

Paradigms of Endtime Teachings

Dr. Kenneth Meadors

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- 1) Introduction to Eschatology
- 2) God's Purposes in the Earth
- 3) Approaches to Prophetic Interpretation
- 4) Apocalyptic Language and Symbolism
- 5) Daniel's Seventy Weeks
- 6) Jesus and Matthew 24
- 7) Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism
- 8) Kept from the Hour of Temptation
- 9) One Holy Nation.
- 10) The Millennial Question
- 11) Summary and Conclusions of the Apocalypse

Materials based on the following books:

End Time Delusions, Steve Wohlberg

The Perfect Ending for the World, John Noe

What on Earth Are You Doing Here, Dr. Kenneth Meadors

A Case for Amillennialism, Kim Riddlebarger

LESSON ONE

Introduction to Eschatology

Opening

- 1) Introduction to Eschatology
- 2) Textbook: *What on Earth Are You Doing Here?*
 - a) My view has evolved since 1996 concerning several issues, which will be considered in the course.
 - i) The end time and end of the world.
 - ii) Kingdom concepts.
 - (1) Present-day Kingdom.
 - (2) Eternal Kingdom.
 - (3) Seven-year tribulation period.
 - iii) The Millennium.
 - b) The textbook will be our basic guide.
- 3) Requirements for the course:
 - a) Class attendance.
 - b) Read textbook.
 - c) Reaction paper on any topic of the course.
 - d) Final Exam
- 4) Scriptures and topics related to eschatology.
 - a) Daniel.
 - b) Jesus in Matthew 24.
 - c) The Book of Revelation.
- 5) Important concept: Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets.
 - a) How does that affect Old Testament prophecies?
 - b) How does that affect New Testament prophecies?

What is eschatology?

- 12) Christian eschatology is a major branch of study within Christian theology dealing with the "last things."
- 13) Eschatology, from two Greek words meaning "last" (ἔσχατος) and "study" (-λογία), is the study of 'end things', whether the end of an individual life, the end of the age, the end of the world and the nature of the Kingdom of God.
- 14) Broadly speaking, Christian eschatology is the study concerned with the ultimate destiny of the individual soul and the entire created order, based primarily upon biblical texts within the Old and New Testament.
- 15) Christian eschatology looks to study and discuss matters such as death and the afterlife, Heaven and Hell, the Second Coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, the Rapture, the Tribulation, Millennialism, the end of the world, the Last Judgment, and the New Heaven

and New Earth in the world to come. Eschatological passages are found in many places in the Bible, both in the Old and the New Testaments. There are also many extrabiblical examples of eschatological prophecies, as well as church traditions.

16) Why study eschatology?

Approaches to Prophetic Interpretation

1) Historicism

- a) Historicism is an approach which sees prophecy as being fulfilled in the past, present and future, including (in the case of the Book of Revelation) during the previous two millennia. In particular, many Historists view The Book of Revelation as a text employing symbols in its communication of prophecy to the Elect Church regarding the actors and events involved during the Great Controversy. Specifically, Historists consider the Book of Revelation to be a symbolic prophetic presentation of the struggle of Protestantism to survive the continuing persecutions of the Papacy. Historists usually consider events such as the Great Tribulation as having occurred during the period of absolute papal supremacy from 538-1798.
- b) The subject of the Revelation to John the apostle was large and complex mostly covering the things which should happen thereafter. The vision covers the combined secular and ecclesiastical history of Christendom describing the grand political changes of the Roman world along with the ecclesiastical purity or corruptions of doctrine and general apostasy of the church and its persecutions of the saints which are the true people of God.[14]:100–101
- c) According to E.B. Elliott, the first six seals of the book of Revelation outline the temporary prosperity of the Empire of heathen Rome followed by its decline and fall which covers the time period A.D. 96 – 396. The first seal, as revealed to John by the angel, was to signify what was to happen soon after John seeing the visions in Patmos and that the second, third and fourth seals in like manner were to have commencing dates each in chronological sequence following the preceding seal.[14]:119,121,122

2) Futurism

In Futurism, parallels may be drawn with historical events, but most eschatological prophecies are chiefly referring to events which have not yet been fulfilled, but will take place at the end of the age and the end of the world. Most prophecies will be fulfilled during a global time of chaos known as the Great Tribulation and afterwards.[15]
Futurist beliefs usually have a close association with Premillennialism and Dispensationalism. Futurist beliefs were presented in the Left Behind series.

3) Preterism.

- a) Preterism (from the Latin praeteritus, meaning "gone by") is an approach which sees prophecy as chiefly being fulfilled in the past, especially (in the case of the Book of Revelation) during the first century.[11] Prophecies in general, therefore, have already been fulfilled. In particular, many Preterists (whether they be Full Preterists or Partial Preterists) view
- b) The Book of Revelation as a text employing symbols in its communication of prophecy to the Early Church regarding the actors and events involved during the destruction of

Jerusalem in the year 70 AD. Other Preterists consider the Book of Revelation to be a symbolic prophetic presentation of the struggle of Christianity to survive the persecutions of the Roman Empire.

- c) There are two major views within Preterism, that of
 - i) Partial preterism (that many of the Bible's prophecies were fulfilled during the life and time of Jesus and the Early Church) and
 - ii) Full preterism, (that all of the Bible's prophecies were fulfilled during the life and time of Jesus and the Early Church).
 - iii) Preterist beliefs usually have a close association with Amillennialism, the belief that the Millennial reign of Christ began during the establishment of the Early Church.
 - iv) Preterists usually consider events such as the Great Tribulation as having occurred during the siege and destruction of Jerusalem from 66-70.

End Times Poem

by Donna Maree Hill

Did you hear that Jesus is coming again?
We must let everyone know!
The best possible way of sharing the news,
Is to make a scary video!
Sorry? You don't thinking scaring people,
Is really God's loving way?
Well, I think it's time He talked with me,
Listened to what I had to say!
I'm "right up" with end times prophecy,
With the help of my favourite book,
No, of course it's not the bible!
To the latest author I usually look.
Have you seen the current end times book?
It's really a good read!
Does it line up with what the bible says?
What is your point? Indeed!
Shred your bank cards, big brother's tracking you,
Every cent you spend!
Don't buy anything with a barcode,
On this your soul may well depend!
I heard you must convert your cash,
To the currency of "religious gold"!
What? Aurora won't accept a nugget?
Well, just rug up in the cold!
Going on holiday to Europe?
Please take lots of care!

Stay well away from Brussels,
I heard the beast lives there!
I want to know the date for sure.
Pre-trib, post-trib, when will it really be?
Before the tribulation is important!
No suffering for me!
Before the 70s, 80s, no, 90s end,
It's definite Christ will appear.
Have I checked a calendar?
Um, surely before 2010. Oh dear!
There's a world-wide government conspiracy,
So give up your jobs, live underground!
But I'm worried - will we be able,
To hear the final trumpet sound?
Someone tried to tell me,
To read the Bible, trust God and pray,
But I'm too concerned that I might miss,
That final rapture day.

Introduction to *What on Earth Are You Doing Here?*

- 1) We have understood the Word of God in the past, especially eschatology, in terms of our predetermined frame of reference.
- 2) Questions.
 - a) Who are we? Why are we here?
 - b) Why did Jesus come? When is He coming again? Why has He delayed His coming?
What is God's purpose in the earth?
 - c) Is our perceived purpose in line with God's purpose?
 - d) What is the destiny of the world?
- 3) The Kingdom of God is all encompassing.
 - a) The Kingdom of God is Jesus.
 - b) The Kingdom of God is a present reality.
- 4) Need for spiritual understanding and interpretation.
 - a) Body of Christ vs. Natural Israel.
 - b) Rapture and Tribulation.
 - c) Kingdom of God as present and future reality.
 - d) Restoration, revival, and the destiny of the world.
- 5) We need to understand some things which are shortly to come to pass in order for us to function properly today.
 - a) If you're convinced the Lord is coming before morning, then that affects the way you function now.
 - b) Unless you understand the purposes of God for the earth, you cannot be effective in being a part of what God is doing.

LESSON TWO

The Purposes of God in the Earth

- 1) Important purpose for the earth.
 - a) The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.
 - b) He has not given up on it nor given it over to the devil.
 - c) The earth was created to be inhabited.
 - d) It is the intention of the Lord to fill this earth with His glory and to restore it in all of its splendor.
- 2) Isaiah said that the Lord would beautify or glorify the place of his feet.
 - a) Where is the place of His feet?
 - b) "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool"
 - c) "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done; in earth as it is in heaven" (Mat. 6:10)
- 3) The Earth is to be restored and redeemed.
 - a) A cleansing and purging of the earth
 - b) New heavens and a new earth.
 - c) God's method of cleansing is by fire.
- 4) Distinction between the earth and the world.
 - a) Dominion mandate vs. Redemption Mandate.
 - b) "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:6-8).
- 5) Many Sons unto Glory
 - a) Body of chosen believers who will do in these latter days what Jesus has already done as one individual.
 - b) That purpose is to bring restoration and redemption to the earth and its inhabitants by destroying the works of the devil.
 - c) Satan has no influence in this earth except through human flesh.
- 6) The Plan of Redemption
 - a) Redemption from sin, sickness, disease, poverty, and physical death.
 - b) Man fell; man had to be redeemer.
- 7) Conformed into His image.
 - a) One purpose of God in the earth became that of conforming a people into this proper image. This people is the "many-member body of sons brought to glory."
 - b) "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).
 - c) From the beginning, it has been God's desire to have a people called unto Himself who would be an expression of His praise and His glory in the earth.
 - i) It has been God's will to have a holy nation, a chosen people, an elect.

- ii) He has been looking for His peculiar treasure in the earth.
 - d) The five-fold ministry has been placed in the church to bring us to this perfection;
 - i) "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).
 - ii) This perfect man is complete in all things.
 - iii) This many-membered Christ man, which is the Body of Christ, is the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:23).
- 8) God's Purpose Is to Destroy Every Enemy
- a) "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8).
 - b) *"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).*
 - c) *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18).*
 - d) *"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" (Is. 58:6).*
 - e) What is the oppression which has held people in captivity, and the yoke that is to be broken? *"The Lord has looked down from the height of the heavens to hear the groaning of the prisoner and to loose those who have been appointed to death" (Ps. 102:19-20).*
 - f) *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).*
 - g) *"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:25-26).*
- 9) Total Restoration.
- a) Even though the kingdom of God is a present reality, there is yet to be a manifestation of the eternal kingdom in this earth.
 - b) Presently, the kingdom of God represents a domain of authority.
 - i) It is a people who has submitted themselves to the kingship and lordship of Jesus.
 - ii) This kingdom is real to those who recognize it.
 - iii) Presently, all men have not faith.
 - c) The purpose of God is to restore the earth to peace and tranquility where Jesus will be the Prince of Peace.
 - d) The domain of the kingdom of God is to encompass all men upon the earth.
- 10) A Heavenly Place
- a) Heaven is a state of perfection and completeness.
 - i) In heaven there is no sickness, disease, lack, or death.
 - ii) Heaven is a realm of life, and heaven is being brought to earth!

- iii) The will of God shall be done in earth as it is in heaven.
 - b) In my father's house are many mansions.
 - i) A mansion is not a stately three-story house with large white columns in front.
 - ii) The word "mansion" simply means "abode", and Jesus said He and His Father would come to make their abode (mansion) within us.
- 11) There is a great change that is coming.
- a) My expectation is to be changed.
 - b) The whole creation is travailing and waiting for this change.
 - c) There is victory for the Body of Christ, and there is a purpose to be fulfilled.

"A Further Look at God's Purposes"

- 1) Having Our Senses Exercised
 - a) There shall be a famine, not for bread or water, but for hearing the words of the Lord (Amos 8:11).
 - b) Hebrews 5:11 states, *"Of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one should teach again which be the first principles of the oracles of God and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For every one who uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*
 - c) Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom
- 2) How Important Is the Earth
 - a) First, the earth is the Lord's.
 - i) The earth and the fullness belong to Him (Psalms 24:1).
 - ii) God doesn't have anything against this earth.
 - iii) He is against the systems of this world controlled by Satan
 - b) *"The meek shall inherit the earth"* (Ps. 37:11; Mt. 5:5).
 - c) Man was given the commandment to subdue the earth and every living creature.
 - i) When man lost that ascendancy, one of the purposes of God became that of restoring everything that had been lost in the fall.
 - ii) Jesus was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil and to restore all that was lost.
 - d) *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him"* (Heb. 2:6-8).
 - e) I Corinthians 15:25 states that *"he (Christ) must reign til every enemy is put under his feet."*
 - f) *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live"* (Deut. 30:19).

- 3) Satan Sought to Abort the Purpose of God
 - a) When Jesus came to redeem us, He came to redeem us in spirit, soul, and body.
 - i) Thank God for complete and total deliverance.
 - ii) Anything short of complete redemption is aborting the purpose of God.
 - b) Satan's attempt to abort the purposes of God.
 - i) Decree went throughout Egypt to kill all the male children when they were born,
 - (1) But God preserved a seed in Moses.
 - (2) Through him, He raised up a prophet and a deliverer who helped to set God's people free from the bondage of Egypt.
 - ii) Satan thought he had aborted the purpose of God when the decree was made by Herod to kill every male child two years and under in the days of Jesus.
- 4) Satan thought he had aborted the plan of God when the dragon sought to destroy the manchild in the 12th chapter of Revelation, but the manchild was caught up to the throne of God. Again, Satan had been defeated.
- 5) Satan will seek to silence your voice by killing you and getting you out of the way.
 - a) He will try to remove you out of the earth in any way possible, because you as the seed of God represent a threat to his kingdom.
 - b) This removal can be accomplished through physical death or even a false concept of a "fly-away rapture."
 - c) He will do everything within his power to keep you from being the authority of God in the earth.
- 6) It doesn't affect the kingdom of darkness for you to get saved and join a dead church, put your name on a roll, and go the rest of your life being spiritually ineffective.
- 7) Why does Jesus tarry His coming?
 - a) God is waiting on you and me as the Body of Christ to do everything the Body of Christ was intended to do, namely to defeat the devil and put him under our feet.
 - b) In Romans 16:20, Paul states, "*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*"
- 8) The Eternal Purpose of the Church
 - a) The purpose of God is to raise up a church that will "*declare to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God*" (Eph. 3:10).
 - i) This is according to the eternal purpose that he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - ii) The intent of God is that the church might be the demonstration to the power of darkness in heavenly places the mighty power of God, the authority in Jesus' name, and the glory of God.
 - b) We as the church need to begin standing up to be what God has ordained us to be.
- 9) The church must come forth in maturity.
 - a) The church must come forth in unity.
 - i) It is time for the church to be a witness to the world.
 - ii) A witness to the world is more than a simple confession that we are saved, filled with the Spirit, and are on our way to heaven.
 - iii) The witness to the world is first of all that of unity.
 - iv) It is a group of people who has caught the same vision—a people anointed and called of God to triumph over every foe—a people who are overcomers.

- b) God's whole creation is crying out to be delivered from this bondage (Rom. 8:22). It is crying out for a manifestation of the Kingdom of God.
- c) This will be accomplished by the five-fold ministry.
 - i) This ministry will perfect the saints in order for them to do the work of the ministry.
 - ii) The body will be edified.
 - iii) We will come into *"the full stature of the fullness of Christ."*
 - iv) That is the purpose of God--to grow up into the full measure of the stature of Jesus Christ.
- d) Concerning unity, Jesus prayed that we may be one as He and the Father are one.

10) A Glorious Church

- a) The purpose of God is that the church might be a glorious church, which means to be full of the glory of God.
- b) It is to be without spot or wrinkle.
- c) We are the light of the world, and we are to expose the works of darkness by that light.
 - i) To be the light of the world means that we are to shine in the midst of the greatest darkness the world has ever known.
 - ii) Isaiah 60:1 states, *"Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but thy light is come."*
 - iii) In the darkest hour the world has ever known, there will be a light and a witness in the earth. This light will expel and break the power of darkness.

11) A Victorious Church

- a) We certainly need to know how to deal with defeat if it comes, but defeat should not be in our thinking.
 - i) It is never God's will that we be defeated.
 - ii) God never uses defeat as his method of teaching or instruction.
 - iii) Sure, we should learn from failures and mistakes if we experience them, but that is not God's method of teaching.
- b) Yes, it is God's will to walk in total victory.
 - i) The victory that overcomes the world is our faith.
 - (1) Faith is active, not passive.
 - (2) It is the power to change your circumstances.
 - ii) Faith is something that is left up to you and me.
- c) The blessings of God are contingent upon our obedience to the Word of God.
 - i) Our obedience enacts the spiritual laws of God that work on our behalf.
 - ii) You will never be blessed financially until you learn to open the door to finances.
 - (1) That is based upon the principle of sowing and reaping.
 - (a) Whatever you sow, you will reap.
 - (b) That is a principle of the Kingdom of God that will never fail. As long as there is day and night, winter and summer, and as long as the earth remains as it is, the principle of sowing and reaping will remain in effect.
 - (2) We sow sparingly; we reap sparingly. We sow bountifully; we reap bountifully.

12) In Earth As It Is in Heaven

LESSON THREE

Approaches to Prophetic Interpretation

Some Ground Rules

- 1) The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.
 - a) All prophecy is about Him.
 - i) He is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.
 - ii) That means that the OT prophets were fulfilled in Him, and there remains no more OT prophecies to be fulfilled, including Daniel's prophecies concerning the "end days."
 - b) There's no other Biblical prophecy to be fulfilled before we experience the full reality of the Kingdom of God.
- 2) The prophetic message is for the here and now.
 - a) Most people have an image of total devastation; a nuclear holocaust.
 - i) The Greek word is *apokalypsis*, which simply means an unveiling or an uncovering.
 - ii) The Apocalypse is the revelation of Jesus Christ and has always been God's present-day message to His Church.
 - b) The Apocalypse is not about the Antichrist, the beast, or the destruction of the world.
 - i) Not doom and gloom as has been presented by the Church, the media, and Hollywood.
 - ii) Obsession with the end of the world.
 - iii) Bad news sells.
 - iv) The Apocalypse was given to people in the first century (and all people since) to enable them (and us) to live out the will of God and to experience the fullness of Christ and His kingdom in their (and our) daily lives.
- 3) At Hand.
 - a) "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."
 - b) This is in contrast to God's message to Daniel to shut up and seal the message, because in Daniel's time, the time was not yet.
 - c) Most likely the first-century Christians in the seven churches of Asia who received this prophecy interpreted it as available, pertinent, and fulfillable for them--not a message about something that would happen more than nineteen centuries later.
 - d) The term "at hand" is used both at beginning and conclusion of Revelation.
 - e) Christians throughout the centuries have always drawn strength, faith, and courage from the Revelation as a message that was within reach for their times, as with all other New Testament writings.
 - f) To limit the symbolic imagery to speculation about single historical events that have either already occurred, or future events that might someday occur, is to rob this vital book of its pertinent reality and practical guidance for our daily lives in this present age.
 - g) The Revelation is not a futuristic foretelling of events that will occur, although the prophecy may indeed contain dynamic future fulfillments. It is a forthtelling of the

gospel of the kingdom of God.

- i) It is the good news of who Christ is, what He is doing throughout history, and what He expects of His disciples of every generation.
 - ii) Everything in the Revelation is graspable and fulfillable as a present-day reality.
 - iii) To focus most of our attention on speculating about past or future events is to draw people's minds away from what God wants to fulfill in their lives here and now.
- 4) We don't have to wait for the end of the world before Christ comes to us in power and glory.
 - a) He is coming in all His fullness, right now.
 - b) We can be overcomers in the daily experiences of our lives.
 - c) We can live victoriously and abundantly, no matter what is happening in our lives today or what may happen tomorrow or twenty years from now.
 - 5) The end of the world, the end times, the last days, the second coming

Schools of Interpretation

- 4) Historicism
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 - b) The subject of the Revelation to John the apostle was large and complex mostly covering the things which should happen thereafter. The vision covers the combined secular and ecclesiastical history of Christendom describing the grand political changes of the Roman world along with the ecclesiastical purity or corruptions of doctrine and general apostasy of the church and its persecutions of the saints which are the true people of God.[14]:100–101
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 - e) The Book of Revelation as a text employing symbols in its communication of prophecy to the Early Church regarding the actors and events involved during the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 AD. Other Preterists consider the Book of Revelation to be a symbolic prophetic presentation of the struggle of Christianity to survive the persecutions of the Roman Empire.
 - f) There are two major views within Preterism, that of
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 - ii) Full preterism, (that all of the Bible's prophecies were fulfilled during the life and time of Jesus and the Early Church).
 - iii) Preterist beliefs usually have a close association with Amillennialism, the belief that the Millennial reign of Christ began during the establishment of the Early Church.
 - iv) Preterists usually consider events such as the Great Tribulation as having occurred during the siege and destruction of Jerusalem from 66-70.
 - v) Early Preterist theologians included Eusebius[12] and John Chrysostom.[13]

Dispensationalism and Futurism

Origin of Futurism

- 1) The futuristic system of interpreting the prophecies is now held by many Protestants, but it was first invented by the Jesuit Francisco Ribera at the end of the sixteenth century.
 - a) It was designed to relieve the papacy from the stigma, that the papacy was the antichrist, cast upon it by the Protestant interpretation.
 - b) If the Papacy were the predicted antichrist, as Protestants asserted, then separation from it was an imperative duty.
- 2) Two alternatives.
 - a) If the antichrist were not a present power, he must either be a past or a future one.
 - b) The other alternative became the popular one with the papists—futuristic.
 - i) Antichrist was future, so Ribera and others taught.
 - (1) An individual man was intended, not a dynasty (the papacy)
 - (2) The duration of his power would not be for twelve and a half centuries, but only three and a half years.
 - (3) He would be an open foe of Christ.
 - (4) The Papal head of the Church of Rome was not the power advocated by Daniel and St. John.

- 3) Jesuit Alcasar decided to apply the Bible's antichrist prophecies to the ancient past while Ribera applied them to the distant future.
- 4) By reapplying these prophecies to the past and to the future, instead of to the present, these two scholars sought to divert the prophetic finger away from the Vatican.
- 5) Their views quickly became official positions within the Roman Church, even though these two views contradicted each other.

