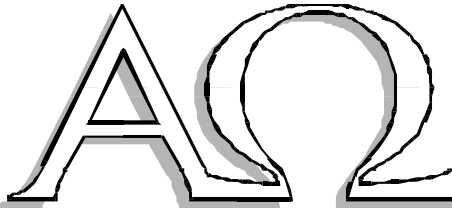


Creation Revelation



God is in the details

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Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one
of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.

Psalm 119:160

The Last Trump: Pre-Tribulation Rapture Theology, Part I Eschatological Worldviews

Worldviews Within Christianity

How you view prophecy ultimately determines what you believe about the end-times. The Bible is about one-third prophecy, but if you do not believe in the future fulfillment of Bible prophecy, you need to devise an interpretive method other than literal. This article primarily is intended to present arguments in favor of the pre-tribulation rapture of the Church. But to do this we must first understand how different groups within Christianity view end-time events, and why they may not favor a pre-tribulation rapture. Therefore, This article will begin by describing how different groups view prophecy, and end in the next issue with the evidence of Bible support for the pre-tribulation rapture of the Church.

We hold the belief that God will remove the Church (true believers) prior to His judgment of the unbelieving and wicked world during what is called the Great Tribulation. During this seven-years tribulation God will once more turn His attention to Israel. We also hold that Jesus Christ will return at the end of the seven-years tribulation preceding a thousand-years millennium (premillennialism). The millennium is the thousand-years reign of the saints with Jesus Christ mentioned in Revelation chapter 20.¹ The millennium is the future period during which the Old Testament Kingdom promises made to Abraham and David (Israel) are to be literally fulfilled. The Church is not fulfilling God's promises to Israel today. The Church and Israel are distinct.² We subscribe to the dispensational view of theology whereby God "is dispensing or administering its [the world's] affairs according to His own will and in various stages of revelation in the process of time."³

Another view of the rapture is the post-tribulation

view that the Church will not be raptured until after the tribulation just preceding the return of Christ in judgment; thus the Church will go through the tribulation.⁴ A few believe in a mid-tribulation rapture that says that believers will go through about half of the tribulation before being raptured.⁵

Today, many scoff at the very idea that Christ will come again. However, Christ's second advent is at the very heart of our Christian beliefs. Many Christians scoff not at the surety of Christ's second advent, but of the very idea that it might happen anytime soon, possibly within their lifetime. Peter warned us that scoffers would come in the last days.

Knowing this first, that **there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.** (2 Peter 3:3-4 KJV)

The sad thing is that many of our last-days scoffers "come from within the ranks of the Christian community." They deny the literal interpretation by applying their own rules of presupposition to the clear literal meaning of the words of the prophets.⁶ While they may not hold to a literal interpretation, they are still considered brothers and sisters in Christ, adhering to the essential doctrines of the faith. There are also those that call themselves Christian while denying most of the essential doctrines (e.g. virgin birth of Christ, the deity of Christ, and the resurrection), refusing to believe in Christ's miraculous works as well.

The Preterist

About 20 years ago, a man entered our lives who challenged our futuristic beliefs about the book of Revelation. At that time he was working toward his eventual Th.D. in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. His view of Revelation is known as preterism. He believes that Revelation was written as early as 68 AD, or as late as 96 AD, and that all of Revelation was probably fulfilled as early as the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The “beast” of Revelation would probably refer to the Emperor Nero, or possibly the Emperor Domitian a little later. The “wrath” found in Revelation would symbolically represent the severe persecution of Christians during the reigns of Nero and Domitian. The Preterist is one that believes that the book of Revelation speaks of past events, but not necessarily of exact fulfillment.⁷ At least one Preterist sees the rapture as a conspiracy, by world planners, to neutralize Christians.⁸ These people almost seem to believe that it is more urgent to save the Republic than to save souls. To them, it seems, the country, the world, and the Kingdom of Christ are ultimately the same things.

The Preterist believes that almost all prophecy was fulfilled at the time of the destruction of the Temple, thus ending the Jewish sacrificial system – replaced by the once-for-all blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.⁹ The Preterist often points to words such as “shortly” in Revelation 1:1 and 22:6 to indicate that the events happened in the immediate future. However, the words translated “shortly” is *en tachei*, which means, not “soon,” but “with speed,” “swiftly,” or “quickly.” 2 Peter 3:8 confirms that “quickly” for God may be a thousand years or more. The Greek words *en tachei* is simply meant to convey the idea of quickly, or suddenly when the time is right.¹⁰

In the view of the Preterist, God has cast Israel aside, and the Church (the new Israel) has replaced the rejected Israel, inheriting all the promises of God. This preterist view that the Church has replaced Israel is known as “replacement theology.” Under God’s new program the world is getting better and better, as more people are evangelized and commit to follow Christ. Eventually Christ will return to claim His already established Kingdom. Revelation therefore deals with the destruction of Israel and the establishment of the Church as the New Covenant Temple. This is why many well known ministries concentrate their efforts toward Christianizing our secular institutions, rather than on the message of the imminent return of Jesus Christ.¹¹ Since Augustine’s *City of God*, the Catholic Church sees itself as possessing the Kingdom authority. To be outside the Church is thought of as being outside the Kingdom of God. When the Church exchanged the rule of Christ with the rule of man (the Pope), religious atrocities followed.¹² Interestingly, atheistic evolution and secular humanism support the false view that man is evolving upwards toward a perfect society. Preterist theologians have bought the idea of the Kingdom being established in

like manner by human effort.¹³

Preterists are usually postmillennial, believing in the idea that the return of Jesus Christ will occur after a thousand-years millennial peace on earth. The Millennial Kingdom, they say, will be established through the evangelistic efforts of the Church. Some modern adherents to the concept are also known as Christian Reconstructionists.¹⁴

