

ATHEOS:
6 PATHS TO
DESTRUCTION

VOLUME III

**OTHER RELIGIONS
AND STILL-FUTURE
ESCHATOLOGY**

**In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.**

—John 1:1—

**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the
only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

—John 1:14—

**Jesus said to him, “I am THE WAY, the truth,
and the life. No one comes to the Father except
through Me.”**

—John 14:6—

**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him
to show His servants—things which must shortly/
quickly or swiftly take place. And He sent and signi-
fied *it* by His angel to His servant John...**

the time is near.

**—The Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to Him by the
Father, delivered by God’s angel to God’s servant, the apostle
John, 1:1-3 (written AD 62/63)—(all NKJV)**

DEDICATION

This third and last volume of the *ATHEOS* series is dedicated to the Alpha and the Omega, the triune and only true God; the only God whom I serve.

Isa 41:4

Isa 44:6

Rev 1:8, 11, 17

Rev 21:6

Rev 22:13

The God who can not lie (**Titus 1:2**) said,
“Surely, I am coming quickly.” (**Rev 22:20**).

And so you *did*, Lord Jesus! Amen!

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*****VALUABLE CHARTS FROM ED STEVENS: PAGES 62, 70, 88-89*****

IMPORTANT NOTES

Even less than “standing on the shoulders of giants,” I see myself as peering out from the corner of the giant’s shirt-pocket. I’m small stuff in this world, but I truly value the dedicated, conscientious teacher-giants that God has so graciously provided in this very age. Even Wikipedia can be harnessed to serve God’s purposes. God has used, after all, the likes of Pharaoh and Cyrus as unwitting accomplices to accomplish His will in history. Also, the SCRIPTURE REFERENCE INDEX on pages 117-124 could well be used as a Bible study (especially with the tools listed on p. 124) of many essential truths connected to the subjects discussed in this volume. BONUS MATERIAL: my favorite living teacher-giant, Ed Stevens of IPA, has graciously allowed me to reproduce 3 of his succinct-and-informative charts (pages 62, 70, and 88-89). Make a point of referring to those!

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS WORK

Books of the Bible

	1 Cor	=	1 Corinthians		
Gen	=	Genesis	2 Cor	=	2 Corinthians
Num	=	Numbers	Eph	=	Ephesians
1 Sam	=	1 Samuel	Gal	=	Galatians
Psa	=	Psalms	Phil	=	Philippians
Prov	=	Proverbs	Col	=	Colossians
Ecc	=	Ecclesiastes	1 Thes	=	1 Thessalonians
Isa	=	Isaiah	2 Thes	=	2 Thessalonians
Jer	=	Jeremiah	1 Tim	=	1 Timothy
Ezk	=	Ezekiel	2 Tim	=	2 Timothy
Dan	=	Daniel	Heb	=	Hebrews
Hos	=	Hosea	Jas	=	James
Nah	=	Nahum	1 Pet	=	1 Peter
Hab	=	Habakkuk	2 Pet	=	2 Peter
			1 Jn	=	1 John
Matt	=	Matthew	2 Jn	=	2 John
Rom	=	Romans	Rev	=	Revelation

Other

AD	=	Anno Domini/Year of our Lord
BC	=	before Christ
C.	=	century
c.	=	circa (around)
Gr.	=	Greek (language)
GWT	=	Great White Throne
HCSB	=	Holman Christian Standard Bible
Heb	=	Heb. (language)
KJV	=	King James Version
NT	=	New Testament
OT	=	Old Testament
NKJV	=	New King James Version
Str.	=	Strong’s # system

GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE *ATHEOS* SERIES

ATHEOS—just what is that all about?

Primarily, this trilogy is about bad ideas—bad ideologies—that have a dismal track record in history. What’s more, they are ideologies which are doomed to *perpetual* failure, with no hope of succeeding in the long run, for one good reason: their proponents are engaged in the ultimate futility of attempting to recreate the real universe that is. Like it or not, all that is, all that is real, all that is possible, all that will work, is subject to the limits set by the Creator-Sole Proprietor-Governor of the universe, the God described in His Word, the Holy Bible; the God who *knows all, sees all, and can not lie* (**Job 38-42; Heb 6:18**).