Dispensationalism

- 1) Dispensationalism is the theory that God deals with mankind in distinct periods or ages.
 - a) According to John Darby, we're now in the "Church Age" which will conclude with the rapture.
 - b) Then Daniel's 70th week will supposedly kick in during which the antichrist will attack unfortunate Jews.
 - c) The Second Advent would take place in two stages.
 - i) First, there would be a quiet appearance of Christ, when all true Christians, the true Church, would be removed from the earth. This was the rapture of the saints.
 - ii) When the restraining presence of the Holy Spirit in His own people had been removed from the world scene, Antichrist would arise.
 - iii) His rule would be brought to an end by the second stage of the Advent—the public "appearing" of Christ in glory.
- 2) Darby, along with Irving, Margaret, and Ribera inserted the virus of futurism into his theology, now a pre-tribulational rapture theology.
 - a) This created a link between John Nelson Darby and Francisco Ribera, the father of futurism.

Origin of Dispensationalism

- 1) Many may be surprised that the prevailing view in most American evangelical churches, that of dispensationalism, is a novelty in the long history of the Christian church.
- 2) Historicism faded and futurism is in as the majority report.
- 3) How did this happen?
 - a) At the Council of Trent, the Roman Church reacted against the Reformation by commissioning members of the Jesuit Order to counteract historicism.
 - b) Alcasar and Ribera put forth their anti-Protestant counter-theories.
- 4) Protestant reformers.
 - a) John Wycliffe in England, Martin Luther in Germany, John Calvin in France, John Knox in Scotland, Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland, and countless others, all preached that the humble Nazarene was the Christ and the proud Roman papacy was the antichrist of Scripture.
- 5) The Catholic Counter Reformation
 - a) In 1545, she convened a special council, the Council of Trent, destined to become the means of counteracting the Protestant Reformation.
 - b) This Council proceeded until 1563.

- i) Up to this point, Rome’s main method of attack had been largely frontal—the open burning of Bibles and of heretics.
 - ii) Yet, this type of warfare only confirmed Protestant convictions that papal Rome was indeed the very beast which would “make war with the saints” (Rev. 13:7)
- 6) At the Council of Trent, papal leaders and Jesuits brainstormed about how to counteract Protestantism and bring defectors back to the Church.
 - a) This would be done, not only by the Inquisition and torture, but also through theology.
 - b) By reinterpreting the prophecies about “the man of sin,” “the little horn,” and “the beast.”
- 7) Shortly after the Council of Trent, Francisco Ribera master-minded a virus, the virus of futurism.
 - a) For the next 300 years, his Jesuit cohorts did their best to insert this virus into Protestant churches through educational processes connected with the universities of Europe.
 - b) In the 1800s, the Futurism of Ribera never posed a positive threat to the Protestants for three centuries.
 - c) It was virtually confined to the Roman Church.
- 8) Jesuit priests, Ribera and Alcasar, had two conflicting theories both of which the Catholic Church accepted.
 - a) Ribera advocated futurism.
 - b) Alcasar advocated preterism—attributing prophecy to the first century.

Infiltration into the Protestant Movement

- 1) Early in the nineteenth century it sprang forth with vehemence and latched on to Protestants of the Established Church of England.
- 2) Dr. Samuel Roffey Maitland (1792-1866) became a librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury.
 - c) It is likely that one day he discovered Ribera’s commentary in the library.
 - d) In any event, in 1826, he published a widely read book attacking the Reformation and supporting the Jesuit idea of a future Mr. Antichrist person.
- 3) After Dr. Maitland came James H. Todd, professor of Hebrew at the University of Dublin.
 - a) Todd published futuristic pamphlets and books.
 - b) He excused the Papacy from any concern with the predicted antichristian apostasy.
- 4) Next came John Henry Newman (1801-1890), a member of the Church of England and a leader of the famous Oxford movement (1833-1845)
 - a) In 1850, Newman wrote his “Letter on Anglican Difficulties” blatantly revealing that one of the goals of the movement was to lead “the various English denominations and parties” back to Rome.
 - b) Worked to unprotestantize the Church of Engle
 - c) Set aside all application to the Roman Papacy of the fearful prophecies respecting Antichrist.
 - d) Newman became a Catholic and later a highly honored cardinal.

- e) A definite “Romeward movement had arisen destined to sweep away the old Protestant landmarks.
- 5) Then came Scottish Presbyterian minister Edward Irving (1792-1834) who pastored the large Chalcedonian Chapel in London with over 1000 members.
 - a) Irving eventually accepted the one-man antichrist idea of Newman, Maitland, and Ribera.
 - b) Somewhere around 1830, Edward Irving began to teach the novel idea of a two-phase return of Christ.
 - c) Margaret McDonald’s vision of a two-phase return of Christ.
- 6) John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) was a brilliant lawyer, pastor, and theologian.
 - a) He became a leader of an English group called the Plymouth Brethren.
 - b) He has been called the Father of Modern Dispensationalism.
- 7) One of the most important figures in this whole drama is Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921)
 - b) Scofield greatly influenced by John Darby.
 - c) In 1909, Scofield published the first edition of his famous Scofield Reference Bible.
 - d) Used in practically all American Protestant Bible schools.
 - e) What made Scofield’s Bible so energizing was not so much the Scriptures itself, but his footnotes.
 - i) Those footnotes contained the virus.
 - ii) Anti-reformation interpretations were inserted that pointed the finger away from Papal Rome and toward a future antichrist.
 - f) The Moody Bible Institute and the Dallas Theological Seminary have strongly supported the teachings of John Nelson Darby.

Rise of the Isms

- 1) Alcasar
 - a) He brought prominence to the Preterist method of interpretation to show the prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the Pope ever ruled at Rome.
 - b) The Preterist School, founded by the Jesuit Alcasar in 1614, explains Revelation by the Fall of Jerusalem or by the fall of Pagan Rome in 410 A.D.
- 2) Ribera
 - a) Ribera tried to set aside the application of the prophecies to Papal Power by bringing out the Futurist system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly not to the Papacy, but to that of some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half years.
 - b) The Futurist School, founded by the Jesuit Ribera in 1591, looks for Antichrist, Babylon, and a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, at the end of the Christian Dispensation.
- 3) This gives rise to three important isms—preterism, futurism, and historicism, which reflect three competing schools of prophetic interpretation.
- 4) Preterism

- a) Preterism sees the majority (or all) of the prophecies found in Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation as having already been fulfilled in either the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D or in the fall of Rome.
 - i) For preterists, “the end of the world” usually means “the end of the Jewish world.”
 - ii) Full preterists believe even the second coming of Jesus Christ somehow mystically occurred in 70 A.D.
 - iii) Partial-preterist still believe in a future literal return of Christ as well as the resurrection
 - b) Preterists usually see the Roman Emperor Nero as the number-one candidate.
 - c) Compared with futurism and historicism, preterism has always been a minority viewpoint within the church.
- 5) Futurism
- a) Futurism is what Francisco Ribera taught.
 - i) Futurism usually sees the majority of Revelations prophecies (from chapter 4 onward) as yet on the horizon.
 - ii) Unlike Preterist’s concept of antichrist as being Nero, futurists generally applies the prophecies of “the little horn,” “the man of sin,” and “the beast” in a single, yet future Mr. Serpent who will slither into history during time’s last sliver (seven years).
 - b) Futurists taught the GAP or parenthesis theory that when Jerusalem or Rome fell, prophecy stopped, only to continue again near the time of the rapture.
 - c) They stop the clock between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel 9:24-27.
 - d) By far, most adherents in the 21st century believe the futurist point of view.
- 6) Historicism
- a) Historicism is what the vast majority of Protestants used to teach.
 - b) In essence, historicism teaches straight forward, chronological progress by saying that the major prophecies of Daniel and Revelation find fulfillment throughout Christian history, while pointing toward the climactic, visible second coming of our Savior.
 - c) They place special emphasis on the ongoing struggle between Jesus Christ and satan inside the Christian church.
 - d) They interpret the “falling away” as a departure from the original faith.
 - e) They discern prophetic fulfillment in the rise of the Roman church.
 - i) Teaches doctrines which divert the mind from simple trust in the all-sufficient merits of the sin-pierced Sufferer.
 - ii) They still point the prophetic finger at the Vatican by calling it “the little horn,” “the man of sin,” “the beast,” and “Mystery Babylon.”
 - iii) Prophecy mirrors the church’s history.
 - f) Historicist teachers of the past included some of Christianity’s most illustrious scholars.
 - i) John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, Sir Isaac Newton, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, John Foxe, Matthew Henry, John Bunyan, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and many more.
 - ii) They all discerned the fulfillment of prophecy in church history and especially in the anti-Christ nature of the papacy as a colossal institution whose doctrines deny the New Testament message of free salvation by grace through simple faith in the Crucified and Risen One, apart from works.

LESSON FOUR

Apocalyptic Language and Symbolism

Introduction

- 1) Where can we turn for the truth about the end of the world?
 - a) To a scientific theory?
 - b) To another end-saying prophet?
 - c) To a psychic's latest revelation?
 - d) To the historic creeds of the Church?
 - i) No creed mentions an end of the world, and end to human history, and end of time, or a demise of the planet.
 - ii) Since the end of the world concerns the creation made by God, we should go the book that tells us about his creation.
- 2) What the Bible actually says.
 - a) The Bible says nothing!
 - b) The world is always changing or coming to an end in its present form or as we know it, and a new one is continually coming into existence; but there is no end of time or end of human history.
 - c) Not a single text, taken in a literal, plain, straightforward context, declares the world will ever end.
 - d) There is no clear statement that teaches an end of the world, an end of time, or an end of human history.
 - e) Not one iota of evidence exists that 1st-century Christians, or any New Testament writer anticipated an end to the human race or the demise of planet Earth.
- 3) Biblical truth about the end of the world:
 - a) World without end, Amen.
 - b) The world had a beginning, but is without end..."from the beginning of the world...throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph 3:9, 21)

Eph. 3:9. "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:"

Eph 3:21. **21** Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

God Promised Never Again to Destroy the World

- 1) Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done. As long as the earth endures (remains), seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease (Gen 8:21b-22)

- 2) Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth (Gen 9:11b)
- 3) Second promise does not restrict the promise of the first (not destroy by water, but by fire, bulldozer, bombs, chainsaw, or bowling balls).
- 4) Planet earth remained intact both during and after the flood; time did not end, even though the world “was said to have been destroyed.”
 - a) Generations come and generations go, but the earth endures (remains) forever (Eccl 1:4)
 - b) The earth is established forever (Ps 78:69).
 - c) The earth and its foundations shall not be removed, ever (Ps. 104:5; Ps 93:1; 96:10; 119:90)
 - i) Ps 104:4-5. Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: **5** Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.
 - ii) **10** Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.
 - iii) Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth and it endures (forever) Ps 119:90
 - d) God told Moses that he would keep his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.
 - i) Figuratively.
 - ii) If literal, a generation is forty years; therefore, we are speaking of 40,000 years.
- 5) God’s plan since the flood has not been to deal with human sin by eliminating the human race or by destroying his creation.

But, isn’t God going to destroy the world by fire?

- 1) Three realms of heaven and earth.
 - a) Heaven of old; world that then was--destroyed by water.
 - b) Heavens and the earth which are now--reserved unto fire.
 - c) New heavens and new earth wherein dwells righteousness--which shall remain.
- 2) Heavens of old; world that then was perished by water.
 - a) Unrighteousness, wickedness, ungodliness destroyed.
 - i) Flood came and took them (wicked) all away.
 - ii) Two shall be in the...one taken, other left.
 - b) Earth was cleansed and purged.
 - c) Noah stepped out of the ark into a new earth.
 - d) The earth contained only the righteous (Noah and those who were with him).
 - e) Righteousness did not remain, for rebellion reappeared.
 - f) God's promise to his people:
 - i) Gen. 9:11 - *"And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there anymore be a flood to destroy the earth."*
 - ii) Gen. 8:21 - *"I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake;.neither will I*

again smite anymore everything living, as I have done."

- 3) But the heavens and the earth, which are now.
 - a) Reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment.
 - b) Purpose of fire to purge, cleanse, that righteousness might dwell therein.
 - c) Every man's works to be tried by fire.
 - i) Everything destroyed that is combustible.
 - ii) Hay, wood, stubble.
 - d) The gold, silver, precious stones will stand the fire.
 - e) "When thou passest through the fires, I will be with you."
- 4) Heb. 12:26 – "Once more shake heaven and earth...that which is of God will remain."

Apocalyptic Language and Its Fulfillments

- 1) Falling stars, bloody moons, darkened sun, shaking earth, signs in the sky is language employed throughout the Bible.
 - a) This type of language has always been associated with another major, Old Testament theme, the coming of "the day of the Lord."
 - b) This language always depicted a coming judgment of God.
 - i) Isaiah 13:10, 13. "The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light (v. 13)...therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the Lord Almighty, in the day of his burning anger."
 - (1) The prophet was not speaking of the end of the world, a final judgment, or a solar or lunar eclipse.
 - (2) He was giving a figurative prediction of the literal destruction of Babylon by the Medes in 539 BC (Is 13:1).
 - (3) The use of cosmic language means the Presence of God was involved and revealed in this judgment upon these people.
 - ii) Isaiah 34:4. "All the stars of heaven will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree."
 - (1) This was not the end of the world, or the end of the cosmos, but a figurative description of the coming divine destruction of Edom in the late 6th century BC (Is 34:5)
 - iii) Ezekiel 32:7, 8a. "I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light. All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you."

This prophecy was God's warning to the Pharaoh of Egypt of his impending fall in the mid-6th century BC (Ezek 32:2)
 - iv) Nahum 1:5. "The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world, and all who live in it."

The subject is God's coming in judgment on the city of Nineveh, and not the physical world, in 612 BC (Nahum 1:1)

- 2) The pattern of figurative language usage and numerous fulfillments by literal, real, momentous, and divine judgment events sets the precedent.
 - a) If these passages were to be taken literally, it would mean that massive changes or destructions of the cosmos and earth occurred numerous times.
 - b) The language transcends its literalism and has to be understood figuratively.
 - c) It's associated with and really and truly describes the literal coming of God's judgment upon a people or nation.
- 3) New Testament
 - a) Matthew 24:29. "...the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."
 - i) Jesus is speaking in the same apocalyptic terms drawn from the language of the prophets cited above, a language very familiar to 1st-century Jews.
 - ii) Jesus was figuratively describing the coming judgment and fall of Jerusalem in AD 66-70.
 - b) 2 Peter 3:10, 11a. "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?"

Peter is employing the same common apocalyptic terminology of his day (2 Pet 3:2).
- 4) Though it sounds like the end of the world, this apocalyptic language of the Bible is a common and frequently used linguistic style.
 - a) It's the language of the prophets and is employed throughout the Old and New Testaments in an identical way.
 - b) Speaks of God's impending judgments that were brought by invading foreign armies or natural disasters.
 - c) These many biblical judgments are also events of international and/or eschatological importance.
 - i) In every instance, the "worlds" (social, political, and religious) were ended or dramatically changed.
 - ii) In none of these historical fulfillments did the physical nature of literal heavenly bodies or the earth change one iota.
 - iii) The Jews of the 1st century did not understand apocalyptic phraseology as literally ending the world.
- 5) ***When God wanted to express his blessings upon a nation or a people, the same apocalyptic language is used, but in positive terms.***

Instead of the earth or the universe pictured as collapsing or destroyed, they're shown to be abundant, flourishing, and more strongly established.

- a) Isaiah 30:26; 60:19-20. "The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the Lord binds up the bruises of his people, and heals the wounds of the inflicted...the sun will no more be your light by day,

nor will the brightness of the moon will wane no more; the Lord will by your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.”

- i) Portrays the blessings promised to Old Covenant Israel if they submitted to God and were obedient.
 - b) Isaiah 35:1, 6. “The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy...Then will the lame leap like a deer and the tongue of the dumb shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.”
 - i) The figurative language describes actual kingdom blessings brought by Jesus. He proclaimed them in like manner when He declared, “Whosoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”
 - ii) By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive (John 7:38, 39a)
- 6) Could we really end the world if we planned it?
- a) Psalm 24:1 declares that “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.”
 - b) God has dominion over the earth.
 - c) We live in God’s world, not ours; He created it. He owns it. He sustains it.
 - d) His stated will and purpose is that the earth be filled with his glory, not destroyed.

What a “World without End” Message Could Mean

- 1) Instead of striving to hang on till the end, we can have a strong reason to undertake dynamic roles in the present, both individually and corporately, for a better future and for the benefit of current and coming generations.
- 2) Some believe that evil is simply too much for God to overturn and transform. Therefore, God “must” destroy the planet before He makes it “anew.”
- 3) A new paradigm shift.
 - a) A paradigm is a model, a pattern, a frame of reference, a worldview, or simply a way of thinking for understanding and interpreting external reality.
 - i) It’s the way we see the world, not visually, but by perception.
 - ii) It’s the mental framework by which we construe reality, process information, make decisions, and determine actions.
 - iii) For individuals, it brings order and meaning to our experiences.
 - b) Our view of the world and the future is a paradigm.

Millions have been programmed into believing in an end-of-the-world paradigm.

Many see “the End” as God’s and their own, final vindication, and as their best opportunity to escape from the toils and responsibilities of this life, even from death itself.

A need for a mental transformation for how we imagine our world that offers a new, optimistic, and opportunistic perspective on the future of the future.

- 4) What are implications of an end-of-the-world philosophy?
 - a) Socially, it leaves a mark on the human psyche and on our dreams and goals.
 - b) Culturally, it diminishes our willingness to make commitments and get involved in social injustice and human needs issues.
 - c) Politically, many fear the personal views of end-time Bible prophecy might influence the foreign policy decisions of world leaders.
 - d) Environmentally, if there is no future for the future, why bother “polishing the brass on a sinking ship?”

The Revelation Uses Figurative Language and Symbols

- 1) Imagery is the means by which the infinite God communicates with finite humans about truth and reality in the spiritual and physical realms.
 - a) Trouble not in way God has chosen to convey message but with the way we humans try to grasp it.
 - b) God speaks in figurative language and symbols to reveal spirit-realm/physical-realm realities.
- 2) Our physical/material mindset.
 - a) Jesus constantly spoke about the kingdom of God in very simple terms, using parables and metaphors such as water, seeds, coins, and fish.
 - b) People who heard Him kept trying to interpret His parables and symbols literally instead of spiritually.
- 3) Why bother about spirit-realm realities?
 - a) God is spirit.
 - i) Can't think of God only in physical terms.
 - ii) “God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship him in spirit and truth.”
 - (1) Truth is unveiled reality.
 - (2) The apocalypse unveils the spirit-realm reality of Christ here and now.
 - iii) God invites us to look beyond Jesus' earthly appearance to see Him in all His present, glorious reality. That is at hand, right now.
 - b) Humans are spirit beings.
 - i) We can experience our spirits only through the new birth--through an awakening of our spirits to the realities of the spirit dimension.
 - ii) The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.
 - iii) Humanity has continually attempted to discredit and de-spiritualize the spirit-realm/physical-realm message Jesus gave to John through visual parables in the Revelation.
 - iv) Because we are so attuned to the material world (our flesh), we long for a physical rapture, for a physical return of Jesus, for a visible New Jerusalem, for a physical wedding supper with Christ--someday, somewhere.
 - v) The real message of the Revelation is that we don't have to wait. Spiritually, we can dwell and dine with Jesus in His Holy City right here, right now.
 - c) The kingdom of God is a spirit-realm kingdom.

- i) "The kingdom of God does not come visibly, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'there it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."
 - ii) God has chosen human beings as the earthly seat of His kingdom.
 - iii) The fact that the spirit realm is invisible doesn't mean that it doesn't exist; the spirit dimension is just as real as the physical world we experience through our five senses.
 - iv) We will never be able to fully understand the physical world and to effectively rule and reign with Christ in it until we understand the world of the spirit.
 - v) The spirit-realm forces influence the behavior of both individuals and nations.
 - vi) We must recognize that we can overcome and live victoriously in the material world only when we are energized by the Spirit of God within and among us.
- d) Spirit-realm reality is where the blessings are promised.
- i) The temple rulers and teachers tried to keep others from entering the spirit realm by reducing everything to a mere physical/material plane.
 - ii) The teachings of Jesus, especially the Revelation, repeatedly promise God's blessings to those who enter the kingdom of God's spirit realm and reign and rule with Christ.
 - (1) Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near (at hand).
 - (2) Blessed is he who stays awake (spiritually) and keeps his clothes with him.
 - (3) Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.
- 4) Spirit-realm reality can only be received spiritually.
- a) Since the Bible is a supernatural book, we can only receive its realities supernaturally, as they are made alive to us by the Holy Spirit.
 - b) "Unless one is born again he cannot even see the kingdom of God."
 - c) The Spirit of God reveals the kingdom of God.
 - i) Don't expect to comprehend with only your intellect.
 - ii) Spirit-realm reality must be received spiritually, too.
 - iii) We cannot figure out the mystery

What the Bible actually says with what our traditions say on the issues:

The Bible Says:

World without end, Amen.
 The earth remains forever
 Generations come and go

The Endsayng Tradition Says:

The world's going to end.
 The earth shall be destroyed.
 We may be the last generation.