Not all books in a Christian bookstore give the same message. Conflicting beliefs about end-time events causes the unwary Christian to become easily confused and discouraged. We do not challenge that many of these Christian writers are committed Christians, but many may not be, as they have allowed unbelief to color their liberal views. However, I believe that there are many committed Christians that hold preterist views, such as Drs. D. James Kennedy and R. C. Sproul. Preterism explains much of the focus of their worthy ministries.¹⁵ According to Dr. Sproul:

I am convinced that the substance of the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled in A.D. 70 and that the bulk of Revelation was likewise fulfilled in that time-frame.¹⁶

We need to grasp the concept that those who challenge the meaning of prophecy and the rapture of the Church view prophecy and future differently than those who hold a literal view of the prophetic passages. It is our view that God says exactly what He means, and does exactly what He says. He has no need to play word games. We should interpret the Bible literally giving proper consideration to allegory or figurative language. Figurative language helps clarify the literal meaning of Scripture.¹⁷ If the prophecies of Christ’s first coming have been literally fulfilled as written, then why shouldn’t we expect that the prophecies of the events of the end-times and His second coming be literally fulfilled as well?¹⁸ Literalism consistently applied is the only interpretive method that presents an “objective standard.”¹⁹ The literal view has no need to force the Bible to say what you want it to say. It is for these reasons that we adhere to the dispensational-futurist view described later in this article.

An example of forcing the plain language of the Bible to fit preterist’ ideas, that tribulation prophecy was fulfilled by 70 AD, is that of the interpretation of Matthew 24:29, regarding the Sun and Moon being darkened, and the stars falling from heaven, as nothing more than a description “of the passing of Judaism.”²⁰ Dr. Larry Spargimino comments:

Preterists have to insist on the significance of A.D. 70 because it is supportive of their view. If the “time texts” speak of a first century disaster, the only one they can find that resembles tribulation judgments is the destruction of the Temple. Investing A.D. 70 with epoch-making significance is the only way

that preterists can explain—or should I say—explain away the heavenly signs that they claim happened in the past...

DeMar says “the people of Israel were represented as stars,” but eschatological passages speaking of the heavenly phenomena speak about fear, perplexity, and terror due to these phenomena and do more than represent people of nations. If stars falling out of heaven represent the demise of the Jewish nation, why would that produce fear on earth? *The Olivet Discourse is not only about Israel’s destruction, but about her victory and restoration (Matt. 24:31). I believe that such explanations are devices of convenience that are used to make A.D. 70 “the end.”*²¹

Among a number of verses Preterists point to for support of their theory is Matthew 16:27-28.

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then **he shall reward every man according to his works.** Verily I say unto you, **There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.**

(Matthew 16:27-28 KJV)

According to the Preterist, this proves that all the prophecies of a future tribulation were fulfilled in the lifetimes of the Apostles. However, immediately after these verses Peter, James, and John witness a preview of the Second Coming at the Mount of Transfiguration. The Transfiguration was a past event that foreshadowed something that would happen in the future.²² Other Preterists’ proof texts can be similarly explained. In Luke 21:27 through 32 we see:

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up **your heads**; for **your redemption draweth nigh.** And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, **when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.** Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.** (Luke 21:27-32 KJV)

If the Olivet Discourse referred only to the destruction of Jerusalem, then where do we find the redemption of Israel, and the coming of the Kingdom, as described in these verses of Luke? According to Dr. Larry Spargimino:

*The Olivet Discourse is not speaking about Israel’s defeat and final doom, but about Israel’s exaltation in the Kingdom.... We must ask preterists, ‘How can the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 be anyone’s redemption?’*²³

The Olivet Discourse is dealing with Israel, not with the Church. When you read it this way, the meaning becomes clear. Likewise, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD are part of the Olivet Discourse, but the other verses within the Discourse refer to future tribulation and the ultimate future restoration of Israel.²⁴

The various names we hear today that relate to the concepts of preterism just discussed are preterism, covenant theology, dominion theology, the Christian Reconstruction Movement, and theonomy (government by God).²⁵ It was Rousas John Rushdoony who wrote extensively during the middle 20th century encouraging a return to Old Testament law, culture, education, politics, and government. His message was to encourage Christians to work for the Christianization of secular institutions, moving the nation and the world toward perfection of Christ’s Kingdom. At the same time, he believed that dispensational eschatology and “rapture escapism” were defeatist Christian “otherworldly attitudes[s].” He believed that we live in today’s world, not in expectation of some future prophetic fulfillment. In his view, to make a better America and world, we need to get back to our theological roots. Some would say our mantra should be: “Take the Kingdom for Christ.”²⁶ Contrary to that message, there is nowhere found in the Bible the command to “take the Kingdom for Christ.” According to dominion covenantist Gary North, “men are responsible as faithful servants of God, to bring the whole world under the rule of God’s [Old Testament] law.”²⁷ To the contrary, the message should be, “tell them (the Gospel),” and that things will get worse, not better, until Christ Himself returns to establish His Kingdom. Our hope is in Christ alone, not what we can do. Our duty is to witness, in order to bring all people individually to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and what He did for them.

Covenant theology, a form of replacement theology, seeks to “magnify the grace of God.” In doing so, “covenant theology muzzles the prophets”, with a “tendency to assert that God’s requirements are revealed primarily through [Old Testament] Law.” We are thus, by imposition, to interpolate the Old Testament by the New. This is contrary to Hebrews 1:2.²⁸

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:2 KJV)

The Law is not wrong, but “simply inadequate” when

compared to the revealing words and example of Jesus Christ.²⁹ Covenant theologian, James Orr admits that the covenant system uses “an artificial system of typology, and allegorizing interpolation,” and that it “sought to read back practically the whole of the New Testament into the Old.” The amillennialism of the covenant theologian is “the natural outcome of allegorizing.”³⁰ The amillennialist believes that the millennium (Revelation 20) is an indefinite long period of time corresponding to the time from the first advent to the second advent of Christ, and that most of Revelation is symbolic.³¹