There’s an obvious common thread that unites what may at first appear to be unrelated idea systems: the theme of *struggle*. Darwin and the evolutionists described the struggle for survival of all living organisms; Hitler’s struggle was put in the form of an infamous book, *Mein Kampf* (“My Struggle”); Marx built the whole system which bears his name on the historical struggle between classes; Humanists struggle for *human* supremacy in all areas of life; Islamofascists struggle for a complete union of mosque and state under *shariah* law; leftists struggle for government control by an elite over the “ignorant masses”; the would-be re-definers of God—false religionists—struggle in their re-definition mission; even professing Christians struggle to “bring in the kingdom of Christ” (and The Rapture, to yank us out of “*these* last days”) by political maneuvering. We’ll see that all of these struggles are doomed to fail, and are not worth the effort. The ultimate irony in all of this should become clear as we move through the overall discussion: in seeking the path of *least* resistance and maximum autonomy—call it *expedience*—all of these thought-system designers have in fact forfeited ease and real freedom and *brought* upon themselves the resistance of Almighty God. God actively opposes all of the ultimate plans of the God-opposers. Obedience and *real* progress *or...* the unattainable expedience and certain failure of disobedience, those are the two choices; the path *of* life *to* life or the path of death.

Face it: there's no escaping the realities of the only universe in which we exist, the only universe in which we *can* exist. There's no going outside of it, no hope of re-arranging it, and no possibility of creating an alternative universe per another design. This is it, people. We all have just two choices: either accept the realities of God's universe or don't. Either way, the consequences will follow; they can't be stopped.

God-fearing, God-honoring acceptance is *The Way* to go through life on this earth. Working *with* God—recognizing His ownership and authority—is the only sane option. **A universe without God (*a-theos*) is not possible.**

Pretending that either the Creator doesn't exist or that He walked away from His creation in indifference won't do any good. Claiming that He has *ceased* to exist or even *could* cease to exist is insane blasphemy. If we could ask “God-is-dead” Nietzsche (mhM—met his Maker— AD 1900) if God is alive now and still on the job, upholding His universe every nanosecond, his tormented reply from his vantage point in Hell would likely be unintelligible and unprintable, but fully understood nonetheless!

God, as the uncaused self-existent Creator of all things, is the Ultimate Reality. Without Him, nothing would be. Period. Now, individuals may not *like* that fact, but it's a fact all the same; no poll will be taken. It's an independent, objective fact that founds (undergirds) all reality. The Creator has fashioned a *stupendous* creation solely for His own glory; *that's* why anything and everything exists! Moreover, The Sustainer (**Col 1:17; Heb 1:3**) operates through an established, perfect order that's superseded only by His *supernatural* interventions in space and time on occasions of His choosing alone. The moment-to-moment, age-to-age rule is simple: ***God's universe, God's rules.***

Two of the primary rules of God's universe are:

1. God defines, humans merely opine; God speaks in facts, humans can offer only opinions. **I say what is right—Isa 45:19**
2. Since God defines reality and speaks only truth, **truth=reality**

A word of caution may be in order here, a word to the would-be wise.

If you're already fighting what has gone before—I mean both in the words I've offered and in the proffered lessons of world history—you've likely succumbed to one or more of the soul-diverting, soul-deceiving, soul-destroying ideas at which we've been looking. Putting it in the form of a contemporary cliché, you're “drinking the Kool-Aid,” trustingly imbibing the poison-laced drink of the *untrustworthy*, and to your own destruction, like the victims of the Jonestown cult massacre. But it certainly doesn't have to be that way, and in God's universe— by His overriding grace—getting back to the path of the Truth (see often and always **John 14:6**) is always possible; that's where God wants you to be walking. “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” asks God through the prophet Amos (**Amos 3:3**). The answer is intuitive, instinctive, obvious, and even practical. Who better to walk in agreement with than the giver of all life and possessor of all power, God Almighty? He's the *last* Being that *anyone* should even *think* to offend if they wish to survive, much less thrive! (see **Job 42:2**).