LESSON FIVE

Daniel's Prophecies of the End Days

- 1) Something prompted New Testament Writers to record such statements as:
 - a) ...the end of all things is at hand (1 Peter 4:7)
 - b) ...the fullness of time was come—But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (Gal 4:4)
 - c) ...the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand(Mark 1:15)
 - d) ...the fulfillment of the ages has come (1 Cor 10:11)
 - e) ...the ends of the world (ages) are come (1 Cor 10:11)
- 2) Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.
 - a) ...for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled (Luke 21:22)
 - b) ...the time is short (1 Cor 7:29)
 - c) ...for the world in its present form is passing away (1 Cor 7:31)
 - d) ...it is the last hour (1 John 2:18)-- Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.
- 3) First century Christians expected that something big was about to happen, very soon.
 - a) To them it was "the last hour."
 - b) Was this the "end of the world?"
 - c) The end of time?
 - d) Conclusion of human history?
- 4) The Two-age Jewish View of Time
 - a) The present age and the age to come.
 - i) The Jews were living in "this present age," the age of Moses.
 - ii) "The age to come" was anticipated.
 - b) The two ages were Jewish expectation for God's plan of redemptive history here on earth.
 - i) They did not view history as a series of unending ages, but stressed these two distinct and contrasting periods.
 - (1) No parenthetical age, third age, or interruption between the two ages.
 - (2) The line of demarcation, or transition, between the two ages would be accomplished by a visitation of God.
 - ii) Jews were schooled that the Messiah, at his coming, would end "this present age" and usher in "the ages to come."
 - iii) Peter believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and penned the words, "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet 4:7)
- 5) Time of the End
 - a) Habakkuk 2:3. "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."

b) Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27 and 12:4-12)

i) Daniel's seventy weeks.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

ii) The "time of the end."

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

c) They foretold the climactic events that would signal the consummation (end of goal) of God's redemptive plan for humankind.

d) The popular view among Christian evangelicals in our day and time is that this "appointed time" has been delayed (or put on hold), and is yet future.

Daniel Is the Key to the End Times

- 1) Daniel is the basis upon which all other end-time prophecies and events rise or fall.
 - a) There are no hidden or secretly encoded meanings in Daniel's two time prophecies.
 - b) There are no artificial interpretative devices such as gaps, interruptions, delays, elongations, twisted dates, flip-flopped segments, symbolic appeals, non-literal tampering, or esoteric qualifying methods of any kind are required to understand this fulfillment.
 - i) Daniel's two prophecies identify the front end (70th week) and the back end (time of the end) of Habakkuk's appointed time of the end.
 - ii) Daniel covers the complete and indivisible transition period between "this present age" and "the age to come," and not the demise of planet Earth or the end of human existence.
- 2) Daniel was told to go his way because "the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end" (Dan. 12:9).
- 3) John, in the book of Revelation is instructed by an angel to leave his book unsealed. "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book because the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10)

Daniel's Time Prophecy of 70 Weeks

- 1) "Seventy sevens are decreed (determined) for your people and your holy city to:
 - a) Finish transgression
 - b) To put an end to sin
 - c) To atone for wickedness
 - d) To bring in everlasting righteousness

- e) To seal up vision and prophecy
- f) To anoint the most holy

“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven “sevens,” and sixty-two sevens.” It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two “sevens,” the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood; War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed (are determined). He will confirm a covenant with many for one “seven,” but in the middle of that “seven” he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And one who causes desolation will place abominations on a wing of the temple until the end that is decreed (determined) is poured out on him.”

- 2) Daniel’s seventy weeks historically links the Old Covenant, Judaic period to the New Covenant, Christian period.

The Starting Point

457 BC...from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Dan 9:25) was made by Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:11-16).

- 3) First Segment: the Seven Sevens
 - a) The first 49 years spanned the restoring and rebuilding of Jerusalem under the administration of Ezra and Nehemiah.
 - b) Nehemiah records how the Jews returned from captivity and worked “in times of trouble.”
 - c) They built the wall, restored the streets and houses; instituted laws, civil ordinances and religious reforms and finished settling in Jerusalem within this 49-year time segment.
- 4) Second Segment: Sixty-two Sevens (434 more consecutive years).
 - a) 408 BC-AD 27—No interval or interruptive gap between the 7-week and 62-week segments is suggested in the text.
 - i) Toward the close of this second segment, messianic expectations began running high in the Promised Land.
 - ii) Daniel’s prophecy was well known, and its fulfillment was being anticipated.
 - b) Jesus was born 4 BC, so 27 AD.
- 5) Third Segment: One Seven—the **First Half**.
 - a) A.D. 27-30...*until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens’ and sixty-two ‘sevens’...*(Daniel 9:25).
 - b) An “anointing” event marks both the conclusion of the second 62-week segment and the beginning of Daniel’s 70th and final week of unbroken and uninterrupted years.
 - c) 483 years (49 plus 434 years) had elapsed since Artaxerxes’ Decree in 457 BC.
 - i) It is now A.D. 27. Jesus Christ, ‘the Anointed One, the ruler’ (or Messiah the Prince, who had emptied Himself of his glory, authority, and power to become like other

men (Phil. 2:7-8; Heb 2:17), is hereby publicly identified as the Messiah with his baptism in the Jordan River.

- ii) Luke reports that Jesus was about 30 years of age at that time (Luke 3:22-23)
- 6) After Jesus was baptized, he went into the wilderness for 40 days.
 - a) He then went to Nazareth where He had been raised, stood up in the synagogue, and read the messianic prophecy from Isaiah 61:1-2 regarding the coming of the “anointed one” and “the year of the Lord’s favor.”
 - b) Then Jesus said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”
 - i) He stopped in mid-verse, concerning “the day of vengeance of our God.”
 - ii) The fulfillment awaited the future time of Daniel’s “time of the end.”
- 7) From the day of his anointing, Jesus moved in the power and authority of the New Covenant.
 - a) During the next 3½ years of his earthly ministry, Jesus taught and demonstrated the new in-breaking kingdom of God.
 - i) Dan. 2:44
 - ii) Dan 7:14, 18, 22, 27)
 - iii) He modeled the “powers of the world to come” (Heb 6:5).
 - b) Jesus came into Galilee, preaching and manifesting the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled...” (Mark 1:14-15).
 - c) It was the fullness of Daniel’s 70-weeks time prophecy.

“After sixty-two ‘sevens’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood; War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed (determined)...And one who causes desolation will place abominations on a wing of the temple until the end that is decreed (determined” is poured out on him (Dan. 9:26).

- d) Jesus was crucified and had nothing befitting a Messiah.
- e) The crucifixion was time-restricted to the middle of the final week, from the other events of Daniel 9:26 (which are not so restricted, but only named as coming “after” the sixty-two weeks.
- f) These events occurred 37 years after the crucifixion.
 - i) The other events that were to come “after” the sixty-two weeks are the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and desolations and abominations.
 - ii) These latter events did not take place until around A.D. 66-73 because they were part of the end and were associated with Daniel’s other time prophecy, *the time of the end*.
- 8) A.D. 30...*He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven,’ but in the middle of that seven, he (Jesus the Messiah) shall put an end to sacrifice and offering...*(Dan. 9:27).
 - a) The Messiah being cut off and the end to sacrifice and offering both occurred in the middle of the 70th Week.
 - i) Jesus’ death and resurrection ended that Old Covenant obligation, though the Jews continued to offer sacrifices until the Temple was destroyed.

- ii) It had been superseded by the “once-for-all...sacrifice” of Christ (Heb 9:26, 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18).
- b) It sealed and determined the fulfillment of all six of the redemptive purposes and promises for Daniel’s 70-weeks time prophecy stated in verse 24:
 - i) To finish transgression.
 - ii) To make an end of sin.
 - iii) To atone for wickedness.
 - iv) To bring in everlasting righteousness.
 - v) To seal up the vision and prophecy.
 - vi) To anoint the most holy (place).

The Second Half of the Final Week (A.D. 30-34)

- 1) After Jesus’ death, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem.
 - a) After Pentecost, they did not disperse to “go into all the world.”
 - b) The purpose and focus of Daniel’s last week of years was to be a 7-year period of covenant confirmation for the Jews.
 - i) Half of this final week still remained.
 - ii) The first half of 3½ years was fulfilled by the earthly ministry of Jesus and his disciples.
 - c) There was a time-restricted waiting period in which the New Covenant was to be confirmed with the Jews exclusively.
 - i) The disciples knew this.
 - ii) Jesus expounded and explained in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.
 - (1) Jesus began at Moses and proceeded through all the prophets.
 - (2) No doubt Daniel was explained as it was the most published of the prophets.

Finishing Point of the Final Week (A.D. 34.)

- 1) Toward the end of A.D. 33, Jewish persecution of Christians in Jerusalem reached a climax with the stoning of Stephen.
 - a) All except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.
 - b) The event that documents the finishing point of Daniel’s 70th week occurred when “Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed Christ there.”
 - i) The time restriction for confirming the New Covenant exclusively for the Jews was now chronologically over.
 - ii) The Gospel of the New Covenant had come first to the Jews, then to the Samaritans, and finally to the Gentiles and the whole world.
- 2) Summary: The prophecy of Daniel’s seventy weeks:
 - a) Commenced in 457 B.C. with the decree of Artaxerxes.
 - b) Was determined in A.D. 30 at the cross.
 - c) Was confirmed by the New Covenant for 3½ years before and 3½ years after the cross.
- 3) The entire prophecy transpired in an uninterrupted 490-year period.

- 4) No valid rationale exists for interrupting the time segments, splitting apart the years, inserting gaps, elongating weeks, or postponing, delaying, minimizing or tampering with the fixed time period in any manner.

Daniel's Time of the End

Daniel's second time prophecy in his very last chapter, Daniel 12:4-13 serves as the back bookend or boundary of the age-changing transition we call the "end times."

"But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge. Then, I Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, 'How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?'

The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, 'It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be complete.'

He replied, 'Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

'From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

'As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allowed inheritance.'"

- 1) Daniel referred to some of the events that would take place during this "time of the end," including the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Jewish Temple, and many other desolations of war (Dan. 9:26). But these events were only "decreed" or "determined" within Daniel's 70th week.
- 2) Their actual occurrence (fulfillment) lies outside that time period. But how can we be sure this interpretation is correct?
- 3) Daniel's time of the end would be a time of intensified trouble and divine judgment.
 - a) That judgment would be poured out upon Daniel's people (Israel) "in the latter days" (Dan 10:14) because of their continual breaking of the covenant and rebellion against God and his plan of redemption via the Messiah.
 - b) The climax would occur "when the power of the holy people (the Jews) has been finally broken."

- 4) The “power of the holy people” was the power of biblical Judaism (their exclusive relationship with God as manifested by the Temple complex).
 - a) The final breaking of this power was to be both the historical setting and defining characteristic for Daniel’s “time of the end.”
 - b) This distinguishing element was not to be the demise of planet Earth, the end of time, the end of human existence, the removal of believers from the world (rapture), a 1,000-year reign of Christ, or any of the other traditional end-time notions.

The Starting Point of the Time of the End

A.D. 66. (Dan. 12:11)...*from the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished...*

- 1) In July of A.D. 66, Josephus records that, as part of the Jewish rebellion against Rome, Jewish Zealots stormed Jerusalem and burned the palace of Agrippa and Bernice (Roman ruler and his sister).
 - a) Burned the palace of the Jewish High Priest, Ananias; killed him in retaliation for his liberal affiliation with the Romans.
 - i) Massacred a garrison of Roman soldiers.
 - ii) Stopped performing the twice-daily Temple sacrifices for Caesar and the Roman people.
 - iii) Cessation of daily sacrifice was the true beginning of the Roman-Jewish War.
 - b) The total cessation of all sacrifices didn’t take place until the Jews ran out of priests and animals in August of A.D. 70 just prior to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by the Roman army.
- 2) 1,290 Days Later (Dan 12:11)...*and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.*
 - a) The one who causes desolation will place abominations on a wing of the temple until the end that is decreed is poured out on him” (Dan.9:27b).
 - b) 1,290 days after the cessation of the twice-daily sacrifice for Caesar and Rome, a major abomination took place in the Temple.
 - c) Civil strife between three rival, Jewish factions inside the city walls reached a climax.
 - i) Rival Zealot factions defiled the Temple’s innermost courts with murders as fierce fighting raged between the Jews struggling for control.
 - (1) Even worshippers were killed while trying to offer their sacrifices.
 - (2) The warring of the three Jewish factions was one of the many abominations and desolations spoken of by Daniel.
 - (3) Josephus details how the Jews frequently and blatantly desecrated their own Temple during the time of the Roman-Jewish War.
 - (4) These atrocities were what eventually led to the complete desolation of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Roman legions.
 - ii) The people of the ruler (i.e., the people of Jesus, and not the Roman army under Titus’ command or some future Antichrist ruler) who will come and destroy the city and the sanctuary (Dan 9:26).
 - iii) Questions: Who destroyed Jerusalem? Who crucified Christ?

- iv) In both cases, the Romans tried to avoid the final action, but the Jews' abominable and self-destructive activities forced the Romans to act.

The Finishing Point

- 1) 1,335 days later, in A.D. 70 (Dan. 12:12). *Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.*
 - a) Jesus warned his first followers, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near...For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written" (Luke 21:20, 22; Luke 19:43-44)
 - b) Shortly before Passover in the spring of A.D. 70 (approximately, if not exactly 45 days) following the previously-cited Temple desecration.
 - i) Titus' Roman legions advanced toward Jerusalem from the north through Samaria as the invader from the "north" of Ezekiel 38 and 39.
 - ii) This setting took place within the 1,335 day time period prophesied to Daniel.
 - iii) The "time of the end" was now at hand.
- 2) In April of A.D. 70, the Roman army began the fourth and final siege of the war.
 - a) In September, it was over.
 - b) Not only the city and the Temple, but the whole of biblical Judaism was utterly destroyed and left desolated.
 - c) It was also the fulfillment of "the day of vengeance of God."
- 3) All of the events of Daniel's two time prophecies (the 70 weeks and "time of the end") took place literally, exactly, chronologically, and sequentially within their two respective time periods, and precisely as foretold, with no gaps or gimmicks.
- 4) As a result, both the historical setting and defining characteristic of Daniel's "time of the end" achieved fulfillment in A.D. 66-73 when the "power of the holy people" was "finally broken."
 - a) The Jews' exclusive relationship with God, as manifested by the Temple complex, was finally terminated.
 - b) Ever since and yet today, rabbis speak about the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 as "the end of biblical Judaism."
 - c) The transition between the two ages was finished at the fall of Jerusalem circa A.D. 70-73.
- 5) Thus, the end that the Bible proclaims is past.
 - a) Habakkuk's "appointed time...of the end" certainly came and is over.
 - b) It did not demand the end of human history, the end of time, or the destruction of the physical creation.
- 6) Every New Testament reference to the "last days" or equivalent "last times, last hour," refers to the time its writers were living in—the first century.
 - a) They weren't the last days of planet Earth, or the end of time.
 - b) They were the last days of the Old Covenant Jewish system and age.
- 7) Like two bookends, Daniel's two time prophecies provide the front and a back for the biblical end-times period.

LESSON SIX

Jesus' Prophecies Concerning the End Days

The First Century Witness

- 1) One week before Jesus was crucified, he made some startling statements about the end.
 - a) His prophetic words are paramount to understanding end-time prophecy.
 - b) Need only to compare his prophecy with Habakkuk's and Daniel's to arrive at his proper meaning.
- 2) Jesus' prophecies.
 - a) "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down" (Matt 24:2).
 - b) When will this happen?
 - c) "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened" (Matt 24:34)
- 3) Other end-time events that would take place within that same time period.
 - a) The end of the age and the sign of his coming (parousia) v. 3
 - b) The gospel preached in all the world...to all nations (vs. 14)
 - c) The end will come (vs. 14)
 - d) The abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (vs. 15)
 - e) The hearers fleeing for their lives (vs. 16-20)
 - f) A great tribulation, unequalled in history before or after (vs. 21).
 - g) False Christs and false prophets appearing, performing great signs and miracles and deceiving even the elect—if that were possible (vs. 24).
 - h) The coming (parousia) of the Son of Man (vs. 27)
 - i) The sun and the moon darkened, stars falling from the sky and the heavenly bodies shaken (vs. 29).
 - j) The sign of the Son of Man appearing in the sky (vs. 30)
 - k) Them seeing the Son of Man coming on the clouds (vs. 30)
- 4) Traditionalists assure us that when Jesus "returns" at his so-called "Second Coming" at some point in the future, He will fulfill the rest of his prophecy and destroy this physical world.
- 5) To cover up for Jesus' apparent failure to produce what He promised, and to defend their futuristic-determent positions, they have employed one or more of

Five Side-stepping Devices

- 1) "Generation" must refer to a future generation.
 - a) This postponement device was popularized by C.I. Scofield in the 1900s.
 - b) Hal Lindsey claims that Jesus' "this generation" began in 1948 with the rebirth of the nation of Israel. This means our current generation is "the terminal generation."

- 2) Jesus was sitting face-to-face with his disciples on the Mount of Olives. He spoke directly to them.
 - a) A simple word study of the seventeen other New Testament uses of the identical word construction reveals that “this generation” always means the generation then living.
 - b) A simple study of the Greek word *genea*, translated “generation,” should clear things up.
 - i) The primary meaning of *genea* is a people living at the same time.
 - ii) This is a chronological association, and not ethnicity or personal characteristics, nor to an unlimited duration of time.
- 3) “Generation” must mean “race,” “nation,” or “a king of people.”
 - a) God’s chronological timing for Israel to come out of Egyptian bondage was in the “fourth generation” of exiled Israelites.
 - b) God told Noah to get himself and his family into the ark “because I have found you righteous in this generation” (Gen 7:1).
 - c) The Bible reckons a generation to be a contemporary group of people.
 - d) Scripture also implies that the length of a biblical generation is forty years (Heb 3:9-10)
 - e) In contrast to Peter’s reference to a chosen generation (*genos*): But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;
 - f) Other examples:
 - i) The same “wicked and adulterous generation” who was asking for a sign (Matt. 12:39; 16:4)
 - ii) The same one He calls an “unbelieving and perverse generation”
 - iii) The same one that would reject God’s only Son: “But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation” (Luke 17:25).
 - iv) The same one to whom John the Baptist came and about which Jesus lamented, “To what shall I compare this generation?” (Mat 11:16-24).
 - v) The same one who would crucify Him: “Therefore, this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world...Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all” (Luke 11:50).
- 4) Dividing Jesus’ prophecy into two sections.
 - a) One section is associated with events fulfilled circa A.D. 70.
 - b) The other events are ascribed to a second, yet-to-be-fulfilled “end of time”
 - c) The accounts in Luke 21, Mark 13, and Luke 17:20-37 do not lend themselves to any such division.

Read Luke 21

- 5) All mentioned “on the day the Son of Man is revealed” (Luke 17:30).
 - a) Jesus’ powerful prophecy is a united, end-times discourse discussing only one subject and one fulfillment.
 - b) Change the meaning of the apocalyptic language.

- i) Jesus' descriptive phraseology of the sun and moon darkening, of stars falling from the sky, and heavenly bodies shaken (Matt 24:29) is suddenly declared to mean something different from its time-honored figurative usages and its many historical fulfillments.
- ii) This figurative language is the language of the Prophets.
 - (1) In all its numerous uses and fulfillments throughout the Bible, never once was the physical creation ever altered or affected to this extent.
 - (2) Instead, this vivid cosmic-collapsing, earth-shaking language always prophesied a coming divine judgment and destruction of wicked nations.
 - (3) Here, in his New Testament prophecy, Jesus is quoting from the prophet Isaiah (Matt 24:29 from Isa. 13:10; Isa. 34)

Isaiah 13:10. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine (against Babylon in the 6th century B.C.)

Isaiah 34:4.

For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine (against Edom in the 6th century B.C.)

- 6) Jesus' "this generation: perfectly correlates with the literal, exact, chronological, and sequential fulfillment of Daniel's two time prophecies previously covered.
 - a) This transition period transpired over exactly forty years—one biblical generation.
 - b) It perfectly connected Daniel's last and 70th week to his 1,290-1,335 days "time of the end."
 - i) That's why Jesus tapped directly into Daniel's time of "unequaled distress" or "tribulation" (Matt 24:21 from Dan 12:1) and the coming of "the abomination that causes desolation"
 - ii) The end in Jesus' prophetic discourse and the end of Daniel 12 are the same end.
 - (1) They speak of an identical scenario—"when the power of the holy people has been finally broken all these things will be completed" (Dan 12:7)
 - (2) It cannot refer to any other time or event other than the fall of Jerusalem circa A.D. 70.
 - iii) Statements of other New Testament writers are in perfect harmony with Him.
 - (1) Peter spoke in plain terms and in a 1st-century context when he warned that "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4:7).
 - (2) "It is the time for judgment to begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17)
- 7) No evidence supports the contention that Jesus, the New Testament writers, or the early Church were looking beyond their day and time and the fate of Jerusalem to a world-ending catastrophe as the "end of all things."
- 8) Postponing fulfillment of "these last days" (Heb 1:2), or "last times" (1 Peter 1:20) beyond the generation in which Jesus lived must be seen for what it truly is—unscriptural.

The End that Was, the Last Days that Were

- 1) History records that circa A.D. 70, exactly forty years after Jesus prophesied on the Mount of Olives and within the span of one biblical generation, Roman armies led by Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple.
- 2) Jesus set a definite time limit for the “last days” of biblical Judaism.
 - a) Every New Testament reference to the “last days” or to equivalent terms such as “last times” or “last hour,” confirms the same.
 - b) These times were not a 19-centuries-and-counting extended period.
- 3) Last days.
 - a) “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb 1:2).
 - b) Acts 2:17. “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams...”
 - c) 2 Timothy 3:1 “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”
 - d) 1 Peter 1:18-20. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you...”
 - e) 1 John 2:18. “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”
- 4) This time restricted period of “these last days” was to encompass the full redemptive work of the Messiah: his birth, anointing, teaching, ushering in of the everlasting kingdom of God, death, resurrection, sending of the Holy Spirit, ending of the Jewish age, and much more.
 - a) These biblical “last days” were never to be the last days of the world, planet Earth, human history, or the Church.
 - b) They were the beginning days of the Church as well as the last days and the ending of biblical Judaism and its Old Covenant age.
 - c) The apostle Paul reminded his contemporaries that “...this world in its present form is passing away” (1 Cor 7:31) and that “the time is short” (1 Cor 7:29)

Eight Confirmatory Insights

- 1) Early confirmations.
 - a) Jesus told his 1st-century disciples that they would be the ones to see “all these things” take place.
 - b) Three early church fathers confirmed that these things did indeed occur:
 - i) Historian and church leader Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) understood that the “great tribulation” of Jesus’ Olivet prophecy was fulfilled in the events leading up to and culminating circa A.D. 70.
 - ii) The abomination of desolation, according to the prophetic declaration, stood in the very temple of God, which was approaching its total downfall and final destruction

by fire.

iii) St. Augustine: "For Luke (21:20) very clearly bears witness that the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled when Jerusalem was overthrown."