In its simplest form, the covenant theologian recognizes two covenants in the Bible, the covenant of works (the pre-fall expectation of Adam) and the covenant of grace (the agreement between God and the sinner, whereby faith in Christ and obedience is man’s way of salvation). Some Reformed theologians introduce a third covenant of redemption.³²

Comparing covenant theology to dispensationalism, “covenant theology is blind to the valid differences that also exist in the different periods of biblical history.”³³ According to Dr. Larry Spargimino, it’s possible that the covenant theologian believes “that an admission of these differences will ultimately lead to a denial of the grace of God. Hence, in order to shield the grace of God from such possible infringements, covenant theology constructs an artificial, overarching, all-embracing ‘covenant of grace.’ The outcome of this artificial construct is the Judaizing of the Church and a denial of the progressive nature of God’s revelation.” Additionally, covenant theology says either that all God’s promises to Israel were fulfilled during the times of Joshua and Solomon, or that “Israel forfeited her promises through disobedience”, or that “God’s promises to Israel were originally intended for the Church.”³⁴ In fact, some covenant theologians believe that the saved people in all ages (Old and New Testament) are called the Church. Therefore, the Church is not distinct from Israel.³⁵ Although the amillennialist holds that Israel has been replaced by the Church, The covenant premillennialist would say that the “Church and Israel are somewhat blended but not amalgamated.”³⁶ Charles Ryrie says that, “only dispensationalism can cause historical events and successions to be seen in their own light, and not to be reflected in the artificial light of an overall covenant.”³⁷ There is not one covenant of grace throughout Bible history since Adam, as required by covenant theologians, but the Bible speaks of “the covenants [plural] of promise.”³⁸

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:
(Ephesians 2:12 KJV)

Contrary to covenant theologians, the “everlasting covenant” of Hebrews 13:20, in context, speaks of the

covenant grace of salvation by the shed blood of Christ, rather than one covenant of grace.³⁹ Instead of one covenant of grace, the Bible clearly speaks of several covenants: Abrahamic (Genesis 15 and 17), Mosaic (Exodus 19 and 24), and others (see: Joshua 8 and 24; 2 Samuel 7; and Jeremiah 31). These were specific covenants for specific people at specific times.⁴⁰

The Futurist

Futurism interprets Revelation in a literal sense, indicating a future fulfillment of the wrath of God during a seven-year tribulation period, after which Jesus Christ will return and set up His Millennial Kingdom (premillennialism).⁴¹ According to Steve Gregg, “the best known version of futurism today is that of dispensational theology.”⁴² Scofield defines a dispensation as follows:

*A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.*⁴³

Ryrie states that, a dispensation is a “stewardship arrangement and not a period of time,” even though time is involved. Ryrie furnishes what he considers a better concise definition:

*A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose.*⁴⁴

An economy may be thought of as “an ordered condition of things.”⁴⁵

There are from four to seven dispensations variously recognized by dispensational theologians. Each dispensation remains in effect until man rebels and is punished. Dispensations represent the different ways God governed in the lives of men. God had certain expectations – when man failed those expectations (man’s responsibility), the dispensation ended. There would be new revelation that influenced the change.⁴⁶ According to a dispensationalist, Pettingill:

*The dispensational tests served to show man’s utter helplessness, in order to bring him to faith, that he might be saved by grace through faith plus nothing.*⁴⁷

The seven dispensations are:

1. Innocence – from Adam to the fall (man communicated directly with God);
2. Conscience, or self-determination – from the fall to the flood (God ruled through man’s conscience);
3. Civil government – from the flood to the tower (God gave man authority over the lives of men);
4. Promise – from the tower to Egyptian captivity (Patriarchal rule);
5. Law – from the Egyptian captivity to Jesus Christ

(Rule by Old Testament Law);

6. Grace – from Jesus to the Second Coming (salvation for all based on Christ's works);
7. Millennium – Second Coming to end of the millennium (direct rule by Jesus Christ).⁴⁸

Dispensationalism supports progressive revelation, “the continually unfolding revelation of God given by various means throughout the successive ages.”⁴⁹ The dispensationalist keeps the distinction between Israel and the Church, and bases this distinction on a system of hermeneutics called literal, or plain, interpretation.⁵⁰ Dispensationalists believe the basic purpose of God is in glorifying Himself through Salvation rather than just Salvation.⁵¹

The unifying principle of covenant theology is “the unity of the overall purpose of redemption,” the one covenant of grace. The unifying principle of the dispensationalist is the glory of God working in Salvation. It is the distinct dispensations that “reveal the glory of God as He manifests His character in the differing stewardships given to man.”⁵² It must be realized that God has other purposes besides the redemption of mankind, but covenant theology makes redemption God's unifying principle and plan. If the covenant theologian would refrain from his spiritualizing approach, he could then clearly see the distinction between Israel and the Church, and see other purposes in the plan of God working in both Israel and the Church, as well as in His dealings with the angels. In those distinctive workings, the manifesting of the glory of God is God's purpose. The salvation of mankind is only one aspect of manifesting God's glory.⁵³

John Nelson Darby

Like Rushdoony's call to preterism, it was John Nelson Darby who began to revive dispensationalism, and a return to the doctrine of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. A popular objection says that dispensationalism can't be true since it was not taught from apostolic times. The charge can be made that the system of **covenant** theology is also recent. Recent theology development does not prove that either system is unbiblical. However, the system of covenant theology does not appear in any form before the late 16th century, and only in the writings of secondary reformers in protest to the strict predestinarianism of the primary “great” reformers. Contrary to what some writers would have you believe, John Darby did not suddenly begin to teach a new concept. Rather, he returned to the expectancy of the early Church. That early expectancy had been abandoned when the formal hierarchical Church began to see itself as the replacement of Israel, and the inheritor of its promises. This hierarchical Church began to embrace postmillennialism, the belief that Christ will return after a thousand years of peace brought about by the evangelistic efforts of the Church.⁵⁴

George Eldon Ladd, no dispensationalist, acknowledges the soundness of Darby's Biblical prophetic interpretation:

