingdom on the earth. The "day of the Lord" is a time when God will totally judge and destroy all the nations who have resisted him and who have been against Israel (God will honor the cause of Israel). Man's pride will be judged and idolatry will be done away with. God alone will be the Lord. It is characterized as a time of judgement, death, destruction. It will be a fearful time - worse than any other period of previous or subsequent history. Despite the ominous nature of the period, it will also be a time of worshipping God - God's Spirit will be poured out and all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

(Isa. 2:12-21; 13:1-22; 22:1-25; 34:1-17; Jer. 46:1-12; Ezek. 7:1-27; 13:5; 30:1-19; Joel 1:15; 2:1-11; 28-32; 3:9-17; Amos 5:18-20; 8:8-9; 9:5-6; Obadiah 15-21; Zeph. 1:7-8; 2:1-3; 3:8; Zech. 14:1-21.

C. Scriptures relating to the period in general. Dan. 9:27 12:1; Matt. 24:1-25:46; Rev. 6-19; Jer. 30:4-7; Luke 21; Zech. 13:8-9.

D. Specific events of the period.

1. The period will begin with a covenant being made between Antichrist and Israel. The covenant will reestablish sacrifice in Israel. Dan. 9:27.
2. The covenant will be broken and Antichrist will set himself up to be worshipped as God. This will take place at the midpoint of the seven year period. Dan. 9:27; 2 Thess 2:3-4; Matt. 24:15 ff.
- E. *The judgements of the period.*
 1. The Seal judgements. Rev. 6:1-8:5.
 2. The Trumpets judgements. Rev. 8:6-11:19.
 3. The Bowl judgements. Rev. 16:1-21.

IV. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

A. Definition. This refers to the bodily return of Jesus Christ to the earth. This return will be a great and glorious return in power. It will take place at the end of the tribulation period and the millennial kingdom will immediately follow. The enemies of Christ will be defeated at this return.

B. Scriptures. Zech. 14:1-9; Matt. 24:29-25:26 Mark 13:26-37; Luke 21:27-36; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 19:11 ff.

C. The time of the Coming is unknown to man. Acts 1:7; Rev. 3:3; Matt. 24:36 ff. Mark 13:32 ff.

V. THE REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS.

A. Definition. The millennial Kingdom is that 1,000 year period in which Jesus Christ rules over the earth as the promised Messiah, the seed of David. This reign will follow the revelation and will be an intermediate stage of the eternal kingdom.

The eschatological kingdom refers to that time which is yet future when God will sovereignly reign over all the earth through the person of his divinely appointed and anointed mediator, Jesus Christ - the son of God, the son of David (Messiah). The eschatological kingdom will be a time of restoration for the nation of Israel - she will be returned to her land and will live there in safety, never to be removed again - there Messiah will reign over his chosen people. The extent of the eschatological kingdom will be universal - all nations will voluntarily submit to Messiah's authority - even the wildlife of earth will live in peace and tranquility, posing no threat to other animals or mankind - the earth itself will be fruitful. The reign of Messiah will be characterized by justice, righteousness, peace, safety, wisdom; the earth will be full of the knowledge of God and the people will obey the laws of God. The sovereign reign of God will last forever. The eschatological kingdom will be a time of rejoicing. (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Zech. 9:9-10; Amos 9; Psalm 110)

B. The reign will last 1,000 years and the saints of Christ will reign with him. (Rev. 20:1-5)

C. Satan will be bound for the duration of the 1,000 year reign. (Rev. 20:1-3)

VI. THE RELEASE AND REVOLT OF SATAN.

A. Definition. This event will take place at the end of the millennial reign. Satan will be released from his prison. He will deceive many on the earth and will fight against God and will be defeated and thrown into the lake of fire.

B. Scripture. Rev. 20:7-10.

VII. THE SECOND RESURRECTION.

A. Definition. This refers to the second resurrection of the dead. In the first resurrection believers will be resurrected to life; unbelievers will be resurrected to damnation.

B. Scripture. Dan. 12:2-3; 1 Thess 5:1-11; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:5-6.

VIII. THE RENOVATION. (THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH)

A. Definition. This is the renovation of the "burned up" present heavens and earth. This will be the eternal abode of the saints of God.

B. Scripture. Rom. 8:19 ff; Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22-23; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-4.

IX. REMORSE. (ETERNAL DAMNATION)

A. Definition. This refers to the eternal punishment of unbelievers. They will be cast into the lake of fire where they will be punished forever.

B. Scripture. Rev. 20:14-15; Rev. 19:20; 20:10; Mark 9:43-48; Matt. 5:29,30; 10:38; 18:9; Luke 12:4-5; Rev. 14:10-11; Matt. 25:41.

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Synthetic and Chronological Outline of Eschatological Events

In attempting to do a totally chronological outline of eschatological events and include all the biblical data in some sensible format, it requires the main outline points to follow the basic chronological order with the synthetic material under each outline point to be listed topically. The major topic headings and their abbreviations will be listed as follows: Personal Eschatology (PE), Old Testament Expectations (OTE), and New Testament Expectations (NTE).

I. The Present Day (NTE, PE)

The period of time in which believers of the church age are currently living is considered here. This is actually a background preparation for the study of future eschatological events.

A. Delay in the Program of God (NTE)

In Christ's teaching concerning the kingdom, he taught that though there was a present reality in the kingdom because of his personal presence, the eschatological kingdom would be delayed until after he had first gone to heaven. (Matt. 11:9-19; 12:28; concerning the delay Lk. 19:11-13; Acts 1:3-11)

B. Present Realities of the Believer During the Delay (PE)

1. Present experience of Abrahamic Covenant blessings in Christ. (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; cf. Gal. 3:8, 16, 27-29)
2. Present experience of New Covenant blessing (2 Cor. 3:1-3, 18; Rom. 7:4-6; 8:1-30; Gal. 5:5-6; 16:25; Eph. 1:11-23; Phil 2:12-13)
3. Present citizenship in the kingdom.
 - a. Present participation or representation of the Kingdom of God. (Col. 1:13; 3:1-4; Eph. 2:6; Rev. 1:6)
 - b. Present citizenship in the City of God. (Gal. 4:26; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 12:22-24, 28)

C. The Believers Hope During the Delay (PE)

1. The object and basis of hope. (1 Pet. 1:3, 21; 2 Thes. 2:16; Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 1:1; Rom. 8:24-29; 15:13; Titus 2:1; Heb. 6:17)
2. The content of hope. (1 Pet. 1:3-5, 13; Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:7; Rom. 5:2; 8:23-25; Acts 24:15; 1 Thes. 5:8; 2 Pet. 3:13; Gal. 5:5; 1 Jn. 3:1-2)

3. The effect of hope.
 - a. Confidence and assurance. (Phil. 1:6; Heb. 6:19)
 - b. Comfort and encouragement. (2 Thes. 2:16; 1 Thes. 4:18)
 - c. Joy. (Rom. 12:12; 15:13; 1 Pet. 1:6)
 - d. Patient endurance of present trials. (1 Thes. 1:3; Rom. 5:2-5; 1 Pet. 1:6-9; Jas. 5:7-8)
 - e. Godly living. (Tit. 2:12-13; 1 Thes. 5:5-24; 1 Pet. 1:13-15; 4:7-11; 2 Pet. 3:11-14; 1 Jn. 3:3; Col. 1:4-5; Heb. 12:14; 2 Cor. 4:18-5:10)

D. Death and the Intermediate State During the Delay (PE)

The basic question to answer here is "What happens to people who die during the present age?" To answer this question, one must deal with the nature of physical death and then denote the intermediate state for believers and unbelievers.

1. Physical death is the separation of the body and soul. (Gen. 35:18; Act 7:59; Ps. 104:29; 146:3,4; Eccl. 12:7; Lk. 223:46; Matt. 10:28)
2. The souls of believers go into an intermediate state with Christ to await the resurrection of the body. (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:9; Acts 7:55, 59; Rev. 7:9-17)
3. The souls of unbelievers go into an intermediate state of torment until the resurrection of the body. (Lk. 16; 2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 6:8-9; 20:13)
4. Resurrection hope. The resurrection should give hope to believers during the delay in the following ways:
 - a. Brings comfort to believers. (1 Thess. 4:18)
 - b. Death and resurrection describe present realities as well as future. (Col. 2:9-3:17)
 - c. The Spirit of resurrection power is now at work in believers. (Rom. 8:6-14; Eph. 1:18-20)

II. The Rapture

The rapture is the next major event to take place in God's eschatological timetable. In this event, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven and be joined together with the saints who will go to live with Him forever.

A. Foreshadowing of the Rapture (OTE)

1. Enoch's translation. (Gen. 5:24)
2. Noah's protection. (Gen. 7:16)
3. Lot's warning. (Gen. 19:22-24)
4. Israel's exodus. (Ex. 14:26-28)

5. Elijah's translation. (2 Kings 2:11-12)

B. The time of the Rapture (NTE)

1. Unacceptable positions.

- a. Partial Rapture Theory. This theory holds that believers will be raptured at different times during the tribulation. The factor used to determine the time of the believers' rapture and the amount of suffering he will endure is his faithfulness to Christ. This theory is unacceptable because it is based on Scriptures which have no reference to the rapture.
- b. Midtribulationism. This theory holds that believers will go through the first half of the Tribulation and be raptured in the middle. This view is based on a correlation of the concept of mystery in Revelation 10 with the rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:51 which is there described as a mystery. The reason why this view is unacceptable is because the concept of mystery is applied to many things in Scripture and there is no reference to rapture in the context of Revelation 10. Also, the reference to the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11 would place this at the end of the tribulation not the middle.
- c. Posttribulationism. This theory holds that the rapture will take place at the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation and the church will go through the tribulation. To support this theory, posttribulationists refer to 1 Thes. 4-5, 2 Thes. 2, and Revelation. These passages will be discussed below.

2. Pretribulationism.

- a. Scriptural support for a pretribulation rapture.
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 4-5. In these verses, the believers are perplexed because they fear for the destiny of other believers who had died before the return of Christ. Paul comforts them by saying that both dead and living will be reunited at the return of Christ at the rapture. To illustrate that this takes place before the tribulation, Paul tells them that they will be separated from the unbelievers before the Day of the Lord (which is the Tribulation). He says that God has not destined them for the wrath of the Tribulation.
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2. In this chapter, the believers were alarmed that the Day of the Lord was upon them which doesn't appear to be consistent with the belief that they would go through the Tribulation. By assuring them that they were not in the Day of the Lord and by associating the rapture with the beginning of the Day of the Lord, Paul encouraged them in their pretribulationism (2:1-2).
 - 3) Revelation 3:10. In this verse, Jesus promised the church at Philadelphia that He would keep them from the hour of testing. The term "hour of testing"

here refers to the Day of the Lord. Some have suggested that "keep from" really means keep in the sense of protection in. However, that would have no meaning for the Philadelphian church because they were not in the Tribulation. The best way to understand this passage is that Jesus is promising that he will keep them externally from the Tribulation by not bringing it into history during their lifetime or by rapturing the church out before the Tribulation. This interpretation is consistent with the fact that the church is not mentioned in Revelation 4-18 which describes the Tribulation.

- b. Theological support for a pretribulation rapture.
 - 1) Earthly bodies. In order for living people to populate the kingdom after the second coming of Christ, the rapture must take place at the beginning and not the end of the tribulation.
 - 2) Daniel's 70th Week. God deals with Israel in the 70 weeks of Daniel of which the tribulation is the 70th. It seems most consistent to place the rapture at the beginning of the 70th week to conclude God's dealings with the church before the reinstitution of Israel's history.
 - 3) Harmonization of biblical passages. Pretribulationism is consistent with dispensational premillennialism. Also, though not all passages in the New Testament dealing with the rapture clearly state that it will be pretribulation, there are no passages that do not harmonize with this view and none that contradict it.

C. The Nature of the Rapture (PE)

The rapture will consist of the resurrection of the bodies of all saints who have died (1 Cor. 15:51) and the translation of all believers who are living.

- 1. Resurrection of the saints. (1 Thes. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:23-52; Jn. 5:25-29)
- 2. Translation of the church. (1 Thes. 4:17; 2 Thes. 2:1; Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51)
 - a. Resurrection bodies. The pattern for the resurrection body will be the pattern of the resurrected body of Jesus. (Lk 24:13-51; Jn. 20:19-29; 21:1-14; cf. 1 Cor. 15:49; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:2)
 - 1) A substantial body. (1 Cor. 15:39-42a)
 - 2) An immortal body. (1 Cor. 15:42b)
 - 3) A glorious body. (1 Cor. 15:43a)
 - 4) A powerful body. (1 Cor. 15:43b)
 - 5) A spiritual body. (1 Cor. 15:44)
 - b. Resurrection abode. The church will take up residence with Jesus in heaven during the tribulation period to return with him at his second coming. (Jn. 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20)

D. The Judgment of the Saints after the Rapture (PE)

After the rapture of the church, the next event for those who have been raptured is the judgment for believers.

1. Believers have been delivered from the condemnation of the world and judgment of sin. (Jn. 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1, 9; 8:1, 31-34)
2. The believer is perfect and complete in Christ. (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10-17; Heb. 10:14)
3. The believer's judgment is a judgment of their works for rewards. (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Rom. 14:10-12; Js. 5:7-9; 1 Pet. 4:17-18; also cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Pet. 1:9-11; 1 Jn. 2:23; 4:17; Rev. 2-3)

III. The Tribulation (OTE, NTE)

The Tribulation is a seven year period between the rapture of the church and the millennial kingdom. During this time, God's judgment will be poured out on unbelieving man in the fullest measure. This judgment period will be used to turn the nation of Israel back to God.

A. Day of the Lord (OTE)

The prophets in the Old Testament looked forward to a period of time when the Sovereign Lord would judge the world and establish an everlasting kingdom. This would be a terrible time of death and destruction which would destroy the power of sin and establish Him over all others as Lord. This period is characterized by:

1. A time of great destruction. (Is. 13:6; 15-17; Jer. 46:3-6, 10; Ez. 7:5-7; Joel 1:15)
2. A time of reckoning. (Is. 2:12; 34:8; Obad. 15)
3. Destruction of idolatry. (Is. 12:18; Ez. 30:13-14)
4. Physical Manifestation of Destruction. (Is. 2:18-20; 13:6-9; 22:1-25; 34:1-17; Jer. 46:1-25; Ez. 7; 30:1-19; Joel 1:19; 2:1-11; 2:31; 3:9-16; Amos 5:18-20; 8:8-9)
5. Judgment is inescapable. (Jer. 46:6-12; Ez. 13:5; Joel 2:3-11; Amos 9:5-9)
6. A remnant will turn to God. (Joel 2:32; Obad. 17-21)
7. God will defeat the nation. (Zech. 14:3-7; 14:12-15)

B. Daniel's 70th Week (OTE)

In the book of Daniel, the prophecy of the future time is divided into 7 year periods called weeks. The 70th week corresponds to the tribulation period. Daniel gives a detailed account of the events that will take place during this period concerning Israel. (Dan. 7-12)

C. The Teaching of Jesus (NTE)

Jesus predicted the coming of the Tribulation by telling of the events that would transpire before the return of the Son of Man. He warns the people about various events that would occur.

1. Jesus' warning against deception and danger. (Matt. 24:4-14; Mk. 13:5-13; Lk. 21:8-19)
2. Jesus' warning concerning the abomination of desolation. (Matt. 24:15-25; Mk. 13:14-23; Lk. 14:10-24; cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11)

D. Day of the Lord (NTE)

The New Testament picks up with the Old Testament description of the Day of the Lord and seems to broaden it to describe the whole event and leading up to Christ's return.

1. It is a day of judgment. (1 Thes. 5; 2 Thes. 2; Rev. 6:17; 16:14; also cf. 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:10; 12; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Cor. 3:13; 5:5)
2. It is a time when Satan will attempt to usurp authority from God. (2 Thes. 2:2-17)

E. Events Which Occur During the Tribulation.

1. The Judgments of the Seven Seals. (Rev. 6)
2. God seals ministers, and believers are martyred. (Rev. 7)
3. The judgment of the seven trumpets (Rev. 8-11)
4. The gentiles occupy the Temple. (Rev. 11:1-2)
5. The Anti-Christ rises to power. (Rev. 13)
6. The judgment of the bowls. (Rev. 15-16)
7. Babylon is destroyed. (Rev. 17-18)

IV. The Return of Christ

The return of Christ refers to the bodily return of Jesus Christ to end the Tribulation period and begin his reign as king. At his return, all his enemies will be defeated.

- A. Jesus Predicted His Return (NTE) (Matt. 24:26-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Lk. 21:25-28)
- B. The Battles of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21)
- C. Resurrection of Tribulation Saints (Rev. 20:4)

V. The Millenium (OTE, NTE, PE)

The millennial kingdom is the 1,000 year period in which Jesus Christ rules over the earth as the promised Messiah, the seed of David. This is an intermediate kingdom before the eternal state.

A. The Covenants of Israel (OTE)

The covenants made between God and Israel form the foundation of the millennial kingdom. These covenants were unconditional and therefore, they had to find a future, literal fulfillment.

1. The Abrahamic Covenant. (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 18:17-19; 22:15-18)
 - a. Personal blessing to Abraham.
 - 1) Great nation. (12:2; 15:5; 12:2, 4-6; 18:18; 22:17)
 - 2) Great name. (12:2)
 - 3) Great blessing. (12:2; 22:18)
 - 4) Great reward. (15:1)
 - 5) Receive the land. (13:15; 17:8)
 - b. National blessing.
 - 1) Great nation. (12:2; 13:17; 15:5; 17:2; 18:18)
 - 2) Receive the land. (12:7; 13:5; 15:18-21; 17:8; 22:17)
 - c. Universal blessing. (12:3; 18:18; 22:18)
2. The David Covenant. (2 Sam. 7:4-16; Ps. 89; 1 Chr. 17:3-14)
 - a. Eternal seed. (Ps. 89:4, 29, 36)
 - b. Eternal kingdom. (2 Sam. 7:13, 16; 1 Chr. 17:14)
 - c. Eternal throne. (2 Sam. 7:13, Ps. 89:4, 29, 36; 1 Chr. 7:12, 14)
3. The New Covenant. (Is. 59:20-21; Jer. 31:31-34; 32:37-42; Ez. 11:17-21; 16:60-63; 36:24-34; 37:21-28)
 - a. God will cause Israel to repent and be obedient. (Is. 59:20; Ez. 36:27, 31; 37:24)
 - b. God will cleanse and forgive Israel. (Ez. 16:63; 36:25, 29; 37:23)
 - c. The Holy Spirit will permanently indwell them. (Is. 59:21; Ez. 36:27; 37:14)

- d. Israel will be permanently established forever in their land as a nation. (Jer. 31:35-37; 32:41-44; Ez. 36:28; 37:25)
- e. God will be worshipped by Israel and will fix His presence among them forever. (Jer. 32:38; Ez. 37:26-28)

B. Predictions of the Eschatological Kingdom of God and His Messiah (OTE)

In the Psalms and Prophets, an eschatological kingdom patterned after but surpassing the model of the Davidic kingship is predicted. This kingdom is a universal kingdom of peace and prosperity with the Anointed Messiah ruling over the whole earth. (Ps. 2, 21, 72, 45, 110, 96, 98; Amos 9:11-15; Is. 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 24-25; 40:3-11; 43:15; 44:6, 22-23; Micah 5:1-5; 4:1-8; Jer. 23:1-6; 33:14-26; Ez. 34:23-31; 37:24-28; Zech. 9:9-10; 14:9, 16-17; Mal. 1:11, 14; Dan. 2, 7)

C. Anticipation of an Intermediate Kingdom (OTE, NTE)

The Scriptures regarding the kingdom seem to indicate that there is a period of time when an intermediate kingdom will function before the final eternal kingdom is established. This is consistent with the premillennial view of the 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth before the eternal state.

- 1. Old Testament references. (Is. 65:17-20; Zech. 14:17;; Amos 9; Micah 7:14-20; Is. 11:4; Ps. 2; Is. 24-25)
- 2. New Testament references. (1 Cor. 15:22-28; Rev. 20:4-6)

D. Proclamation of the Kingdom by Jesus (NTE)

- 1. The future of the kingdom. (Matt. 13:41-43; 16:27; 24:29-31; 25:31-33; 26:63-64)
- 2. The delay of the appearance of the kingdom. (Lk. 19:11-13)
- 3. The presence of the kingdom in the person of Christ. (Matt. 11:11-19; 12:28; Lk. 17:21)
- 4. The nearness of the kingdom. (Mk. 1:15; Matt. 4:17; 10:7; 6:33; Lk. 12:31; 11:2)
- 5. The mystery form of the kingdom. (Matt. 13:1-52)

E. The Future Kingdom in the Apostolic Teaching (NTE, PE)

- 1. The kingdom comes when Christ comes. (2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Cor. 15:23-27; Rev. 19:15)
- 2. Believers have an inheritance in the kingdom. (Acts 14:22; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 2 Thes. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:12; 4:18; Heb. 12:28; Js. 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:11)

3. Israel has a special place in the kingdom. (Acts 1:6-7; Rom. 11:25-29)

F. The Millennial kingdom in Revelation (NTE)

1. It begins after the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21)
2. Satan is bound for the duration of the 1,000 years. (Rev. 20:1-3)
3. The tribulation martyrs are resurrected and glorified. (Rev. 20:4)
4. Christ reigns over the earth for 1,000 years. (Rev. 20:6)

VI. Events Between the Millennium and the Eternal State (NTE, PE)

Certain events will take place at the end of the millennium and the beginning of the eternal state. These have been listed as a separate category for clarity.