2) Those who correctly read the signs and fled.

a) Signs of the time.

i) Social decay, wars, rumors of wars, famines, diseases, natural catastrophes, earthquakes, false prophets, and apostasy.

ii) Though these are true in our day, they were also prevalent in A.D. 60-69.

iii) Jesus said that they do not indicate the end. They were only "the beginning of sorrows" or "birth pains" (Mat 24:8).

b) Prime sign #1: The abomination that causes desolation...standing..."

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation; spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matt 24:15-16; Mark 13:14)

i) The Jews of Jesus' time were the "you" he was warning.

ii) During the inter-testament times, the Jews were taught that all of Daniel's prophecy concerning the abomination of desolation had been fulfilled by Antiochus Epihanes.

iii) Jesus spoke of an abomination that was to come.

(1) The first was a 3-year time period of desolation.

(2) The one Jesus was speaking of represented an everlasting desolation.

iv) Early in the decade of A.D. 60-69, an unqualified Jew, Phannias, was appointed to the position of high priest.

(1) This high priest and his staff of other priests failed to properly perform the daily sacrifices and many other required Temple duties.

(2) Instead, they made a mockery of the holy ordinances.

(3) In A.D. 66, priests and Zealots fought each other in the Temple courts.

(a) Josephus reports that the floors swam with the blood of more than eight thousand who stabbed each other.

(b) Many more atrocities (abominations) between the Zealots and other Jewish factions occurred in the holy place between A.D. 66-70.

v) The final desolation was similar to that of Antiochus Epiphanes.

(1) It came about in the same way when another foreign Gentile army, the Roman army, stood in the Temple, and raised and worshipped its standards as was their custom.

(2) Then the Romans destroyed the Temple and tore it down stone by stone.

c) Prime sign #2: Jerusalem surrounded by armies.

"When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has

been written (Luke 21:20-22)

- i) All that was written always and only referred to the Old Testament, biblical writings.
 - (1) This would include Daniel's "time of the end," Isaiah's new heaven and new earth, and much more.
- ii) Again, as in 167 B.C., foreign armies were God's instruments of judgment.
 - (1) Early in the decade of 60-69 A.D., skirmishes between Jews and Romans began to break out.
 - (2) Many false Christs appeared among the Jews.
 - (3) "Wars and rumors of wars" were rampant.
- iii) Four times, Jerusalem was surrounded by armies.
 - (1) First time: In A.D. 66, Roman armies commanded by Cestius Gallus came to put down the Jewish rebellion.
 - (a) After surrounding Jerusalem, they began their siege.
 - (b) For no apparent reason, Cestius withdrew his troops and left in retreat.
 - (c) The Jews pursued the Romans, slaughtering many and capturing their abandoned war machinery.
 - (d) This humiliating withdrawal by the Romans gave the Jews a false sense of being unconquerable.
 - (e) It helped create an atmosphere of having "peace and safety" before the destruction of the day of the Lord which was soon to "come on them suddenly" (1 Thess 5:3).
 - (2) Second time: When news of Rome's defeat at the hands of the Jews reached Nero, he was most upset with Cestius' "poor generalship"
 - (a) He ordered Vespasian, a veteran general, back to Jerusalem in A.D. 67 to completely crush the Jewish uprising and avenge Rome's humiliation.
 - (b) Vespasian advanced into Galilee, north of Jerusalem.
 - (c) He conquered its major cities and subdued the land.
 - (d) He then marched south and encamped around Jerusalem.
 - (e) When word came of Nero's death, Vespasian delayed his plan for taking Jerusalem, withdrew his troops. And returned to Rome to become Emperor.
 - (f) Again, the Jews prevailed.
 - (3) Third time: In A.D. 68, at the request of the Zealot faction inside Jerusalem Idumaeans from the territory south of Judea camped outside the walls.
 - (a) The Zealots let the Idumaeans into the city to join their forces.
 - (b) In the ensuing battle, over 8,500 were killed in the Temple area.
 - (c) Shortly afterwards, the Idumaeans withdrew from the city, but the cruelties and killings of Jews by other Jews continued.
 - (4) Fourth and final time: Shortly before Passover in A.D. 70, Titus, the son of Vespasian, arrived with his legions at the northern outskirts of Jerusalem to finally put an end to the Jewish revolt and finish the insurrection.
 - (a) He marched from the north to the south through Galilee and set up three camps overlooking the city.
 - (i) During the final siege, those who sought to flee were either prevented

from doing so, killed by the Jewish factions inside, or captured, tortured, and crucified by the Romans at the city wall so all could see.

(ii) By this time, it was too late to flee.

(iii) All inside the walls were entrapped by Titus and his Roman legions.

(b) Jerusalem's days were numbered.

(i) Josephus reports that the Romans encircled and built an embankment or rampart to breach the city walls, just as Jesus had foretold.

(ii) 500 or more were captured daily and that "the soldiers out of rage and hatred amused themselves by nailing their prisoners in different postures.

(c) Peter had announced that judgment was about to begin at "the house of God."

(d) John twice proclaimed, "this is the last hour" (1 John 2:18).

(e) John the Baptist had warned his generation to "flee from the coming wrath" (Luke 3:7).

(f) The king or invader from the north spoken of in Daniel 11 and Ezekiel 38 and 39 is not a modern-day Russian or Iraqi army invading from countries located directly north of Israel.

(i) Rather, it was the Roman army of that 1st century.

(ii) The Romans chose to invade from the same direction from which Babylon invaded in 579 B.C. just as Ezekiel and Daniel had prophesied.

(g) During the persecutions and the time between the four sieges, a great temptation arose for many to abandon the new Christian faith and return to the old ways of Judaism.

(i) Others remembered Jesus' solemn warning to "watch out that no one deceives you" (Matt 24:4) and heeded his life-saving instruction to "flee".

(ii) Previously, the Jews always fled to the city, but now they were fleeing from the city.

(iii) As anticipation of the end intensified, fleeing the city became more and more difficult. Then it was impossible.

(h) Jesus' followers, in obedience, had watched for these signs and knew when the end was near

(i) Eusebius records that many Christians fled to Pella in Transjordan around A.D. 68 after the first siege and before the second one.

(ii) Others fled to Alexandria in Egypt, and still others to Asia Minor.

3) Those who failed to read the signs.

a) Two groups experienced the horrors of the fall of Jerusalem.

i) The unbelieving Jews and former followers of Christ who were zealous for the law and fearful of being put out of the synagogue.

ii) Having rejected Jesus as the Messiah, the unbelieving Jews naturally refused to follow his prophetic warnings.

b) The Jews wanted to continue their exclusive relationship with God, and viewed equality with the Gentiles as an insult.

i) History records that by the time of the first Roman siege, unbelieving Jews had

- divided into three rival and warring factions.
- ii) This continued to the very end with Jews slaughtering each other inside the city walls in the Temple itself.
 - c) An unknown number of law-zealous followers of Christ who were unwilling to give up the old ways.
 - d) The presence of the Temple, the priesthood, the daily sacrifice, and the appeal of the city were too much to leaven.
 - e) So they turned their backs on the crucified Messiah and reverted to their old faith.
 - i) Their end-time apostasy is mentioned in several of Paul's letters and was forecast by Jesus Himself.
 - ii) According to Josephus, 1.1 million Jews were killed in the fall and destruction of Jerusalem.
 - iii) 97,000 more Jews went into foreign captivity.
 - iv) They personally received the judgment of "the time of the end"
- 4) The Temple represented the Jews' exclusive relationship with God.
- a) This relationship was "the power of the holy people."
 - b) The prophet Daniel prophesied that at "the time of the end" this power would be "finally broken" (Dan 12:4, 7).
 - c) The Jews thought their privileged position with God would never end, and that He would always protect them and their Temple.
- 5) Why did the Romans go to such an extreme effort to dismantle the Temple stone-by-stone and raze the whole city to the ground?
- a) They were so enraged by the humiliations they had suffering during the 3½ year campaign against the Jews and feared that news of this Roman weakness could trigger other uprisings in the provinces of their empire.
 - b) They were driven by their hatred of the Jews and had sworn to make an example of them.
 - c) They were concerned about the tenacity of the Jews and felt they would never cease their rebellion as long as the Temple stood as a focus of nationalistic pride.
 - d) They were hoping to recover melted gold.
 - i) The Jews used gold to decorate the walls, furniture and fixtures in the Temple.
 - ii) During the intense heat from the fire that destroyed the Temple, this gold ornamentation melted and flowed down between the cracks of the huge stones.
 - e) Jerusalem and its magnificent Temple complex, known throughout the world, had been utterly destroyed, and biblical Israel now ceased to exist.
 - i) It all happened exactly as and when both Jesus and Daniel had prophesied.
 - ii) This was the "time of the end" of the Jewish age.
- 6) Many modern-day Christians as well as orthodox Jews long for a future time when, supposedly, the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, its rituals reestablished.
- a) To do so would be an insult to Christ.
 - b) A return to the old Judaic law system is not going to happen.

The Final Abomination that Caused Desolation

- 1) Daniel's reference to a single "the abomination that causes desolation" (Dan 11:32; 12:11) contrasts with his earlier plural reference to multiple "desolations" and "abominations" (Dan 9:26,27)
- 2) Abominations
 - a) The abomination that set the historical precedent and type for the final one was committed by the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes between 171-164 B.C.
 - i) He replaced the Jewish high priest with Menelaus, who was not a priest.
 - ii) He captured Jerusalem, massacred many of its occupants, plundered the Temple and stopped the practices of the Jewish religion.
 - iii) He profaned the Temple by dragging in a pig and sacrificing it on the Jewish altar.
 - iv) He set up an altar to Zeus and erected a statue in the Holy Place.
 - v) During this time, many Jews were put to death.
 - vi) Antiochus Epiphanes' abomination(s) only caused a three year and two month, temporary period of desolation
 - vii) Antiochus Epiphanes was the little horn, not a future Antichrist.
 - b) Prior to A.D. 64, Christians were persecuted primarily by religious Jews, both in Jerusalem and throughout the Roman Empire.
 - i) After 64 A.D., Nero took over the persecution of Christians.
 - ii) James, Peter, Paul, and others were martyred then.
 - iii) Before, during, and after the Jewish rebellion, a great falling away or apostasy from both Judaism and Christianity took place.
 - iv) Animal sacrifices, made obsolete by Christ's crucifixion in A.D. 30 continued in the Temple until July 17, 70 when a lack of priests to offer them and animals to be offered forced discontinuance.
 - c) The bitter strife that split the Jews into warring camps produced many brutal atrocities and thousands of killings within the Temple areas.
 - i) Jews betrayed Jews and persecuted each other.
 - ii) Priests were killed as they worshipped and administered their sacred duties.
 - iii) During their internal battles, the apostate Jews not only killed and wore each other down, they set fire to their own stocks of grain.
 - iv) The famine and starvation forced Jews trapped inside the city walls to eat their own children.
 - d) The pinnacle and final abomination began when the Roman soldiers, driven by their hatred of the Jews, rushed into the Temple and set it on **fire**.
 - e) Biblical Judaism (not rabbinical Judaism) was so thoroughly destroyed that it has never been, nor ever will be, reestablished.
 - i) Many rabbis refer to A.D. 70 as "the end of biblical Judaism" and "the end of days."
 - ii) God's judgment had so completely destroyed the Temple, the city, the genealogical records in order to demonstrate his repudiation of biblical Judaism as a religious system.
 - iii) For over fifty years the entire country was left desolate and devoid of most of its inhabitants.

- iv) Not only did Israel cease being the nation of the living God, it ceased being a nation for 19 centuries until its rebirth as a secular nation in 1948.
 - v) It all happened some forty years from the time Jesus told his disciples, “not one stone shall be left on another.”
 - vi) What stronger proof could there be that “the time of the end” in Daniel 12 is identical to “the end of the age” in Matthew 24 and to Peter’s “the end of all things is at hand.”
 - vii) The power of the holy people had been finally broken
- 3) The Abomination of Desolation standing in the Temple is a thing of the past.
- a) It’s not prophesied to occur again.
 - b) Those words were written to them, not to us, although they are for us.
 - c) No future Antichrist is necessary to erect a statue or instigate abomination(s) of desolation(s) in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during a cut-off 70th week of tribulation.
- 4) The Great Tribulation objection.
- a) Would be unequalled.
 - b) What about Holocaust?
- 5) The whole-world objection.
- a) “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14).
 - b) The Bible must be understood on its own terms and in the context of its original hearers.
 - i) “Every nation under heaven” was assembled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5).
 - ii) The Apostle Paul, 31 years later, confirmed that “all over the world this gospel is producing fruit and is growing...” (Col. 1:6).
 - iii) “The gospel that you heard...has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven” (Col. 1:23).
 - iv) “But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” (Rom 10:18).
 - c) The Roman Empire was the then-known world, or the civilized world of that time.
 - d) Was also the “world” of the Jews into which they had been scattered.

LESSON SEVEN

Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism

A Well-Devised Plot

- 1) It is necessary to understand the purposes of God in the earth in order to understand the "rapture" and the coming of the Lord.
 - a) I will be attempting to expose what I believe to be a great deception brought into Christian teaching.
 - b) It is a well-devised plot of Satan to distract the Body of Christ from the purposes of God in the earth.
 - c) The primary purpose of God in the earth is found in Ephesians 3:10. *"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."*
 - d) The purpose of God is to raise up a witness through the church and to manifest its influence in the earth.
 - i) It is to raise up a mighty army, a force of righteousness, which will prevail over every force in this earth. T
 - ii) he purpose of the Lord is ultimately to destroy the works of the devil through the church.
- 2) Jesus has already won the victory.
 - a) He has triumphed over death, hell, and the grave.
 - b) It is left up to you and me as the Body of Christ to win the victory over the devil.
- 3) The Body of Christ is yet to come to maturity and unity.
 - a) We still must put Satan under our feet.
 - b) To do this, we must understand his devices.
 - i) His purpose is to establish a kingdom in opposition to God.
 - ii) The kingdom of darkness is headquartered in the earth and operates through the systems of this world.
- 4) Changes are beginning to take place primarily because the Body of Christ is beginning to recognize who it is.
 - a) Satan is doing everything within his power to distract us.
 - b) His job is to defeat us through ineffectiveness. If he can stop us from being a powerful force in this earth, by whatever means, he has been successful.
- 5) One of the subtle devices of Satan has been to instigate the present-day popular theory of a pretribulational rapture of the church.
 - a) Of all teachings of the present-day church, there perhaps has not been one more distracting in fulfilling the purposes of God in the earth than this pretribulational rapture theory.
 - b) This theory says that before tribulation, the Lord is going to remove the Body of Christ from the earth for a 3 1/2 or 7 year period.

- c) During this time the devil runs rampant with full authority without any opposition.
- 6) The Body of Christ is the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
 - a) The glory of the Lord is come, and the light of His glory is risen upon us.
 - b) This light is manifest in the midst of great darkness that covers the earth, while gross darkness is upon the inhabitants of the earth (Is. 60:1).
 - c) It is now time for the Body of Christ to shine forth as lights of the world to expel the darkness.
- 7) There are three questions that are often asked:
 - a) What takes place at the rapture?
 - b) How soon will it take place?
 - c) Who will be a part of it?
 - d) We are going to deal with them in two basic categories: (a) What is the rapture? and (b) When is the rapture?

A Look at the Traditional "Rapture" View

- 1) It is basically is the idea of a "catching away."
 - a) The Bible says nothing about a "catching away", but it says something about a "catching up."
 - b) Nothing is said about the Lord coming back "after" a glorious church, but He is coming "to present unto himself a glorious church."
 - c) The scripture says nothing about the Lord coming to take his "waiting Bride away."
 - i) Jesus will come to be united with His bride.
 - ii) He is not coming after a glorious church, but He will come to be made one with it.
 - d) There is nothing in the Word of God that speaks about the removal of the saints of God from the earth, but it speaks about the manifestation of the glory of God in them.

The Word "Rapture" Is Not Found in the Bible

- 1) The term "rapture" is not even found in the Bible.
 - a) It implies a "catching away" or a removal from the earth.
 - b) The word "rapture" comes from a Latin word "rapio" which carries a basic meaning of "snatching away violently" or "to rape."
 - c) Another meaning of rapture, which might be closer to accurate, has reference to ecstasy, or a state of great joy.
 - i) If that be the case, many of us has been raptured many times!
 - ii) We have literally been caught up into the ecstasy of the presence of the Lord many times in the spirit.
- 2) The concept of "at any moment."
 - a) This has been used effectively by many evangelists to scare people into an experience of salvation that very often was based on shaky ground.
 - b) The teaching of the rapture should not be designed to bring you into the kingdom of God through the tactics of fear.
- 3) We are saved and brought into the kingdom of God as we are drawn by the Spirit of God.

- a) There is a spirit within us which has been created in the likeness and the image of God, and that is what draws us to Him.
- b) The spirit of man within us seeks to be united with the Father of all Spirits.
- 4) "At any moment" is not God's plan to have a purifying effect upon us.
 - a) That which purifies us is the hope that when we see Him we will be like Him.
 - b) We are changed from glory to glory as we behold ourselves in a glass.
 - i) That glass is the Word of God.
 - ii) We look into the perfect law of liberty to see what manner of person we are. The Word of God shows us where we are lacking in our developing image.
 - c) It does not leave us there but shows us how to become pure as He is pure.
 - i) We measure ourselves by the standard of God's Word, which has a purifying effect upon us as we seek to be as He is.
 - ii) Then, we are cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word of God.
- 5) Another traditional picture of the rapture is one of chaos, as airplanes, automobiles, and trains are left without drivers.
 - a) Can you imagine such a chaotic disaster?
 - b) God is not the author of confusion, neither is He the God of fear.
 - c) Our message should be nothing but a message of total victory—this victorious message is one of total overcoming.
- 6) Other implications of the rapture are that we will be with the Lord for all eternity.
- 7) Another implication is that it is the means to escape this world.
 - a) "This world is not my home, I'm just passing through.
 - b) My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue."
 - c) We are not conformed to this world.
 - i) We are to be delivered from the corruption of this world.
 - ii) We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.
 - iii) We're not citizens of this world's systems, and we should have no desire to be a part of its corruption.
- 8) Yet, another implication is that the rapture will be the means by which we shall escape the Great Tribulation.
- 9) In the purposes of God there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile.
 - a) The middle wall of partition has been broken down, and that which once was twain is now made one in Christ Jesus.
 - b) He is a Jew who is one inwardly.
 - c) There is one chosen and one elect.
 - i) There is one eternal purpose of God-- not one for the Jews and one for the church.
 - ii) The church is not God's Plan B in the earth.
 - iii) It is not an afterthought or parenthetical insertion in God's purposes.

God Will Have to Apologize

- 1) To be raptured in order to escape tribulation insinuates either one of two things.
 - a) First, we are too weak to survive and God is not big enough to keep us, or
 - b) Secondly, God is far too good to allow us to be subjected to such pressure.

- i) If that be the case, God will have to apologize to every generation who has ever suffered any persecution in this earth.
 - ii) He will have to apologize to the early Christians who were fed to the lions. He will have to apologize to every martyr recorded in Foxes Book of Martyrs.
 - iii) He will have to apologize to those in Southeast Asia and others who have suffered the great tragedy of war in our lifetime.
- 2) Many have suffered the agony and pain of seeing their loved ones killed and tortured before their very eyes.
- a) What about the Holocaust?
 - b) To use the reasoning that God is far too good is not legitimate.
 - c) By this same reasoning, God is far too good to allow sickness, disease, and death
 - d) God is far too good to allow children to suffer and die.

Three Major Positions

- 1) There are three major positions:
- a) pre-tribulational,
 - b) mid-tribulational, and
 - c) post-tribulational.
- 2) Jesus prayed that we be not taken out of the world, but that we be kept from the evil of the world (John 17:15).

A Brief History of the Pre-Trib Rapture

- 1) First of all, the early church never taught it.
- a) The apostles did not teach it.
 - b) In 1830, a young lady by the name of Margaret McDonald had a vision.
 - i) This gave rise to the two-phase returning of the Lord;
 - ii) First for His saints and second with his saints to rule on the earth.
 - c) We are saying that no doctrine or spiritual issue should be contingent upon a dream or a vision which cannot be validated by the Word of God.
- 2) This vision was excitedly embraced by an excommunicated minister of the Church of Scotland, Edward Irving.
- a) Irving began to teach this two-phase rapture throughout all England and Scotland.
 - b) In one of his prophetic meetings, John Darby of the Plymouth Brethren heard this teaching, and from him,
 - c) C. I. Scofield, author of the Scofield Bible, popularized this teaching through his footnotes and comments.
 - d) Clarence Larkin was influenced by Scofield, and he devised charts to reinforce this teaching.
 - e)

Removal From the Earth?

- 1) The scripture declares that the righteous shall never be removed.

- a) Psalms 37:9 says that evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth.
 - b) Psalms 37:11 says, *"The righteous shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."*
 - c) Psalms 37:29 declares, *"The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever."*
 - d) Proverbs 2:21-22 says, *"The upright shall dwell in the land and the perfect shall remain in it, but the wicked shall be rooted out."*
 - e) *"The righteous shall never be removed, but the wicked shall not inherit the earth"* (Proverbs 10:30).
- 2) In Matthew chapter 13, we find the parable of the wheat and the tares.
- a) The good seed represents the children of the kingdom. They were sown in the field which is the world.
 - b) The evil one came and sowed the tares.
 - c) The Lord said to wait until the end of the world (or the end of the age).
 - i) The tares will then be gathered, bundled up, and burned.
 - ii) Then shall the righteous be gathered together to shine forth in the kingdom of the Father.
- 3) *"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"* (Mat. 24:37-39).
- a) The flood came and took the wicked all away.
 - b) A rapture?
- 4) Two shall be in the field; one shall be taken and the other left.
- a) Two shall be at the grindstone; one taken, one left.
 - b) Two shall be in the bed; one taken, one left.
 - c) Who was taken, and who was left?
 - d) It is apparent that the wicked are taken and the righteous are left!