*His system of prophetic interpretation was eagerly adopted, not because of the attractiveness of his system, but because its basic futurism seemed to be a recovery of a sound Biblical prophetic interpretation – which in fact it was – and to give to the doctrine of the Lord's return the importance it deserved.*⁵⁵

L

add can be described as a futurist with a touch of preterist' beliefs.⁵⁶ Thus Ladd, in support of his post-tribulation view, “is forced to regard the 144,000 of Revelation 7 as referring not to literal Israel but to spiritual Israel or the Church.⁵⁷ A fact admitted by amillennialists is that consistent literal interpretation leads one to the premillennialist position. In order to maintain their amillennialist position, they must abandon the strictly literal approach and resort to using allegory. This results in a “hybrid” literal-theological interpretation that mixes spiritualizing and allegory with the literal.⁵⁸

Dispensationalists are futurists. The difference between futurists and dispensational futurists is that Dispensationalists place the rapture at Revelation 4:1, and futurists place the rapture later, either in the middle, or toward the end (chapter 19) of Revelation.⁵⁹ According to Ryrie:

*The distinction between Israel and the Church leads to the belief that the Church will be taken from the earth before the beginning of the tribulation (which in one sense concerns Israel). Pretribulationism has become a part of dispensational eschatology.*⁶⁰

The first prophetic conference in the United States (1878), and those that followed, grew from the desire to protect “the rapid takeover of existing denominations by modernism and the social gospel, not to promote dispensationalism (the attendees were denominational men).” Dispensationalist ideas became a part of these conferences due to their “insistence on the absolute authority of the Scriptures, the literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and the expectation of the imminent coming of Christ.”⁶¹ Again Ryrie comments:

Inevitably, dispensationalism came into the messages of these conferences, for the attention given to prophetic themes focused men's minds on the literal interpretation of Scripture and the distinction between Israel and the Church. But there is little evidence that these men were borrowing from Darby....⁶²

Dispensational futurism is the natural result of considering the literal interpretive method.⁶³

Dave McPherson, a Preterist, in his *The Rapture Plot*, attempts to connect Darby's theology to a prophetic utterance by Margaret MacDonald, of Glasgow, in 1830, and to a London preacher named Edward Irving.⁶⁴ Although much of McPherson's book contain accusations of plagiarism and deceptive omissions by modern writers such as John F. Walvoord, Dwight J. Pentecost, Hal Lindsey, and Tim LaHaye, it does not prove, except by inference, that Darby's futuristic theology is wrong. McPherson's book supposes that if it can discredit the messengers, then it can discredit the message. His book is not a theological study of what the Bible does or does not reveal about dispensationalism or the pre-tribulation rapture. The book simply exposes McPherson's preterist preconceptions.⁶⁵

Dave McPherson's message is not convincing, because the message of the pre-tribulation rapture is not dependent on whether Margaret MacDonald's utterance, Edward Irving's preaching, or John Darby's beliefs are valid. According to Charles C. Ryrie, "outlines of the dispensationalist approach" are found much earlier than Darby, and "certain features of the dispensational system are found in the teaching of the early Church."⁶⁶ Even though the **system** of dispensationalism is of recent origin, early church fathers, such as Justin Martyr (110-165), Irenaeus (130-200), Clement of Alexandria (150-220), and Augustine (354-430) each exhibited some dispensationalist concepts in their writings.⁶⁷ The few eschatological writings of the early Church point to their premillennial leanings. However, premillennialist Justin Martyr acknowledges that there were those who believed otherwise.⁶⁸ Long before Darby, Pierre Poiret (1646-1719) published a systematic theology that presented a premillennial dispensationalist scheme.⁶⁹ Likewise, John Edwards (1639-1716) and Isaac Watts (1674-1748) wrote in favor of dispensationalist schemes.⁷⁰

God's consistent pattern has been one of "progressive revelation" throughout the Old Testament leading up to and through the New Testament. This means that God continues to unfold and reveal His truths. He does not reveal His truths all at once, but precept on precept, line upon line.⁷¹ The various dispensations, or stewardships, are successive and progressive manifestations of God's purpose.⁷² Had they looked back on what God had been saying in this manner, the Jews would have recognized their Messiah in Jesus. Dispensational theology, including the pre-tribulation rapture, depends on what the Bible literally says whether or not the doctrine was fully developed by the early Church. The message of the Preterist, though, is one of force fitting the prophecy of the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24) and the book of Revelation into the generation of the disciples of Jesus, and no further. This writer was a dispensationalist long before he knew the meaning of that term. It was the natural result of taking God at His word.

Spiritualizing Revelation

The Manicheanism of Augustine caused him to forsake literal interpretation of Scriptures in favor of allegory. Although the Alexandrian school and Origen first introduced the allegorical method, it was amillennialist Augustine's influence, in spite of some dispensational leanings, that caused the Church to abandon the literal method.⁷³ This fact gives credence to the literal futurist approach being favored by the early Christians prior to Origen and Augustine.

The preterism of Philip Mauro caused him to spiritualize the book of Revelation and other prophetic passages of the Bible. Writing about the "dry bones" prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 37 he revealed his belief that those passages dealing with the return of the Jews to the Land of Israel, actually dealt with the Church of Jesus Christ, as follows:⁷⁴

*By this prophecy God makes known that He would employ, in the mighty work of regeneration and recreation, the same agencies He used in the old creation – **the Word** ("prophecy (sic) to these bones") and **the Spirit** ("Breath"); for the salvation of all those who compose "the Israel of God," that "holy nation," is effected by **the word** of the gospel, preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (1 Pet. 1:12.*

The chapter foretells the gospel era beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist (who prophesied unto the dry bones of Israel). In verse 4 mention is made of the Word and in verse 9 of the Spirit. In verse 11 is foreseen "the whole house of Israel" (the true Israel), a people quickened together with Christ, baptized into His death, and made partakers of His resurrection....