A. The Release and Revolt of Satan (NTE)

Satan will be released from prison and he will deceive many on the earth to fight against God. He will be defeated and cast into the lake of fire for eternal judgment. (Rev. 20:7-10)

B. The Resurrection of Unbelievers (PE)

All the people who have died in unbelief will be resurrected to face judgment and eternal damnation. (Rev. 20:11-15; cf. Rev. 19:20; Mk. 9:43, 48; Matt. 5:29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; Lk. 12:4-5; Rev. 14:10-11)

VII. The Eternal State

The eternal state is the everlasting establishment of the rule of God for the whole creation. It will be a time of everlasting conscious blessedness for the saved with God and everlasting conscious punishment for the lost without God. (Rev. 21:1-22:5; cf. Phil. 3:20; Gal. 4:22; Heb. 11:10; 12:22-24; 13:14)

"The Righteous Rapture of The Redeemed"

I Thess. 4: 13-18
(cf. I Cor. 15: 50-58)

- | | | |
|------|---|-------------------------|
| I. | <u>The Rapture Is An Event of Controversy</u> | 4:13 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Partial Rapturism 2) Pre-wrath Rapturism 3) Post-tribulationism 4) Mid-tribulationism 5) Pre-tribulationism | |
| II. | <u>The Rapture Is An Event For Christians</u> | 4: 14-16 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There is a promise to the disciples of Christ 2) There is a privilege for the dead in Christ 3) There is a proclamation of the day of Christ | 4:14
4:15-16
4:16 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Heaven shouts B) The archangel speaks C) The trumpet sounds | |
| III. | <u>The Rapture Is An Event of Celebration</u> | 4:17 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We will celebrate in the clouds 2) We will celebrate with Christ 3) We will celebrate continuously | |
| IV. | <u>The Rapture Is An Event of Comfort</u> | 4:18 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We comfort one another personally 2) We comfort one another with His promise | |

THE RAPTURE

The rapture is the next major event to take place in God's eschatological timetable. This event will precede the Great Tribulation which is described in detail in Revelation 6-19. The word itself comes from the Latin raptus and the Greek harpazō, meaning to catch up or snatch away. In this event, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven and believers, both dead and living, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the clouds. They will then be with the Lord forever.

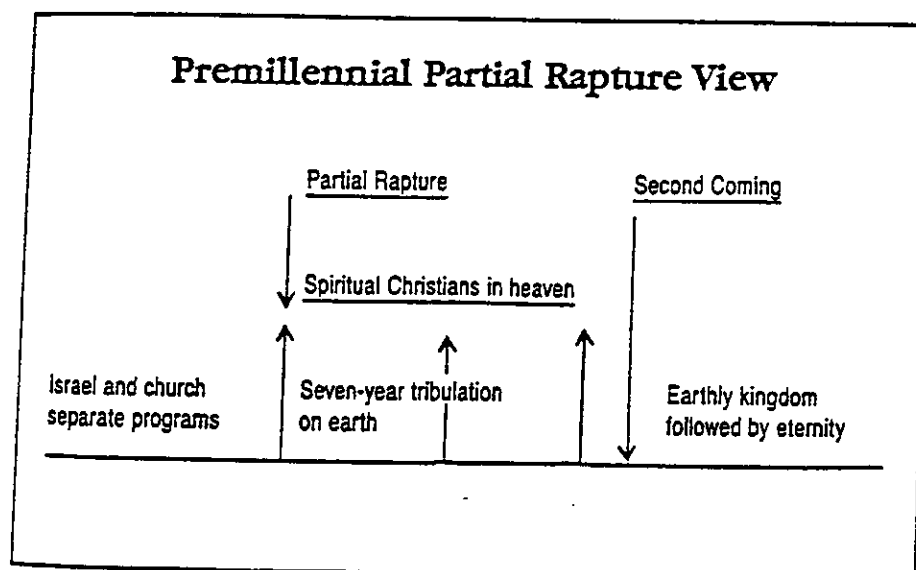
I. Foreshadowing of the Rapture.

- A. Enoch's translation (Gen. 5:24).
- B. Noah's protection (Gen. 7:16).
- C. Lot's warning (Gen. 19:22-24).
- D. Israel's exodus (Ex. 14:26-28).

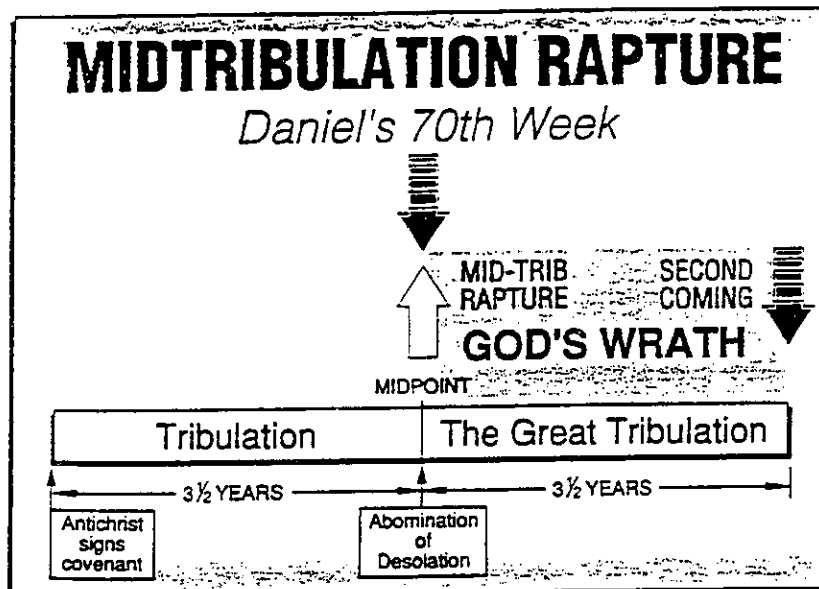
*The point is that, in each case, God divinely protected His people, taking them out of the way of His judgment on wicked men.

II. Various Theories Concerning the Time of the Rapture.

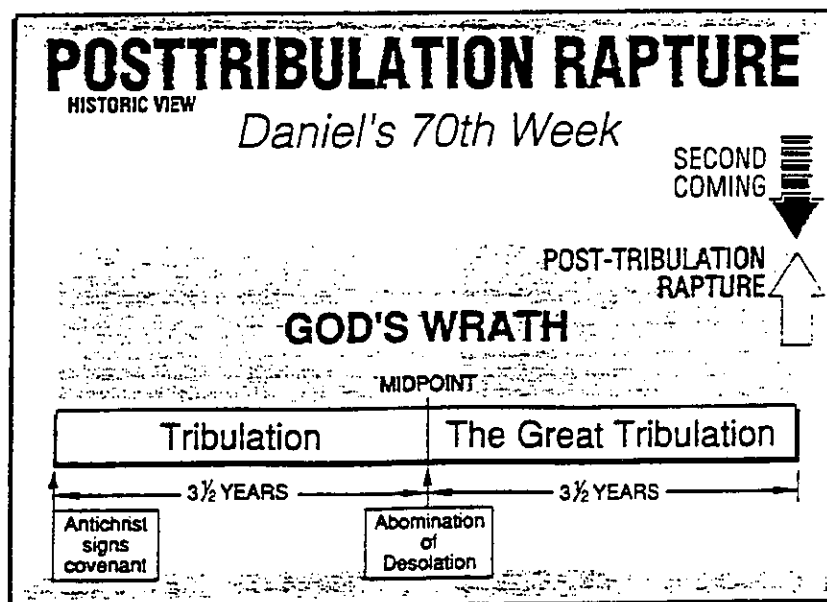
- A. Partial Rapture Theory. This theory holds that believers will be raptured at different times just before and during the tribulation. The factor used to determine the time of the believers' rapture and the amount of suffering he will endure is his faithfulness to Christ. This theory is seldom advocated and is unacceptable because it is based on Scriptures which have no reference to the rapture.



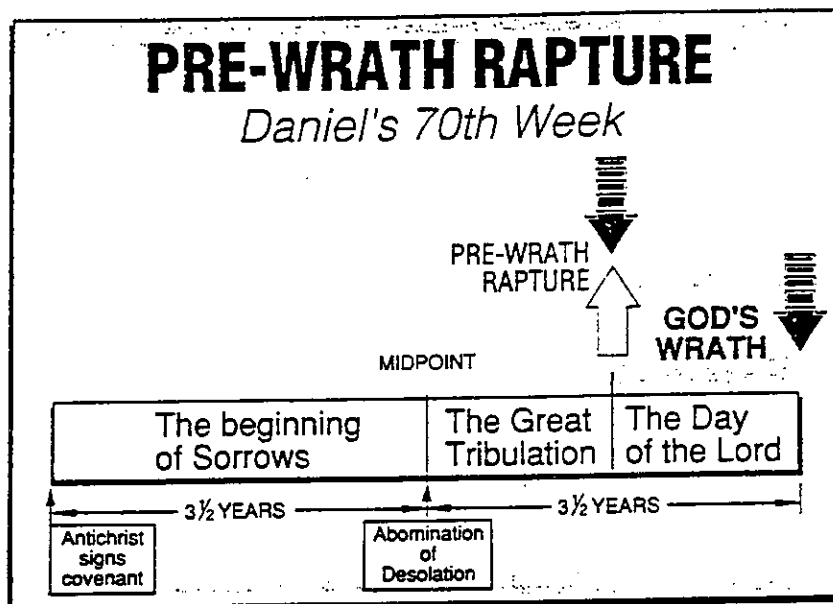
- B. Midtribulationism. This theory holds that believers will go through the first half of the Tribulation ($3\frac{1}{2}$ years) and be raptured in the middle. This view usually associates the rapture with the seventh trumpet in Rev. 11, and sees only the last half of Daniel's 70th week (the Tribulation period) as being the time of God's wrath.



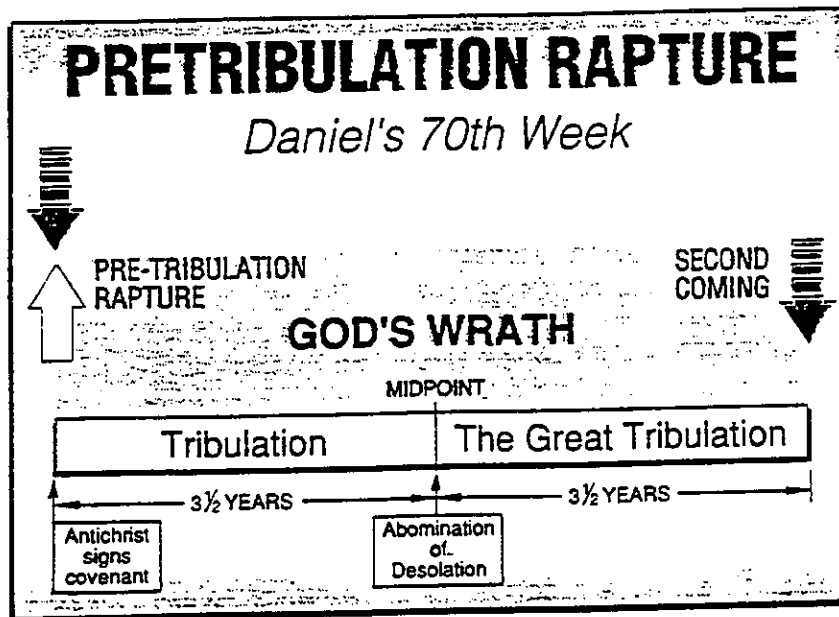
- C. Posttribulationism. This theory holds that the rapture will take place at the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation, and therefore, the church will go through the tribulation. Also known as historic premillennialism, this position often rejects the distinction between Israel and the church. The church is viewed as the new Israel. This is the most popular theory among non-dispensational evangelicals.



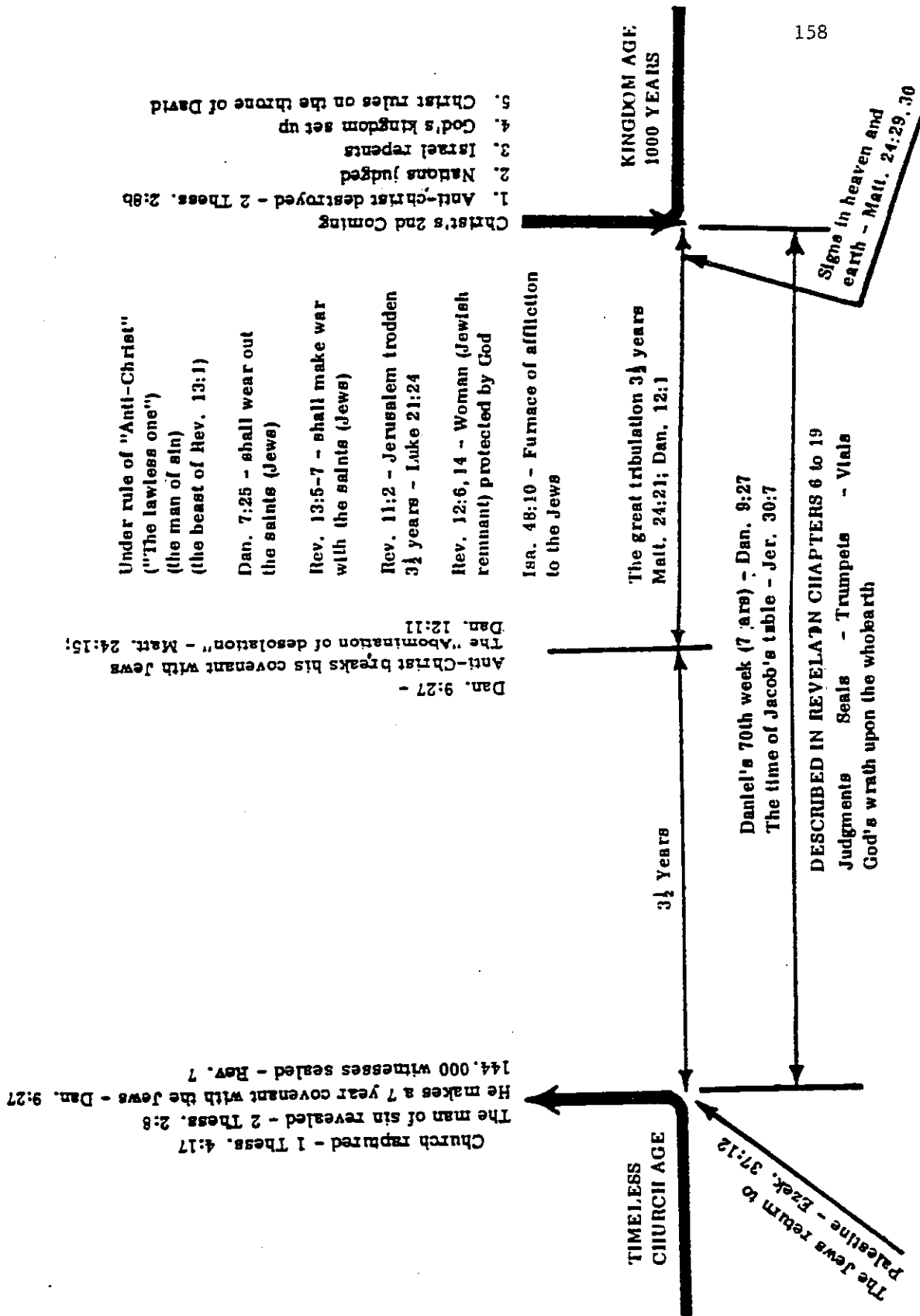
- D. Pre-wrath Rapturism. A recent theory, this view says the church will enter the 70th week of Daniel, but that it will be raptured out before the beginning of the Day of the Lord or the Day of God's Wrath. The rapture will occur sometime in the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of Daniel's 70th week, and will be immediately followed by the wrath of God which begins with the sixth seal of Rev. 6:12.



- E. Pretribulationism. This position argues that the rapture will take place without warning, and then the tribulation (Daniel's 70th week) will begin. The church, in this view, will not go through any part of the tribulation period.



EVENTS OF THE COMING TRIBULATION PERIOD



THE RAPTURE AND THE TRIBULATION

Posttribulation - The view that the rapture will coincide with the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation (Thus the church will go through the tribulation).

A. Types of posttribulationism.

1. Classic posttribulationism (ex. J. Barton Payne)
 - a. The tribulation is not literal.
 - b. The church is now at the end of the tribulation.
 - c. The rapture/second coming is imminent.
2. Semiclassic posttribulationism (ex. A. Reese)
 - a. Not all of the tribulation is literal.
 - b. Part of the tribulation is future.
 - c. The church is presently in the first part of the tribulation.
 - d. The rapture/second coming is near but not imminent.
3. Futurist posttribulationism (ex. G. E. Ladd)
 - a. The tribulation is literal.
 - b. The tribulation is future.
 - c. The rapture/second coming is not imminent.
4. Dispensational posttribulationism (ex. R. Gundry)
 - a. The tribulation is literal.
 - b. The tribulation is future.
 - c. The Day of the Lord begins at the end of the tribulation.
 - d. The rapture takes place before Armageddon.
 - e. The second coming ends Armageddon.
 - f. Neither the rapture nor the second coming are imminent.

I. Posttribulational arguments

1. Argument: Nowhere does the Scripture teach that the rapture is pretribulational.

Response: 1) There is Scripture which implies a pretrib. rapture. (1 Thess 4:13-5:11)
 2) There is no Scripture which denies a pretrib. rapture.
 3) The reality of His imminent coming is only satisfied by a pretrib. position. (Titus 2:13)

2. Argument: Passages that teach a deliverance from wrath most likely refer to a deliverance through wrath (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10; cf. 2 Tim. 4:17-18).

Response: - Though such interpretation(s) are possible, they, in context, are not the best interpretations.
 -- Also, the overall development of Scripture points more to a pretrib. position.
 -- Christians are said not to be destined for wrath. (1 Thess. 5:9)
 -- One should distinguish between tribulations and The Tribulation.

- - - - - Excursis: Discussion of Revelation 3:10 - - - - -

* A posttribulational view:

- a. "The hour of testing"
 - 1) In heaven and on earth (?)
 - 2) Does not imply a period of time but rather trials in that period
 - 3) cf. Jer. 30:7 and similar promise
 - 4) Some limit it to the Roman world of John's day
- b. "Out from within" "keep from" (tereo ek) -- kept thru, guarded and protected thru, preserved in (internal protection vs. external protection)
 (yet many are martyred during this time!)
- c. Comparison with John 17:15

Post-trib. argue that this (like 3:10) is a prayer for preservation of the disciples in the moral sphere of Satan since they are left in the world. But tereo ek argues best here for preservation in an outside position.

- - - - - End of Excursis - - - - -

3. Argument: The removal of the restrainer in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 does not teach a pretribulational rapture.

Response: - It does not deny it.

- Context affirms the Day of the Lord was not present and believers in error for thinking it was or that they would experience it.
- Holy Spirit is the restrainer; He indwells us; if He is removed as to His restraining influence, we can be removed with Him.

4. Argument: The rapture must be posttribulational since it is part of the first resurrection and the first resurrection is said to be after the tribulation (Dan. 12:1-3; Rev. 20:4-6; 1 Cor. 15:23-25).

Response: - 1st resurrection is not a time of resurrection but a kind of resurrection (to life! 2nd to death!)
 -- Christ resurrection in 1 Cor. 15 precedes the 1st resurrection in time!

5. Argument: 1 Thessalonians 4-5 teaches a posttribulational rapture.

- a. Comfort is given that death does not diminish future hopes.
- b. These same believers look for the Day of the Lord.
- c. The Day of the Lord occurs at the end of the tribulation.
- d. Putting both chapters together leads to a posttribulational rapture.

Response: - Point C is incorrect

- The Day of the Lord contains all of the Tribulation (if not being equal to it).
- Chron. reading of 1 Thess. 4-5 implies pretribulationism.

6. Argument: Matthew 24:1-44 teaches a posttribulational rapture in that the rapture event of verses 39b-41 follows the signs of the tribulation in verses 4-39a.

Response: Rapture is not in view in Matt. 24-25. Matt. 24:39-41 refers to those taken in judgment not rapture.

7. Argument: 2 Thess. 1-2 teaches that the rapture occurs at the time of the 2nd coming after the Day of the Lord.

Response: - Rapture and coming of the Day of the Lord are associated together.

- Thess. did not expect (it seems) to be in the Day of the Lord and were troubled by this false teaching.
- Holy Spirit as restraining embodied in the church is problematic here.

8. Argument: Revelation favors a posttribulational rapture since no pretribulational rapture is mentioned and saints are explicitly said to be in the tribulation.

Response: - Rapture is not in view at all in Revelation, thus it supports no position.