What Actually Takes Place?

- 1) The three basic scriptures:
 - a) I Thessalonians 4:14-17
 - b) Matthew 24:29-31
 - c) I Corinthians 15:51-52.
- 2) The first thing is our gathering together unto the Lord.
 - a) The context of I Thessalonians 4 is to give hope to those who have lost their loved ones.
 - b) There is hope if they have died in Jesus, for these are the ones God brings with Him when we shall all be reunited together.
 - c) *"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) those who are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (I Thes.

4:14-17).

- d) In John 14, Jesus says, *"I go away to prepare a place for you and I will come and receive you unto myself."*
 - i) Jesus did not say that He would come to take us to our mansion in the sky.
 - ii) He said, "I will come to receive you unto myself."
 - iii) Where Jesus is, is where we will be.
- e) Ephesians 1:10 declares that in the dispensation of the fullness of time, God shall gather together all things which are in heaven and in earth in Christ Jesus.
 - i) This means that those who have already gone on represent the army beyond the veil, and those on earth represent the army of God in this realm.
 - ii) The time will come when all things in heaven and in earth will be brought together in Christ Jesus.
- f) II Thessalonians 2:1 states, *"I beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him..."*
 - i) Does that say anything about the Lord coming to take you away?
 - (1) No, it speaks about our gathering together unto Him. *"That you be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled by word or spirit."*
 - (2) The Wicked One must be revealed in order that the Lord might destroy him with the brightness of His coming.
 - (a) Evil and darkness must be revealed first in order that the manifestation of light, or the brightness of His coming might destroy them.
 - (b) Therefore, we should not become alarmed with the darkness which is covering the earth.
- 3) In Matthew 24:31, the scripture says, *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sign of the coming of the son of man shall appear in heaven. He shall send forth his angels with a sound of a trumpet to gather together his elect from the four corners of heaven*
- 4) The second thing associated with the coming of the Lord is the resurrection of the dead.
- 5) A third thing that takes place is the translation of the living saints. This is recorded in I Corinthians 15:51-52.
- 6) *I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."*
 - a) This means that all will not go by the way of the grave, but all will be changed.
 - b) Corruptible flesh cannot inherit the incorruptibility of the kingdom of God.
 - c) Our mortality cannot inherit the immortal glory of God. There must be a change.

At the Last Trump

- 1) All takes place AT THE LAST TRUMP, and it takes place in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. *"For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*
- 2) So what takes place at the coming of the Lord?
 - a) We're gathered together unto him;
 - b) the dead in Christ are resurrected;
 - c) and those who are alive will be translated or changed.
- 3) When will this be?

- a) If this event takes place after tribulation, what tribulation are we speaking about?
 - b) It is the greatest tribulation the world has ever known.
 - c) *"Immediately after the days of that tribulation shall appear the sign of the coming of the son of Man...(Mat. 24:29).*
- 4) This brings us to something very interesting--the trumpets.
- a) It is difficult to refute the timing of the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead saints, and the translation of the living saints when considered in light of the trumpets.
 - b) There is no way that the resurrection of the dead, the translation of the living saints, and our gathering together unto the Lord will be any other time other than after the tribulation.
- 5) Let's look again at our three foundational scriptures.
- a) I Thessalonians 4:16 says, *"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the TRUMP OF GOD..."*
 - b) Let's now look at I Corinthians 15:52. *"In a moment in a twinkling of an eye, at THE LAST TRUMP..."*
 - c) After the last trump, there are no more, because that is the last one.
- 6) What takes place at that last trump?
- a) The change comes for those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.
 - b) Rapture adherents declare that this is the rapture;
 - i) The change is the rapture, and this is at the last trump.
 - ii) If that is the last trump, it cannot take place before tribulation, because after tribulation, there is a sound of a trump.
- 7) *"Immediately after the tribulation...shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven...son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...and he shall send his angels with a GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET" (Mat. 24:29).*
- 8) At the sound of the seventh (last trumpet of Revelation) angel in Revelation 11, the declaration is made that *"the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ."*
- a) This represents the beginning of the prevailing kingdom of God upon this earth in visible form that is initiated at the coming of the Lord.
 - b) He that overcomes will sit with the Lord on his throne.
 - c) This kingdom shall be everlasting and eternal, not just for 1000 years, though it will certainly include the significant 1000-year period.

Going Out to Meet Him

- 1) When the Lord returns, the church will go to meet him and be joined together with him in union that they may forever enter in together and be one.
 - a) This is representative of the consummation of the marriage in the natural.
 - b) The customs of Biblical times were for one to run out to meet another when coming to visit, especially if it was a special occasion or if the two have not seen each other for some time.
 - i) When Abraham sought a bride for his son Isaac, as the bride was returning, Isaac ran out to meet her.

- ii) As they were joined in fellowship, they then proceeded together back into the house.
- 2) Caught up.
- a) John the revelator was caught up in the spirit, and his feet still remained on the ground.
 - b) Paul said he was caught up to the third heaven.
 - i) He didn't know whether in the body or not, but he was caught up.
 - ii) If he was caught up in the spirit, his feet never left the ground.
 - iii) Ezekiel was caught up to see many things.
 - iv) My wife, Nancy, was caught up in the spirit for a tremendous visitation of the Lord without ever having left her bedroom floor.
 - c) Our being caught up to be with the Lord might be purely spiritual or it could certainly be a literal meeting of the Lord in the physical air.
 - i) If we assume that it is a literal catching up, at the most, it will only be a split-second momentary thing that I believe will not even affect our functioning here on this earth.
 - ii) It will be in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.
- 3) In the air.
- a) One noteworthy thing is that the catching up is still in the air or the earth's atmosphere.
 - i) It is not in outer space as many would have us to believe, as we sing "I'll go sailing through the air."
 - ii) Air only goes so many thousands of feet up from the earth, and it is still considered to be a part of the earth's atmosphere.
 - iii) It is not in outer space, where there is no air or atmosphere.
 - b) So the gathering together unto the Lord is within the immediate atmosphere of the earth.
- 4) In the clouds.
- a) According to I Thessalonians 4:17, our catching up unto the Lord will be our gathering together not only with Him but with those whom He brings with Him.
 - i) We are caught up together in the "clouds."
 - ii) Jesus is not coming back "on a cloud", but the word of God says he comes "in clouds" (Mat. 24:30) and "with clouds" (Rev. 1:7).
 - b) A cloud is symbolic of the manifestation of the glory of God, as God appeared in a cloud on numerous occasions in the Old Testament.
 - c) Clouds also are symbols of people.
 - i) "*Seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...*" is referring to a group of select people who were identified as heroes of faith (Heb. 12:1).
 - ii) Jesus is returning with these clouds as He returns to this earth.
 - (1) To further show that clouds typify people, Peter spoke of the ungodly as "*wells without water: and clouds that are carried with a tempest*" (II Peter 2:17).
 - (2) Jude referred to these same individuals as "*clouds without water*" (Jude 12).
 - d) If Jesus were coming riding on a cloud, what would happen if the Lord came on a cloudless day?
 - i) Clouds are only so high above the earth.
 - (1) In fact, if you take an airplane ride, you most likely will be flying above the

clouds.

- (2) If Jesus came while you were in the airplane, would you go up to meet Him, or down to meet Him?
 - ii) If people in the United States went "up" to meet the Lord, and people in China went "up" to meet the Lord, where would they end up?
- 5) The eastern skies.
 - a) *"As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"* (Mat. 24:27). Could this be where the theory that Jesus will split the eastern skies came from?
 - i) I find nowhere in the Word of God that Jesus is coming out of the eastern sky.
 - ii) This scripture says, AS the lightning shines from the east to the west, so shall the Lord's coming be.
 - b) First, lightning fills the whole sky in a flash of an eye.
 - i) It completely envelops the whole heaven.
 - ii) The coming of the Lord will likewise be.
 - iii) His coming will be everywhere as a flash of the lightning.
- 6) No man knows the day.
 - a) *"But of the day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven but my Father only"* (Mat. 24:36).
 - b) Though we may not know the specific moment in time of the coming of the Lord, we can and should know the times and the seasons.
 - i) *"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you"* (I Thes.5:1).
 - ii) Jesus said in Matthew 16:3, *"O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"*
- 7) A thief in the night.
 - a) Some would insinuate that since the coming of the Lord is as a thief in the night, then that day will sneak upon us.
 - b) This is where no doubt the idea of a secret rapture comes in.
 - c) *"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness"* (I Thes. 5:4-5).
 - d) That day will not take us unawares.
 - e) God will do nothing unless He reveals it to his holy servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).

Summary

- 1) In summary, the Word of God does not teach a removal from the earth of the righteous, but it does teach a change.
 - a) It teaches a gathering together unto the Lord.
 - b) The Word teaches a resurrection.
 - c) It also teaches a translation of the living saints.
 - d) This all takes place after tribulation immediately preceding our ruling with Christ as a part of the eternal kingdom of God on this earth.
- 2) The blessed hope of the Church

- a) The blessed hope of the church says nothing about the rapture or when it will be-- whether before, during, or after tribulation.
 - b) The blessed hope of the church in Titus 2:13 is the "*glorious appearing of the great God and saviour Jesus Christ.*"
 - c) This certainly has no reference to a pre-tribulational rapture.
 - d) John 3:3 says that every man who has this hope purifies himself.
 - i) That hope we have in him is not the rapture of the church, but it is the expectation that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.
 - ii) Every man who has this hope purifies himself.
 - iii) The fear of an uncertain rapture never purified anyone.
- 3) Jesus will come to be glorified in His saints before He returns in the manner He went away.
- a) I believe in the coming of the Lord, but not the going of the church.
 - b) I believe in the appearing of Christ, but not the disappearing of the saints.

Preterist View of the Return of Jesus

- 1) Few Biblical scholars deny that every *New Testament* writer and the members of the first century Church expected Christ to return within their lifetime.
 - a) For nearly 2000 years, the Church has continued eagerly expecting and proclaiming the return of Jesus Christ, "soon!"
 - b) If the first Christians expected the Parousia "soon" and 2000 years later Christians are still expecting it "soon," does "soon" mean anything that we understand?
 - i) Well, yes it does. It means that the Christians have been wrong all along.
 - ii) If Christians were misguided or wrong on such a crucial issue as Christ's return, how can anyone believe anything they say?
 - iii) Can they be trusted to tell us the truth about salvation and immortality?
- 2) Christianity is hardly credible if the firmest, clearest prophecy of the son remains unfulfilled.
 - a) John Noe, an evangelic theologian, having struggled with the problem of the absent Parousia and its implications, has decided Christians have struggled unnecessarily.
 - i) There is no escaping the truth. Christians were wrong to wait for 2000 years for a Parousia while trying to uphold Biblical inerrancy, Papal infallibility, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and other hard acts the Christian sects impose upon themselves.
 - ii) Noe's astonishing answer is that Jesus *did return* within the generation which was alive during his earthly ministry, just as and when he said he would. For us, Noe gives from a fundamentalist Christian viewpoint all the good evidence why Jesus was wrong (though he argues Jesus was not). Here we gratefully use some of the arguments of this Christian in support of the view that Jesus indeed expected the miracle of God to renew the world... then!
 - b) Christ... certainly thought that his second coming would occur in clouds of glory before the death of all the people who were living at the time.
 - i) There are a great many texts that prove it... where it is quite clear that he believed that his coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living.
 - ii) In *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* Albert Schweitzer, the Christian doctor, summarized it this way:

- (1) Jewish critics contend Jesus did not do what the Messiah was supposed to do—introduce the kingdom of God.
- (2) That is why he is not the Messiah of the Jews, merely the Messiah of the gentiles.
- iii) Most Muslims acknowledge Jesus as a prophet, but seek to discredit him as a god and destroy the credibility of Christianity by pointing out his failure to return.
 - (1) Either the apostles lied, or Jesus was wrong about his imminent return and the inauguration of the kingdom of God.
 - (2) If the latter, he was a prophet all right, but a false one.
- c) Even in the *New Testament* people with a brain scoffed (2 Peter 3:3, 4; Jude 16-19) that nothing had happened, nothing changed:
 - i) "Where is this coming he promised?" as they say in 2 Peter.
 - (1) These scoffers doubted the sureness of Christ's promise,
 - (2) In the times of 2 Peter and Jude the delay of the Parousia was only about a century.
 - (3) History has proven the scoffers right—2000 years later Christians are still saying, "soon."
 - ii) Even Christians inadvertently join their own critics because the standard Christian answer to the non-happening Parousia has been to insist Jesus will come again, someday!

Jesus' Clear Prophecies of the End

- 1) Jesus' own statements on the matter left no doubts.
 - a) In frequent statements, he confirmed the certainty of the eschatological coming and when.
 - b) At face value, these words of Jesus are some of the clearest in the *New Testament*.
- 2) Matthew 26:64. Quoting from the prophet Daniel, Jesus responded to and forewarned the high priest and the Sanhedrin saying:
 - a) In the future you shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.
 - b) Jesus' "you" meant his audience not twenty-first century fundamentalists.
 - i) He was speaking in the first-person, directly to them, the audience.
 - ii) How could Jesus possibly have been describing an event some 2000 years in the future?
 - iii) The text demands immediate impact and fulfillment in their lifetime.
- 3) Matthew 10:23— while talking with his disciples, Jesus declared,
 - a) But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next: for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes.
 - b) The obvious meaning of Jesus' words was not to deceive his disciples, but to assure them that during the persecution which was too soon to come upon "them," they would not run out of places to flee for safety before he returned.
- 4) Matthew 16:28. He informed his disciples:

- a) For truly, I say to you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the son of man coming in his kingdom.
 - b) Here, Jesus is describing the same event.
 - i) A 40-year period was to transpire between the time he ascended to heaven and the son of man came back in the post-crucifixion revision of Nazarene eschatological hopes.
 - ii) During that time some of his disciples would have died, but others remained alive.
- 5) Matthew 24:30, 34. Jesus repeats his promise in the mini-apocalypse:
- a) At that time the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn.
 - b) They will see the son of man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory...
 - c) I tell you the truth; this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.
 - d) Jesus here uses the very same phrase his disciples had just heard him speak to the scribes and Pharisees when he told them the guilt of the blood of the righteous would fall upon "this generation"
- 6) (Mt 23:35-36). Jesus' "this generation," in every *New Testament* usage, always means the contemporaries of Jesus alive at that time.
- 7) Luke 21:6, 22, 27, 32. In the parallel passages in Luke's gospel, the message is repeated again.
- a) If Jesus did not mean the words to say he would return within a generation, why did he plainly make it sound as if he did
 - b) It was included because it could not be left out and, ever since, Christians have had to excuse it.
- 8) If Jesus was wrong, he was a false prophet, not a prophet of God (Deut 18:21-22), nor the Messiah.
- a) He will come "soon," is their mindless mantra. In a sort of defense they appeal to "of that day and hour knoweth no man" (Mt 24:36; 25:13).
 - b) The period of gestation of an animal is known quite precisely but no one knows exactly when a birth will happen.
 - i) This is Jesus' point in this statement, not that Christians might still be waiting 2000 years later.
 - ii) That he is telling his disciples to be ever watchful because nobody knows exactly when the moment will be.

Expectations of Jesus' Followers

- 1) All of the following quotations highlight the immanency of the coming, but do not forget that at the time of Jesus there was only one Lord—God!
 - a) The "coming of the Lord" was the coming of God—God's visitation at the End Time.
 - b) Only by promoting their crucified leader to the level of God did the Christians change the coming from that of God to that of Jesus:

- c) James told the first century followers of Christ to be patient until the coming of the Lord.
 - i) "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and
 - ii) "the judge standeth before the door" ([James 5:8-9](#)).
 - (1) The Greek translated "nigh" is literally "within grasp," sometimes translated as "at hand."
 - (2) Jesus used "at hand" too, denoting readiness or availability (Mt 4:17; 10:7; also 26:18, 45, 46; John 2:13) with the same obvious meaning.
 - iii) Were James's readers to interpret his use of this adverbial phrase to mean 2000 years?
 - (1) James's "at hand" has the same immediacy as Jesus'. [1111]
[SEPISEPI]
 - (2) The earnest evangelical Noe says that for God to inspire men to write words that meant nearness and imminence to man, but in reality meant a long time is deceitful double-talk.
 - (3) Meanings stretched a thousand years or to protect a theological bias are deceitful.
- 2) The Writer of Hebrews wrote:
- a) In just a very little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay (Heb 10:37).
 - b) He also wrote: "As you see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).
 - c) 2000 years is longer than the covenant nation of Israel even existed in myth, let alone history, so is this what the author meant when he spoke to these people of "a very little while"?
 - i) None of Jesus' parables depicting the Lord's coming suggest a potentially "long" time.
 - ii) It was the evil servant who says "My Lord delayeth his coming" ([Mt 24:48](#)).
 - d) Paul further told Timothy to "keep the commandment... until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim 6:14).
 - i) Paul clearly anticipated the imminent return of Christ in his lifetime and in the lifetime of his hearers.
 - ii) The plain grammatical meaning of Paul's often-used "we" (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17), and the saturation of his epistles with nearness expectations and exhortations, allow no other conclusion (Rom 13:12; [Phil 4:5](#); [Gal 4:4](#); 1 Corinthians 7:29, 31).
- 3) The two epistles attributed to Peter also exhort their readers to holy living and to hang in there for "a little while" ([1 Pet 1:6](#); 5:10).
- a) This was to be "unto a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time ([1 Pet 1:5](#)) of "these last times" (1 Pet 1:20).
 - b) Peter is referring to the same identical, first century time frame as all the other *New Testament* writers.
 - i) That is why throughout, Peter employs the personal pronoun "you." Peter's "you" in its normal, face-to-face, customary context means his contemporary audience, not an abstract reader anywhere, anytime.
 - ii) We are invited to believe that the *New Testament*

- iii) writers were addressing whoever would experience these eschatological events living in or beyond the twenty-first century, and that all earlier Christians have been admittedly deluded to imagine it might mean them.
 - iv) They were addressed to people alive then and there.
 - v) In no stretch of the imagination could 2000 years be Peter's "a little while," or justify his sense of urgency for his target audience.
- 4) Jesus' coming was often compared to "like a thief" (Mt 24:43; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15).
- a) The reason for the thief comparison was that no one could know the precise time when they would be burgled. Jesus' followers would *not* be caught off guard (1 Thessalonians 5:4).
 - b) His disciples could watch and see "the day" approaching by discerning the signs.
 - c) Paul wrote and admonished first century believers that that day should not overtake "them" as a thief (1 Thessalonians 5:4).
 - i) No one is bothered about a thief coming in the distant future.
 - ii) A warning about a thief has to apply to "now" or a time that will soon become "now," not a time 2000 years or more hence.
- 5) The "this generation" immanency of the coming of the son of man was the central motif of *New Testament* teaching and the uniform expectation of the early Church.

Biblical Precedents

- 1) Behold he cometh with the clouds (Rev 1:7).
- a) "Coming on the clouds" is used of *Old Testament* portrayals of God descending from heaven and coming in power and glory to act in deliverance of his people or to execute judgment on wicked nations and cities.
 - b) The nature of the Hebrew god is plainly given in Genesis where he leaves his bow in the clouds as a token of His covenant with His people.
 - c) God is found in clouds in many places in the scriptures (Gen 9:13,14,16; Ex 13:21,22; 14:19,24; 16:10; 19:9,16; 24:15,16,18; 34:5; 40:34-38; Lev 16:2; Numbers 9:15-22; 10:34; 11:25; 12:5; 14:14; 16:42; Deut 5:22; Judges 5:4; 2 Sam 22:12; 23:4; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chr 5:13-14; Job 22:13-14; 26:9; 36:32; 37:15; Psalms 18:11; 69:34; 77:17; 104:3; 147:8; Isaiah 14: 14:19:1; Lam 3:44; Ezek 1:28; 10:4; Dan 7:13; Nahum 1:3; Zeph 1:15; Zech 10:1).
 - d) The imagery of "coming on the clouds," the son of man was prophesied by Daniel to come (Dan 7:13): I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.
- 2) But every biblical instance of coming on a cloud is God coming!

Parousia

- 1) *New Testament* writers confirmed they were then living in those "last days" (Heb 1:2; Acts 2:17; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1; James 5:3; 2 Pet 3:3; Jude 18; 1 John 2:18).

- 2) Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would come robed "with the garments of vengeance" (Isaiah 59:17).
 - a) He would proclaim not only salvation but, "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2).
 - b) Jesus' statement in Luke's Olivet Discourse contains this very wording,
 - i) "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near... flee..."
 - ii) "For these be the days of vengeance in which all things that are written must be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20-22).
 - iii) He takes this to be 66-70 AD, the Jewish War and the destruction of the temple.
- 3) As this historical time approached, James said, "The Judge is standing at the door."
 - a) And, "The coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:9, 8).
 - b) How long in our traditional view are we going to leave Judge Jesus standing at the door?
- 4) Paul reminded his readers, "the time is short" (1 Corinthians 7:29). How long is short, anyway?
- 5) Peter in perfect, first century harmony proclaimed, "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet 4:7), and warned, "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God" (1 Pet 4:17).
 - a) Urgency permeates Peter's sense of expectation.
 - b) He is emphatic, "the time has come"!
- 6) John wrote in his day: "it is the last hour!" (1 John 2:18b).
- 7) The technical word most often used in the *New Testament* to speak of his coming/return is the Greek word, *Parousia*.