*But at Pentecost there came the mighty **Breath of God**. God began to breathe upon those who had been dead in their sins; and **they lived**, and "stood upon their feet." And the work begun that day has been going on ever since, until the company of the regenerated ones has become "an exceeding great army," an innumerable multitude (Rev. 7:9)....*

And furthermore [the Jewish Rabbis], they were ignorant of the "mystery" of the true "Israel"..., namely, "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ, by (means of) the gospel."⁷⁵

Philip Mauro makes this next statement about the prophecies of the expectation of Israel's literal return to their land.

*[T]he advocates of modern dispensationalism have wrought confusion, and have succeeded in giving plausibility to many misinterpretations of Scripture, by first taking for granted (erroneously, as will be herein shown) that a "literal" interpretation... by insisting strenuously that all prophecies which refer to **Israel, Jerusalem, Zion, etc.**, should be interpreted "literally."*

For example, those expositors who think the Bible teaches us to expect hereafter a millennium of earthly bliss, a golden age of world-wide peace and plenty, during which the Jewish nation will be reconstituted and will have the place of headship over a world occupied by God-fearing and peace-loving Gentiles, base that expectation upon certain Old Testament prophecies which, they think, are to be fulfilled "literally"; and since they cannot possibly be fulfilled in that manner during this era of the Gospel, there needs to be an age to come of an entirely different character from this day of gospel salvation....

*[T]here is a natural "**Israel,**" "**Zion**" and "**Jerusalem**" and also a spiritual counterpart of each....all future promises of glory and blessing for Israel and Zion must belong to the true Israel [the Church] and the heavenly Zion.⁷⁶*

The spiritual approach does not require literal interpretation, but that the meaning is taken in a spiritual sense, edifying believers in any age. A common approach is to mix spiritual with preterist views.⁷⁷ Today we see that it was Israel itself that came to life and returned to the land, becoming a nation once again in 1948.⁷⁸ In spite of the obvious modern day literal fulfillment of prophecy regarding Israel's return to their land, Preterists, as well as Christian world leaders, refuse to acknowledge that current events of the Middle East are related to such prophecy, or have any significance as end-time events (Ezekiel 36:8-10, 24, 25, 33-36). President George W. Bush's recent prediction of a Palestinian State by 2007 is an example. Whether or not this will happen, the Bible is clear that Israel will eventually possess all the land as their inheritance.⁷⁹

Philip Mauro lived in a time before Ezekiel's prophecy was literally fulfilled. Philip Mauro saw only the abandonment of Israel by God. Philip Mauro took a spiritual preterist position that the Church had replaced Israel, and the Old Testament prophecies of the nation Israel had spiritual fulfillment in the Christian Gospel and Church. The more prophecy that is fulfilled, the more the literal futuristic truth of the Bible is revealed. In spite of this, liberal theologians continue to believe both prophecy and miracles impossible. Philip Mauro's excuse is that he did not live to witness the fulfillment of prophecy as we have in our era. The liberal theologians today have no excuse other than

the hardness and unbelief of their own hearts.⁸⁰

Those adhering to the spiritual approach are likely to be amillennialists, believing that the thousand-years of Revelation chapter 20 refers only to the millennium as a long period of time between Christ's first and second comings.⁸¹ If you think the Bible does not speak the plain truth, then the Bible can say anything you want it to say by the spiritual approach.

The Historicist

An additional view is that the book of Revelation unfolds all of Church history. The entire Church age is revealed by symbolism. Thus, for example, the seven seals become "the barbarian invasions that sacked the Western Roman Empire." The "beast" would represent the Papacy of Rome.⁸² The Historicist is likely to be an amillennialist.⁸³

The Importance of Imminency

For an event to be imminent means that it can happen at anytime, not necessarily that it will happen soon.⁸⁴ I believe we are intended to continue to expect Christ's return at any moment. Two thousand years is imminent in God's eternity.

The belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ was mostly abandoned after 300 AD, which caused the fervor of the first 300 years to abate. Postmillennialism replaced the doctrine of the imminent return of Jesus Christ, which had caused the Christians to continue expectantly looking for the return of Jesus.⁸⁵

Constantine made Christianity the state religion, and the Church became rich and powerful. The prevailing postmillennialism said that Christianity would make everything better and better, promising that Christ's kingdom would finally reach perfection, and that Christ would return at the end of a thousand years. This doctrine required a redefining of Israel. It was said that Israel was "cast off forever" and that the promises of Israel now applied to the Church. It would take another one thousand four hundred years to return to the doctrine of "imminent return" which would excite evangelistic fervor once more. Whenever a Church has a strong emphasis on the "Second Coming," a strong missionary evangelistic fervor is present.⁸⁶

The doctrine of Imminency as pertains to the rapture of the Church is that there are no prophecies awaiting fulfillment prior to that event.⁸⁷

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (Titus 2:13 KJV)

According to Spargimino:

In stressing immediacy instead of imminency, preterists have limited the need for spiritual

*watchfulness only to Jesus' immediate contemporaries.*⁸⁸

The idea, according to preterist thinking, is that whenever Scriptures say that Jesus is coming "quickly," or that "the time is near," it applies to the first century.⁸⁹

The Church is not Israel

A proof text often used by replacement theologians is Matthew 21:43.⁹⁰

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

Jesus seems to be saying that the nation of Israel will be taken from the Jews and given to another. Analyzing this verse in context we find instead that it refers to the parable of the landowner (Matthew 21:33-41). This parable speaks of a vineyard (Israel) and unfaithful vinedressers (Jewish religious leaders). Nowhere in the parable is the nation of Israel condemned; only the vinedressers are condemned. The future "nation" cannot refer to the Church, since "nation [ethnos]" implies race, government, and territory." In context, "nation" implies "a future generation of Jews" living during a time when Israel can truly say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:39). This is something they haven't yet proclaimed as a nation.⁹¹

For I say unto you, **Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.** (Matthew 23:39 KJV)

In Zechariah we find that Israel will finally show remorse for their rejection of Jesus Christ as their Messiah. We see this in their post-salvation mourning:⁹²

And it shall come to pass **in that day**, that **I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.** And **I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications:** and **they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son,** and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. **In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem,** as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. (Zechariah 12:9-11 KJV)

Zechariah 12:10 takes place not at Christ's return, but after His return and victory.⁹³ Therefore, when does Israel repent? In Hosea 5:15 we find:

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction **they will seek me early.** (Hosea 5:15 KJV)

They will repent **before** Christ returns. This is confirmed by Matthew 23:39. Their repentance comes in Zechariah 12:5 before Israel sees Him, when they realize they need the Lord's help, and then the Lord will return to save Israel (Zechariah 12:8, 9). Then they will see the One "whom they have pierced" (Zechariah 12:10).