- Word church (*ekklesia*) occurs 19 times in Rev. 1-3, once in Rev. 22, but not at all in 4-18. This must be accounted for.
- Word "saints" could easily apply to those converted during the tribulation, and does not prove the presence of the pre-tribulation church.
- Rev. 19 - Who is coming with Christ?

II. Midtribulationism (also Pre-Wrath rapturism)- The view that the rapture will take place at the mid point of the tribulation period, but the second coming will occur at its end (thus the church will go through part of the tribulation.). Prewrath rapturism sees the rapture 3/4 of the way thru Daniel's 70th week.

A. Basic tenets of midtribulationism

1. The tribulation is future.
2. The wrath of God is poured out only in the second half of the tribulation.
3. Predictions that the church will go through tribulation are fulfilled by the first half of the tribulation.
4. Predictions of deliverance from wrath are fulfilled by the rapture preceding the second half.
5. Thus the rapture is not imminent.

B. Basic arguments of midtribulationism

1. Argument: The wrath of God is descriptive only of the second half of the tribulation.

Response: Revelation 6-19 will not allow this, esp. Rev. 6. The wrath of God is present throughout the 7 years, though intensifying no doubt in the last half (3 1/2 years).

2. Argument: The rapture can be clearly seen in Revelation 11.

- a. Rev. 10:7 teaches that the mystery of God will be accomplished in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet. Note that the rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:51 is said to be a mystery accomplished at the sound of the trumpet (v. 52). 1 Thessalonians 4 also places this event at the sound of the trumpet.

- b. The rapture of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:11-12 occurs at the time of the rapture of the church said to be 1260 days into the tribulation (half way) at the time of the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

Response: - It is spiritualizing to see a rapture at 11:11-12, just as would be the case to see a rapture at 4:1.

- Rev. 10:7 ~~is~~ rapture. Mystery does not always refer to the rapture though it also is a mystery.
- Witnesses ~~is~~ rapture because the most essential element is missing: Translation of living people without death.
- These two are not necessarily or even probably symbols of the church.

III. Pretribulationism - The view that the rapture will take place in history without warning after which the tribulation will begin and be followed at its completion by the second coming of Christ (Thus the church will not go through the tribulation).

A. Some basic tenets

1. The tribulation is future.
2. The rapture is imminent; the second coming is not.
3. The rapture concerns the church (redeemed of all ages prior to the tribulation); the tribulation concerns Israel and the gentile nations.

B. Some basic arguments

1. I Thessalonians 4-5 favors a pretribulational rapture.
 - a. Comfort is given that the dead will be united with Christ at His coming.
 - b. These same believers are expecting the Day of the Lord.
 - c. The Day of the Lord describes (better "contains") the whole of the tribulation.
 - d. Believers are said to be separated from unbelievers at the beginning of this day.
 - e. Believers are said to be not appointed to the wrath of that day.
2. 2 Thessalonians 2 favors a pretribulational rapture.

- a. The rapture and the coming of the Day of the Lord are associated in 2:1-2. This fits the pretribulational view of the rapture as beginning or just prior to the Day of the Lord.
 - b. The Thessalonians were surprised and alarmed at the prospects of the Day of the Lord coming upon them. This should not be the case if they had been taught posttribulationism.
 - c. Paul's insistence that the Day of the Lord had not come upon them would reassure their pretribulational hope. But how could his words be of any comfort to them if Paul was confirming their posttribulationism? (Is the church supposed to hope to not be the tribulation church? But how is it they are supposed to hope for Christ's coming?)
3. Revelation 3:10 favors a pretribulational rapture. (See detailed treatment in J. Townsend, "Revelation 3:10 and The Rapture of The Church," ThM Thesis, DTS, 1978.)
- Note the Purpose
- a. The meaning of "keep from", tereo ek, i.e., "outside position" not "out from within"
Best interpretation is "exemption from"
(cf. John 12:27; Acts 15:29; Prov. 21:23 LXX)
-- Tereo ek does not describe the rapture, but the position and status of the church during the hour of testing. It thus describes the results of the rapture not the rapture itself.
 - b. The significance of "The Hour of Testing."
-- A reference of the whole time
(The time [hour] is in view, more than the testing only)
 - c. Comparison with John 17:15
Object of tereo ek in John is a person.
Object of tereo ek in Rev. is a time.
* But John may also have the idea of exclusion as well.
 - d. Conclusion
Rev. 3:10 fits best the pretrib. position.
4. There is no passage that cannot be harmonized with a pretribulational view.
5. Pretribulationism is necessary for a premillennialism in which old and New Testament promises are literally and harmoniously fulfilled.
- a. A posttribulational rapture does not allow easily/readily for a believing remnant in earthly

bodies at the time of the second coming to enter and populate the millennium.

- b. The mystery of the rapture is a fitting conclusion to the mystery of the church existing prior to the reinstitution of Israel's appointed history (the 70th week).
- c. The tribulation saints are distinguished between Jew and gentile. Furthermore, this distinction remains as these saints enter the millennium to populate it.
- d. The ultimate and primary destiny of the church is not the land of Israel or the nations but the new Jerusalem.
- e. A pretribulation view best harmonizes these expectations.

POSTTRIBULATIONISM

1. Rapture occurs after the Tribulation.
2. Church experiences Revelation 3:10 at end of Tribulation.
3. Day of the Lord begins at close of Tribulation.
4. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 occurs near end of Tribulation.
5. 144,000 redeemed at conclusion of Tribulation.
6. Rapture and Second Coming are a single event.
7. No such judgment.
8. Living Gentiles judged after Millennium.
9. Parents of millennial population come from 144,000 Jews.
10. Believers of Church Age judged after Second Coming or at conclusion of Millennium.

PRETRIBULATIONISM

1. Rapture occurs before the Tribulation.
2. Church experiences Revelation 3:10 before the Tribulation.
3. Day of the Lord begins with the Tribulation.
4. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 occurs at beginning of Tribulation.
5. 144,000 redeemed at start of Tribulation.
6. Rapture and Second Coming separated by seven years.
7. Living Israelites judged at Second Coming.
8. Living Gentiles judged at Second Coming.
9. Parents of millennial population come from survivors of judgments on living Jews and Gentiles.
10. Believers of Church Age judged in heaven between Rapture and Second Coming.

III. Support of the Pretribulation Position

- A. The tribulation of the church is the continuous attack of wicked men upon her in the present (John 15:18-20, II Tim. 3:12). However, the great tribulation is God's climactic judgment upon wicked men in the future.
- B. In Daniel 9:24, the prophecy of the 70 weeks or 490 years is concerning "Thy people [Jews] and upon the holy city [Jerusalem]." The N.T. church was not in the first 483 years before the crucifixion of Christ, and therefore, it should not be expected to be in the last seven years as the prophecy is a unit.
- C. The church is not to be brought into judgment. Its' judgment is past [Calvary] (John 5:24; Rom. 5:1; 8:1, 8:33-34; I Cor. 11:31-32). The seven year Tribulation is, however, an incredible time of judgment.
- D. The church is not appointed to wrath (Rom. 8:9; I Thess. 1:9-10; 5:9). The context of this promise, especially in I Thess. 5:9, is the Great Tribulation. The church, therefore, cannot enter "The great day of the wrath" (Rev. 6:17).
- E. None of the Old or New Testament passages on the tribulation mention the church. Indeed, the church is completely absent in Revelation 6-18.
- F. It is characteristic to deliver believers before a divine judgment is inflicted upon the world as illustrated in the deliverance of Enoch, Noah, Lot, Israel in Egypt, Rahab, etc. (II Pet. 2:6-9).
- G. The New Testament emphasizes the imminent return of Christ. The exhortation to look for "The glorious appearing" of Christ to His own (Titus 2:13) loses its significance if the tribulation must come first. Believers in that case should look for signs.
- H. The chronology of the discussion in I Thess. 4:13-5:11 argues for a pretribulation rapture. The rapture discussion precedes the Day of the Lord discussion. In these verses, the believers are perplexed because they fear for the destiny of other believers who had died before the return of Christ. Paul comforts them by saying that both dead and living will be reunited at the return of Christ at the rapture. To illustrate that this takes place before the tribulation, Paul tells them that they will be separated from the unbelievers before the Day of the Lord (which is the Tribulation). He says that God has not destined them for the wrath of the Tribulation.

- I. In II Thessalonians 2, the believers were alarmed that the Day of the Lord was upon them, which doesn't appear to be consistent with the belief that they would not go through the Tribulation. By assuring them that they were not in the Day of the Lord and by associating the rapture with the beginning of the Day of the Lord, Paul encouraged them in their pretribulationism (2:1-2).
- J. In Rev. 1:19, John is told to write the things which "you have seen" and the things "which are" and the things which "shall take place after these things." In chapter 1, John records the things which he has seen, and in chapters 2 and 3, the things "which are." The church is mentioned 19 times in these chapters, "the things which are." However, after 4:1, when John is told to "come up here and I will show you what must take place 'after' these things," the church is not mentioned once in chapters 6-19, which cover the great tribulation period. The church is conspicuous by its absence. Therefore, it appears the church is in heaven until it returns as the bride of Christ in Rev. 19.
- K. In Rev. 19:11-21, the saints are viewed as "coming with" Christ at His Second Coming, not "waiting for" Him. Thus they must at some time have been gathered to Him prior to this event. This would be consistent with pretribulationism.
- L. In order for living people with non-glorified bodies to populate the kingdom after the second coming of Christ, the rapture must take place at the beginning and not the end of the tribulation. Otherwise, unbelieving people must be allowed to enter the millennial kingdom, which is inconsistent with Rev. 19:11-21.
- M. There are numerous differences between the Rapture and Second Coming, which would argue for their being separate events (see accompanying chart).
- N. Though not all passages in the New Testament dealing with the rapture clearly state that it will be pretribulational, there are no passages that do not harmonize with this view and none that contradict it.

*Sufficient mystery still remains concerning the time of the rapture. One's position will be inferential and not by direct statement. Therefore, one's position concerning the time of the rapture should not be a test of fellowship with other believers. We should and must be able to disagree in a Christlike and gracious manner.

THE RAPTURE AND SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST COMPARED

PHASE ONE (THE RAPTURE)	PHASE TWO (THE SECOND COMING)
Christ comes to receive His church in the air.	Christ returns with His bride and angels to the earth.
The seven year tribulation begins shortly after the rapture of the church.	The millennial kingdom (1000 years) of Christ is established after the second coming.
The event is imminent; it could happen at any time.	Numerous signs precede this event (cf. Rev. 6-19).
This is a message of comfort for believers.	This is a message of judgment (and warning) for unbelievers.
The church is of primary importance.	Israel is of primary importance.
The rapture is a mystery.	The second coming is predicted in both the Old and New Testaments.
The judgment seat of Christ for believers occurs. (Rom. 14:10; I Cor. 3:10-15; II Cor. 5:10).	1) The sheep and goats' judgment occurs (Matt. 25:31-46). 2) Antichrist and the world are judged (Rev. 19:11-21)
Only believers are affected.	All people are affected.
The church is taken into the Lord's presence in heaven.	All believers are brought into the millennial kingdom to reign with Christ on earth.

The Pretribulationist (Adversities is-not Formies)

Perhaps the most excitable resident of the vast Premillennial Plains is the perky Pretribulationist. Having feathered a temporal nest, he seems determined to roost well away from the Wrath to Come. This instinct to fly the coop may be the result of his large appetite for Rapture Roots, Tribulation Twigs, and Second Coming Seeds.

Despite his seemingly escapist tendencies, the Pretribulationist has shown a remarkable instinct for breeding, a trait researchers have termed "proselytizing."¹ This populous pastime is most evident in the pecking order of the Lone Star Leghorns and the Western Conservative Game Hens.

Perhaps because of his vast numbers and common appearance, the Pretribulationist does not attract the attention he once did. Recently his "sky-is-falling" duck and "you've-been-left-behind" look seem to have lost their luster. Whatever the response, this is one bird that doesn't intend to be fried or tried by fire.²

¹For a positive account of the Pretribulationist, see Hal Linseed's popular book *The Late Great Chicken Coop*. A more technical work is Lewis Spary Cheeter's *Out of the Frying Pan and Also the Fire*.

²A critical account of the Pretribulationist can be found in J. Barton Pain's *The Pretribulationist: Make Like an Egg and Beat It*.



(THE IMMINENCY OF CHRIST'S RETURN

Renald Showers

The expression *the imminency of Christ's return* means that Christ could return at any moment. Nothing else *has* to happen before His return.

Two significant things should be noted concerning the imminency of Christ's return. First, the Bible teaches the imminency of His return in such passages as 1 Corinthians 1:7; 16:22 ("Maranatha" means *Oh, Lord come!*); Philippians 3:20; 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Titus 2:12-13; James 5:7-9; Revelation 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20. Some of these passages declare that the Lord is near or at hand (even at the time the New Testament was written). Others indicate that the believers of the first century were eagerly waiting for Christ to return. All of them imply that He could return at any moment.

Second, throughout the history of the church, many of its leaders have recognized that the Bible teaches the imminency of the Lord's return. Following are examples of such recognition.

The First Epistle of Clement, 23 (written around 96 A.D. by Clement, a prominent leader of the church at Rome who knew some of the apostles personally and probably is the Clement referred to in Phil. 4:3): "Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, 'speedily will He come, and will not tarry.'"¹

The Didache, chapter 16, section 1 (written as early as 70 to 90 A.D. or as late as 120 to 180 A.D.): "Be vigilant' over your life; 'let your lamps' not be extinguished, or your loins ungirded, but be prepared, for you know not the hour in which our Lord will come."²

John Calvin, the reformer at Geneva during the 1500s and founder of the Presbyterian Church, made the following statements in some of his commentaries on books of the Bible: "Be prepared to expect Him every day, or rather every moment." "As He has promised that He will return to us, we ought to hold ourselves prepared, at every moment to receive Him." "Today we must be alert to grasp the imminent return of Christ." Commenting on 1

Thessalonians 4, the Rapture passage, Calvin said that Paul "means by this to arouse the Thessalonians to wait for it, nay more, to hold all believers in suspense, that they may not promise themselves some particular time ... that believers might be prepared at all times."³

The Westminster Confession, xxxiii, 3 (written by the Puritans of England during the 1600s), declared that men should "shake off all carnal security and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come."⁴

J. Barton Payne, a 20th-century opponent of the pretribulation Rapture view, could not deny that the imminency of Christ's return was taught in the Bible and was believed by church leaders throughout the church age. In his book *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, after an entire section dealing with some of the Bible passages upon which the imminency of Christ's return has been based historically, Payne made the following comment about the concept of Christ's imminent return: "The preceding section has validated a considerable group of passages that do demonstrate its legitimacy. In fact, no natural reading of Scripture would produce any other conclusion." Payne also stated, "Belief in the imminency of the return of Jesus was the uniform hope of the early church." Concerning early church believers, he said, "They were waiting, eagerly awaiting, His imminent appearing."⁵

The pretribulation Rapture view is the only view of the Rapture that comfortably fits the biblical teaching of the imminent return of Christ. It is the only view that can honestly say that Christ could return at any moment and that nothing else *has* to happen before His return. Since all the other views believe that the church will go through at least part of the 70th week of Daniel 9 before Christ returns to rapture it, those views cannot honestly say that Christ could return at any moment. According to those views, at least some part of the 70th week of Daniel 9 *has* to transpire before Christ returns to rapture the church.

☆

The Partial Rapture Theory. This theory states that believers will be raptured in multiple stages (at least 2) during the Tribulation. The time of rapture granted to any individual believer is determined by his or her works of service so that the most faithful Christians are raptured early, thus being privileged to escape the tribulation, while the unfaithful are required to suffer the tribulation, awaiting their rapture at the end.

A. Arguments in favor of this position

1. When Christ comes, he saves those who are described as “eagerly waiting for him” (Heb. 9:28); “ready” (Matt. 25:10); [Those who] have loved his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8); Those who “watch” (Matt. 24, 25, 1 Thess. 5; Rev. 3); Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead (Luke 20:35); “[Those who] have kept the word of my perseverance” (Rev. 3:10).
2. Others are described as left out (Matt. 25:10-12); “left” (Matt. 24:41); as those upon whom He will come “like a thief” (1 Thess. 5:1; Rev. 3:3); the rest [who are not caught up to heaven] or otherwise are implied as being those who do not escape “all these things that shall come to pass” (Luke 21:36) or “The hour of testing” (Rev. 3:10).
3. These things apply to the experience of believers at the rapture.
4. There must be a subsequent rapture for the believers who are left.

B. Criticisms of this view

1. The insufficiency of the argument - it fails to produce evidence for more than one rapture event.
2. The error of the third premise - with the exception of 1 Thessalonians 5 and Revelation 3, the passages cited have no clear reference to the rapture.
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5 can be properly explained with reference to the separation between believers and unbelievers produced by the coming of the day of the Lord.
 - b. Revelation 3 also deals primarily with the distinction between believers and unbelievers.
 - 1) The coming of the Lord like a thief is common to believers and unbelievers.
 - 2) The passage stressing perseverance does not imply that any believer will be left behind at the rapture, but rather points to the judgment of all believers which will take place.

3. The view is invalidated by the express teaching of Scripture.

a. No distinction is made when Scripture designates believers as those who will be raptured. (in John 14:1, 3; 1 Thess. 4:14-15).

Those who are translated are designated simply as "we who are alive and remain," of those in Christ, of whom some are dead (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). (As no distinction is made between those who are resurrected, so no distinction is implied between those who are translated.)

b. The teaching of 1 Cor. 15:51-52, "we shall all be changed in a moment . . . and the dead will be raised" is inclusive of all believers including those already designated as carnal in this epistle.

4. The hope of the church is based on grace. The partial rapture theory founds at least one part of that hope on works.

**CONTRASTING THE "JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST"
AND THE "GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT"**

Issue	Judgement Seat of Christ Bema Seat Judgement	Great White Throne Judgement
Persons	Believers Only	Unbelievers Only
Scripture	Romans 14:10 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 2 Corinthians 5:10	Revelation 20:11-15
Basis	Faithfulness in Christ and resultant good works (even to the motivations)	Rejection of Christ and thus one's own righteousness
Time	Between Rapture and Second Coming, or at the Second Coming	End of the Millennium
Results	Rewards or loss of rewards	Eternity in the "Lake of Fire"

III. The Hope of Resurrection

- A. Brings thanksgiving (1 Cor. 15:57)
- B. Motivates patient, ending service to Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 4:7-18; 5:1-11; Rom. 8:18; Phil. 3:8-15, 20-21)
- C. Brings comfort to believers (1 Thess. 4:18)
- D. Motivates us to flee sins against the body (1 Cor. 6:2-20)
- E. Causes us to consider ourselves alive now to righteousness, and is the basis of exhortation to present our bodies as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:1-13 and living sacrifice Rom. 12:1-2).

1. Death and resurrection describe present realities as well as future. (Col. 2:9-3:17; esp. 2:12-14; 3:1-4)

2. The Spirit of resurrection power is now at work in believers (Rom. 8:6-14; Eph. 1:18-20)

Note how in both Eph. 1 and Col. 2-3, the present expression of resurrection power necessarily involves a corporate structure. This emphasizes the New Testament teaching that sanctification of the believer is both personal and corporate at the same time.

MAJOR RESURRECTIONS

- 1. Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1-10; Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:32; 10:40; 17:3; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:4; Eph. 1:20; 1 Thess. 4:14; 1 Peter 3:18).
- 2. The mysterious resurrection of some saints at the time of the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 27:50-53).
- 3. The resurrection at the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thess. 4:14-17).
- 4. The resurrection of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:2-13).
- 5. The resurrection of the Old Testament saints (Isa. 26:19-21; Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:1-3).
- 6. The resurrection of the Tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4-6).
- 7. The resurrection of the wicked dead (Rev. 20:11-15).

IV. The Nature of the Rapture

The rapture will consist of the resurrection of the bodies of all saints who have died (I Cor. 15:51) and the translation of all believers who are living (I Thess. 4:13-18).

- A. Resurrection of the saints (John 5:25-29; I Cor. 15:23-52; I Thess. 4:13-18).
- B. Translation of the church (John 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:51; I Thess. 4:17; II Thess. 2:1).
 1. Resurrection bodies. The pattern for the resurrection body will be the pattern of Jesus (Luke 24:13-51; John 20:19-29; 21:1-14; cf. I Cor. 15:49; Phil. 3:21; I John 3:2).
 - a. A substantial body (I Cor. 15:39-42a).
 - b. An immortal body (I Cor. 14:42b).
 - c. A glorious body (I Cor. 15:43a).
 - d. A powerful body (I Cor. 15:43b).
 - e. A spiritual body (I Cor. 15:44).
 2. Resurrection abode. The church will take up residence with Jesus in heaven during the tribulation period to return with him at his second coming (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20).

V. The Judgment of the Saints after the Rapture.

After the rapture of the church, the next event for those who have been raptured is the judgment for believers (the bēma or Judgment Seat of Christ).

- A. Believers have been delivered from the condemnation of the world and judgment of sin (John 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1, 9; 8:1, 31-34).
- B. The believer is perfect and complete in Christ (I Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10-17; Heb. 10:14).
3. The believer's judgment is a judgment of their faithfulness and service for rewards (I Cor. 3:10-15; II Cor. 5:10-11; Rom. 14:10-12; James 5:7-9; I Pet. 4:17-18; also cf. I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 6:17-19; II Tim. 4:7-8; II Pet. 1:9-11; I John 2:23; 4:17; Rev. 2-3). This judgment stands in stark contrast to "The Great White Throne" judgment of unbelievers in Rev. 20:11-15.