LESSON EIGHT

Kept from the Hour of Temptation

The Church Will Be Here

- 1) We have been dealing with the coming of the Lord and the purposes of God in the earth.
- 2) We're not talking about the purpose of God in heaven, because we know the will of God in heaven will be brought to earth.
 - a) *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth, as in heaven"* is the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray.
 - i) We're interested in what God has to say to the church in this hour.
 - ii) We want to find what God wants to do with this generation.
 - iii) So often when we talk about the kingdom of God, we refer to that which is futuristic.
 - b) We must discover our relationship to the Lord and His kingdom in this present time.
- 3) We have discussed in a previous chapter the "rapture", exposing what I consider to be a great deception.
 - a) That of course is the pre-tribulational teaching of a catching away out of the earth of the saints before an intense period of time known as the Great Tribulation.
 - b) This teaching is basically only about 150 years old. The early church apparently did not teach it.
- 4) Hopefully, we have established in the hearts of the readers that the church will be here during days of tribulation.
 - a) The righteous shall never be removed, but the wicked shall not inherit the earth.
 - i) If this is to be the case, there is an event preceding the coming of the Lord known as Great Tribulation that we must prepare ourselves for.
 - ii) In this chapter, we will be discussing how the Lord has prepared a way for His saints to escape the hour of temptation.
- 5) I have entitled this chapter, "Kept From the Hour of Temptation", or it could be subtitled, "Tribulation: Protection by Removal or Preservation."
- 6) Jesus was asked in Matthew 24:3, *"When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"*
 - a) These things were referring to the disasters Jesus was speaking about in the earlier part of the chapter.
 - b) A great deal of what was being referred to was fulfilled in 70 A. D. when Titus overran Jerusalem. T
 - c) The temple was destroyed during that time when the city laid in ruins.
 - d) The second part of the question concerning the sign of his coming and the end of the age is addressed in verse 21.
 - i) *"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."*

- ii) Verse 29 speaks about *"immediately after the tribulation of those days..."*
 - iii) After this period, shall appear the sign of the coming of the Son of man in heaven.
- 7) Spiritual refuge is the only real safety you will ever find.
- a) You won't find protection from the devil in a geographical location on the face of this earth.
 - b) The only place of safety is abiding under the shadow of the Almighty and in the secret place of the Most High.
 - c) That is why it is important to understand that our protection is in God.
 - i) Jesus said He would have gathered us under his wings as a hen would her brood, but we would not.
 - ii) When the storms come, there will be a hiding place.
 - iii) That's the way the mother hen protects her young when the storms approach, by hiding her chicks under her wing.
- 8) Building on the Right Foundation.
- a) Today is the day of preparation for the coming storm.
 - b) Our preparation is based upon hearing and acting upon the Word of God.
 - c) Matthew 7:24, Jesus said, *"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock."*
 - i) When the rains descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, it fell not.
 - ii) It was founded upon a rock.
 - d) When a man hears the Word of God and does nothing about it, he is like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.
 - i) When the rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it fell and great was its fall.
 - ii) That which is not built upon a solid rock, the sure foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus as the chief cornerstone, will be in for a great fall.
 - iii) It will not stand the pressures and storms of tribulation.
- 9) To withstand the fiery darts of the enemy, we are admonished to put on the whole armour of God.
- a) Having done all to stand, we are to continue to stand in the evil day.
 - b) Why are we commanded to stand in the evil day if we will not be here during the evil day as many surmise?
 - i) If you are not to be in battle, why put on the whole armour of God?
 - ii) Having done all, we stand and know when the battle is over, we will still be standing!
- 10) The coming of the Lord has been likened unto the days of Noah.
- a) As Noah was commanded to prepare an ark--not for escape out of the world, but to be kept or preserved in the flood--so is the command going forth today to prepare the ark of safety.
 - b) As the ark is now being prepared, people are invited to enter for protection from the coming tribulation.
- 2) The way of escape in tribulation is not a cop-out, but escape out of tribulation could be.
- a) Jesus prayed, *"Father, I pray not that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil thereof"* (John 17:15).

- b) The Lord said, *"Because you have kept the word of my patience, I will also keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."*
- 3) Removal not an option.
 - a) He does not say he's coming to take his "waiting bride away."
 - b) It does not say that he is coming to take the church out, but to present himself a glorious church--a perfect church, an overcoming church, a victorious church, a church filled with power, a church that is a voice and an influence in the world, a church that represents a light, a church that is declaring to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God.
- 4) The Lord will provide protection for those who have kept the word of his patience.
 - a) He will keep them from the hour of temptation.
 - b) That word to "be kept from" is identical to what Jesus prayed, "Take them not out of the world, but keep them from the evil thereof.
 - c) That denotes a preservation right in the midst of—preservation instead of by removal.
 - d) Many may have held to a traditional teaching because of fear.
 - i) Either they believe they're too weak or God is too good to allow it.
 - ii) The mentality of many is, "Lord, if you don't hurry and get your church out of here, we're all going to go down the tube!"
 - iii) God's people should never be fearful of the things which are coming upon the earth.
- 5) There is more emphasis upon the mark of the beast than upon the mark of God.
 - a) There is more emphasis upon the antichrist than upon the Christ.
 - b) When we place our attention on the antichrist and the beast, we are being diverted from the real thing God wants to do in and through us.
 - c) The Lord wants to put a seal and mark upon us.

Distinction between Tribulation and Wrath of God

- 1) What is tribulation?
 - a) It is basically persecution and afflictions, which could be represented by plagues, famines, earthquakes, wars, sicknesses, and starvation.
 - i) Therefore, there have been varying degrees of tribulation since the beginning of time.
 - ii) Because we are in America and have never suffered any of these things doesn't make us immune.
 - b) Tribulation is the same as afflictions, persecutions, and troubles which come from Satan.
 - i) Tribulation is not that which comes from the hand of God.
 - ii) If you study the root words of tribulation, affliction, suffering, and trials, you will discover they are basically the same.
 - c) The Word of God teaches that in the midst of every tribulation the will of God is deliverance.
 - i) *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all (Ps. 34:19).*
 - ii) Through much tribulation we are to press our way into the kingdom of God (Acts

14:22). The kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent take it by force (Mat. 11:12).

- 2) The Great Tribulation has been referred to as the time of Jacob's trouble.
 - a) The time of Jacob's trouble is specifically referring to the natural nation of Israel.
 - i) The seventieth week of Daniel refers to this period, and gives rise to the theory of seven years of tribulation (week of years).
 - ii) *"And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thes. 1:7).*
 - b) Ephesians 5:6 speaks of the works of the flesh. Because of these works of the flesh cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
 - c) Jesus said, *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).*
 - d) Romans 5:9 says, *"Now being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*
 - e) *"In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).*
 - f) *"This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).*
 - g) I Thessalonians 5:9 states, *"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." I Thessalonians 1:10 says, "Even Jesus who has delivered us from the wrath to come."*

Protection from Egyptian Plagues

- 1) In the Old Testament, we find one of the most profound examples of God's exemption for his chosen.
 - a) During the plagues of Egypt provision was made right in the midst of Egyptian bondage.
 - i) That provision was made under this old agreement; just think of the provisions of the new covenant.
 - ii) There was not one single case of the children of God even being touched.
 - b) In the middle of Egypt, the death angel went throughout the land and supernaturally passed over households without touching those who had the blood applied to the lintels of their doorposts.
 - i) They were protected by the blood!
 - ii) We are now justified by the blood and are saved from the wrath to come.
- 3) The Seal of God.
 - a) In Revelation 7:2-3, John said he saw an angel with the seal of the living God who was given the commandment to not hurt the earth or any living thing until the servants of the Lord were sealed.
 - b) Ezekiel 9:6 records the account of one who had the inkhorn by his side to put a seal upon a group of people.
 - i) They were not to be hurt by the plagues against the land.
 - ii) Revelation 14:1 tells about the 144,000 who had their Father's name or nature in their foreheads.

- (1) These are overcomers.
- (2) Based on these Biblical accounts, should we be concerned about the mark of the beast?
- iii) *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivered him out of them all."*
- 4) The Lion's Den.
 - a) When he went into the tribulation of the den of lions, the mouths of the lions were closed.
 - b) He came forth out of the lion's den victorious and unscathed!
 - c) He came through his tribulation triumphantly.
- 5) The Fiery Furnace
 - a) Is there a more beautiful account of deliverance from tribulation in the Word of God?
 - b) The same faith and determination they had to demonstrate in order to come forth victorious out of the fire is the same that will bring us through anything we will ever be faced with.
 - c) They declared, *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter..."*
 - i) If it be so that you will follow through with your threat and throw us into the fiery furnace,
 - ii) *"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace..." "and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king."*
 - (1) You go ahead and follow through with your threats, and if it be so that you do what you have said, let it be known that our God will deliver us.
 - (2) If it be not so--if you decide to change your mind--we still have our minds made up. We still will not serve your gods or worship the golden image.
- 6) Then what is tribulation?
 - a) Was the lion's den really tribulation for Daniel?
 - i) Sure the lions represented a real threat, but not one hair of Daniel's head was harmed.
 - ii) He was not delivered out of the den, but was delivered in it.
 - b) Was the fiery furnace really tribulation for the Three Hebrew Boys?
 - i) The fire was very real, and it was very hot!
 - ii) Yet, they were not burned nor even scorched.
 - iii) They were not delivered out of the fire, but they were delivered in the fire.
 - c) *"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Is. 43:2).*

The Secret Place of the Most High

- 1) The message of the church is one of overcoming victory, and there is a secret place of the Lord.
 - a) *"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome*

pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday" (Ps. 91:1-6).

- b) *"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee" (verse 7).*
- 2) Did you know that according to Psalm 91, death can be all around us, with pestilence and destruction lurking at every side, but it will not come nigh us?
 - a) John Lake, a medical doctor who believed in the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which supersedes the law of sin and death, demonstrated that no plague could harm him.
 - i) During a great outbreak of the bubonic plague, people were dying from this highly contagious disease all around him.
 - ii) He challenged scientists to test the live germ that came in contact with his skin.
 - iii) When the germs of the bubonic plague contacted his flesh, they (the germs) died immediately!
 - b) The power of God was so strong in Smith Wigglesworth's life that people could not die in his presence.
 - i) He manifested the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (1) Where life is, death cannot prevail.
 - (2) Where there is victory, defeat cannot remain.
 - ii) What we are sharing is that where there is destruction, even all around you, it does not mean it has to come nigh your dwelling.
- 3) Where can you run from disaster?
 - a) That could be like the man in the Bible who escaped the bear and the lion in the way only to come into the house and be bitten by the adder.
 - i) Where do you run to escape?
 - ii) You can't run from plagues and destruction; you have to find a place in God.
 - b) This is the secret place of the most high.
 - i) The Lord is saying, *"Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Is. 26:20).*
 - ii) *When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him" (Is. 59:19).*
- 4) Elijah had a provision for 3 1/2 years.
 - a) This 3 1/2 year period is significant and typical of tribulation.
 - i) Ahab, the king of Israel, is typical of the political beast system of Revelation 13.
 - ii) Jezebel is a type of the religious beast of Revelation 13.
 - iii) Elijah is typical of the Body of Christ, who are overcomers, while the famine was typical of the Great Tribulation.
 - b) God had a place of provision for Elijah.
 - i) For 3 1/2 years, he was nourished by the hand of the Lord.
 - ii) That is one of the most beautiful types that I have found in the Word of God.
- 5) Being Strong and Doing Exploits

- a) The Word says in Daniel that they who do know their God shall be strong and do exploits (Dan. 11:32).
- b) This is right in the midst of tribulation of the last days.

The Glory of the Lord Is Risen

- 1) If the purpose of God is for the church to be a witness or a light during dark hours upon the earth, then it is evident there will be no removal of its presence or influence before these dark days.
- 2) *"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."* (Is. 60:1).
 - a) When is this light come and the glory of the Lord risen?
 - b) The darkest days upon the face of this earth will be when men alienate themselves from God.
 - c) The light of the Lord is come for the Body of Christ.
 - d) *"Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising."*
- 3) When the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; when it appears everything is falling apart around you; when it looks like the earth is going to "hell in a basket", then you can rest assured that there is a glory of God to be revealed!
 - a) The Word says in Habakkuk 2:14, *"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."*
 - b) *"As surely as I live, saith the Lord, the earth shall be filled with my glory"* (Num. 14:21). Isaiah said, *"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together"* (Is. 40:5).
 - c) What does it mean for the earth to be filled with the glory of God?
 - d) People need to see the manifestation of the glory of God in you and me.
- 4) The glory of God will be revealed in the house of God.
 - a) The Word of God says that the glory of the Lord so filled the house that Solomon built the ministers could not minister for the power of the glory of His presence.
 - i) That temple was little more than a type or shadow, but there is a greater tabernacle.
 - ii) There is a house of God that is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone!
 - b) The Word says WE are the habitation and the house of God!
 - i) That house will be filled when the Lord will come to be glorified in His saints!
 - ii) The next appearing of the Lord will be the appearing in His saints.
 - iii) II Thessalonians 1:10 declares, *"...when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his angels...when he shall come to be revealed in His saints..."*
- 5) What does it mean to reveal the glory of God?
 - a) The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was to set the captives free and to open the prison doors. *"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised"* (Luke 4:18).

- i) To manifest the glory of the Lord is when the people of God see things in a different light.
 - (1) While everything around you is crumbling, we have hope and encouragement.
 - (2) The world is caught up in a spirit of despondency; it sees no hope.
 - (a) All it sees is the darkness.
 - (b) All it can see is the antichrist and the beast.
 - ii) When you are reminded that light will always expel darkness, you will have a different perspective.
 - b) Light will make manifest all things, and we are the children of light.
- 6) What about the day of the Lord which will come as a thief in the night?
- a) Good news! We are not of the night!
 - b) I Thessalonians 5:5 states, "*Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*"
 - c) We have understanding and discernment of the Spirit to know the times and the seasons.
 - i) We must know the day and hour we are living in so that day should not come upon us unawares or as a thief.
 - ii) So when people say there is no hope in the world or there is no way things can be salvaged, then rest assured that there is a need for the manifestation of the light of God.
- 7) The Lord Jesus Christ is coming forth within us, which Paul described as the mystery of Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).
- a) The hope of glory just speaks of something that is yet to come.
 - i) The Christ in us is the hope of glory.
 - ii) As sure as there is a hope of glory, faith will bring the glory.
 - b) Faith will bring the actuality of the glory, not just the hope of the glory.
 - i) When Christ came within us was our hope of glory.
 - ii) The manifestation of the Christ will be the glory.
- 8) Why must there be a manifestation of the antichrist before the coming of the Lord?
- a) II Thessalonians 2:8 says the Wicked shall be revealed so that the Lord may destroy him with the brightness of his coming.
 - i) Darkness must come first so that the light might destroy it.
 - ii) Evil must be manifest so that the light of His glory might be revealed to destroy it.
 - b) You are the light of the world!
 - i) Your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you!
 - ii) Light will always expel the darkness.
- 9) When will the Lord come?
- a) "*When the Lord shall build up Zion, then shall HE appear in His glory?* (Ps. 102:16).
 - i) He didn't say that he would appear over in glory land.
 - ii) He will appear in His glory.
 - b) Zion is the holy city of God.
 - i) We have come unto Mt. Zion, the holy city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22).
 - ii) The Zion of God is the church, the Body of Christ. When the Body of Christ is built

- up, then the Lord shall appear in His glory.
- c) The Lord will appear in His glory when the Body of Christ comes into unity and into maturity.
 - i) When we come into the full stature of the measure of the Lord Jesus Christ is when Zion is built up.
 - ii) The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers have been given to the church for the work of the ministry that we may be brought into maturity (Eph. 4:11-13).
- 10) The Bible speaks of the greater glory.
- a) It speaks of the glory of the latter house (Hag. 2:9).
 - i) The glory of this latter house will far supersede the glory of the former.
 - ii) According to II Corinthians 3, we are experiencing a greater manifestation of glory through the ministry of spirit and life.
 - b) There was a glory associated with the law.
 - i) There was a glory associated with the ministration of death and condemnation.
 - ii) In fact, there was such a manifestation of the glory of God upon the face of Moses that he had to veil his face.
 - c) If the glory of God associated with the Old Covenant was so great, just think how much greater will be the glory of the New Covenant which is associated with spirit and life!
 - d) Paul says, "*We are beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord and are being changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord*" (II Cor. 3:18).
- 11) The world needs a manifestation of the power and the glory of God.
- a) The world needs a manifestation of light and life.
 - b) It needs the saints of the most High to arise in the power and the authority of the kingdom of God and to manifest the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 12) The Lord Needs Ministers in Time of Darkness.
- a) There is a witness in the earth, and there will be a witness to remain in this earth through the darkest hour.
 - b) It will be the glory of the Lord through the church.

LESSON NINE

One Holy Nation

1) Who Is the Elect of God?

- a) Some questions to consider.
 - i) To whom will the glory and blessings of God be give?
 - ii) Who will be used to manifest his glory to the world?
 - iii) Who are the saints of the most High God who shall possess the eternal kingdom of God forever and ever?
 - iv) The book of Revelation speaks of the saints in excess of 20 times. Who are they?
 - v) Who is the elect of Matthew 24?
- b) The purposes of God.
 - i) That there might be a people who will be a praise in the earth.
 - ii) That there might be a people who will destroy the works of the devil and to restore creation.
 - iii) That there might be a people who will be conformed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - iv) That there might be a people who will be the manifestation of the glory of God in the earth.
- c) The word “elect” in Mat. 24 is the same as the word chosen in 1 Pet. 2:9. (1588. eklektos, ek-lek-tos'; from G1586; select; by impl. favorite:--chosen, elect.)
 - i) (Mat 24:31 KJV) And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
 - ii) (1 Pet 2:9 KJV) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

2) The Church Is Not God's "Plan B."

- a) God had an eternal plan in Christ Jesus from the foundation of the earth.
- b) When Adam sinned, God immediately had plans to raise up a seed unto himself who would bruise the head of the serpent.
- c) God always had in mind a peculiar people, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, and a chosen people.
 - i) (Exo 19:5 KJV) Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: (Exo 19:6 KJV) And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.
 - ii) (Deu 14:2 KJV) For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.
 - iii) (Titus 2:14 KJV) Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,

and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

- iv) (1 Pet 2:9 KJV) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

3) **God's Eternal Plan Is to Reveal Himself through the Church**

- a) The church has been in the earth through the centuries, but was a New Testament revelation.
- b) The church is a called out people unto the Lord; a people raised up for His name sake.
- c) Church is "ecclesia" which means a congregation called out from a larger group.
- d) The word "assembly" in Acts 19:32 referred to the gathering of the hostile people who were angry with Paul for being responsible for destroying the idols of Diana.
- e) The church in the wilderness. (Acts 7:38 KJV) This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:
- f) Abraham's call was the beginning of the church.
- g) God's promise to Abraham. Your seed shall be as the stars of the heaven and the sand of the sea.

4) **Who Is the Seed of Abraham?**

- a) It is not enough to say you're the seed of Abraham.
 - i) The Arabs and Jews both can make this claim.
 - ii) We as believers can make this claim, and we're neither Jew nor Arab.
- b) They are not all Israel who are of Israel.
 - i) (Rom 9:6 KJV) Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:
 - ii) (Rom 9:7 KJV) Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. (Rom 9:8 KJV) That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.
- c) We be Abraham's seed.
 - i) (John 8:32 KJV) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:33 KJV) They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?
 - ii) (John 8:37 KJV) I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.
- d) Distinction between "seed" and "children."
 - i) (John 8:39 KJV) They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.
 - ii) (John 8:42 KJV) Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.
- e) The devil is your father.
 - i) (John 8:44 KJV) Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

- ii) Jesus recognized their natural lineage as being the seed of Abraham, but their spiritual lineage was identified with the devil.
- iii) Bloodline is not enough. Recognized only on the basis of spiritual relationship.

5) The Seed of Isaac—the Son of Promise.

- a) (Rom 9:8 KJV) That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.
- b) (Gal 4:22 KJV) For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. (Gal 4:23 KJV) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.
- c) Two covenants. (Gal 4:24 KJV) Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. (Gal 4:25 KJV) For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. (Gal 4:26 KJV) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
 - i) Allegory of natural seed and spiritual seed of Abraham.
 - (1) Jews and Arabs.
 - (2) Natural Jews and spiritual Jews.
 - ii) Jerusalem which now is (the natural city).
 - iii) Jerusalem which is above (the spiritual city). (Heb 12:22 KJV) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
- d) (Gal 4:28 KJV) Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.
- e) (Gal 4:31 KJV) So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

6) Heirs According to the Promise.

- a) If ye be Christ's. (Gal 3:29 KJV) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
- b) Promise through faith.
 - i) (Rom 4:13 KJV) For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. (Rom 4:14 KJV) For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:
 - ii) (Rom 4:16 KJV) Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,
 - iii) (Gal 3:7 KJV) Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.
- c) Promise to seed--Christ. (Gal 3:16 KJV) Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.
- d) (Eph 2:19 KJV) Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

7) God Has One New Man

- a) Nigh by the blood of Jesus. (Eph 2:12 KJV) That at that time ye were without Christ,

being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:(Eph 2:13 KJV) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (Eph 2:14 KJV) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

b) One new man.

i) (Rom 9:23 KJV) And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, (Rom 9:24 KJV) Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (Rom 9:25 KJV) As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. (Rom 9:26 KJV) And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

ii) (Rom 10:12 KJV) For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

iii) (Gal 3:28 KJV) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

iv) (Eph 3:5 KJV) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (Eph 3:6 KJV) That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

v) (Col 3:10 KJV) And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (Col 3:11 KJV) Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

c) You are a chosen generation. (1 Pet 2:9 KJV) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (1 Pet 2:10 KJV) Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

d) There are two groups.

i) God is not dealing with a natural seed and a spiritual seed as his elect. He is dealing with two groups of people--believers and unbelievers.

ii) The blessings of the Lord are to the Jews and Gentiles who have been born again.

iii) Born again Gentiles do not become a part of the inheritance of God with unregenerated Jews.

iv) They become fellowheirs with regenerated or born-again Jews.

8) **God Has Never Been Interested in a Bloodline!**

a) He has always been interested in a spiritual lineage.

b) Proselyte Jews.

c) Yes, God is interested in a pure race.

i) (2 Cor 6:14 KJV) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

- ii) (2 Cor 6:17 KJV) Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Paul's Desire for His People

Romans 9:1-10

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. ³ For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: ⁴ Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; ⁵ Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. ⁶ Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: ⁷ Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. ⁸ That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. ⁹ For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. ¹⁰ And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

Romans 10:1-5

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. ² For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. ⁵ For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

Romans 11:1-7

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, ³ Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. ⁴ But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. ⁵ Even so then at this

present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. ⁷ What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

The Jews Provoked to Jealousy

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin (Romans 11:1).