And **the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.** (Zechariah 12:5 KJV)

God does not forsake Israel "even in the latter days."

When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, **even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;** (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) **he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.** (Deuteronomy 4:30-31 KJV)

Israel's belief must come after the rapture, otherwise they would have been raptured. Their repentance is immediately before Christ's return, and during the tribulation, otherwise they will be destroyed (Revelation 19:20, 21).

Clearly Israel will be in the land when they finally accept their Messiah. There have been previous times of apostasy and punishment, after which God restored Israel. The Church Age is no exception to this pattern. God's promise to Israel regarding the land is unconditional.⁹⁴ Paul affirms that Israel is not cast off forever:

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. **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, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 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. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.** (Romans 11:1-5 KJV)

The Church of Jesus Christ began as a predominantly Jewish Church. By 200 AD a shift occurred as many Gentiles embraced Christianity. With this change, the Church began to see itself as the replacement for Israel. Justin Martyr, writing in the second century, in his *Dialogue With Trypho, a Jew*, argues that what had belonged to Israel, including their scriptures, now belonged to the Church - "not yours but ours."⁹⁵

There is something significant in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9 regarding God's relationship with Israel. We see that an event is to occur after a period of 69 weeks (483 years).⁹⁶ That event is Jesus' entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey as prophesied by Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9; Luke 19:37-44). Some recognized Him as King, but most did not, and rejected Him as their Messiah. Less than a week later Jesus was crucified on the cross.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, **thy King cometh unto thee**: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and **riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass**. (Zechariah 9:9 KJV)

Jesus came to offer the Kingdom first to Israel (Mark 1:15).⁹⁷ It is revealing that prior to that time Jesus limited His message to only the Jews of Israel (Mark 1:15, 6; 15:22-24). After His rejection at Jerusalem, He began to speak of the Church that would later be founded. The Church did not exist at anytime during Daniel's first 69 weeks.⁹⁸ The non-dispensationalist believes that the Kingdom in its present form is the Church. Since the Jews rejected the offer of the Kingdom, then the Church replaced Israel as spiritual Israel representing the spiritualized Kingdom. A problem with this view is the prophecies that refer to a future kingdom with a Davidic throne that have yet to be fulfilled. There is thus a postponement of the offered theocratic earthly kingdom ruled by Christ.⁹⁹

There is indeed a spiritual aspect of God's realm that finds fulfillment in the Church. Believers are in this sense a part of God's Kingdom (Colossians 1:13). But the earthly Davidic Kingdom promised through the Old Testament prophets, and offered by Christ during His first advent has been postponed until the millennium.¹⁰⁰ Does the postponement signify that the cross might have been unnecessary if the offer to the Jews was accepted? Not at all, for we find that God's Lamb was ordained to be slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8; 1 Peter 1:19, 20). Israel's "Suffering Savior" (Isaiah 53) and "Reigning King" (Zechariah 14) are necessary parts of Israel's promised Kingdom. The Church Age fills the gap of the postponement.¹⁰¹ Ryrie says that the millennial kingdom will be "a time when God harmoniously joins the spiritual and earthly in a final display of the glory of the King on this earth."¹⁰²

In Matthew chapter 12 we see a complete rejection

by the religious leaders when they said that Jesus' powers came from the devil. A shift in Jesus ministry took place after that time in that He began to speak in parables so that only His own would understand Him.

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but **by Beelzebub the prince of the devils**. (Matthew 12:24 KJV)

At the same time, Matthew indicates that there was also a shift toward bringing salvation to the Gentiles. We speak of "shift" only in the sense that even though it was always God's plan to offer salvation to all people, He first brought the message to His chosen people, Israel.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and **he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles**. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And **in his name shall the Gentiles trust**. (Matthew 12:17-21 KJV)

After the religious leaders had rejected Jesus as Messiah, the rejection was completed by the rejection by the general populace as shown by His disciple's answer to a question by Jesus in Matthew chapter 16.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?** And they said, **Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets**. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God**. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. **Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ**. (Matthew 16:13-20 KJV)

Several things are noted in this exchange in Matthew 16. The Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah. They

acknowledged Him as anyone but their Messiah. Only Jesus' own recognized Him. Upon that revealed knowledge Jesus would build His Church. For the first time the new concept of a Church is mentioned. That Church would include both Jews and Gentiles. No longer were the disciples permitted to broadcast that Jesus was the Messiah, until after Pentecost. It was at Pentecost that the Church was born by the power of the Holy Spirit acting in believers (Acts 2)¹⁰³ While we say that the Church is not Israel, or that it has not replaced Israel, we can say that the Church is made up of both Jew and Gentile believers by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Jews should have recognized the exact day that their Messiah would come to Jerusalem, because that exact day was given them in Daniel's prophecy.¹⁰⁴ Because of this, Jesus would say the following:

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, **If thou hadst known**, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; **because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.** (Luke 19:41-44 KJV)

Several differences between the New Testament Church and Israel should illustrate that they are not the same, as covenant theologians insist. Dr. Spargimino lists:

1. *Through the Spirit of God Christ indwells the members of the Church (John 14:17), but this is never said of Israel.*
2. *In the Church, Jew and Gentile are equals, but this was not true under the Old Covenant (Eph. 3:1-6).*
3. *The existence of the New Testament Church is dependent upon the giving of gifts to the Body of Christ which occurred at the Ascension of Christ, and not before. Christ led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. (Eph. 4:8).*
4. *The existence of the Church is tied in with the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).¹⁰⁵*

The differences in the Old (Israel) and New (Church) Testaments is summed up by the Apostle John:

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17 KJV)

Ezekiel speaks of a time when God will use scattered, disobedient Israel to glorify His name among the heathen (Ezekiel 36:22-24).¹⁰⁶ The chapters following

chapter 36 of Ezekiel speak of returning Israel to their land. Paul, in Romans, looks at "Israel's election in the **past**" (chapter 9), "Israel's hardness in the **present**" (chapter 10), and "Israel's restoration in the **future**" (chapter 11).¹⁰⁷ Paul sums up with:

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 KJV)

Natural Interpretation

People are influenced by their worldviews. In the case of Christianity, those worldviews shape how they interpret Scripture, and ultimately how they view subjects such as end-times and particularly the rapture. It is our belief that a literal, or plain, interpretive method is the most natural. It allows the Bible to interpret itself by saying exactly what it means. We believe that God says exactly what He means and has communicated His meanings to the writers of Scripture, and to the prophets. We also believe that a consistent literal interpretive method will lead one naturally to dispensational theology, premillennial in regards to the second advent of Christ, and to the pre-tribulation rapture.

Your End-Times

How do you view prophecy? Are you eagerly awaiting the imminent return of Jesus Christ as the early Christians did. One thing is certain; there will be an end. For some the end will come unexpectedly "as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). The Bible says that those who "watch" will not be caught unawares (1 Thessalonians 5:4), and as true believers, will not face the "wrath" of God that is about to come on the earth.

Are you prepared? Why not? God loves you and wants to bring you into His Kingdom forever. We are all sinners saved by grace. None of us deserve to be saved, but for the price paid on that wooden cross at Calvary 2000 years ago. Just say a simple prayer – "Jesus, I acknowledge that I am a sinner and am sorry for my offenses. I can do nothing for myself to obtain righteousness before a Holy God, except for what Christ has done for me. He bought my release, and I now want and accept Him into my life as Lord and Savior."

To begin your new life in Christ, read the book of John and learn how much God loves you. Then continue Bible study by a systematic reading of the whole Bible. Find a good Bible believing Church and fellowship with other believers. Make it a daily habit to talk to God in your own words (that's prayer). If you are unsure in anything, you may contact us at the phone number, E-mail address, or address at the end of this newsletter. We would love to hear from you. **AΩ**

¹ Steve Gregg, Editor, *REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1997, p. 27.

² Charles C. Ryrie, *DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY*, Chicago, IL: Moody

Press, 1965, pp. 158-160.

³ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 31 – bracketed words are mine.

⁴ Allen Beechick, THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE, Denver, CO: Accent Publications, Inc., 1980, pp. 5, 6. Daymond R. Duck, Larry Richards (editor), REVELATION: GODS WORD FOR THE BIBLICALLY-INEPT, Lancaster, PA: Starburst Publishers, 1998, p. 64. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 54-56.

⁵ Duck, Richards (editor), REVELATION: GODS WORD FOR THE BIBLICALLY-INEPT, p. 64.

⁶ Larry Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, Oklahoma City, OK: Hearthstone Publishing, 2000, pp. 79, 80, 107. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 7-15 (Pages 7 and 8 are part of the Foreword by Frank E. Gaebelein).

⁷ David Noel Freedman, et al, editors, THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Domitian, New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992, Vol. 2, pp. 9, 221, 222. Steve Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1997, pp. 37, 38. Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 126, 178. Robert L. Pierce, THE RAPTURE CULT: Religious Zeal and Political Conspiracy, Signal Mountain, TN: Signal Point Press, ca1977, pp. 56, 57.

⁸ Pierce, THE RAPTURE CULT: Religious Zeal and Political Conspiracy, pp. 48, 49, 51, and 52.

⁹ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 150.

¹⁰ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 138-141. Pierce, THE RAPTURE CULT: Religious Zeal and Political Conspiracy, p. 55.

¹¹ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 20-24, 30, 50, 83, 191, 197, 198

¹² Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 198-201.

¹³ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 199, 205.

¹⁴ Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 28. Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 191.

¹⁵ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 30, 68, 69, 191.

¹⁶ Larry Spargimino, "IT'S GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME"?, *The Bible in the News, N-141*, Bethany, OK: Southwest Radio Church Ministries, July 2002, p. 2.

¹⁷ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 87.

¹⁸ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 88.

¹⁹ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 88, 89, 91.

²⁰ J. Marcellus Kik, AN ESCHATOLOGY OF VICTORY, Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1971, pp. 127, 128; cited by: Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 130.

²¹ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 153, 154.

²² Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 162-165.

²³ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp.171, 172.

²⁴ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 171-174, 17

²⁵ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 30.

²⁶ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 31, 54, and 67. See: Gary North, RAPTURE FEVER: Why Dispensationalism is Paralyzed, Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1993, p. 121.

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²⁸ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 55, and 91. Bracketed words are mine, added for clarification. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 187.

²⁹ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE

CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 55. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 188.

³⁰ James Orr, THE PROGRESS OF DOGMA, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., undated, p. 303. Cited by: Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 19, 20, 34.

³¹ Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 28.

³² Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 177, 178, 181, 182.

³³ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 55. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 15, 16, 41.

³⁴ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 55, and 91. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 19, 20.

³⁵ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 140-142.

³⁶ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 95.

³⁷ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 20.

³⁸ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 55, and 56. Bracketed word in the original. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 177, 178.

³⁹ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 56.

⁴⁰ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 56.

⁴¹ Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, pp. 27, 40.

⁴² Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 40.

⁴³ Cited by: Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 29, emphasis in the original.

⁴⁴ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 29, 30.