THE TRIBULATION (Part 1)

The Tribulation

The Tribulation is a seven-year period between the rapture of the church and the millennial kingdom. This period of time is designated by various titles in Scripture as noted below. During this time, God's judgment will be poured out on unbelieving man in the fullest measure. This judgment period will be used to turn the nation of Israel back to God. Indeed it will be a time of retribution, redemption, and restoration.

A. Day of the Lord (OT)

The prophets in the Old Testament looked forward to a period of time when the Sovereign Lord would judge the world and establish an everlasting kingdom. This would be a terrible time of death and destruction which would destroy the power of sin and establish Him over all others as Lord. This period is characterized by:

1. A time of great destruction. (Is. 13:6; 15-17; Jer. 46:3-6, 10; Ez. 7:5-7; Joel 1:15)
2. A time of reckoning. (Is. 2:12; 34:8; Obad. 15)
3. Destruction of idolatry. (Is. 12:18; Ez. 30:13-14)
4. Physical Manifestation of Destruction. (Is 2:18-20; 13:6-9; 22:1-25; 34:1-17; Jer. 46:1-25; Ez. 7; 30:1-19; Joel 1:19; 2:1-11; 2:31; 3:9-16; Amos 5:18-20; 8:8-9)
5. Inescapable judgment. (Jer. 46:6-12; Ez. 13:5; Joel 2:3-11; Amos 9:5-9)
6. A remnant turning to God. (Joel 2:32; Obad. 17-21)
7. God defeating the nations. (Zech. 14:3-7; 14:12-15)

B. Daniel's 70th Week

In the book of Daniel, the prophecy of the future time is divided into 7-year periods called weeks. The 70th week corresponds to the tribulation period. Daniel gives a detailed account of the events that will take place during this period concerning Israel. (Dan. 7-12) The 70th week is discussed specifically in Daniel 9:27.

C. The Teaching of Jesus

Jesus predicted the coming of the Tribulation by telling of the events that would transpire before the return of the Son of Man. He warned the people about various events that would occur.

1. Jesus warned against deception and danger. (Matt. 24:4-14; Mk. 13:5-13; Lk. 21:8-19)
2. Jesus warned concerning the abomination of desolation. (Matt. 24:15-25; Mk. 13:14-23; Lk. 14:10-24; cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11)

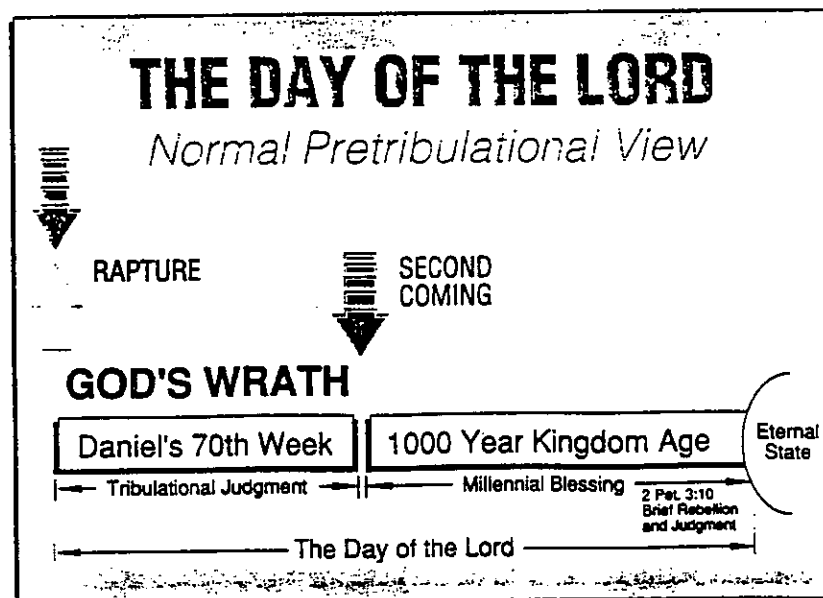
D. Day of the Lord (NT)

The New Testament picks up with the Old Testament description of the Day of the Lord and seems to broaden it to describe the whole event leading up to and including Christ's return.

1. It is a day of judgment. (1 Thess. 5; 2 Thess. 2; Rev. 6:17; 16:14; also cf. 1 Cor. 3:13; 5:5; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:10; 12)
2. It is a time when Satan will attempt to usurp authority from God. (2 Thess. 2:2-12)

E. Events Which Occur During the Tribulation.

1. The judgments of the seven seals. (Rev. 6)
2. God seals 144,000 Jews, and believers are martyred. (Rev. 7)
3. The judgment of the seven trumpets (Rev. 8-11)
4. The Gentiles occupy the Temple. (Rev. 11:1-2)
5. The Anti-Christ rises to power. (Rev. 13)
6. The judgment of the seven bowls. (Rev. 15-16)
7. Babylon is destroyed. (Rev. 17-18)
 - a) religious Babylon (ch. 17)
 - b) economic/political Babylon (ch. 18)



THE TRIBULATION (Part Two)

THE TRIBULATION: A Recap

A. Definition

This is a period of seven years when God's judgment on unbelieving man will be intense and fulfilled. It will be specifically related to Israel but will include all the earth. It is also known as "Daniel's seventieth week" (Dan. 9:27) and the time of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) and the "Day of the Lord."

B. Parenthesis - "Day of the Lord"

The "Day of the Lord" is a future period of time when the Sovereign Lord will judge Israel and the nations of the earth for their pride and establish His kingdom on the earth. The "day of the Lord" is a time when God will totally judge and destroy all the nations who have resisted him and who had been against Israel (God will honor the cause of Israel). Man's pride will be judged and idolatry will be done away with. God alone will be the Lord. It is characterized as a time of judgment, death, and destruction. It will be a fearful time--worse than any other period of previous or subsequent history. Despite the ominous nature of the period, it will also be a time of worshipping God--God's Spirit will be poured out and all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Is. 2:12-21; 13:1-22; 22:1-25; 34:1-17; Jer. 46:1-12; Ezek. 7:1-27; 13:5; 30:1-19; Joel 1:15; 2:1-11; 28-32; 3:9-17; Amos 5:18-20; 8:8-9; 9:5-6; 9:11-15; Obad. 15-21; Zeph. 1:7-8; 2:1-3; 3:8; Zech. 14:1-21). Thus it is a time of retribution, redemption and restoration (cf. Rev. 20-22).

C. Scriptures relating to the period in general

Jer. 30:4-7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; Zech. 13:8-9; Matt. 24:1-25:46; Luke 21; Rev. 6-19

D. Specific events of the period

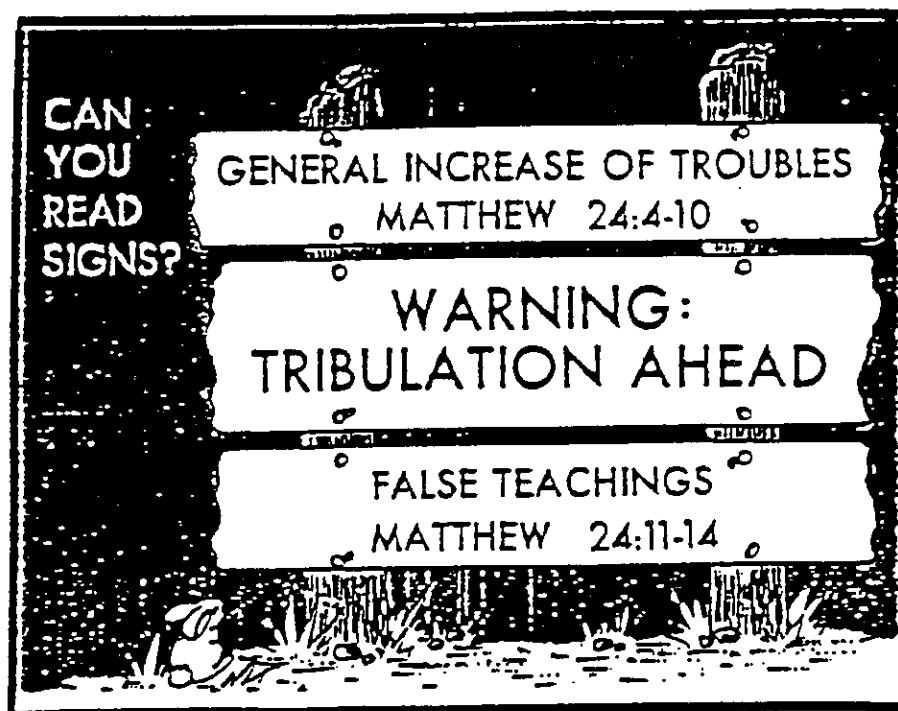
1. The period will begin with a covenant being made between Antichrist and Israel. The covenant will reestablish sacrifice in Israel (Dan. 9:27).
2. The covenant will be broken and Antichrist will set himself up to be worshipped as God. This will take place at the midpoint of the seven year period (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15ff; 2 Thess 2:3-4; Rev. 13:14-15).

E. The judgments of the period.

1. The Seal judgments Rev. 6:1-8:5
2. The Trumpet judgments Rev. 8:6-11:19
3. The Bowl judgments Rev. 16:1-21

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE (Matt. 24-25)

The Olivet discourse is the fifth and last great discourse in Matthew (chs. 24-25), so named because of the location of its delivery on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. It is given its most extensive form in Matthew (cf. also Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36). Three questions are raised by the disciples: 1) When is the destruction of Jerusalem prophesied by Jesus to take place? 2) What will be the sign of Christ's coming? 3) What signs will foreshadow the "end of the world?" The first query is given less attention than the last two. The coming destruction of Jerusalem, which was accomplished by Titus in A.D. 70, is pictured along with the events of the end of the age in 24:5-28. However, even this is clearly viewed by Jesus as a foreshadowing of the fateful days of the Great Tribulation period. The greater portion of the material relates to the awesomeness of those days.



THE PREDICTIONS OF THE KING

-- Matthew 24-25

- I. The Destruction of the Temple in the Future - 24:1-2
- II. The Question of the Disciples Concerning the Future -- 24:3
- III. The Explanation of Jesus Concerning the Future 24:4-31

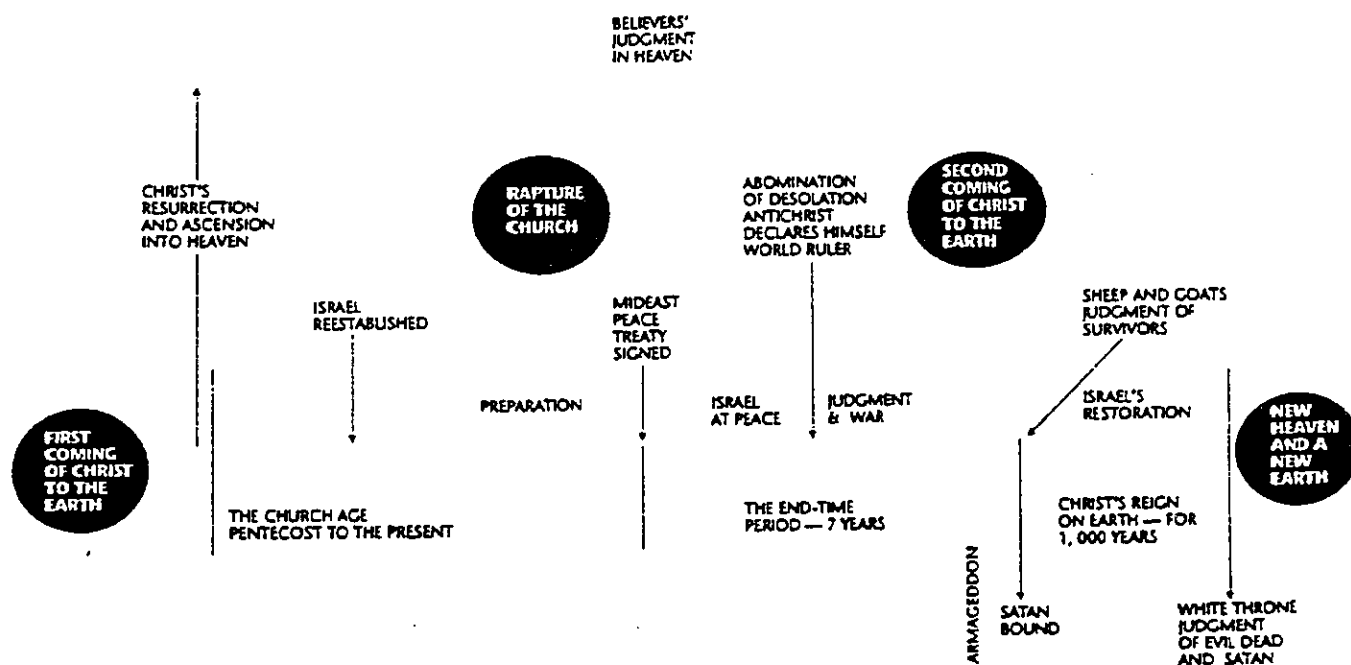
(The end time typified in the destruction of Jerusalem)

cf. Mark 13; Luke 21

(The end time realized in the tribulation of the world)

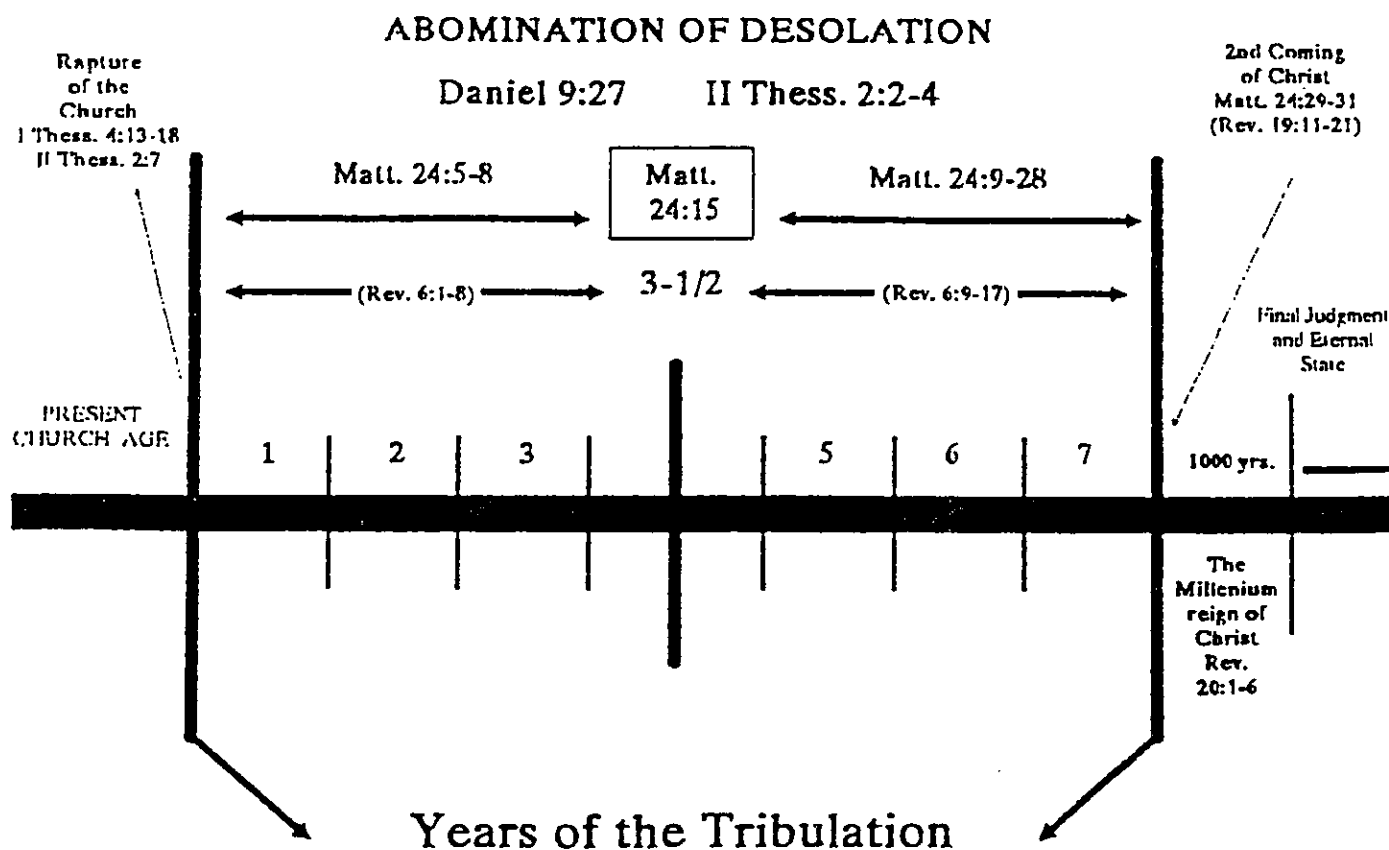
- A. The first half of the seven years tribulation -- 24:4-8
- B. The midpoint of the seven years tribulation -- 24:15 (See detailed explanation)
- C. The second half of the seven years tribulation -- 24:9-28
- D. The consummation of the seven years tribulation -- 24:29-31

TIME LINE OF BIBLE PROPHECY



MATTHEW 24:15: AN EXPLANATION

The terminology "abomination of desolation" is found in Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11. This text is one of the clearest examples in Scripture of a prophecy with multiple fulfillment. 1) The first reference is to Antiochus Epiphanes, who reigned in Syria from 175 to 164 B.C. Antiochus halted the sacrifices in the temple, defiled the temple by raising up an idol, a pagan altar to Zeus, and sacrificing a pig on the altar in the temple. 2) Jesus, in this discourse, seems to have in view, at least typically, the near destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 by the Roman general Titus. That Christians of that time so understood this prediction is evidenced by the fact that many followed the command of vv. 16-18 and fled to the wilderness during the Roman invasion and siege. 3) Daniel, Jesus, Paul (cf. 2 Thess. 2:2-4) and John (cf. Rev. 13:14-15), see a future eschatological and ultimate fulfillment in the actions of Antichrist during the Tribulation (Rev. 6-19), also identified as Daniel's 70th week (Dan. 9:24-27). In Daniel 9:27, it becomes apparent that a reenactment of Antiochus' treacherous desecration will occur when the "prince who is to come" makes a seven-year covenant with Israel. The "prince" who is the Antichrist (Paul's "man of sin" and John's "sea beast") breaks his covenant after 3 1/2 years. There follows the desecration of the temple, great persecution of Israel, and the more severe judgments of the Tribulation. This 24th chapter then is a further description of Daniel's 70th week, and in a number of instances parallels the book of Revelation, especially the sixth chapter as the accompanying chart "Abomination of Desolation" shows.



IV. The Illustrations of Jesus Concerning the Future -- 24:32 - 25:46

- A. The fig tree -- 24:32-35
- B. The days of Noah -- 24:36-39
- C. The two in their work -- 24:40-41
- D. The faithful householder -- 24:42-44
- E. The wise servant -- 24:45-51
- F. The ten virgins -- 25:1-13
- G. The talents -- 25:14-30
- H. The judgement of the Gentiles -- 25:31-46

Matthew 24	Description	Revelation
Verses 4,5	Deceitful assurances	6:2
Verse 6	Disturbing reports	6:4
Verse 7	Divers testings	6:5,6
Verses 9,10	Deadly perils	6:8
Verse 13	Durable saints	7:14
Verse 14	Distinctive preaching	7:1-8
Verse 15	Detestable idolatry	8:10,11
Verses 16-21	Desperate situations	8:1—9:21
Verses 22,29	Darkened skies	8:12
Verse 28	Devoured carcasses	8:13
Verse 29	Demon activity	9:1-12; 12:9-13
Verse 30	Descending Son	14:14
Verse 31	Delivered elect	15:1-8

DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN PEOPLE	RETRIBUTION UPON UNSAVED	REWARD FOR SAVED
Taken-Left (24:40,41)	Swept away (24:40,41)	Remaining for kingdom (24:40,41)
Evil-Faithful (24:45-48)	Severed (24:51)	Ruling over goods (24:47)
Foolish-Wise (25:2)	Shut out (25:11,12)	Feasting at mar- riage supper (25:10)
Slothful-Good (25:21-26)	Shut away (25:30)	Ruling over many things (25:23)
Goats-Sheep (25:32)	Suffering (25:46)	Inheriting the kingdom (25:34)

DEATH AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

I. Theological uses of the word death

- A. Spiritual death - The spiritual state of human beings since the fall prior to salvation.
- B. Eternal death or the second death - The judgment of God that will be imposed on those who during their physical lifetime did not receive eternal life by faith; this judgment is described in Scripture as eternal existence in hell.
- C. Physical death - The separation of the soul (or the immaterial part of man) from its physical body.