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Definition of Jealousy

Jealousy is a complex emotion that encompasses feelings ranging from fear of abandonment to rage and humiliation. Jealousy strikes both men and women and is most typically aroused when a person perceives a threat to a valued relationship from a third party. Jealousy is distinguished from envy in that jealousy always involves a third party seen as a rival for affection. (Psychology Today—www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/jealousy)

Jealousy is an emotion; the term generally refers to the thoughts or feelings of insecurity, fear, concern, and envy over relative lack of possessions, status or something of great personal value, particularly in reference to a comparator. (Wikipedia—<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jealousy>).

Both jealousy and envy are often used to indicate that a person is covetous of something that someone else has, but jealousy carries the particular sense of “zealous vigilance” and tends to be applied more exclusively to feelings of protectiveness regarding one's own advantages or attachments. (Merriam-Webster dictionary). Israel Provoked to Jealous

When Will Israel Be Provoked to Jealousy?

Presently, the Jews don't have any reason to be jealous. They will be provoked to jealous only when they recognize there is something of which to be jealous. What would that be? It would be to come to the realization that they are no longer the sole target of God's love and commitment. At that time, they will feel that their lover has rejected them in favor of another. That would be the source of jealousy. At the present time, the Jews have not accepted the fact that God has extended His love to the whole world. They still believe, as does most of

the Church, that they are the elect of God. But, the elect is those who have accepted the Messiah and have accepted His love, grace, and mercy.

The manifestation of jealousy will not come until the Jews recognize and experience the fact that the source of God's manifestation of love is for anyone who is non-Jewish, and that comes through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have not accepted the fact that God's love has been extended to those outside the commonwealth of Israel. That will not happen until they come to the realization that their Messiah has indeed come, which allowed anyone outside the commonwealth of Israel to come into common union. That common union will come when that which was once twain is now made one in Christ Jesus. Now, the middle wall of partition has been broken down, and the non-Jews who accept Christ are on the same level as any other who accepts Christ, including the Jews themselves. Everyone must come through Jesus, who is the truth, the life, and the way.

The event that cut the Israeli branch off from the vine was the coming of the Messiah whom they rejected. In order to be grafted back into the vine, they will have to accept the vine, who is the Messiah. That will be what Paul referred to as "resurrection from the dead." "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" That will truly be a phenomenal time when Jews and non-Jews recognize they are one in Christ Jesus, our Lord and King.

Where Does the Natural Nation of Israel Stand Today?

- 1) The same as all nations.
 - a) Righteousness exalteth a nation, sin a reproach to any people
 - i) Ps. 9:17 - *"The wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God."*
 - b) They need God.
 - i) They must accept the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii) They must come by grace through faith. There is no justification except through faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c) Grafted in.
 - i) (Rom 11:1 KJV) I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
 - ii) (Rom 11:23 KJV) And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. (Rom 11:24 KJV) For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?
- 2) A great revival. (Rom 11:12 KJV) Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

No Return to an Old System that Has Been Superseded by the New

The Church—One Holy Nation

- 1) One elect; one group of saints.
 - a. One purpose of God.
 - b. One witness to the world.
 - c. (Rom 2:28 KJV) For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: (Rom 2:29 KJV) But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.
- 2) There is one body of Christ--the Church. It is made up of all races, kindreds, and tongues of the earth.
 - a. This Church is purchased by His blood. (Acts 20:28 KJV) Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
 - b. Glory in the church. (Eph 3:21 KJV) Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.
 - c. Revelation of the mystery. (Eph 3:3 KJV) How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (Eph 3:4 KJV) Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (Eph 3:5 KJV) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (Eph 3:6 KJV) That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (Eph 3:7 KJV) Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. (Eph 3:8 KJV) Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (Eph 3:9 KJV) And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (Eph 3:10 KJV) To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (Eph 3:11 KJV) According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

LESSON TEN

The Millennium Question

- 1) Definition of Millennium
 - a) Derived from the Latin words *mille*, meaning a “thousand,” and *annus*, meaning a “year.”
 - b) The term refers to a thousand-year period.
- 2) Revelation 20:1-10 discusses this period of time, and it is characterized by the following:
 - a) It includes the binding of Satan (vv. 1-3).
 - b) The testimony of the witnesses, the beheaded souls who have not worshiped the beast (vv. 4-5).
 - c) Satan will be loosed for a brief period at the end of the millennium only to be thrown into the lake of fire (vv. 7-10).
 - d) The thousand years ends with a great apostasy and the rebellion of nations led by God and Magog (v. 7).
- 3) Three major viewpoints regarding the millennium.
 - a) Premillennialism—claims that the return of Christ precedes the millennium.
 - b) Postmillennialism—holds that Christ returns after the millennium.
 - c) Amillennialism—holds that the millennial is not limited to a thousand years but includes the entire period of time between the first and second comings of Christ.
- 4) A related term is *chiliasm*, which comes from the Greek term *chilia*, literally meaning “thousand years.”
- 5) The Protestant orthodox, both Lutheran and Reformed, denied the notion of an earthly millennial in the future and viewed Revelation 20 as a reference to the reign of grace between the first and second coming of Christ.

Dispensationalism

- 1) Dispensationalism is a system of biblical interpretation that distinguishes between seven distinct periods or “dispensations.”
 - a) Innocence (before the fall).
 - b) Conscience (from the fall to Noah).
 - c) Human Government (from Noah to Abraham).
 - d) Promise (from Abraham to Moses).
 - e) Law (from Moses to Christ).
 - f) Grace (the church age).
 - g) The Kingdom (millennial).
- 2) Dispensationalists argue for literal interpretation of all prophetic portions of Scripture.
 - a) This means that all of the covenantal promises made to Abraham and David in the Old Testament are to be fulfilled literally in a future millennial age.
 - b) Israel will regain the land promised by God, which was fulfilled in 1948.

- 3) Dispensationalists insist that God's redemptive plan focuses on national Israel, with provision made for Gentiles during the church age.
 - a) The church age is the period of time between Jesus' offer of a messianic kingdom to Israel and the beginning of the great tribulation, which commences with the rapture, when the Gentile church is removed from the earth.
 - b) A distinction between God's purposes for Israel and the church is an important feature of the dispensational framework.
- 4) Dispensationalism clearly distinguishes between Israel and the church and their respective programs.
 - a) In fulfillment of God's promises to the descendants of Abraham, the next event to occur on the prophetic time line, is the rapture of Christian believers.
 - b) This will occur when Jesus Christ secretly returns to earth at the beginning of the seven-year tribulation period.
 - c) Dispensationalists do not see Daniel's seventieth week as being a fulfilled messianic prophecy but as a future event.
 - i) This period refers to unbelieving Israel, not the church, which will have already been raptured from the earth.
 - ii) Those who are converted to Christ will go on into the millennium to repopulate the earth.
 - d) During the millennium, the kingdom of God is fully manifested on earth.
- 5) According to dispensationalists, Jesus came to earth, bringing an offer of God's long-anticipated theocratic kingdom to the Jews, who rejected their own Messiah.
 - a) God then turned to dealing with the Gentiles, making the church age a parenthesis of sorts.
 - b) Signs of the end of the age include
 - i) The birth of the nation of Israel.
 - ii) The revival of the Roman Empire as seen in the emergence of the European economic community.
 - iii) The impending Russian-Arab invasion of Israel.
 - c) The anti-christ is presently awaiting the removal of the church so he can be revealed and begin his reign of terror upon Israel and those who accept Christ during the tribulation period.
- 6) According to dispensationalists, the millennium is marked by a return to Old Testament temple worship and animal sacrifices to commemorate the redemptive work of Christ.
 - a) At the end of the millennium, the nations revolt against Christ, resulting in the great white throne judgment, after which Satan and all unbelievers are cast into the lake of fire.
 - b) The majority of those involved in the early charismatic movement were dispensational in their views on Bible prophecy, even though most dispensationalists emphasized the "Charismata" ceased with the completion of the New Testament.
- 7) Progressive dispensationalists see God's covenant promises to Abraham fulfilled in the church and the Davidic covenant fulfilled in Christ, not in a future millennial Davidic kingship.

- a) They make no artificial distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven.
- b) They move closer to traditional forms of covenant theology and historic premillennialism.

Historic Premillennialism

- 1) The basic features of historic premillennialism.
 - a) The coming of Jesus Christ marks the beginning of a new age and is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophetic expectations.
 - i) When Jesus begins his public ministry, the kingdom of God is manifest through his preaching, teaching, and miracles, though that kingdom is not yet consummated.
 - ii) From Jesus' ascension into heaven and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the kingdom remains present through the Spirit and advances until the end of the age, which is marked by the return of Christ to the earth in judgment.
 - b) Great apostasy and tribulation occur immediately preceding the return of Christ.
 - c) After his return, a period of a thousand years will separate the first resurrection from the second resurrection.
 - d) Satan will be bound, and the kingdom will be consummated.
 - e) At the end of the millennial period, Satan will be loosed, and a massive rebellion led by the mysterious Gog and Magog will immediately precede the second resurrection or final judgment

Postmillennialism

- 1) Postmillennialists affirm that the millennial is a period of universal peace and righteousness yet to come.
- 2) Five essential characteristics.
 - a) Through the preaching of the gospel and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Christianity will experience a tremendous expansion. During this lengthy period of time known as the millennium.
 - b) Christian influence will spawn increasing peace and economic well-being.
 - c) Large numbers of ethnic Jews will come to faith in Jesus Christ.
 - d) At the end of this millennial age, a short period of apostasy will occur.
 - e) Then Christ will return, followed by the resurrection and the final judgment.
- 3) Postmillennialists are divided as to whether the period of time is a literal one thousand years, and whether the millennial age begins abruptly or gradually.
- 4) Some argue that postmillennialism was the historic position of the church from the days of St. Augustine.
- 5) The difference of opinion between amillennial and postmillennial Christians centers on the starting point, character, and length of the millennial age.
- 6) Amillennial Christians see the millennial age as occupying the entire period of time between the first and second comings of Christ.

- a) This period is one of the triumph of the spiritual kingdom of God in the midst of the corresponding rise of evil in opposition to Christ and his kingdom.'
 - b) The majority of Reformed Christians are amillennial.
- 7) A point of contention among postmillennialists has to do with preterism.
- a) Most preterists are postmillennial, though not all postmillennialists are not preterists.
 - b) Preterists believe the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation describe the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, while some postmillennialists think certain aspects of these prophecies may yet be future.
- 8) Postmillennialism was a widely accepted eschatological position among American evangelicals in the period of unprecedented technological growth between 1870 and 1915.
- a) The coming of World War II, the Great Depression, and the horrors of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, optimism gave way to pessimism. Dispensationalism largely supplanted postmillennialism as an eschatological option for evangelicals.
- 9) Reconstructionism is a philosophy aimed at bringing all institutions under subjection to God.
- a) In the theonomic version of postmillennialism, the millennial vision focuses on those things traditional postmillennarians hold dear, but they look for a Christian theocracy to be restored on earth.
 - b) They emphasize the continuity of the civil law as applied to Israel under the old covenant and to all nations under the new covenant.
 - c) Once established, this victorious kingdom will bind Satan, Christianize the nations, and largely subdue evil throughout the world.
 - d) God exercises dominion through his church and establishes his law as the law of the land.
 - e) Both individual Christians and civil magistrates are bound to this moral law.
- 10) While theonomic postmillennialism emphasizes the rise of a theocracy, classical postmillennialism emphasizes an optimistic view of the future of redemptive history, when people will convert to Christianity and society at large will prosper.

Amillennialism

- 1) Amillennialism was not recognized as a distinct position until around the turn of the twentieth century.
- a) Until then, amillennarians called themselves postmillennialists because they believed Christ would come back after the millennial age.
 - b) They were different from traditional postmillennarians in that they did not believe in an earthly millennial age yet to dawn.
 - c) Amillennialism is also called "present" or "realized" millennialism.
- 2) Amillennialists hold that the promises made to Israel, David, and Abraham in the Old Testament are fulfilled by Jesus Christ and his church during this present age.
- a) The millennium is the period of time between the two advents of our Lord with the thousand years of Revelation 20 being symbolic of the entire interadvental age.
 - b) At the first advent of Jesus Christ, Satan was bound by Christ's victory over him at Calvary and the empty tomb.

- i) The effects of this victory continued because of the presence of the kingdom of God via the preaching of the gospel and as evidenced by Jesus' miracles.
 - ii) Through the spread of the gospel, Satan is no longer free to deceive the nations.
 - c) Christ is presently reigning in heaven during the entire period between Christ's first and second coming.
 - d) At the end of the millennial age, Satan is released, a great apostasy breaks out, the general resurrection occurs, Jesus Christ returns in final judgment for all people, and he establishes a new heaven and earth.
- 3) First given systematic expression by St. Augustine in his famous City of God, amillennialism developed a distinctive Reformed emphasis.
 - 4) Because amillennialism has its roots deep in historic Christianity, when it comes to comparing amillennialism with dispensationalism, the burden of proof lies with dispensationalists to prove their case.
 - 5) It should be noted that all major thinkers in Christian history have held something akin to the amillennial position.
 - a) Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin.
 - b) Many believers have rejected amillennialism because they presume it emphasizes interpreting prophecy "spiritually" or "nonliterally."
 - c) Hal Lindsey has labeled the amillennialism position as "demonic and heretical," and the root of modern anti-Semitism.

The Historic Protestant Hermeneutic

- 1) Three major presuppositions underlie the historic Protestant system.
 - a) The New Testament should explain the Old. The New Testament must be seen as the final authority and interpreter of the Old Testament.
 - b) Old Testament images are types and shadows of the glorious realities that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. According to amillennialists, Jesus Christ is
 - i) The true Israel.
 - ii) The true temple.
 - iii) The heir to David's throne.
 - iv) Heir to the promises made to Abraham.
 - c) The analogy of faith.
 - i) This refers to the importance of interpreting an unclear biblical text in light of clear passages which speak to the same subject rather than taking the literal sense in isolation from the rest of Scripture.
 - ii) Texts which speak of last things must be interpreted by other biblical passages.
 - iii) This is especially the case when New Testament writers show how an Old Testament passage pointed to Christ and is fulfilled in him.
- 2) Christ, the True Israel.
 - a) Peter spoke of "how the prophets who spoke...searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow" (1 Peter 1:10-12).

- b) “Dispensationalists interpret Old Testament prophecies as being fulfilled in a future earthly millennium in which Israel along with Gentiles would be under the reign of the Davidic king.
 - c) The gospel writers interpreted prophecies from Isaiah as fulfilled in the messianic mission of Jesus.
 - i) Isaiah 53:4 – “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted...”
 - ii) Matt. 8:16-17 – “When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”
 - iii) “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son” Matthew told us that Hosea’s prophecy was fulfilled when baby Jesus’ parents took him to Egypt during Herod’s persecution.
 - d) Jesus was the seed of Abraham.
 - e) Galatians 3:7-8. “...those who believe are children of Abraham.”
 - i) Abraham believed the same gospel that Paul preached to the Gentile Galatians.
 - ii) There has been only one plan of salvation and one gospel from the very beginning.
 - f) The New Testament writers claimed that Jesus was the true Israel of God and the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.
- 3) The City of Jerusalem.
- a) Jesus to the Samaritan woman: “You worship in this mountain; the Jews in that. The time is now that we worship God in spirit and in truth.”
 - b) Hebrews 12. “You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire, to darkness, gloom and storm, to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded.
 - i) If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.
 - ii) The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”
 - c) But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:16-24).
 - d) In the Lord Jesus, the heavenly Jerusalem has already come, even now.
- 4) David’s greater son.
- a) (Isaiah 9:7) “...of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne...”
 - b) “Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 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. (Luke 1:31-33).

- c) “Brethren, I can tell you confidently, that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him an oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven and yet he said, ‘the Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’ Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:29-56).
 - d) It was in Christ’s resurrection and ascension that God fulfilled his promise that David’s greater son would rule the nations with an everlasting kingdom.
- 5) Christ the true Temple.
- a) “One greater than the temple is here” (Matt. 12:6).
 - b) “...people will go up to the temple on the mountain of the Lord and learn his ways.
 - c) “Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days” (John 2:19).
 - d) Ezekiel said a river of life will flow out of the temple.
- 6) “The glory of the Lord filled his temple” (Exodus 40:34)
- a) Against the backdrop of redemptive history, we see how this pointed to Pentecost, when, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, the glory of the Lord filled his true temple, the mystical body of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:12)
 - b) If we are the temple of the living God (2 Cor. 6:16), what use remains for a future literal temple?
 - i) That to which the temple had pointed is now a reality through the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii) Why return to the types and shadow?
 - c) In Hebrews 8-10, Jesus fulfilled the priesthood typology.
 - d) “We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man” (Heb. 8:1-2).
 - e) If the reality to which the Old Testament sacrifices and priesthood pointed is found in this true sanctuary and tabernacle in heaven, why look for a return to the shadows in the form of an earthly temple, which pointed us to this heavenly scene? of the Old Testament in his death, and he put an end to the sacrificial system in his own blood once and for all.
- 7) If Jesus is the true temple of God, he alone gives us the “living water” which takes away the thirst of human sin and longing.
- a) The dispensationalists’ insistence on a return in the millennial age to the types of the Old Testament sacrificial system amounts to a serious misunderstanding of the nature of redemptive history.
 - b) By arguing for a new commemorative order based on Old Testament typology in the millennial age, dispensationalists see the future not as a consummation but as a return to the past.

- c) This sadly obscures the person and work of Christ by seeing the ultimate reality not in him but in the types and shadows destined to perish when the reality entered the theater of redemption.
- 8) The rebellion at the end of the millennium will be a revolt of the redeemed against the redeemer.

The Resurrection

- 1) "Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them" (Rev. 20:6).
 - a) Jesus said that those who believe in him have already "crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24).
- 2) The first resurrection takes place in this present age, not in the future millennium.
 - a) Christ's resurrection marked the dawn of the age to come and ushered in a new and final era of redemptive history.
 - b) Christ's resurrection marked the initial resurrection from a whole group to follow.
 - c) "...all who are in Christ were raised with him when Christ rose from the dead.
 - d) "As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22).
 - e) Paul spoke of believers having been raised with Christ and seated in the heavenlies even while they are still living on earth (Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12-13, 3:1).
 - f) Because believers have been raised with Christ and are united to him through faith, they now participate in his resurrection as citizens of the age to come.
- 3) The resurrection of Jesus Christ marks the beginning of the renewal of all creation.
 - a) Jesus was called the last Adam and was designated as the life-giving Spirit.
 - b) The first Adam belonged to this present age; he was of the dust.
 - c) The second Adam was the man from heaven, the one who brings about the new age which dawns in his very person.
 - i) Once Jesus burst from the tomb, the age to come dawned, and the new creation commenced.
 - ii) The empty tomb is the sign and seal of the new creation.

LESSON ELEVEN

Summary and Conclusions of the Apocalypse

Daniel's 70 Weeks

“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.

25 “Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. **26** After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. **27** He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.

- 1) Daniel's seventy weeks of years.
 - a) Seven weeks, or 49 years, is from issuing of decree to rebuild the Temple and the Holy City (457 B.C. until 408 B.C)
 - b) Sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, from the rebuilding to the Messiah (408 BC until 26 or 27 AD, which will make Jesus about 30 years old when he began his ministry, since he was born about 4 BC).
 - c) One week, or 7 years,

Jesus' Response to Disciples' Questions

Matt. 24:3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

Luke 21:7 “Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

- 1) The end of the world (age)
- 2) Gospel of the kingdom preached in the whole world.
- 3) Signs of the times.
 - a) Social decay, wars, rumors of wars, famines, diseases, natural catastrophes, earthquakes, false prophets, and apostasy.
 - b) These are continually characteristic of depraved humanity, human history, and/or the earth's physical dynamics.

- 4) Two prime signs.
 - a) The abomination that causes desolation standing in the holy place. “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matt. 24:15-16; Mark 13:14).
 - b) Jerusalem surrounded by armies. “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written” (Luke 21:20-22).
- 5) Those days cut short for the elect’s sake (v. 21-22)
- 6) Deception of the elect (v. 23-26)—Waiting for a physically visible coming and sighting of Jesus in Person.
- 7) As lightning flashing from east to west (v. 27).
 - a) Quickness or suddenness of His coming.
 - b) “Bright shining”
 - i) Luke 9:29 – “...and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning” (NIV).
 - ii) Jesus described Satan’s fall from heaven as being “like lightning” (Luke 10:18).
 - (1) In the Old Testament, lightning often signified the presence of the Lord, the manifestation of His power, and the display of His awesome judgment against His enemies.
 - c) Lightning language considers that physical lightning that “comes from the east and flashes to the west” represents a better argument for invisibility than for visibility.
 - i) Lightning that flashes from “east to west” in the intra-cloud variety (within the cloud) or inter-cloud (between two clouds).
 - ii) Different from cloud-to-ground lightning that accounts for only about one-sixth of all discharges.
 - iii) Sometimes a very active thundercloud produces hundreds of cloud flashes without a single discharge to the ground.
- 8) Use of apocalyptic language.
 - a) Falling stars, bloody moons, darkened sun, shaking earth.
 - b) In all of the other references, the physical creation was ever altered or affected one iota.
 - c) Always spoke of “the day of the Lord” in divine judgment and destruction of wicked nations, peoples, and cities.
- 9) Coming on the clouds (v. 30).
 - a) A common metaphor borrowed from Old Testament portrayals of God descending from heaven and coming in power and glory to execute judgment on a nation, people, or city.
 - b) Each event was a direct act of God and termed “the day of the Lord.”
 - c) Clouds are figures of speech and symbolic of God’s majesty, power, glory, and elevated position.
 - d) When Jesus made these references to his disciples as well as to Caiaphas was a claim of deity.
 - e) Cloud coming denotes divine action.