⁴⁵ H. A. Ironside, IN THE HEAVENLIES, New York, NY: Loizeaux Brothers, not dated, p. 67 – cited by: Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 31.

⁴⁶ Leon Bates, A BIBLE MAP, Sherman, TX: Bible Believers' Evangelistic Association, Inc., 1969. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 32, 36-39.

⁴⁷ William L. Pettingill, BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED, Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, not dated, p. 470 – cited by: Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 115.

⁴⁸ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 16, 22, 57-64. Bates, A BIBLE MAP.

⁴⁹ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 35, 36, 124.

⁵⁰ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 44-48.

⁵¹ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 48, 102.

⁵² Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 101-104.

⁵³ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 104, 155.

⁵⁴ Tim LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973, 1975, p. 37. Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, pp. 28, 37. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 13, 179-181, 183. George Eldon Ladd, THE BLESSED HOPE, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956, p. 43.

⁵⁵ Ladd, THE BLESSED HOPE, p. 43.

⁵⁶ Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 42.

⁵⁷ Ladd, THE BLESSED HOPE, p. 126. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 20.

⁵⁸ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 93, 94, 158.

⁵⁹ Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 40.

⁶⁰ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 159.

⁶¹ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 81, 157.

⁶² Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 81.

⁶³ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 96, 97.

⁶⁴ Dave McPherson, THE RAPTURE PLOT, Simpsonville, SC: millennium III Publishers, 1994, 2000 (2nd edition), pp. 2, 3.

⁶⁵ McPherson, THE RAPTURE PLOT, pp. 3, 4, 10, 11, 42, 226. See also: Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 12, 13.

⁶⁶ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 66.

⁶⁷ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 68-70.

⁶⁸ Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 29.

⁶⁹ Peter Poiret, THE DIVINE OECONOMY: Or An Universal System of the Works and Purposes of God Toward Men Demonstrated, London, ENG: 1713. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 71.

⁷⁰ John Edwards, A COMPLEAT HISTORY OR SURVEY OF ALL DISPENSATIONS AND METHODS OF RELIGION, I, v. Isaac Watts, WATT'S WORKS, Vol. II, Leeds edition p. 625, London edition p. 543. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 72, 73.

⁷¹ Beechick, THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE, p. 93. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 14, 33.

⁷² Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 104, 178.

⁷³ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 200-202.

⁷⁴ Philip Mauro, THINGS WHICH SOON MUST COME TO PASS. A Commentary on the Book of Revelation, Sterling, VA: G.A.M. Publications, 1990. Philip Mauro, THE HOPE OF ISRAEL, Grace Abounding Ministries, Inc., 1988, p. 111.

⁷⁵ Mauro, THE HOPE OF ISRAEL, p. 111, 112; bold emphasis are italics in the original.

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⁷⁸ See: THE GLORIOUS LAND, *Creation Revelation*, Summer 2002, Vol. 6, Issue 2.

⁷⁹ See: THE GLORIOUS LAND, *Creation Revelation*.

⁸⁰ See: Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, p. 10.

⁸¹ Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 28.

⁸² Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 34.

⁸³ Gregg, Editor, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: Parallel Commentary, p. 28.

⁸⁴ Renald Showers, MARANATHA, OUR LORD COME! A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church, Bellmawr, NJ: The Friend's of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., 1995, p. 127.

⁸⁵ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 37.
"Postmillennialism is the view that the present age will see the whole world Christianized and the prophecies of the millennial age fulfilled before Christ's return." See: Floyd H. Barackman, PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981, 1984, 1990, 1992, p. 540.

⁸⁶ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, pp. 37, 38.
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⁸⁷ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 225.

⁸⁸ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 229.

⁸⁹ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 229

⁹⁰ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 115.

⁹¹ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 115-117.

⁹² Beechick, THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE, pp. 52, 53.

⁹³ Beechick, THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE, p. 53.

⁹⁴ See: THE SEVENTY SEVENS, *Creation Revelation*, Spring 2002, Vol. 6, Issue 1, and: THE GLORIOUS LAND, *Creation Revelation*.

⁹⁵ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 90, and 91. See also: Marvin R. Wilson, OUR FATHER ABRAHAM: JEWISH ROOTS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; and Dayton, OH: Center for Judaic Christian Studies, 1989, p. 89

⁹⁶ See: THE SEVENTY SEVENS, *Creation Revelation*.

⁹⁷ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 87 and 88.

⁹⁸ Showers, MARANATHA, OUR LORD COME! A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church, p. 241.

⁹⁹ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 171-173.

¹⁰⁰ Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 172, 173, 211.

¹⁰¹ L.S. Chafer, SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1948, 1976, Vol. 5, pp. 348, 349. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 163-165.

¹⁰² Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 174, 175.

¹⁰³ Showers, MARANATHA, OUR LORD COME! A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church, p. 232. Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 148, 150, 151. Ryrie, DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, pp. 136, 137, 141, 142, 203, 204.

¹⁰⁴ See: THE SEVENTY SEVENS, *Creation Revelation*.

¹⁰⁵ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, p. 58.

¹⁰⁶ See: THE RED HORSE, *Creation Revelation*, Oct-Dec 2001, Vol. 5, Issue 4.

¹⁰⁷ Spargimino, THE ANTI-PROPHETS: END-TIME PROPHECY AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRETERISM, pp. 96, and 97. Bold emphasis in the original.

Please note that this third issue, Fall 2002, is the last issue for 2002. Usually there are four issues during each year.

This year, beginning with Spring 2002, we began to distribute the issues at the beginning of the quarter, rather than at the end. Therefore, while you will still receive the same number of issues, one each quarter, 2002 will only have three issues. The next issue will be Vol. 7, Issue 1, Winter 2003, distributed during January.

During 2003, four issues will be distributed, Winter, Spring, Summer,

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Topics will have a primary focus on the Defense of Scripture, including Creation (Genesis), Humanism, and Prophecy (Revelation). Other topics of interest may be presented. Questions, comments, and suggestions are encouraged. <http://www3.calvarychapel.com/pearlharbor/index1.htm>

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