II. Physical death

- A. The reason for it (Gen. 2:17, 3:17, 19; Rom. 5:12)

The Fall. Death is a result of the entrance of sin, not a natural consequence of being human.
- B. The fear of it; "the king of terrors" (Job 18:14; Ps. 55:4-5; 73:19; 1 Thess. 4:13)

 - It is existentially a step into the unknown
 - It is existentially viewed possibly as unnatural
 - It is identified as a domain of the devil and sin
 - * Death and resurrection of Christ frees us from this fear Heb. 2:14-25
- C. The nature of it (Gen. 35:18; Acts 7:59; Ps. 104:29; 146:3, 4; Eccl. 12:7, Lk. 23:46; Matt. 10:28)

Separation of the soul (immaterial) from the body (material)
- D. The victory over it (Heb. 12:14, 15; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:54-57)

 - Resurrection = Victory over physical death
 - Regeneration = Victory over spiritual death
 - Glorification = Victory over eternal death

III. The intermediate state of the dead

- A. The state of the dead before the death and resurrection of Christ
 - 1) Sheol (Hades, Gk.) - An intermediate state in which souls are dealt with according to their lives on earth (65 times in Heb. O.T.). Sheol has the idea of "to ask" (of more bodies)

- a. location - beneath the earth(?) - found most often in the writings section of the O.T.
 - b. the grave? (31 time trans. in Heb.)
 Hell (3 times, Sheol)
 * General meaning for the place of the dead, but most often viewed neg. as the place for the wicked, and that from which the righteous are saved
 - c. Conscious existence
 - 1) passages supporting unconsciousness
 (Eccl. 9:4-6, 10; Isa. 38:17; Ps. 115:17; 88:12)

 usually viewed in reference to "bodily existence"
 - 2) passages supporting consciousness (Ezek. 32:17-32; Isa. 14:9-10, cf. evidence in A.2, B, C, below; 1 Sam. 28:13-19)
 - O.T. idea of being "gathered to his people"
 - Mt. 17 Moses/Elijah
 - Ex. 3:6 God of the living
 - d. Inhabitants - Righteous and Unrighteous
 - Place where all people go upon death (Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31)
 - Place where wicked go upon death (Job. 21:13; 24:19; Ps. 9:17; 31:17, 49:14; 55:15)
 - Place from which the righteous are saved (Ps. 49:15; 86:13; Prov. 15:24; Hosea 13:14; Ps. 16:10)
 - e. Nature of existence in sheol (Job 26:5; Ps. 88:10; Isa. 14:9; Prov. 9:18; Ps. 139:7-12)

 People are like shadows being without bodies
2. Luke 16:19-31 (parable or historical?)
- a. conscious existence in hades (cf. Matt. 17)
 - 1. Torment for the wicked
 - 2. Comfort for the righteous
 - b. An impassable barrier between the wicked and the righteous

- c. No communication between the dead and the living
- B. Christ in the intermediate state - "... [I believe] in Jesus Christ ... who ... was crucified, dead, and was buried; he descended into hell, the third day he rose from the dead ..." (The Apostles Creed)
1. Luke 23:43 (cf. 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7)

Paradise (Persian word meaning a beautiful garden)

Paradise is a synonym for heaven (3rd), the dwelling place of God.
 2. 1 Peter 3:18-20 (various views)
 1. Christ preached in Noah to the pre-flood generation
 2. Christ preached in hell to fallen angels
 3. Christ preached in hell to proclaim his victory to the lost (and provided victory to the redeemed in sheol prior to the ascension)
 3. 1 Peter 4:6

This preaching is past and was accomplished while those people were alive. They are believers, having been judged in one light by the world, but by another by God.
 4. Ephesians 4:7-10
 - Some see Christ descend into the earthy grave
 - Some see Christ descend into sheol to rescue O.T. saints

* I see a continuity between the O.T. and N.T. with respect to the intermediate state, but a progressive revelation of it.
- C. The intermediate state of the dead since the resurrection of Christ.
1. Believers (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-9; Acts 7:55, 59; Rev. 7:9-17)
 - To be away from the body is to be with Christ
 - This is a preferred existence
 - Paradise or heaven is our destiny

2. Unbelievers (2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 6:8-9; Rev. 20:13)

- To be away from the body is to be in conscious torment
- This is a horrible and hopeless existence
- Hades is the intermediate state/gehenna is the eternal state

3. Conclusion

There is radically different and conscious destinies for humanity as to the intermediate state: Unbelievers = torment = hades
Believers = blessedness = heaven

"Who is this Jesus who will judge all humanity one day?"

In Genesis Jesus is the Ram at Abraham's altar. In Exodus He's the Passover Lamb. In Leviticus He's the High Priest. In Numbers He's the Cloud by Day and Pillar of Fire by Night. In Deuteronomy He's the City of our Refuge. In Joshua He's the Scarlet Thread out Rahab's window. In Judges He is our Judge. In Ruth He is our Kinsman Redeemer. In 1st and 2nd Samuel He's our Trusted Prophet. In Kings and Chronicles He's our Reigning King. In Ezra He is our Faithful Scribe. In Nehemiah He's the Rebuilder of Everything that is broken. In Esther He is the Mordecai sitting Faithfully at the Gate. In Job He's our Redeemer that Ever Liveth. In Psalms He is My Shepherd, and I shall not want. In Proverbs and Ecclesiastes He's our Wisdom. In the Song of Solomon He's the Beautiful Bridegroom. In Isaiah He's the Suffering Servant. In Jeremiah and Lamentations it is Jesus that is the Weeping Prophet. In Ezekiel He's the Wonderful Four-Faced Man. In Daniel He is the Fourth Man in the Fiery Furnace. In Hosea He is My Love that is Forever Faithful. In Joel He Baptizes us with the Holy Spirit. In Amos He's our Burden Bearer. In Obadiah our Savior. In Jonah He is the Great Foreign Missionary that takes the Word of God into all the world. In Micah He is the Messenger with Beautiful Feet. In Nahum He is the Avenger. In Habakkuk He is the Watchman that is ever

praying for revival. In Zephaniah He is the Lord Mighty to Save. In Haggai He is the Restorer for our Lost Heritage. In Zechariah He is our Fountain. In Malachi He is the Son of Righteousness with Healing in His Wings. In Matthew, Thou Art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In Mark He is the Miracle Worker. In Luke He's the Son of Man. In John He is the Door by which every one of us must enter. In Acts He is the Shining Light that appears to Saul on the road to Damascus. In Romans He is our Justifier. In 1st Corinthians, our Resurrection. In 2nd Corinthians, our Sin Bearer. In Galatians He redeems us from the Law. In Ephesians He is our Unsearchable Riches. In 1st and 2nd Thessalonians He is our Soon Coming King. In Philippians He supplies our every need. In Colossians He's the Fullness of the God-head Bodily. In 1st & 2nd Timothy He is the Mediator between God and Man. In Titus He is our Blessed Hope. In Philemon He is a Friend that Sticks Closer than a Brother. In Hebrews He's the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant. In James He is the Lord that Heals the Sick. In 1st and 2nd Peter He is the Chief Shepherd. In 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John it is Jesus who has the Tenderness of Love. In Jude He is the Lord coming with 10,000 Saints. In Revelation lift up your eyes Church, for your redemption draweth nigh. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

CONTRASTING THE "JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST"
AND THE "GREAT WHITE THRONE"

Issue	The Judgment Seat of Christ	The Great White Throne Judgment
Persons	Believers Only	Unbelievers Only
Scripture	Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10	Rev. 20:11-15
Basis	Faithfulness in Christ and resultant good works (even to the motivations)	Rejection of Christ and thus one's own righteousness
Time	Between Rapture and Second Coming (or at the Second Coming)	End of the Millennium
Results	Rewards or loss of rewards	Eternity in the "Lake of Fire"

The Judgment of the Believer's Works The Bema or Judgment Seat of Christ
A Summary

A. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

1. The judgment concerns the works of the Christian life (building on the foundation of Christ).
2. Works will be revealed.
3. The quality of the works will be tested (even to heart motivation).
4. Individuals will receive reward or loss in accordance with the quality of their works.
5. This judgment does not concern salvation.

B. 2 Corinthians 5:10

1. The event takes place before the Judgment Seat of Christ.
2. It covers all believers.
3. Judgment is given individually.
4. Judgment is given according to deeds done in this life.
5. The outcome is either "good" or "bad" (as to reward).

C. Romans 14:10-12

1. The event takes place before the Judgment Seat of God.
2. It involves all believers.
3. "Each one shall give account of himself to God."

D. Other passages on the fact of the judgment of believers: Jas. 5:7-9; 1 Pet. 4:17-18.

E. Other passages on the consequences of this judgment: 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Pet. 1:9-11; 1 Jn. 2:28; 4:17; Rev. 2-3.

1. Positive results - Rewarded for faithful service to the Savior.
2. Negative results - Loss of reward for that which we do as a believer characterized by wrong attitude (motive) or action.
3. Also note the exhortations and conditional promises in the letters to the seven churches in Rev. 2-3.
Again we see positive and negative affirmations (promises) made to the believer.
Judgment Seat of Christ deals only with post-salvation life

Implications of the Future Judgment for the Christian Life

- A. Do not judge other brethren, i.e., question their motives or be unduly critical (Rom. 14:10, 13; 1 Cor. 4:5; Jas. 4:11-12; 5:9).
- B. Do not cause brethren to stumble (Rom. 14:13).
- C. Be careful to live in accordance with your position in Christ (1 Cor. 3:10, 16-17).
- D. Be faithful to the requirements of God; aim to please Him above all else (1 Cor. 4:2, 5; 2 Cor. 5:9, 10; Jas. 2:12; 1 Pet. 4:1-17; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).
- E. Make Christ's reward your goal; live in such a way, and do such things as will gain you that reward. Also work to avoid a negative judgment (1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Pet. 1:10).
- F. Fear God (2 Cor. 5:11).
- G. Keep the faith (2 Tim. 4:7).
- H. Endure trials patiently in Christian living (Jas. 4:7-11).

JUDGMENT	TIME	PLACE	PERSONS	BASIS	RESULTS	SCRIPTURE
Believers' Works	Between Rapture and Second Coming	Berna of Christ	Believers in Christ	Works and walk of the Christian life	Rewards or loss of rewards	1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10
Old Testament Saints	End of Tribulation ^{or} /Second Coming?		Believers in O.T. times	Faith in God	Rewards	Dan. 12:1-3
Tribulation Saints	End of Tribulation /Second Coming		Believers of Tribulation period	Faith in and faithfulness to Christ	Reign with Christ in the Millennium	Rev. 20:4-6
Living Jews	End of Tribulation /Second Coming	Wilderness	Jews who survive the Tribulation	Faith in Christ	Believers enter kingdom; rebels are purged	Ezek. 20:34-38
Living Gentiles	End of Tribulation /Second Coming	Valley of Jehoshaphat	Gentiles who survive the Tribulation	Faith in Christ as proved by works	Believers enter the kingdom; others go to lake of fire	Joel 3:1-2; Matt. 25:31-46
Satan and Fallen Angels	End of Millennium		Satan and those angels who follow him	Allegiance to Satan's counterfeit system	Lake of fire	Matt. 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10
Unsaved People	End of Millennium	Before the Great White Throne	Unbelievers of all time	Rejection to God	Lake of fire	Rev. 20:11-15

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

- I. This doctrine is grounded in the Authority of Jesus Christ. John 5:19-30
 - Because Jesus Christ is the Son of God with all authority (Matt. 28:16-20), He has authority to raise the dead
 - As self-existent and the source of life (John 1:1-5), He has the power to raise the dead
 - Both the righteous and unrighteous will be raised by Christ, the former to eternal life, the latter to the second death (Rev. 20:4-15).

- II. The Resurrections
 - A. Resurrection to a mortal body
 - Persons raised in scripture (ex. Lazarus [John 11], The widow's son at Nain [Luke 7], before and after Christ's resurrection died again. Thus, these are actually resuscitations!

 - B. Christ's resurrection - Jesus's resurrection is different from the above both in kind and time: "an eternal and immortal body"
 1. Christ's bodily existence prior to glorification
 - No body was left in the tomb
 - He had a substantial body (he could be touched; he ate)
 - His body also had unique and new properties (He could disappear; veil His identity)
 2. Glorification - upon ascension? (Would appear yes) Thus there is some difference between his immediate post-resurrection body and his ascended glorified body. Apparently, what He received progressively, we receive immediately at the glorification of our body (1 Thess. 4; 1 Cor. 15).
 - a. His Bodily presence

Acts 9, Rev. 1:9 ff
Now He is glorified, brilliant, shining, majestic light (note, Erickson, p.1199)
 - b. Divine (spiritual) presence

via the Holy Spirit with believers (John 14-16; Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8)

C. The resurrection of mankind (John 5:19-30)

1. The resurrection unto life

- That which believers will experience (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35-58; 2 Cor. 5:1-10)
- Our body will be as Jesus' present body (cf 1 John 3:1-3).

2. The resurrection unto condemnation

That which unbelievers will experience at the Great White Throne unto the Lake of Fire (cf. Rev. 20:11-15).

D. Certain errors refuted

1. Soul Sleep

a. Description of the doctrine

Soul Sleep. Psychopannychy, the doctrine that the soul sleeps between death and resurrection. It has been held sporadically in the church. It is not a heresy in the narrower sense, due to the paucity of Scripture teaching on the intermediate state, but it may be called a doctrinal aberration. Some Anabaptists endorsed it. In the Forty-two Articles of Edward VI, which preceded the Thirty-nine Articles, the following statement, as the Fortieth Article, was included: "They which say that the souls of those who depart hence do sleep being without all sense, feeling or perceiving till the Day of Judgment, do utterly dissent from the right belief disclosed to us in Holy Scripture."

The case for soul sleep rests principally on these considerations: (1) Human existence demands the unity of soul and body. If the body ceases to function, so must the soul. (2) The use of the term "sleep" in Scripture for death is alleged to point to the cessation of consciousness. (3) A state of consciousness between death and resurrection, characterized by bliss or woe, unwarrantably anticipates the judgment of the last day, when the basis for these experiences is provided.

On the contrary view, while the normal state of man is admittedly a union of soul and body, the possibility of disembodied conscious existence is firmly held, both on the analogy of God's existence as pure spirit (man being made in his image) and on the basis of such passages as Heb. 12:23 and Rev. 6:9-11. As to the word "sleep," it is intended to apply to the body, even though the individual as such may be said to sleep in death. This is clear from Matt. 27:52; John 11:11; Acts 13:36, etc. On the third point it may be replied that the exclusion of the possibility of bliss or woe from the intermediate state, on the ground that the divine judgment which justifies such reactions will not yet have been pronounced, would logically rule out the joyful assurance of salvation in this life as well as the foreboding of judgment to come. But see John 5:24; Phil. 1:28.

Continuing consciousness after death seems to be a necessary (rather than an accidental) element in Jesus' account of the rich man and Lazarus, and also in our Lord's promise to the dying thief. The clearest and strongest passages, however, are in Paul's writings (Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:8). If it be contended in the case of the former passage that the sleep of the soul so effectually erases the interval between death and resurrection that the prospect of being with Christ, even though actually long delayed, could produce joyful anticipation, in any event the same thing can hardly be said for the second passage, where not only the resurrection body but the intermediate state is directly contemplated, being a less desirable alternative than the change to the resurrection body without death (vs. 4).

E. F. HARRISON

b. Biblical proof advanced on behalf of the doctrine

1. The biblical description of death as "sleep" (Matt. 9:24; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13)
2. Evidence for unconscious existence in the immediate state of the dead.
3. No one raised from the dead ever gave an account of intermediate existence.

c. Criticism

1. Biblical evidence of conscious existence in the intermediate state.
2. The term "sleep" can easily be understood as a metaphor for death without implications for consciousness in the intermediate state.
3. The passage indicating unconsciousness are more easily reconciled to those teaching consciousness than vice versa.
4. The denial of consciousness does serious damage to the hope of being with Christ after death (cf 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil 1:21).

2. Purgatory

Purgatory. The teachings of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches set forth a place of temporal punishment in the intermediate realm known as purgatory, in which it is held that all those who die at peace with the church but who are not perfect must undergo penal and purifying suffering. Only those believers who have attained a state of Christian perfection are said to go immediately to heaven. All unbaptized adults and those who after baptism have committed mortal sin go immediately to hell. The great mass of partially sanctified Christians dying in fellowship with the church but nevertheless encumbered with some degree of sin go to purgatory where, for a longer or shorter time, they suffer until all sin is purged away, after which they are translated to heaven.

The sufferings vary greatly in intensity and duration, being proportioned in general to the guilt and impurity or impenitence of the sufferer. They are described as being in some cases comparatively mild, lasting perhaps only a few hours, while in other cases little if anything short of the torments of hell itself and lasting for thousands of years. But in any event they are to terminate with the last judgment. Gifts or services rendered to the church, prayers by the priests, and Masses provided by relatives or friends in behalf of the deceased can shorten, alleviate, or eliminate the sojourn of the soul in purgatory.

Protestantism rejects the doctrine since the evidence on which it is based is found not in the Bible but in the Apocrypha (II Macc. 12:39-45).

L. BOETTNER

Limbo. Derived from a Germanic word for a hem or fringe, limbo was devised by medieval theologians as the place or state of those souls after death who did not fit neatly into either heaven or hell. In fact there were two limbos.

The limbo of the fathers (*limbus patrum*) was for the souls of the saints of the OT; Christ's descent into hell in the creed was interpreted as his liberating these souls and taking them to heaven. In Renaissance art the limbo of the fathers was depicted as a large prison cell. More important was the limbo of infants (*limbus infantum*). The majority of children born before the development of modern medicine died without attaining a maturity sufficient to commit serious personal sin. Augustine believed that all children of Adam have original sin, and hence infants who die without baptism are consigned to hell, although their punishment there will be mild. Many medieval theologians such as Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas considered the Augustinian view too harsh and postulated limbo as a perpetual state free from the pain of sense but without supernatural salvation and the enjoyment of God. Partly this view paralleled the development of the concept of original sin as privation of grace rather than as positive guilt.

The Councils of Lyons and Florence stated that those who die with only original sin will be punished differently from those with personal sin. Pius VI rejected the claim of the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia that belief in limbo was Pelagian; but belief in limbo has never been defined by the Roman Catholic Church, although it was the dominant teaching of Catholic theologians for many centuries. Theologians in the Calvinist tradition had little need to postulate a limbo: unbaptized infants go to heaven or hell as God has predestined them.

Many twentieth century Catholic theologians have tended to argue for the salvation of unbaptized infants, some postulating an illumination of the infant at the moment of death and a choice for or against God. Others see death itself as a sort of saving martyrdom. Some argue that the parents or the church provide a kind of baptism by desire. Others see limbo as lasting only until the general judgment, at which souls in limbo are either united to Christ or obdurately reject him.

J. P. DONNELLY

Higher things

The tug from above calls us to long for heaven

WE HAVE HAD A BUSY SPORTS SEASON: THE Olympics has come and gone, football has just begun, and baseball is crescendoing. These events remind me that I have never been much of an athlete—fallen arches in my teens, routine back discomfort since my 30s, and a Mayo Clinic prod in my 40s to prefer a desk job over one involving much travel as a career option.

When I preached in the Vienna YMCA in Austria a few years ago, a substantial congregation unitedly enjoyed—much to my chagrin—my unsuccessfully repeated efforts to mount an 18-inch riser to the platform. In Seoul, Korea, I publicly struggled with five floors of foot-high concrete steps without handrails in order to reach an upper-floor chapel until two solicitous helpers took my books and one provided an arm lift while the other pushed my generous anatomy from behind.

I did not really intend to recite such a litany of discomforts, aware as I am that many friends and colleagues have considerably worse complaints. In one's 80s, some medics say, almost everything may be expected to come apart if it hasn't already done so, and one might better live with tolerable discomfort than to venture problematical surgery.

WHAT I HAD REALLY in mind was the awareness that at this stage a push from behind—if not too eager—is likely to be more than welcome. Perhaps it is portrayed best not so much as a push from below as a tug from above. It anticipates that happy day when believers are conformed fully to the image of the risen and glorified Jesus.

"When he shall appear, we shall be like him," writes the apostle John, "for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

I recall when in Egypt some years ago visiting the pyramids at Giza with my mate (I had best say "help-meet" lest I be called to account). By crouching low I managed to squeeze into the walkway to the burial chamber of the Queen. By some quirk of anatomy I couldn't straighten up in order to continue moving either backward or forward. Wife Helga (bringing up the rear) was frantic lest

the Queen's chamber suddenly acquire another permanent occupant for which none of me was prepared. How I ever untwisted myself I still do not know except for the nearby intercessory prayer of a righteous woman that availeth much.

These days I sometimes think more and more that I hear echoes of a distant trumpet call. It carries exhilaration and momentum all its own. It is less a push from below than a summons from beyond with an invitation not to a desk job but to space travel. The prospect makes me eager to go home.

I look forward to riding to new lodgings on a rainbow. There will be no more steep steps to climb, no icy walkways of which to

beware, no more unreimbursed insurance claims, no more wrong-number phone calls just after I've managed to get to sleep. Nor need one choose between AT&T, Ameritech, Sprint, or whatever, to get a brief message from Jesus. Wonder of wonders we shall, as John assures us, "see him as he is"; more wondrous still, "we shall be like him."