- 10) Heaven and earth will pass away.
- 11) No one knows about that day or hour.

What about the Blessed Hope?

- 1) What about the “blessed hope”—“the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ?” (Titus 2:13).
 - a) NAS version: “Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”
 - b) The blessed hope is the appearing of the “glory.”
 - i) Glory took on various forms as: a cloud, a consuming fire, fire, like a rainbow in the clouds, or radiance.
 - ii) Numbers 14:21 “The glory of the Lord fills the whole earth,” which is not a visible appearance of Deity.
 - c) Jesus said, “Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more” (John 14:19a, KJV).

What about Paul’s “Man of Sin” Who Had to Be Revealed?

- 1) 2 Thess. 2:1-12 Verses 1-2.

“Concerning the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.”

- 2) 2 Thess. 2:3-4

“Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man lawlessness (man of sin) is revealed, the man doomed to destruction (son of perdition—KJV). He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, and even sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

- a) History records that the Jewish rebellion against Rome and apostasy from the faith was already underway in the early 60s, and reached its climax in the Roman-Jewish War of A.D. 66-70.
- b) He had to be a specific person who set himself up in the Temple that was standing when Paul was writing.

- 3) Verses 5-7.

“Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.”

- a) Starting around A.D. 66 the Jews began revolting against Rome and rejecting the sacred practice of biblical Judaism.
- b) Some followers of Christ who remained zealous for the Temple system were departing from the new faith and falling back into the old ways.
- c) The restrainer.
 - i) Some say Nero or the Roman government.
 - ii) Futurists say it's the gospel, the Church, the Holy Spirit, or an angel.
 - iii) No doubt it was the institution of the Jewish priesthood.
 - (1) In A.D. 66, the high priest, Ananus, opposed the Jewish, Zealot-led rebellion.
 - (2) As long as the priesthood stood in the way, the lawlessness of the Jewish Zealots was held back and the "man of sin" couldn't appear on the scene and cause the final destruction.
 - (3) In A.D. 68, the Zealots, with the assistance of the Idumaeans, murdered Ananus and over 12,000 other priests and left their bodies unburied, which was a violation of the Jewish Law.

Josephus on the removal of the priesthood in his history of the fall of the city:

I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her walls, and the ruin of her affairs, whereon they saw their high-priest, and the procurer of their preservation; slain in the midst of their city...for he was thoroughly sensible that the Romans were not to be conquered. He also foresaw that of necessity a war would follow, and that unless the Jews made up matters with them very dexterously, they would be destroyed: to say all in a word, if Ananus had survived that would have certainly compounded matters...and I cannot but think that it was because God had doomed this city to destruction, as a polluted city, and was resolved to purge his sanctuary by fire, that he cut off these great defenders and well-wishers.

4) Verses 8-10.

"And then the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming (parousia). The coming (parousia) of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved!"

- a) All this happened in the very Temple that was occupied and standing until A.D. 70.
 - i) As the war between the Jews and Rome developed, a strong leader of the Jewish Zealots emerged who would fulfill Paul's prophecy.
 - ii) He would soon become the key man in inciting the Jews against Rome, in bringing abominations into the Temple area, and in causing the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

- b) After the murder of Ananus and the removal of the priesthood, Josephus records that a man named John, the son of Levi, became the treacherous leader of the Jewish Zealots in control of the Temple area.
- c) "Now this was the work of God, who therefore preserved this John that he might bring on the destruction of Jerusalem."
- d) This John physically entered the Temple, presented himself to the Zealots as a God-sent ambassador, and persuaded them to defy the laws of Rome and go to war to gain independence.
 - i) He ordered the death of Ananus and the removal of the priesthood.
 - ii) He then became the despotic leader of the Zealot group in control of the Temple area.
 - iii) He began disregarding the laws of Rome, God, and man, and promised deliverance from the Romans.
 - iv) He "set on fire those houses that were full of corn, and of all other provision.
 - v) In possession of the Temple, he cut the throats of anyone suspected of wanting to go over to the Romans.
 - vi) He performed many sacrileges, such as melting down the golden and sacred utensils used in Temple service, and defiled the Temple.
- e) This John established himself in the Temple, the one standing when Paul wrote, and put himself above Rome and above God, thereby taking the place of God in the Temple.
- f) After the coming of the Lord and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70, John of Gishala was condemned to perpetual imprisonment by the Roman authorities.
- g) This man would be destroyed by "the spirit of his (Jesus') mouth and brightness of his coming (parousia).

5) Verses 11-12.

"For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but delighted in wickedness.

- a) Josephus personally pleaded with John of Gischala to surrender.
 - b) John and his Jewish followers taunted the powers of Rome and refused to listen.
 - c) Through the power of Satan and the delusion sent by God upon the Jewish people, forced the Roman armies to act.
 - i) Instead of accepting Jesus as Messiah, King, and Deliverer, the unbelieving Jews place their hope in this false messiah, a man of deceit and wickedness.
 - ii) By August or September of A.D. 70, Paul's entire "man of sin" prophecy of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 was fulfilled.
 - (1) The city and the Temple were burned and destroyed.
 - (2) The covenant nation of Israel and biblical Judaism were forever finished.
- 6) Scripture gives this "man of sin" the name of "the one doomed to destruction" or "the son of perdition."
- a) Judas betrayed Jesus.
 - b) John of Gischala betrayed the Jews.

What about Double Fulfillment?

- 1) R.C. Sproul admits that “the destruction of the Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was a parousia or coming of Christ” and that “Jesus really did come in judgment at this time, fulfilling his prophecy in the Olivet Discourse,” he argues that “it was not THE parousia...not the final or ultimate coming of Christ.
- 2) The interpretive device of double fulfillment is used to dilute or discredit a past-fulfilled view and to get around the time factor.
 - a) Therefore, there must be two destructions—one of Jerusalem fulfilled circa 70 A.D. and another of Jerusalem and/or the world in the future.
 - b) Some insist that Daniel’s fourth empire (the Roman Empire) must be revived for this complete fulfillment to be attained—“in the days of those kings” (Dan. 2:44).
- 3) Double fulfillment is an arbitrary and uninspired extrapolation that evades and obscures truth.

1 Thes. 4:13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. **14** For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. **15** According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

- 1) Caught up in the air.
 - a) There are two Greek words which the New Testament translates as “air.”
 - i) *Ouranos*, or atmospheric air, where birds fly.
 - ii) *Aer*, means the internal breath.
 - b) We are to be caught up into the spirit realm, not physically removed from the earth.
- 2) With them in the clouds.
 - a) In prophecy, clouds symbolize humans, not atmospheric clouds.
 - b) Hebrews 12: speaks of our being “surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses (saints who have died in the Lord).
 - c) Jude 12 describes “godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ as “clouds without rain.”
- 3) To meet the Lord.
 - a) Our feet never have to leave the ground for us to meet the Lord.
 - b) In the Spirit, we meet Christ and are transformed into the fullness of His reality.
- 4) Asleep in him.
 - a) Acts 7:60 says that Stephen fell asleep.
 - b) The asleep are the physically dead who have died in Christ.
- 5) The dead in Christ.

- a) "A time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (John 5:25).
- b) These are those who are physically alive but spiritually dead.
 - i) They are not reigning and ruling as part of the first resurrection.
 - ii) They are saved, but other than that, they are dead spiritually.
- 6) We who are alive.
 - a) These are the people who have experienced the first resurrection—
 - b) Those who have come alive in Christ and are also physically alive.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57 New International Version (NIV)

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— **52** in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. **53** For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. **54** When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." **55** "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1) Death came through Adam, and the resurrection of the dead came through Christ.
 - a) All will be made alive, "but each in his own time:
 - b) Christ the first-fruits, then when he comes, those who belong to him.
 - c) Each in his own time (order, or turn) clearly means that being made alive is not a one-shot, corporate deal, but an ongoing, continual reality for individuals.
- 2) We will all be changed.
 - a) Transformed into the likeness of Christ.
 - b) This change is effected by Jesus Christ, and it occurs "in a flash, in a twinkling of an eye," instantaneously.
- 3) At the last trumpet.
 - a) The seventh trumpet in Revelation 10 and 11.
 - b) In prophetic symbolism, an angel sounding a trumpet represents a voice, or message, from God.
 - i) The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.
 - ii) The last trumpet has already sounded in reality, but not everyone has received it.
 - iii) It continues to sound for individuals as they personally receive the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - iv) The sounding of the trumpet does not tell people to leave, but to get ready to reign on earth in this life.
 - v) When we receive the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are changed instantaneously into kings and priests to rule and reign in the kingdom of God.
- 4) The dead will be raised imperishable.
 - a) The dead are those who are physically alive, but not reigning and ruling with Christ.

- b) “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection...and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.
- c) “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”
- d) Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.
 - i) Our flesh is perishable, but our spirit is imperishable.
 - ii) “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of the imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.
- e) When we receive the revelation of the last trumpet, the message, we are changed (transformed).
- f) We suddenly realize that we are eternal; our spirits will live forever.

2 Thess. 2:1-4. Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, **2** not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. **3** Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

- 1) This passage implies that someone was circulating a letter under Paul’s name stating that the day of the Lord had already come and gone.
- 2) Matthew 16:27-28 New International Version (NIV). **27** For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. **28** “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Armageddon

- 1) Has been taught that Armageddon is the final war which will someday pit God and all His heavenly forces against Satan and all his evil forces.
 - a) The term *Armageddon* never appears in the Bible.
 - b) The Scriptures call it the battle on the great day of God Almighty, and Armageddon is the location of the battle; the name does not appear in ancient geographical or historical writings; neither does such a place appear on either ancient or modern maps.
- 2) The Hebrew term *Har Meggidon* is translated as *Armageddon*.
 - a) *Har* in ancient Hebrew, means *mountain*.
 - b) *Har migdo* is God’s fruitful mountain of Mount Zion.
 - c) The Book of Revelation takes the imagery from the book of Joel, in which God’s warfare against evil forces always proceeds from Mount Zion.
 - d) A mountaintop is the chosen symbol for the site of spiritual warfare and great victories by the people of God.
- 3) Don’t look for a one-time Battle of Armageddon to be fought in the Middle East at some future date with horses, tanks, soldiers, missile, and airplanes.
 - a) The battle on the great day of God Almighty, like everything else in the Revelation, was

- “at hand” when Joh wrote about it, and it has been at hand ever since.
- b) Armageddon symbolizes the location of the ongoing conflict between God’s overcomers and those within the church who oppose the unveiling of the supernatural Christ.
 - c) Mount Zion is the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God...the church of the firstborn.
- 4) By depicting this battle as God’s war, not ours, and by shoving it out into the future, the conspirators hope to dupe Christians into believing that the battle on the great day of God Almighty has no direct meaning for their daily lives.
 - a) Sleeping warriors pose no danger to the enemies of God.
 - b) Most Christians either ignore Bible prophecy about spirit-realm conflict, or they think of conquering evil as something God will do someday.
 - c) “Let Jesus come back and clean up this mess.”
 - 5) The battle line is drawn in the boundary between the material realm and the spirit realm.
 - 6) The Rider on the White Horse Wages War against Satan’s Kingdom.
 - a) The rider is called “Faithful and True,” and “his name is the Word of God.”
 - i) He judges and makes war.
 - ii) His eyes are like blazing fire.
 - iii) He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood.
 - iv) The armies of heaven were following him.
 - v) Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.
 - b) The battle is within you, it is within the church, and it is wherever the beastly world system seeks to place its mark of ownership on you.
 - c) Once we have overcome the evil within ourselves, we must engage and overcome Christ’s enemies within the church and throughout the world.

The Book of Revelation

- 1) The Book of Revelation is the crowning glory of the entire Bible, the point where all scriptural truths come together.
- 2) Christ is worthy to be worshiped and is given full authority in God’s kingdom.
 - a) It is Christ who receives the worship of John, the angels, the four living creatures, the white-robed saints, the twenty-four elders, and eventually the whole world.
 - b) He is declared worthy to receive worship, honor, power, and glory, and He alone is worthy to open the seals.
 - c) He is given the keys of David, the keys of hell and death, the keys to the bottomless pit, and the keys to the book of life.
 - d) He stands in the center of the throne of God.
 - e) He sits on the conqueror’s white horse.
 - f) His seal of authority is placed on the forehead of the numberless saints.
 - g) He is given the power to judge.
 - h) He is called Lord of lords and King of kings.
 - i) He is the Bridegroom who receives His bride at the wedding supper.
 - j) He is the light of the new heaven and new earth.
- 3) It is Jesus who plays the starring role in the drama of the Revelation—not the Antichrist, or

- the beasts, or the great harlot, or Babylon, or Israel, or Russia, or China, or anyone else.
- 4) Take the supernatural, spirit-realm reality of Jesus Christ out of Revelation and the whole book collapses.—it is indeed, the unveiling of Jesus Christ.
 - 5) Christ constantly triumphs in and through his overcoming saints.
 - a) The beasts, the great prostitute, Babylon, and the false prophet all symbolize the idolatrous world and religious system that conspires against Christ and His faithful saints.
 - b) These creatures arise within individuals and in the church.
 - c) The great dragon and his archangel (the spirit of antichrist) empower and direct the constant spirit-realm onslaught against the kingdom of God, as reflected in such symbols as the plague of locusts and the demon spirits that look like frogs.
 - 6) The two sides of Revelation.
 - a) The dark side.
 - i) Evil spirit-realm beings deceiving, controlling, and energizing human beings and their institutions in order to persecute and kill the blood-washed saints who dare to exhibit the testimony of Jesus.
 - ii) Evil spirit-realm beings are at work in and among us, just as Christ is at work in and among the people of His kingdom.
 - b) The bright side.
 - i) Christ has already won the decisive battle over all evil forces, and we can win with Him in our day-to-day lives.
 - ii) Those who love to lump Christ's triumphs over evil into a single Second Coming and shove it out into the future deceives millions of Christians into waiting and longing and looking for something that is already happening.
 - (1) Revelation proclaims that Christ's victories over evil are ongoing, present realities.
 - (2) We don't have to just hope for victory over evil someday, but we can have victory over evil right now.
 - 7) The prophetic message of the letters, the seals, the trumpets, and the vials of wrath is ongoing, not predictive.
 - a) Christ continuously comes to us through His Word, encouraging, rebuking, and warning us.
 - b) He breaks the seals of the scroll within us, exposes the spirit-realm creatures of the Apocalypse, clothes us in His righteousness, and places His protective seal upon us.
 - c) His trumpets (messages) sound within us and through us to the church, proclaiming His triumph over all evil spirit-realm forces and judgment of those who resist His message.
 - d) If we receive His message in our innermost beings (symbolized by eating the scroll), He enables us to overcome the evil within us and to ride out with Him to conquer the beastly religious and worldly systems.
 - e) The seven plagues (bowls of wrath) show what happens to those who continuously reject the message of the letters, the seals, and the trumpets. God hands them over to Satan and to their won evil natures and devices.
 - 8) We overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony!

Study Guide for Lessons One through Three

- 1) What is eschatology?
- 2) What are the three major approaches to prophetic interpretation?
- 3) What is historicism?
- 4) What is futurism?
- 5) What is preterism?
- 6) What is the difference between partial preterism and full preterism?
- 7) What is dispensationalism?
- 8) What is a reason to study eschatology?
- 9) Describe the difference between “the earth” and “the world.”
- 10) What is meant by the Dominion Mandate?
- 11) What is meant by the Redemption Mandate?
- 12) What is meant by “many sons unto glory?”
- 13) Why would Satan seek to “remove” the saints of God from the earth?
- 14) Identify three purposes for the Body of Christ as verbalized in the book, *What on Earth Are You Doing Here?*
- 15) What is meant by Jesus’ desire that the kingdom come in earth as in heaven?
- 16) The Book of Revelation identifies _____ as the Spirit of Prophecy.
- 17) What is meant by Jesus being the fulfillment of the Law and Prophets?
- 18) What is the proper biblical meaning of the apocalypse?
- 19) God’s message to Daniel was to shut up and seal the message, but John the Revelator was told to “seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Why was Daniel told to seal the message? Why was John to *not* seal up the message?
- 20) In what way can the Book of Revelation be said to be the revelation of Jesus Christ?
- 21) After the Council of Trent, Ribera and Alcasar had two conflicting theories both of which the Catholic Church accepted. What was each of these conflicting theories?
- 22) Why would the Catholic Church be supportive of both theories?
- 23) Who was John Nelson Darby and what was his basic teaching of eschatology?
- 24) Who was C. I. Scofield, and what significance did he play in the evolving of eschatological teachings in the late 1800s that has prevailed until this day?
- 25) Which school of prophetic interpretation did the early Protestant leaders adhere to?

STUDY GUIDE FOR LESSONS FOUR THROUGH SIX

- 1) What has falling stars, bloody moons, darkened sun, shaking of the earth, and signs in the sky been related to throughout the Bible?
- 2) What has “the Day of the Lord” been associated with?
- 3) Generally speaking, the impending judgments of God were brought about by _____ or _____.
- 4) In contrast to God’s judgments, how did God express his blessings upon a nation or a people?
- 5) What is meant by a paradigm shift?
- 6) What are negative implications of an end-of-the-world philosophy?
- 7) _____ is the means by which the infinite God communicates with finite humans about truth and reality in the spiritual and physical realms.
- 8) Why should we be concerned about spirit-realm realities?
- 9) End-saying traditionalists say, “The world is going to end.” The Bible says, _____.
- 10) End-saying traditionalists say, “The earth shall be destroyed,” but the Bible says _____.
- 11) What is the two-age Jewish view of time?
- 12) According to the Jews, what marks the beginning of a future kingdom?
- 13) What event marked the beginning of Daniel’s seventy weeks of years?
- 14) What happens at the end of Daniel’s sixty-ninth week?
- 15) What is the significance of Daniel’s seventieth week as it relates to futurists’ concept of eschatology?
- 16) What problem does futurists’ interpretation of Daniel’s seventieth week present?
- 17) What happens in the middle of the seventieth week that fulfilled God’s plan of redemption?
- 18) Identify six of the redemptive purposes and promises for Daniel’s seventy-week-time prophecy.
- 19) The “power of the holy people” was the power of _____.
- 20) Jesus warned his first followers, “Then you will know that the desolation is near when you see what?”
- 21) What happened in A.D. 70?
- 22) When did Jesus say that the events of Matthew 24 would be fulfilled?
- 23) What are three different interpretations of the meaning of a generation?
- 24) What was the significance of the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. as far as God’s historic-redemptive purposes were concerned?
- 25) Why did the Romans go to such an extreme effort to dismantle the Temple stone-by-stone and raze the whole city to the ground?

STUDY GUIDE LESSONS SEVEN THROUGH TEN

- 1) What are the three major positions on the timing of the “rapture?”
- 2) What is the viewpoint of the futurist pretribulational teaching concerning eschatology?
- 3) Where does the concept of a seven-year period of tribulation in the end of time come from?
- 4) What is the origin of the two-phase coming of Jesus, first in a secret rapture, and secondly in Christ’s bodily return?
- 5) What did Jesus pray concerning the saints being taken out of the world?
- 6) In what way is the coming of the Son of man related to the days of Noah?
- 7) What are three major events that are commonly associated with the “rapture,” or the coming of the Lord?
- 8) Paul states in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 that we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be _____ in _____.
- 9) According to Scripture, when does the last trump sound as related to tribulation?
- 10) “Immediately after the days of that tribulation shall appear the sign of _____.”
- 11) What does Paul say that happens to loved ones who have already gone on as they relate to those still remaining on earth?
- 12) What was Paul’s reasoning behind relating those who have gone on with those who still remained?
- 13) What does the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11 announce?
- 14) What is the symbolic significance of “clouds?”
- 15) Where does the teaching of Jesus coming from the east come from? (Why it is traditional that people are buried with their bodies facing the east?)
- 16) If the “glorious hope” is not the rapture of the church, then what is it?
- 17) If the hope that purifies us is not the imminent return of Jesus in a rapture, then what is it?
- 18) What is the preterist view of the coming of Jesus in the clouds?
- 19) Give three examples in the Old Testament of the Lord preserving his people in the midst of “tribulation.”
- 20) “In the world you shall have _____, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”
- 21) “He that dwelleth in _____ shall abide under _____ (Psalm 91).
- 22) “When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will _____.”
- 23) “Arise, shine, for _____ and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (Isaiah 60:1).
- 24) “_____ shall cover the earth and _____ the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”
- 25) What do you believe is meant by “the earth being filled with the glory of God?”
- 26) What did Jesus say concerning our knowing the times and seasons?
- 27) Scripturally speaking, why does the “man of sin” have to precede the coming of the Lord?

- 28) According to Psalm 102:16, “When the Lord shall _____, then shall he appear in his glory.”
- 29) What is the “new Jerusalem?”
- 30) Why do dispensationalists say that the Church is the “parenthesis” or “plan B” of God’s plan of redemption?
- 31) What is an argument for God not having a separate plan of redemption for the Gentiles and the Jews?
- 32) Who is the true seed of Abraham?
- 33) What is the significance of this seed as it relates to us?
- 34) What does the allegory of the two sons of Abraham in Galatians chapter four represent?
- 35) The promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through _____ but through _____.
- 36) Identify a scripture that makes no distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles.
- 37) What does Peter say concerning the elect of God that includes the Church?
- 38) How will the Jewish people be restored to God?
- 39) Who is God’s holy nation?
- 40) What is the “millennium?”
- 41) What are three views of the millennium?
- 42) Which view of the millennium did the Protestant leaders embrace?
- 43) What is an argument that anti-Christ is not one individual?
- 44) What is dispensationalists’ stated purpose of the millennium?
- 45) What is an argument that the “thousand years” of Revelation is not a literal thousand years?
- 46) Amillennial Christians see the millennial age as occupying the entire period of time _____.
- 47) Reconstructionism is a philosophy aimed at _____.
- 48) What identifies the theonomic version of postmillennialism?
- 49) What is meant by “the analogy of faith?”
- 50) What is the meaning of “the first resurrection?”
- 51) What are the two different viewpoints concerning the Abrahamic covenant and Davidic covenant being fulfilled?