WHEN CHRIST RETURNS he will overtake the living. All this planet's tombs will surrender their dead. Not even Olympic medalists will sprint quickly enough to welcome him. Even angelic hosts may join the accompanying reception committee. Life lived by a tug from above will cancel any need for any and every push from below. The call "come up higher" will signal an international marathon wherein all God's people are winners; nobody comes in second.

The Creator God is unharassed by time and space; these features are facets of his created universe. The Risen Jesus covered distances in no time and blended space into infinity. Despite such majestic transcendence he escorted confused and unsuspecting disciples on the path to Emmaus. He overtook fearful followers locked in with uncertainty and urged them to soar above their anxieties. They had not counted on a tug from above. It is, after all, too easy to settle only for a shove from behind, even for a holy push from below, when it is time for higher things. ☛



by CARL F. H. HENRY

THE ETERNAL STATE

(Heaven and Hell)

I. Definition

The eternal state is the final and eternal abode of all men. Unrepentant sinners will dwell forever in hell (also called the Lake of Fire in Rev. 20:11-15). Forgiven saints will live forever with God in what the Bible describes as the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem (cf. Rev. 21-22).

II. Deviant Positions

1) Universalism - This view believes God will finally redeem all rational beings. To accomplish this He will, if necessary, even override the free will of man and force him to be saved. This view was advocated by the Church Father Origen and is popular with many liberal and sentimental theologians.

2) Annihilationism - The word is from the Latin *nihil*, "nothing," and expresses the position of those who hold that some, if not all, human souls will cease to exist after death. This point of view may take various forms: (1) that all human beings inevitably cease to exist altogether at death (materialist); (2) that man, being created immortal, fulfills his destiny in salvation, while the reprobates are sent into nonexistence through a direct act of God.

The final annihilation of the wicked has been taught by various individuals including some contemporary evangelicals such as Clark Pinnock and John Stott (for a contemporary statement see Edward William Fudge, The Fire That Consumes, Houston: Providential Press, 1982), but it is usually associated with the teachings of the Seventh-Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses (as noted above, the annihilation of every individual at death is taught by secular humanists (materialist) and various modern philosophers). The Adventists teach the eventual annihilation of the resurrected wicked after a period of torment. The Witnesses teach the annihilation of some at physical death (no resurrection for them) and the annihilation of some who are resurrected during the Millennium and the Eternal State. Most important to their argument is the New Testament use of words that can be translated "destroy" or "perish" to describe the punishment of hell.

3) Conditional Immortality - This view is similar to that of annihilationism but is to be distinguished from it. Here human beings are viewed as being naturally mortal. God in salvation imparts the gift of eternal life to the redeemed. Eternal life is thus equally qualitative and quantitative. The rest of humanity is allowed to decay naturally and waste away into nothingness. Some argue that eternal punishment is everlasting in its effects (like the 'punishment of eternal fire' which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, mentioned in Jude 7), but not in its pains. It is an everlasting punishment, but not an everlasting punishing. Christ's reference to 'eternal life' and 'eternal punishment' is not primarily concerned with the everlastingness of the two destinies, but with the finality of what happens when the advent of the New Age is consummated.

Conditionalists also deny that the highly symbolic Revelation of John intends to picture a final state which includes continuing sin and suffering. The smoke of torment which rises forever represents the memory of the triumph of God's

righteousness, not a continuing burning of tortured flesh. As to the account of the rich man and Lazarus, it is noted that the scene is Hades, not Gehenna (hades, which is an intermediate state, is one day to be cast into the Lake of Fire), and that the passage is pictorial (parabolic) rather than literal. It would be precarious for any school of thought to draw literal conclusions from it about the topography of the next world.

- * In annihilationism God actively destroys the lost.
In conditional immortality God passively allows the destruction of the lost.

Evaluation: Problems with Universalism/ Annihilationism/Conditional Immortality

- 1) **Biblically inaccurate** - Ignores clear statements in Scripture to the contrary.

Matt. 25:41 - "Depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Note that Hell was not originally intended for men).

Mark 9:43-48 - "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

John 3:36 - "the wrath of God abides on him" (present tense verb)

2 Thess. 1:9 - "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;"

Jude 7 - "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Rev. 14:10-11 - "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."

(cf. also Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 11-15)

- 2) **Theologically inadequate**

- A) Fails to sufficiently appreciate that sin against a perfect and eternal God entails eternal consequences.

- B) Fails to note the confirmed state of unrepentance and rebellion against God by the unbelieving.
 - C) Does not adequately account for the doctrine of resurrection, even of the wicked (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:6).
 - D) Does not account for the fact that there are degrees of punishment in hell (Matt. 11:21-24).
- 3) **Hermeneutically incorrect**
- A) Advocates a more allegorical than natural (literal) interpretation of the Scriptures. Universalism rejects outright clear statements in Scripture.
 - B) Gives the word "death" (meaning separation/deprivation) an incorrect definition (i.e., extinction/cessation).
 - C) Erroneously sees the words "immortal" and "eternal" as synonymous; immortality is a gift of God (thus it is contingent not essential) given to all men in light of His creating them, whereas eternal life is a gift of God in light of His redeeming them.

III. **Doctrine of Hell and The Eternal Death**

- 1) **The Judgment of Hell is pronounced at the Great White Throne Judgment.** "This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."
Rev. 20:14-15 (cf. Rev. 19:20; 20:10).
- 2) **Terms for Hell**
 - A) Gehenna (from the Heb. gehinnom, a valley lying to the south of Jerusalem).
 - 1) The valley of the Son of Hinnom was the site of OT historical abominations; children were burnt to death in sacrifice to Molech (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6; Jer. 32:35; 2 Chr. 33:6) until the site was desecrated by Josiah (2 Kings 23:10) and then used as a mass grave and disposal site for bodies slaughtered in the judgment that produced the exile (Jer. 7:32-53; Jer. 19:4-8). In later times, the valley seems to have been used for burning refuse and the bodies of criminals.
 - 2) In the intertestamental period, Gehenna was used in reference to an eschatological punishment of fire.
 - 3) In the N.T., Gehenna refers to the place of final punishment after the last judgment.
 - a) It is of eternal duration. (Mark 9:43, 48)

- b) Resurrected individuals are punished there. (Matt. 5:29, 30; 10:28; 18:9) Thus all will be resurrected.
- c) It is described as a place of fire. (Matt. 18:9; Mark 9:43-48)
- d) It is to be feared worse than physical death. (Matt. 10:28; Lk. 12:4-5)

B) Lake of fire, Fire.

In Scripture, fire is frequently associated with God in vision and theophany. God is described as a consuming fire (Gen. 15:17; Ex. 3:2f; Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Dan. 7:9, 10; 2 Thess. 1:7; Rev. 1:13-15). Frequently, His judgments are judgments of fire (e.g., Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 19:24; the Exodus, Ex. 9:24; Gog and Magog, Ezek. 38:22; The Day of Yahweh, Mal. 3:2-3; 4:1; 2 Pet. 3:7, 10, 12; judgments belonging to the Day of Yahweh, Rev. 8:7, 8, 10; 9:17, 18; 11:5). But fire is also used to describe the nature of the final punishment, and the lake of fire designates the place of that punishment. Christ uses "fire" interchangeably with "gehenna."

- 1) Matt. 13:40-42 and 18:8 speak of the judgment of being thrown into the "furnace of fire" (similar to Dan. 3:6) or "lake of fire," Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8.
- 2) This fire is said to be eternal (Matt. 18:8; 25:41; Mk. 9:43 (cf. Isa. 66:24); Rev. 14:10-11, 20:10).
- 3) It is the place of final punishment for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10), the antichrist and the false prophet (Rev. 19:20; 20:10), the wicked in resurrection bodies (Rev. 20:15).

- C) Other descriptions of the final judgment: "eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9 cf. Matt. 7:23); "The outer darkness [where] men will weep and gnash their teeth" (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30); "eternal punishment" (Matt. 25:46); "wrath" (John 3:36; Rom. 2:3-9).

3) The Eternal, Conscious Suffering of Hell

- A) The consciousness of hell is taught in the references to the experience of its torment and to the sorrow of its inhabitants.
- B) These same passages and others speak of the punishment as eternal (*aionios*), for ever and ever (*eis aionas aionon*), unquenchable (*abestos*).
- C) The eternal punishment of hell is often set in contrast to eternal life indicating that the contrasting destinies are parallel in extension. If hell is not eternal, then one has grounds for saying that life in the kingdom is not eternal either. Matt. 25:46; Dan. 12:2; cf. passages that speak of eternal life: Jn. 3:16; 10:28; 2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 9:12, 15.

"Eternal" is used in Scripture to describe the perfection of God with respect to time (Rom. 16:26) just as it is used to describe the final punishment.

4) Degrees of Punishment in Hell

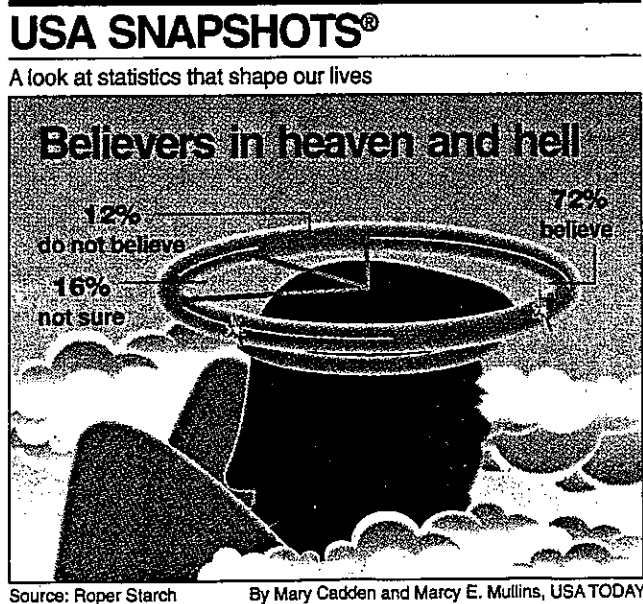
Hell will be less painful for some than others. God judges on the basis of revelation. Revelation brings responsibility. The more one knows (and rejects) the more accountable one is and the more severe will be the judgment (cf. Matt. 11:20-24).

Hell is a spiritual and material furnace of fire where its victims are exquisitely tortured in their minds and in their bodies eternally, according to their various capacities, by God, the devils, and damned humans including themselves, in their memories and consciences as well as in their raging, unsatisfied lusts, from which place of death God's saving grace, mercy, and pity are gone forever, never for a moment to return.

J. Gerstner. Jonathan Edwards on Heaven and Hell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books. 1980), 53.

The strongest support of the doctrine of Endless Punishment is the teaching of Christ, the Redeemer of men . . . Christ could not have warned men so frequently and earnestly as He did against 'the fire that shall never be quenched,' and 'the worm that dieth no,' had he known that there is no future peril to fully correspond to them . . . Jesus Christ is the person who is responsible for the doctrine of Eternal Perdition. He is the Being with whom all opponents of this theological tenet are in conflict.

Shedd. 675.680.



Summary of arguments in favor of annihilationism (conditionalism):

1. The idea of God tormenting individuals eternally is morally indefensible.

"Let me say at the outset that I consider the concept of hell as endless torment in body and mind an outrageous doctrine, a theological and moral enormity, a bad doctrine of the tradition which needs to be changed. How can Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness whose ways include inflicting everlasting torture upon his creatures, however sinful they may have been?" (Pinnock 246-47)

"... emotionally, I find the concept intolerable and do not understand how people can live with it without either cauterising their feelings or cracking under the strain." (Stott 314)

2. The concept of eternal punishment was started by Augustine.

"What I would ask my readers to do is to entertain the possibility that the Christian tradition has gone wrong in regard to hell as everlasting, conscious torment. It should not be too much to ask since many of them already hold that Augustine got certain other things wrong in his theology. Many will hold, for example, that he was wrong on the doctrine of the millennium, on the practice of infant baptism, and on God's sovereign/arbitrary reprobation of the wicked. So why should they not entertain the possibility that he may have erred with regard to the doctrine of hell as everlasting, conscious punishment as well?" (Pinnock 249)

3. The biblical description of judgment gives the impression of final destruction.

"The strong impression the Bible creates in this reader with regard to the fate of the finally impenitent wicked is a vivid sense of their final and irreversible destruction. The language and imagery used by Scripture is so powerful in this regard that it is remarkable more theologians have not picked up on it. The Bible repeatedly uses the language of death, destruction, ruin, and perishing when speaking of the fate of the wicked. It uses the imagery of fire consuming (not torturing) what is thrown into it. The images of fire and destruction together strongly suggest annihilation rather than unending torture." (Pinnock 250; cf. Stott 315, 316ff.; Hughes 403)

4. The concept of hell depends on the Platonic notion of immortality.

"This is how the traditional view of hell got constructed: add a belief in divine judgment after death (scriptural) to a belief in the immortality of the soul (unscriptural), and you have Augustine's terrible doctrine." (Pinnock 253)

"If cannot, I think, be replied that it is impossible to destroy human beings because they are immortal, for the immortality—and therefore

indestructibility—of the soul is a Greek not a biblical concept." (Stott 316)

5. God is not vindictive, and all of His punishments are "redemptive."
 "What purpose of God would be served by the unending torture of the wicked except sheer vengeance and vindictiveness? Such a fate would spell endless and totally unredemptive suffering, punishment just for its own sake. . . . The chief point is that eternal torment serves no purpose and exhibits a vindictiveness out of keeping with the love of God revealed in the gospel." (Pinnock 254-55)
6. Matthew 25:46 can support either position.
 (Pinnock 256)
7. Luke 16:23f. is not meant literally, and speaks only of intermediate state anyway.
 (Pinnock 256; Stott 317)
8. The devil, the beast, and the prophet are not ordinary humans in Rev. 20).
 "... it is the Devil, the beast, and the false prophet who are the only ones present, and they cannot be equated with ordinary human beings, however we should understand their nature." (Pinnock 257; cf. Stott 318)

*"Though every vessel of mercy
 shall be full completely
 in heaven, yet one
 may hold more than
 another."*

Thomas Watson

Response

1. While we need to be compassionate, we must remember our final authority.
2. Many doctrines are later expounded in more detail, and we can certainly reconsider those doctrines which appear to have been improperly formulated. However, a consideration of the Scripture demonstrates that the traditional concept of hell as a place or state of eternal torment is indeed biblical.
3. We must realize that the imagery of grass burning, etc., is a direct contrast to the illustration of Israel's life in the land as a thriving plant, firmly rooted and resistant to heat. Those who continued in the law of God, would be like a strong tree, planted by a stream, thriving in the land of promise and enjoying the blessing of God. By contrast, the wicked would wither and fade (perhaps be burned off) and would be uprooted from the land and driven into exile. This imagery does not really address the nature of the afterlife except to say that the wicked will be cut off from life in the land in fellowship with God.

However, there are two passages which seem to take the idea further. Isaiah 66:24 says that the fires of God's judgment upon the wicked would never be quenched. Pinnock writes, "The fire will be quenched only when the job is finished, not before" (256). On the contrary, it appears as though the job will never be finished. In Numbers 11, the Lord's anger burned against the Israelites who were complaining in the wilderness. Verse one says, "the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp." Moses then interceded on behalf of the people—he prayed to the Lord, and the flame died out. God's anger was set aside. In Isaiah 66, that will never happen. The flame of His judgment will never die out.

That this is the proper understanding of Isaiah 66 is strongly suggested by Revelation 20, where the flames of the lake of fire bring eternal torment upon God's enemies.

4. It has become popular to say that immortality is purely a Greek notion and that it is at odds with the biblical doctrine of resurrection. Quite the contrary, the concepts of immortality and resurrection are both inseparable and complementary. Biblically, immortality is the inevitable outcome of resurrection. The two ideas are quite compatible. We should also note that this biblical doctrine is distinct from the Platonic notion of immortality, in which the soul is inherently good and longs to be free from the confines of the body. (cf. Harris, 271)

5. This is certainly not true with the devil, the beast and the false prophet (Rev. 20:10).
6. The key here is in seeing more in life and death than existence and non-existence.

7. Even if it is the intermediate state, it shows conscious punishment for a long time.
8. We can respond to this argument with two crucial observations. First, the fact that these three are tormented forever demonstrates that God **does** punish at least these enemies eternally. Therefore, we cannot say that such punishment is contrary to the biblical view of God's justice. He punishes, indeed torments, the devil, the beast, and the false prophet for all eternity. Second, Pinnock is wrong when he says that these three are the only ones found in this position. According to verses 14 and 15 of this same chapter (Revelation 20), the unbelieving dead are condemned to the same fate—they are cast into the lake of fire.

Positive arguments for the existence of hell

1. Rev. 20
2. Stott provides a nice summary of the anguish that God feels for the lost: "... Jesus wept over the impenitent city of Jerusalem. He cried out: 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace . . . !' (Luke 19:41-42). In this too Paul had the mind of Christ. He wrote of the 'great sorrow and unceasing anguish' he felt in his heart for his own race, the people of Israel. His 'heart's desire and prayer to God' was for their salvation. He was willing even, like Moses before him, to be 'cursed and cut off from Christ' if only thereby his people might be saved (Rom. 9:1-4). He had the same deep feelings for the Gentiles. For three whole years in Ephesus, as he reminded the church elders of that city, 'I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.' (Acts 20:31)
Question: Why would there be such anguish over the lost if there was no hell?
3. Judgment is necessary if man is to have a choice. C.S. Lewis writes, "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'thy will be done.'" (*The Great Divorce*, p. 72)
4. It has been objected that the continuing presence of hell would result in less joy in heaven. Again C. S. Lewis writes, "It sounds merciful to say that 'the final loss of one soul gives the lie to all the joy of those who are saved.' But behind this is the demand of the loveless and self-imprisoned that they should be allowed to blackmail the universe: that till they consent to be happy (on their own terms) no one else shall taste joy: that theirs should be the final power; that Hell should be able to veto Heaven." (*The Great Divorce*, p. 120)

IV. Doctrine of Eternal Life: Resurrection Life in the Kingdom of the New Heavens, New Earth, and New Jerusalem

- 1) **The New Heavens and New Earth** (References to "new heavens and new earth" are found in Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22-23; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-4)
 - A) **Observations of the New Heavens and New Earth and New Jerusalem as the final destiny of believers** (Rev. 21-22)
 - 1) God makes all things new 21:1-2,5
 - 2) Chaos and disorder are no more 21:1
 - 3) God will live with His people personally 21:3; 22:4
 - 4) The effects of sin are done away 21:4, 8, 27; 22:3
 - 5) All the legitimate desires of our heart will be satisfied 21:6
 - 6) Our inheritance of heavenly blessings will be plentiful and permanent 21:7
 - 7) The splendor of the New Jerusalem will be magnificent 21:9-21
 - 8) The glory of God will permeate our dwelling place 21:22-23
 - 9) Nations will be guided by God 21:24, 26
 - 10) Protection and peace are perfectly present 21:25; 22:4-5
 - 11) Productivity will be incredible 22:1-2
 - 12) Perpetual perfect service will be our calling 22:3
 - B) **The Institution of the New Order of Heavens and Earth**
 - 1) The new creation view - At the end of the millennium God annihilates the old order and out of nothing creates a new order (2 Pet. 3:7, 10, 12; Rev. 21: 1 ff.)
 - 2) The renovation view - God does not annihilate, but transforms the old order into the new. This seems more consistent with Rom. 8; and also adequately answers 2 Pet. 3:7 ff).
 - C) **Life on the New Earth**

"On that new earth, therefore, we hope to spend eternity, enjoying its beauties, exploring its resources, and using its treasures to the glory of God." (Hoekema)
 - D) **Conclusion**
 - Restoration of a pre curse world is attained.
 - Perfect fellowship and communion with God is eternally enjoyed.
- 2) **The City of God (A place and a people: The Church or redeemed of all ages)**
 - A) **Pauline references** - Gal. 4:22-31; Phil. 3:20
 - B) **Hebrews references** - 11:10; 12:22-24; 13:14

C) Characteristics

- Prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed 21:2, 9
- The bride, wife of the Lamb
- Perfectly symmetrical 21:16
- Constructed with materials of great wealth 21:18-21; cf. Isa. 54:11
- Shines with the glory of God 21:11
- Has foundations named after the apostles 21:12
- Has gates named after the 12 tribes of Israel 21:14

Conclusion

The Hope of Eternal Life

Eternal life in the City of God, in the Kingdom of God is truly gospel (good news)! It stimulates joy for it is a sustaining hope anticipating forgiving and renewing grace that is truly satisfying to the sin-death anxious human being. It is truly satisfying because it fits our created design, having been fashioned by our Creator-Redeemer Himself to fellowship with Him. This hope gives perspective to the present - the present is to be lived in light of the future. It motivates toward quality living in the present determined in light of the quality of the future.

MAJOR RESURRECTIONS IN LIGHT OF THE ETERNAL DESTINY OF MAN

1. Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1-10; Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:32; 10:40; 17:3; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:4; Eph. 1:20; 1 Thess. 4:14; 1 Peter 3:18).
2. The token resurrection of some saints at the time of the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 27:50-53). What this means, historically and theologically is truly a great mystery!
3. The resurrection at the Rapture of all believers (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thess. 4:14-17). Some make a distinction in time between OT and NT saints, with OT saints being resurrected after the Tribulation.
4. The resurrection of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-13).
5. The resurrection of the Tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4-6).
6. The resurrection of the wicked dead (Rev. 20:11-15).

ETERNAL LIFE: RESURRECTION LIFE IN THE KINGDOM

The New Heavens and New Earth (References to "new heavens and new earth" are found in Isaiah 65: 17-25; 66:22-23; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4).

Recognition of the significance of the new earth as the final destiny.

G.E. Ladd (The Last Things, p. 112)

After the millennium when the Age to Come has been inaugurated, John sees a new heaven and a new earth, unto which the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descends. Here is an important fact: the ultimate scene of the Kingdom of God is earthly. It is a transformed earth to be sure, but it is still an earthly destiny. Scripture everywhere teaches this. Paul says that "the creation itself will be set free from bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). Corresponding to the new creation is the resurrection of the body ...

A. Hoekema (The Bible and the Future, p. 274)

The Bible teaches that believers will go to heaven when they die. That they will be happy during the intermediate state between death and resurrection is clearly taught in Scripture. But their happiness will be provisional and incomplete. For the completion of their happiness they await the resurrection of the body and the new earth which God will create as the culmination of his redemptive work.

J.D. Pentecost (Things to Come, pp. 561-62)

"Israel's covenants guarantee that people, the land, a national existence, a kingdom, a king, and spiritual blessings in perpetuity. Therefore there must be an eternal earth in which these blessings can be fulfilled. By a translation out of the old earth Israel will be brought into the new earth, there to enjoy forever all that God has promised to them . . . [The] Lord Jesus Christ will be dwelling with men on the new earth in the eternal kingdom. Since Scripture reveals that the church will be with Christ, it is concluded that the eternal abode of the church will likewise be in the new earth, in that heavenly city, New Jerusalem, that has been especially prepared by God for the saints."

Hell Hath Little Fury These Days

SUMMARY: From ancient times a debate has raged over the existence of hell and whether it is a state of mind or a real place. Some scholars and theologians today say the fear of God has been lost, thus there is no fear of hell. Others blame hell's status on unitarian theology that says we will all be saved. But some think the evangelical churches and the triumph of orthodoxy eventually will resurrect belief in hell.

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In his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Jonathan Edwards wrote that the "vitals" of the wicked "shall forever be full of glowing, melting fire, fierce enough to melt away the very rocks and elements; and, also they shall eternally be full of the most quick and lively sense to feel the torments of hell . . . for ever and ever, without any end at all, and never, never be delivered."

Since the 18th century New England Calvinist preached, the idea of such divine punishment has declined to the point where "hell today is enveloped in silence," says Alan Bernstein, a professor of medieval history at the University of Arizona.

His view is confirmed by others such as Professor Donald Bloesch, a minister of the United Church of Christ who teaches theology at Dubuque Theological Seminary in Iowa, a Presbyterian institution. "The doctrine of hell has passed out of conversation and preaching, even in conservative evangelical churches," he says.

The Rev. Carl F.H. Henry, visiting professor of theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., says hell is avoided as a topic of discussion for two reasons. Conscience, the Baptist says, no longer summons "us daily and anticipatively before the final judgment throne of God." The fear of God has been lost. "At the same time, the infatuation with the God of love has become predominant with the modern misunderstanding that his love is unbounded by anything whatever. This makes hell inconsequential and irrelevant."

The Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, Lutheran pastor and author, says that "the market for hell is bearish," noting the modern "unwillingness to allow that life may have ramifications for better or worse eternally."

In a similar vein, Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski says, "Our crimes are conceived of as finite and subject to finite punishment. We cannot conceive of being judged for eternity. This human measure has been the standard since the 18th century."

The idea of hell as an accounting, Bernstein wrote in the *Wilson Quarterly* last summer, evolved out of beliefs among the

Jews and Greeks. In both cultures, the afterlife was first conceived as a place where the shades of the dead existed without distinction as to their virtue or vice in life.

But about 3,000 years ago the Jews began to believe that God would judge the dead and separate the good from the evil, awarding each an appropriate fate. As the prophet Daniel said, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Part of Sheol, Hebrew for the underworld, was reserved for the wicked. It was given various names: Abaddon (Destruction), Bor (the Pit) and Gehinnom (the Valley of Hinnom) or Gehenna, a ravine outside Jerusalem.

In the Greco-Roman civilization, the idea also grew of differing fates in the hereafter. Plato, in his dialogue "The Phaedo," has Socrates say he has "good hope that there is something remaining for the dead, some far better thing for the good than for the evil." And the Roman poet Virgil, who died in 19 B.C., has the dead, transported to the realm of the god Pluto, assigned rewards or punishments.

In the Gospels, Jesus describes hell in

various ways: as an outer darkness, as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth, as eternal fire sometimes combined with worms and other times with brimstone. Like other Jews, Jesus accepted hell as originally a place of torment for the fallen angels, led by Lucifer, who had rebelled against God. In the Gospel according to Matthew and the Revelation of John, God is described seated upon a throne rendering in the Last Judgment his verdict on the irreversible fate of individuals.

Writing at the turn of the fifth century, St. Augustine declared that the bodies of the wicked will burn forever without being consumed. Worse will be the sheer sense of loss: "To be gone from the kingdom of God, to be an exile from God's city."

The Christian conception in succeeding ages generally follows that of Augustine. The Florentine poet Dante drew on it for his "Inferno," which was written around 1314 and remains the greatest literary vision of hell.

In the Reformation, Martin Luther located hell not only in the hereafter but in our awareness of ourselves, an idea picked up by the Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe, who, in his version of the Faust legend, has Mephistopheles say: "Hell hath no limits nor is circumscribed, in one self place, where we are in Hell, and where Hell is, there must we ever be."

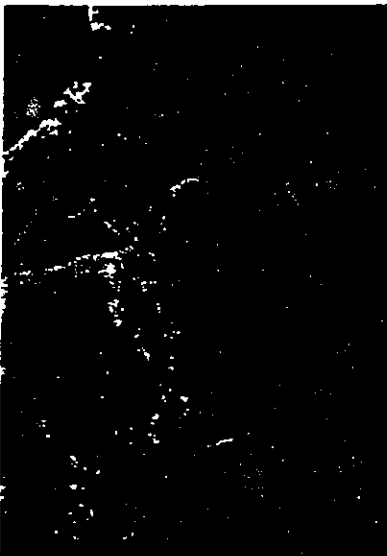
But come the 18th century Enlightenment, which stressed man's natural goodness and asserted that he had the power to save himself without God, hell began its retirement to the intellectual attic of most cultivated Occidentals.

If hell as a theological concept is not much talked about at present, the hells that men create are. We fear nuclear war, and we have witnessed the death camps, the gulag, the killing fields, the induced famines from the Ukraine to Ethiopia.

But as Bernstein says, "Our hells are invented. Either they are for the innocent or they are indiscriminate. We have not reproduced the retributive side of Gehenna." He adds, "We have only feeble mechanisms to punish the creators of concentration camps or the instigators of large-scale suffering."

The philosopher Hannah Arendt argued that the denial of hell, of all theological doctrines, has the greatest political impact because it increases the desire to punish and reward people.

This view is shared by the Rev. James Schall, a Jesuit priest and author of "The Politics of Heaven and Hell." "Totalitarian parties take upon themselves a divine function, which in Plato and in Christianity is



Van der Weyden's "Last Judgment"



The right panel of the triptych "Garden of Earthly Delights" depicts Hieronymus Bosch's frightening concept of hell.

left to the transcendent, of determining the ultimate guilt or innocence of people." They do this, he says, because the existence of evil has to be dealt with. As these parties can neither deny that evil exists nor leave it to God to punish, they locate it in categories of people they hold responsible for society's imperfections.

"Totalitarianism sanitizes whole classes of people," says Neuhaus, who believes hell to be "the inevitable, if not intended, consequence of millenarian attempts to set up the kingdom of God in the here and now." But the existence of man-made hells does not mean that hell in the hereafter has ceased to exist, according to the upholders of traditional Christian belief. "The dialectic of salvation-damnation is inescapable," Neuhaus says.

Hell is real for Bloesch, too. "The fire in hell is the very same as that in heaven, which is the glory of God. It is bliss to the believer and torment to the unbeliever," he says, citing the dictum of the 20th century German theologian, Paul Althaus, for whom hell was "inescapable Godlessness in an inescapable God relationship."

Bloesch sees hell, as the Anglican writer and scholar C.S. Lewis did, as the last refuge of the sinner who feels more at home enclosed in his self-love than in the fellowship of saints. Hell is an inner darkness for the sinner, who is banished there for his obduracy in rejecting God. Hell is not God's absence but his presence in his grace to those who reject him.

Just how physical is hell? Is it pictured the way Augustine or Dante described it?

"It is easier to imagine physical pain than spiritual pain," says Schall, "but the most agonizing pains are those that result from one's knowledge of our own choices and their consequences. Knowing that one chooses a lesser good and stays there will bring spiritual pain, not the pain of burning one's fingers. But nevertheless, one's complete being, body and soul, will be affected." So one interpretation of hell is that it is psychosomatic.

"We are free to describe hell as we choose, but ultimately we do not know, because we are not in that condition which involves death and the resurrection of all, the good and the bad," Schall asserts.

What are the odds of hell being resurrected? Although he personally believes in hell, Bloesch does not see a resurgence of belief in the concept. Instead, he sees the continuing advance of a unitarian theology that tells us we are all saved, accompanied by the spread, through the feminist revision of Scripture, of notions that result in an androgynous and impersonal God.

But he is not altogether without hope for his beliefs. The immense growth of the evangelical churches in the past decade, he believes, gives a context for the enlivening of Christian orthodoxy. This, he thinks, could lead to a renewal of the notion of hell.

Henry is more optimistic. In the contest between orthodoxy and "modern options," the latter will not prove out, he says. To

those who cannot discern grounds for hope that there will be a spiritual restoration. "No futurist foresaw the energy crisis 10 years before it happened, and nobody foresaw how it would be solved."

Neuhaus is conditionally optimistic. If the resurgence of the transcendent, which is evident in many sectors of contemporary culture, realizes its promise, this will entail a revived understanding of the irreversible moral consequences of the living of life. "Not, I hope, as a morbid preoccupation with loss, but as a natural corollary of understanding the beatitude of the fulfillment of the transcendent," he says, adding, "Hell is the negative of this beatitude."

Kolakowski offers an idea that would seem to square orthodox belief with modern humanistic sensibilities. "We should pay attention," he says, "to the fact that while the Roman Catholic Church has declared that the saints are saved and that there are thousands more saints than we know of, it has not even in one case declared a person condemned to hell, not even Judas. It is compatible with Christ's teaching that there is a hell but that there is no one in it; it's a possibility," he suggests. "We can imagine that hell, this terrifying threat, is a tactic of God, but will not materialize. But we don't know."

So what is the outlook for hell? Does it have a future? Bernstein concludes that "only when human society can justly punish every evil will hell be forgotten."

—Derk Kinnane Roelofsma

The Index View

R. Albert Mohler Jr.
Editor



Whatever Happened To Hell?

"Hell disappeared—no one noticed." That is the sober and stunning assessment offered by historian Martin E. Marty, and he is right. Hell has simply evaporated from the thinking of most churches and citizens. As Marty commented, hell is "something that has either atrophied or entirely disappeared in the vocabulary and doctrinal repository of most churches."

Disappeared? The caricature of the "hell-fire and brimstone" preacher has been a staple figure in American literature since the 18th century. But this stern-faced, weeping and perspiring preacher bears little resemblance to modern reality. He lives on in novels, motion pictures, and sit-coms, where he continues as a stereotype secularists cannot bear to give up. But within the evangelical church itself, hell is seldom mentioned.

The reasons for this are several. One background factor is the "demythologization" project of 19th and 20th century biblical critics, who insisted that hell was a part of primitive mythology which should be replaced with more modern notions. Hell was transformed from a literal, physical state of torment and separation from God into a relic from an ancient worldview, now to be discarded.

But the influence of critical scholarship is not the major factor in the disappearance of hell. That blame must be placed squarely on the contemporary church. Hell has disappeared because we have been hesitant to tell the truth. Jesus Christ had more to say about hell than about heaven. The Lord spoke of hell as eternal punishment, physical torment, consuming fire, and perpetual destruction. To reject or ignore biblical teachings concerning hell is to deny the clear teaching of Jesus.

The contemporary evangelical church simply evades the issue. When was the last time you heard a sermon mention hell—even remotely? Facing a society which laughs at the prospect of hell, the church simply chooses to be silent on the issue.

Marty is correct, hell is "culturally unavailable." That is, American culture no longer takes the issue with seriousness. *U.S. News and World Report* recently released a cover story heralding the return of hell, but the substance of the article revealed the shallowness of their headline. Though 60 percent of Americans indicated that they believe in hell, only 4 percent thought of hell as a realistic prospect for themselves.

With therapy triumphant over theology, modern Americans may speak of "the hells

each of us create in our own lives," but they are stiffly resistant to any suggestion that hell might be a place of eternal judgment to which, but by the grace of God, they would be sent.

The greater issue is not the resistance of the modern mind to the notion of hell, but the unwillingness of the church to declare the clear teaching of Scripture. The church is charged to preach "the whole counsel of God." Failure to confront secular society with the truth about hell is an affront to the gospel.

The church is not called to make hell its central message, but the Bible demonstrates a natural balance in the wholeness of the gospel. Hell itself bears witness to the righteousness and holiness of God, to the radical evil of human sin, and to the hopelessness of humanity. The grace of God cannot be understood apart from this truth. Salvation cannot be seen in its proper perspective unless damnation is understood as a true and horrible reality. Furthermore, the moral exhortations of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are meaningless apart from hell. The "broad way" which leads to destruction becomes no more than a poor choice on life's road.

Charles Spurgeon, as usual, put it clearly: "Think lightly of hell, and you will soon think lightly of the cross." Failure to witness to the issue of hell is an insult to the cross of Christ. It is the blasphemy of silence. Jonathan Edwards, the 18th century preacher whose sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," is touted as a piece of quaint literature, showed the way toward the biblical balance. The entire thrust of his ministry was the greatness of the grace of God. But he understood that the reality of hell was essential to the preaching of the gospel. As he preached to his Northampton, Mass., congregation: "I do not desire to go about to terrify you needlessly or represent your case worse than it is, but I do verily think that there are a number of persons belonging to this congregation in imminent danger of being damned to all eternity." Hearing this message from the preacher, many evangelical churches would be quickly forming a new pulpit committee.

We do not need the return of manipulative hell-fire and brimstone theatrics. We desperately need a return to the undiluted truth and balance of the gospel. As Spurgeon warned, "He who does not believe that God will cast unbelievers into hell, will not be sure that He will take believers into heaven."

Looking Up

Looking On Outward Appearance

By James N. Griffith
Executive Director—Treasurer
Georgia Baptist Convention

U.S.A. Today a few years ago published a story about a man named John Barrier, who, according to his own words, was "treated like I'd crawled out from under a rock" by the people in the bank.

Dressed in the rugged and soiled clothes of a construction worker, he had come into the bank to cash a small check.

After cashing the check at one teller's window, he started out of the bank—remembered his parking slip—and stopped to ask another teller to validate his parking ticket so that he could save the 60-cent charge.

The teller, skeptical of him because of his appearance, refused to grant him that courtesy.

Surprised by this kind of treatment, John protested and the manager was summoned.

A discussion followed and, even though there seemed to be no good reason, the manager also refused to validate his parking slip.

Frustrated by the lack of courtesy shown him, John threatened to withdraw all of his funds from the bank. Again this was received with skepticism.

But the next day, to the surprise of both the manager and teller, John returned to the bank, withdrew his funds and closed his accounts which totaled more than \$2-million!

The bank president must have asked himself and his employees, What happened? Apparently, the bank employees had made the mistake of judging John's worth and importance by his appearance.

As the Scripture expresses it: "... for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

It brings to mind the ancient incident of the poorly dressed man who was brought into a medical center in serious condition.

Examining the old man, one doctor turned to another and said, "Well, let's see what we can do for this worthless bit of humanity."

Struggling to raise himself, the old man whispered these unexpected words: "Would you call worthless one for whom Christ died?"

From outward appearances you cannot always tell where the treasure is.

Overheard

"We think of ourselves as a nation that cherishes its children, but, in fact, America treats its children like excess baggage. In all other countries, childbirth is seen as an event that is vitally important to the life and future of the nation. But in the U.S. we treat child-rearing as some kind of expensive private hobby.... These days we treat divorce as just another personal choice. Birth control has made it possible to choose when to have children, and liberalized divorce laws have made it easy to abandon them."

—Economist Sylvia Ann Hewlett,
in an interview in the August 26, 1991 issue of *TIME*.

"We have placed too much hope in politics and social reforms, only to find out that we were being deprived of our most precious possession: our spiritual life. It is trampled by the party mob in the East, by the commercial one in the West. We are at a harsh spiritual crisis and political impasse. All the celebrated technological achievements of progress ... do not redeem the 20th century's moral poverty."

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn
in *Fragments*.

"Evangelism must be seen as the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of all people. Salvation must not be confused with humanization or rehabilitation, as sociologists understand these terms. Rather, it should be equated with justification and sanctification, and this means that it primarily concerns man's relationship not to society but to God."

—Donald G. Bloesch, in
The Crisis of Piety.

U.S. News & World Report

MARCH 25, 1991

\$2.50

**THE KGB'S
RISING POWER**



**GORBACHEV'S
U.S.S.R.**

THE REKINDLING OF



Record numbers of Americans now
believe in a netherworld—and in a wide
variety of after-death punishments



SCIENCE & SOCIETY

Hell's sober comeback

Three out of 5 Americans now believe in Hades, but their views on damnation differ sharply. Theologians are struggling to explain these infernal images.



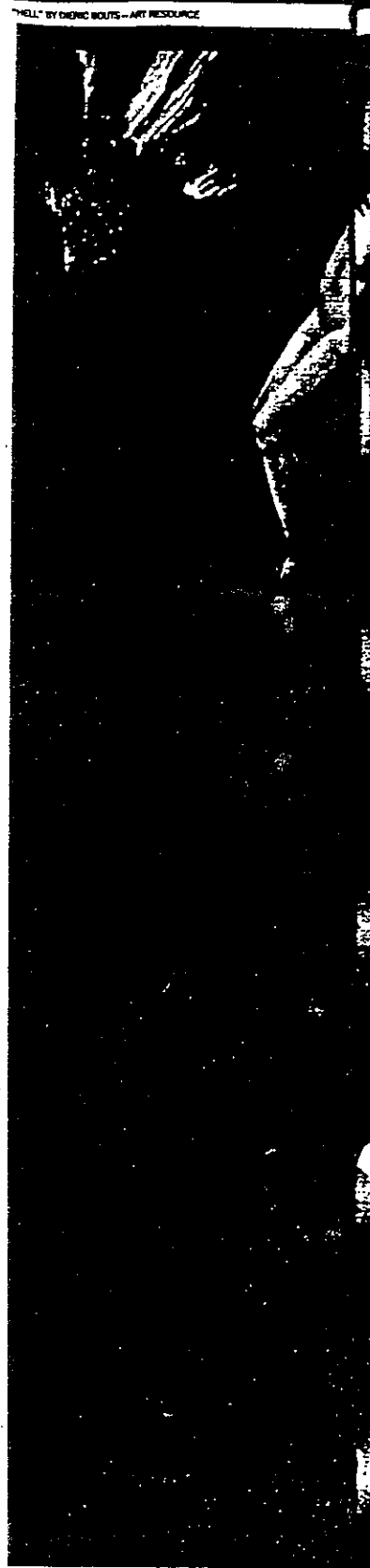
It is the horrifying flipside of heavenly Paradise, a place of endless torment, a fiery abyss to be shunned by prudent seekers of religious piety. Hell is every believer's worst nightmare. And its presence is being felt more acutely today than it has in decades.

Long before Jonathan Edwards struck primordial fear into the hearts of 18th-century New Englanders with his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," the blazing imagery of an infernal netherworld haunted the religious conscience. Indeed, the prospect of punishment beyond the grave for the wicked has been part of Christian teaching since the days of Jesus. It has roots in ancient Judaism and branches in most other major world religions.

But for much of the 20th century, hell didn't fare well. Attacked by modern intellectualism and paled by the flames of Hiroshima and the Holocaust, hell's frightful imagery lost much of its fury. By most accounts, it has all but disappeared from the pulpit rhetoric of mainline Protestantism. And it has fared only marginally better among evangelicals. Even Kenneth S. Kantzer, a former editor of the evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*, confessed a few years back that he hadn't preached a sermon on hell in more than three decades. A general neglect of the subject in theological discourse prompted Martin Marty, a chronicler of American religious trends and professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, to observe that "hell has disappeared and no one noticed."

Now, however, it seems that hell is undergoing something of a revival in American religious thought. Of course it never entirely disappeared from some of Christianity's more conservative acreage. But even among some liberal mainline denominations, there are signs that theologians are beginning to think more seriously about the idea of hell than they have in decades—though not always in traditional ways. A Roman Catholic bishop in New York startled church members who had not heard much of hell recently when he warned pro-abortion-rights Catholic politicians a few months ago that they were in serious danger of going there. And it seems to be increasingly on the minds of the public as well. A recent Gallup Poll showed more Americans believe in hell today than did in the generally more wholesome and pious 1950s.

Spiritual revival. Why the comeback? Some see it as a hopeful sign, along with reports of increased church attendance, that the America of the baby boomers is returning to traditional religion. Others find in it a sobering reflection of the pervasive violence and suffering in modern society that somehow makes the idea of hell more readily grasped. Still others question whether it is much more than a shallow nostalgia for the beliefs of childhood. "If people really believed in hell," suggests Marty, "they wouldn't be watching basketball or even the TV preachers. They'd be out rescuing people." Yet, however it is explained by theologians and understood by believers, a modern recovery of hell could well influence thinking on basic questions of faith and morality for years to come. □



We believe in Hell, says the Church

(but without the flames)

By Victoria Combe

HELL exists and we shall all face a Day of Judgment, an unusually hard-line Church of England report says today.

The Mystery of Salvation, the third in a series by the Doctrine Commission, says that Hell is a state of annihilation rather than eternal torment.

Hell has been played down by the Church for two centuries to try to end a "religion of fear", in which people were terrified into believing.

But this report, commissioned by the House of Bishops chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, rejects that all people of all faiths will automatically be saved.

"No one can be compulsorily installed in Heaven," it says. "The possibility remains for each human being of a final rejection of God. Final judgment therefore remains a reality."

It is also uncompromising on its belief that the only way to salvation is through Jesus and the Cross and reasserts the Church's mission to convert non-Christians.

The traditional images of Heaven with angels and Hell as a flaming pit are rejected.

"Hell is not eternal torment, but the final and irrevocable choosing of that which is opposed to God so completely and so absolutely that the only end is total non-being."

Heaven is not "eternal and static perfection", but an everlasting "participation in the life of God".

The report addresses feminist theology and acknowledges that sin has always been described from a male point of view.

It suggests that pride would have been given less prominence by women in writing theology.

They might have wished to place a greater emphasis on sin "as the failure to assert and take responsibility for oneself". But the report does not favour feminine pronouns when talking about God. It recommends the use of "God" rather than He when possible, but says that terms such as "Godself" rather than "Himself" are obtrusive and confusing.

THE DAMNED

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

— Revelation 21.8

This way for the sorrowful city. This way for eternal suffering. This way to join the lost people... Abandon all hope, you who enter!

— Dante (Inferno)

Hell is other people.

— Jean-Paul Sartre

The former Bishop of Durham, the Rt Rev David Jenkins, who rejected the existence of Hell in lectures two years ago, said last night: "I believe that the love of God in the end will find it possible to save everyone."

The report was welcomed by Anglican evangelicals, who had criticised the Church for failing to be authoritative about fundamental beliefs.

"It is a strong traditional piece of Anglican theology," said the Rt Rev John Taylor, the former Bishop of St Albans, an evangelical who is on the Doctrine Commission. "Anything less and I would have been unhappy."

He said that people did want to be saved "from the pointlessness of life". Unfortunately, for many, salvation "is whether their lottery number comes up on Saturday night".

Editorial Comment: Page 18

Percentage of Americans who say they believe in—

	HEAVEN	HELL
1990	78%	60%
1981	71%	53%
1965	68%	54%
1952	72%	58%

	HEAVEN	HELL
Total	78%	60%
Men	74%	59%
Women	81%	61%
Ages 18-29	84%	71%
30-49	78%	61%
50 and up	74%	54%

Protestant	84%	66%
Catholic	81%	57%
Evangelical	91%	80%
No religion	46%	36%

Attend church	87%	67%
Nonmembers	62%	48%

Excellent or good chance of going to—

	HEAVEN	HELL
Total	78%	4%
Men	73%	5%
Women	81%	3%

Ages 18-29	78%	3%
30-49	80%	3%
50 and up	76%	5%

Protestant	80%	4%
Catholic	78%	5%
Evangelical	88%	3%
No religion	61%	9%

Attend church	83%	3%
Nonmembers	65%	7%

Note: This survey was conducted among 1,108 Americans in November 1990.
USNSWR - Basic data: Gallup Organization

"THE LAST JUDGMENT" BY JAN VAN EYCK. THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART/FLETCHER FUND 1933



Hell's roots in the Bible



Then He will also say to those on the left, "Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels."

—Jesus in the Gospel According to Matthew



Christians trace their belief in hell to the words of Jesus. As recorded in the gospels, he spoke of it often as a "fiery hell" and an "unquenchable fire" awaiting those who reject God and defile themselves. But Jesus painted only a sketchy picture in his preaching. Much of what Christians believe about hell today is the result of centuries of theological develop-

ment and literary imagination.

In earliest Old Testament times, all the dead—both righteous and wicked—were believed to go to *Sheol*, a gloomy underworld separated from God. It seemed to be the last stop for everyone. Then in about the second century B.C.,

The Devil's metamorphosis

He is evil incarnate. By his many names—Lucifer, Satan, the Prince of Darkness—he inspires fear and fascination bordering on obsession. For centuries,

mortals have struggled to render a portrait of the Devil, weaving his evil legacy inextricably into the saga of humanity.

The Devil was born of the Old Testament, but he has predecessors at least as old as the horned sorcerer depicted on cave walls in France 9,000 years ago. The biblical story of Satan as a fallen angel parallels tales from Greek, Egyptian, Hindu and other mythologies. His role as ruler of the underworld can be traced to 500 B.C., when the Gaelic god, Cernunnos, governed the dead.

Satan's evolution over time reflects the human imagination. He has picked up physical characteristics and personality



under the influence of Greek and Persian philosophy, Pharaonic Judaism began to embrace the idea of the immortal soul and of *Hades*—the infernal netherworld of Greek mythology—as a place where all would be either rewarded or punished. Later, when the doctrine of a final resurrection surfaced in parts of Judaism, *Hades* developed into a temporary abode just for the souls of the wicked, while the godly went to “heavenly blessedness” to await bodily resurrection. After the resurrection and final judgment, the wicked would be condemned to a hell of fire, called *Gehenna*, named after the desolate Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem where trash fires burned and where ancient human sacrifices were performed. Jesus is quoted in early Greek gospel texts as using both *Gehenna* and *Hades* to refer to hell. He used *Gehenna*, for instance, when he warned:

“Whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’
shall be guilty enough to go into
the fiery hell.”

But he chose *Hades* when he spoke of a present-day hell, as when he vowed that the “gates of hell will not prevail” against his church.

As much as Jesus said about hell, he left enough unsaid so that his followers have been debating its nature, purpose and duration ever since. Where is hell? Is it hot or cold? Is the fire real or metaphorical? Is the torment physical or psychological? Are the condemned punished forever or are they rehabilitated—or perhaps annihilated? Above all, who goes to hell?

Many of the early church leaders, including the second-century theologian Justin Martyr and the Latin fathers Tertullian and Jerome, assumed a hot, fiery hell of sensory punishment. Origen of Alexandria, in the third century, thought it was more a place of spiritual suffering—of remorse and separation from God. In the fifth century, the great Latin-speaking theologian Augustine tidied things up

by saying it was both. While most of the early fathers taught that hell’s purpose was to punish, Origen suggested it was remedial—that in hell, the worst of sinners could be reclaimed. But his “universalist” view was rejected by church leaders at the Council of Constantinople in 543. And while a few theologians of the day believed that sinners ultimately would be annihilated, most held the belief that the torments of hell were unending.

The idea of purgatory—a place separate from hell where sinners unfit for heaven are rehabilitated—became part of church teaching in the sixth century. And later, limbo was conceived as a compartment for unbaptized infants who are spared sensory torments but never see God.

Abysmal imagery. Little of importance was added to the official doctrine of hell in the middle ages. But the graphic imagery of tortured souls and of flaming, multileveled subterranean chambers became an important part of the popular imagination with Dante’s fictional descriptions of the *Inferno* in *The Divine Comedy* in the early 14th century. The Protestant reformers rejected the idea of limbo and purgatory—though they remain part of Roman Catholic theology—as well as the terrifying portrayals of hell in popular paintings of the day. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin viewed hell’s punishments as eternal but figurative, the greatest conceivable torment being alienation from God.

But the old idea that hell inflicted both physical and spiritual pain rebounded in the 17th and 18th centuries. It was codified with adoption of the Westminster Larger Catechism, which cited “grievous torments in soul and body” as well as “everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God.” And Origen’s hope of “universal” redemption in a purgatorylike hell began to gain a new following in the 19th century. Rather than becoming more uniform, the Christian doctrine of hell entered the 20th century more fragmented than ever. □



traits from different cultures. The Bible calls him a lion, a wolf, a dragon and, of course, a serpent. Early Christians fancied him a dog and gave him three heads, like Cerberus, the Greek watchdog of hell. He later adopted a human body, the serpent hair of the Greek furies and a cloven hoof from Loki, the Norse god of destruction. Satan’s trident, fashioned after Poseidon’s, mocked the triune God.

Monster among men. Medieval priests pictured the Devil as a hideous blend of repugnant parts, drawing a connection between evil and physical ugliness. Yet to succeed as the grand tempter of man, Satan could assume enticing forms, appearing as a beautiful woman or an angel. The Devil’s powers of persuasion were so great that, in the New Testament, even Christ struggled to resist him.

The Renaissance witnessed a rejuvenation of the dignity Satan lost in his fall from the heavens. Milton’s epic poem, “Paradise Lost,” cast Satan as a tragic hero who fell from grace because of pride and envy—but who, through inherent nobility and vision, came quickly

to rule the underworld. This Satan had human emotions—pity for fellow fallen angels and compassion for humans.

The Age of Reason undermined Satan’s reputation, but the wars and genocide of the 20th century have saved him. Movements within modern churches have revived human obsessions with Satan and demonic possession, blamed for major and minor sins, from murder to mere bad habits like smoking or laziness. As loathed as the Devil is, Satan is so fundamental to our culture that western man might not recognize himself without Satan’s presence. The art of storytelling, and of recording history, revolves around the idea of opposing forces, of a conflict. One religion scholar, Maximilian Rudwin, even contends that “Lacking the Devil, there would simply be no literature.” Without Satan’s evil to contrast with goodness and light, he suggests, humans would be hard pressed to describe the events of the world or even the substance of their own souls.

BY JOANNIE M. SCHROF

Revisiting the abyss



Hell was not made for men. It is in no sense parallel to heaven: It is "the darkness outside," the outer rim where being fades away into nonentity.

— C. S. Lewis, "The Problem of Pain"



o many Christians today, the fiery depictions of hell and damnation by Dante and Jonathan Edwards are more nearly like documentaries than allegories. "I preach a literal hell," says the Rev. Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of the 7,900-member First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas. "The Bible calls it a

'lake of fire,' and I don't think that definition can be improved upon."

But in much of mainline Protestantism, modern Roman Catholicism and even in some evangelical churches, views of hell have changed in recent decades and, in some instances, are still evolving.

In many churches, one finds little talk these days about a literal, punitive hell as a real possibility after death. "My congregation would be stunned to hear a sermon on hell," says the Rev. Mary Kraus, pastor of the Dumbarton United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Her parishioners, she says, are "upper-middle-class, well-educated critical thinkers" who view God as "compassionate and loving, not someone who's going to push them into eternal damnation."

Church visions. That view reflects a general shift away from supernaturalism in much of Protestant theology that began in the 19th century but gained momentum in the 1950s with the teaching of Rudolf Bultmann, a German scholar who sought to "demythologize" the Bible. Among other things, Bultmann held that one need not believe in a literal heaven and hell to be a Christian. Now, to many modern schol-

ars, a literal hell is "part of an understanding of the cosmos that just doesn't exist anymore," says Stephen J. Patterson, professor of New Testament at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis. Biblical references to hell are often viewed metaphorically as referring to the isolation, pain and suffering that result from evil. "Once we discovered we could create hell on earth," says John Dominic Crossan of DePaul University in Chicago, "it became silly to talk about it in a literal sense."

But at some leading divinity schools, hell is getting another hearing. Gabriel Fackre, professor at the Andover-Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, Mass., and president of the American Theological Society, detects a growing desire among many modern theologians to "retrieve the classic traditions"—including doctrines of heaven and hell—from the broadly "secularized theology" that has held sway at many schools. While that doesn't necessarily signal a wholesale retreat to the old literalist views of a hot and fiery underworld, he says, many scholars now are more willing at least to consider hell an "ontological possibility."

In Roman Catholicism, the possibility of hell for the wicked remains on the doctrinal books. But according to modern teachings, few souls are likely to end up there. Since the 1960s, when a spirit of ecumenism took hold of the church at the Second Vatican Council, Catholic theology has emphasized the potential for all souls ultimately to make it to heaven—although many first may have to spend time in purgatory, a temporary lodging where sinners are rehabilitated. In earlier times, "we were told hell was a real possibility for all of us," recalls the Rev. Richard McBrien, chairman of theology at the University of Notre Dame. "If you ate a hot dog on Friday and got hit by a truck before you went to confession, you'd suffer the same punishment

as if you were a murderer." Now, says the Rev. Avery Dulles, theology professor at Fordham University in New York, the emphasis is on the mercy and love of God. "Hell is there and ready to receive anyone who meets the condition for falling into it," says Dulles, "but it's quite possible that no one will really go there." To many Catholic theologians, hell has come to be perceived as a "state of being" rather than a place. "You can't dig far enough into the earth to find it," says McBrien. Today, he adds, the suffering is widely thought to be more spiritual than physical. "It's not necessary to believe it's fire and that you're constantly cooking on a spit," he says.

In Eastern Orthodoxy, hell is real, but the flaming imagery is viewed allegorically. The Rev. John Meyendorff, dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York, says most Orthodox Christians believe "all will be raised" for the final judgment, after which God will reign on

ILLUSTRATION OF THE RIVER STYX FROM DANTE'S INFERNO — THE GRANGER COLLECTION



"EVENING ON KARL JOHAN STREET" BY EDVARD MUNCH - SCALA/ART RESOURCE

earth. "For those who desire that, it will be bliss," says Meyendorff, "but for those who hate it, it will be hell." In modern Judaism, the idea of a literal hell has been widely rejected since the 18th century when Moses Mendelssohn, an influential German philosopher, propounded the idea that eternal punishment is inconsistent with God's mercy. Also influential was the 12th-century philosopher Moses Maimonides, who taught that biblical references to heaven as well as hell were to be understood figuratively. For most Jews today, says Barry Kogan, professor of philosophy at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, "The main concern is retribution in this life. The hottest fires of hell probably burn in the human heart, in the harmful ways we treat others."

Among evangelicals, hell remains a central doctrine. Most hold that it is inextricably linked to the doctrine of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus—that to repudiate hell is to renounce, in large measure, the need for personal salvation. And while most evangelicals think of hell as a real place of punitive torment, many allow that at least some of the biblical hell talk may be metaphorical. "The Bible makes it clear that hell is real and it's bad," says Kantzer, now a professor of theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill. "But when Jesus spoke of flames... these are most likely figurative warnings." What is clearer from scripture, say Kantzer and others, is that consignment to hell means eternal separation from God, and that alone, as the noted Christian writer C. S. Lewis wrote, is a horrendous punishment.

Eternal punishment? A more contentious debate is raging among evangelicals over the traditional view that the torments of hell are everlasting. That view is being challenged by a small but influential group of scholars who argue that it is based more on pagan philosophy and classical literature than on the Bible itself. Such highly regarded theologians as Clark H. Pinnock, theology professor at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario; John R. W. Stott, president of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, and Philip E. Hughes, a noted Anglican clergyman and author, contend that rather than suffering endlessly, those who ultimately reject God will simply be put out of existence in the "consuming fire" of hell.

Those who subscribe to this view—called "annihilationism"—point to New Testament passages that speak of "eternal destruction" and "the second death" for those who do not know God and to the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel's declaration that "the soul that sins

shall die." They raise ethical arguments, as well. "How can Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness" as to inflict "everlasting torture upon his creatures, however sinful they may have been?" Pinnock asked recently in the *Criswell Theological Review*. A God who would do such a thing, said Pinnock, is "more nearly like Satan than like God." Stott contends that in biblical imagery, fire's main function is to destroy and that while the "fire of hell" may be eternal and unquenchable, "it would be very odd if what is thrown into it proves indestructible." And Hughes argues that the traditional belief in unending punishment is linked to the erroneous belief in the "innate immortality" of the soul—a belief, he says, that is based more on Plato than on the Bible.

"The immortality of which the Christian is assured is not inherent in himself or in his soul but is bestowed by God," says Hughes. He notes Jesus's admonition to his disciples in Matthew 10:28 not to fear men, who can kill only the body, but rather God, "who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Defenders of the traditional view disagree, citing scriptures referring to hell as a place of "everlasting punishment" where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." That, says David F. Wells, theology professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, "would hardly be true of those who do not exist." Traditionalists also argue that annihilationism takes some of the punch out of gospel preaching. To tell the unrepentant that the worst fate that could befall them is extinction, says Harold O. J. Brown, a theology professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, "makes continuing in sin seem less risky." □



Other faiths, other hells

But for the wrongdoers will be an evil place of final return! Hell! They will burn therein — an evil bed indeed to lie on!

— The Koran



he threat of painful punishment in the hereafter has its counterparts in nearly every major world religion, as well as some minor ones.

In Islam, which shares common roots with Christianity and Judaism, hell is depicted as a huge crater of fire beneath a narrow bridge that all souls must pass over to go to paradise. Those who are judged by Allah as unworthy fall from the bridge and suffer endless physical torments in one of seven layers of hell. The Koran, Islam's holy book written in the seventh century A.D., uses much of the same infernal imagery as the Bible to describe hell's fiery attributes. It is a "lake of fire," a burning "bed of misery" where the wicked and the infidel suffer endlessly, apart from God and with only "boiling, fetid water" to drink. Even the Arabic word for hell, *Jahannam*, has the same derivation as the Hebrew hell, *Gehenna*: a locale used for incineration.

Despite the Ayatollah Khomeini's condemnation of British novelist Salman Rushdie to hell for writing "The Satanic Verses," in mainstream Islamic thought no one can know for certain—or be guaranteed by another person—what his or her eternal fate will be. While obedience to the laws of Islam, dying a martyr's death and certain other meritorious acts place a Muslim in a more advantageous position than that of evildoers and unbelievers, all must walk the Path after death, according to Muslim teachings. And whether one makes it to paradise or topples into hell, says Abderrahmane Lakhsassi, visiting professor of Islamic history at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, ultimately "depends on the mercy of God."

In Hinduism, with its belief in reincarnation, hell is merely one stage in the career of a soul as it passes from one life to the next. Unlike the hells of Christianity and Islam, the Hindu hells—there are 21 of them in all—are temporary abodes

where bad *karma*, the evil that one commits during a lifetime, is burned away. Once purged, the soul is recycled to a higher state in the next life. In the hierarchy of Hindu hells, some are more unpleasant than others. As spelled out in ancient writings called the Puranas, the soul whose karma is not so bad may simply be reborn as an animal. Stealers of meat, for example, may return as vultures, and thieves of grain may be reborn as rats. Worse sinners may come back as grasses, shrubs or other inanimate objects. The very wicked face condemnation to the lower hells where they may be scorched in hot sand, boiled in jars or devoured by ravens. There is no Judgment Day in Hinduism. Under the karma system, explains the Rev. James D. Redington, associate professor of theology at Georgetown University and an expert on Hinduism, where one goes after death is determined virtually automatically by one's deeds. "It's a sort of no-fault system," says Redington. "The consequences of one's actions are built into the structure of the universe."

Buddhism, like Hinduism, speaks of a multitude of hells as temporary stops in a person's journey toward nirvana, a sort of blissful nonexistence. There is no soul, per se, in Buddhism, rather there is a "karmic energy" or individual life force that is recycled from one lifetime to another. In classical Buddhism, no fewer than seven "hot hells" await the evildoers, each flanked by four torture chambers that include a fiery pit and a quagmire. Tibetan Buddhists also speak of eight cold hells and certain "frontier" hells for those guilty of lesser sins.

Alternative damnations. Variations on the Buddhist and Hindu views of hell appear in Jainism and Taoism. Jainism, which grew out of Hinduism some 2,500 years ago, views the universe as having three realms, the lowest containing 8.4 million hells where humans are punished for their sins. Those guilty of unpardonable sins are kept in a bottomless abyss forever. In Taoism, a Chinese religion, the dead are

believed taken to the God of walls and moats who judges them, and sends them to one of the Buddhist paradises, to the mountain dwelling of Taoist immortals or to one of several hells for a fixed period of punishment.

The idea of a punitive hell for the wicked is also part of the lore of some present-day tribal religions—among the Andaman Islanders in the eastern Bay of Bengal and the Gabon and Fon people of the West African republics of Gabon and Benin, for example. It is absent, for the most part, from North American native religions.

But despite the differences, all views of hell seem to have in common a sense that some evils are "so great that no punishment in this life can be adequate," observes Avery Dulles of Fordham. Consequently, he says, people are drawn to the belief that "there must be a punishment beyond death." To the extent that hell reminds humanity that evil and hatred have dire consequences, its 20th-century comeback may be a welcome turn.

BY JEFFERY L. SHELTER



ILLUSTRATION FROM 15TH CENTURY TURKISH MANUSCRIPT — THE GRANGER COLLECTION