Assuming that the reader and the writer are on the same page—we both see the sheer practicality and wisdom in *not fighting* the all-powerful One, who also happens to be the *sole* source of all *grace*— the writer can affirm (confirm) the “game plan.” The plan is straightforward and well-ordered, coming straight from God Himself: He has seen fit to declare His perfect will in an inerrant, infallible, inspired format, the written Word of God. Whether we call it The Holy Bible, Scripture, Holy Writ, the Inspired Writings, The Good Book, or even “God's Playbook,” we will accept its teachings without question, and in their entirety. Whatever disagrees with the very Word of God will be utterly rejected as neither God-pleasing nor true (**Prov 30:5-6; Isa 8:20**).

The short-form Biblical cases are presented, with some effort made to head off common objections. In some parts, we'll refer to the works of other writers—other than those inspired writers of The Bible—whose views have been informed and shaped *by* the Bible. In other cases, we'll give the God-opposers just enough rope to hang themselves by quoting their own words, thus exposing their designs and folly. In many cases, the direct *antithesis* between the truth of the

infinite, omniscient God and finite, fallible men is demonstrated so plainly that “he who runs may read” (**Hab 2:2**). That says nothing about any personal skill, but much about the power of God’s Word. God alone is infallible; He *can’t* make mistakes. Even *Archie Bunker*, that renowned theologian of Queens, New York knew that. He blurted out this simple, crass explanation to his “Meathead” son-in-law, Mike: “Gawd don’t make no mistakes, buddy boy. That’s how He got to be Gawd!” Like I say, crass, but it shows that even the simple-minded understand that a total *inability* to make mistakes—to err—is part of what defines the *God-ness* of God; His divine nature precludes even the *possibility* of erring or “messing up” as we say today (we who are somewhat polite, at any rate; there are other terms in popular use).

Where Archie erred was in his implication that God somehow *became* God—as if he just worked his way up through the ranks, never slipping up in his ascent to the elevated position of *The Boss*. No, God has always *been*, always been God, always been mistake-free. And so His Word is mistake-free, as well. *This* is why we all must turn to God’s Word. Only His Word is mistake-free. The difference between the mistake-free, factual, immutable (unchanging) declarations of God and the mistake-riddled, ever-changing opinions of sinful men is *infinite*. What’s significant for the reader at this point is this: I know that difference exists. You can trust me to the extent that what I say lines up with Scripture, and I trust you’ll come to the conclusion that I’ve been fairly conscientious in reflecting its teachings. Bereans of the world, unite! (see **Acts 17:11**).

This present work, Volume III: **Other Religions and Still-Future Eschatology**, or *Out-of THE WAY Systems*, deals with religions other than Biblical Christianity and false, nonbiblical eschatologies (end-times/ “last things” teachings). The common ground here is the failure to believe *all* of that which God has said in and through His Word; by which we mean the Holy Bible and the unique God-man, Jesus Christ, who *IS THE WAY*, The Truth, and The Life (**John 14:6**). There simply is *not a second way* to God the Father and life in His holy Heaven. But Jesus will most certainly get all of *His* sheep (**John 10 & 17**) safely to the Father and the Heaven to which Jesus ascended to prepare our dwelling places (**John 14:1-4**). From there He *has* returned, and all that has been promised

has been delivered; all that has been prophesied *has been fulfilled* (**Luke 21:20-32**). If Christ said—and His hand-picked, personally-taught, Holy Spirit-inspired apostles wrote—*anything* that was untrue about the timing and nature of the “second coming/return of Christ” and the other “last things,” the reality is that we have no sinless, whole-truth telling Savior! It’s just that serious and that basic. *This* is why I will unequivocally state:

While not one individual’s salvation hinges on a Preterist (past-fulfillment) view of eschatology, if that Biblical teaching is *not* true, *not one of us can* be saved.

Now, I can just feel “the love” coming at me from virtually any reader who has gotten this far, and I realize that I’ve made an extremely audacious statement—at least in the eyes of most readers. But if anyone will “hear me out” by getting through to the end of this work, that effort in search of The Truth will be rewarded. *Then* ...consider whether my “bold” assertion is more like a matter-of-fact conclusion drawn from the plain teaching of the Bible as properly understood, **taking God at His Word in each and every instance**. At the very least, the diligent reader will have heard the “other side”—the non-distorted and *unmodified* side of Biblical prophecy—and likely for the very first time. In any case, you can stone the messenger, but you can’t stop The Truth from rolling on.

Throughout this *ATHEOS* series, we...

- + Take God at His Word in all points, ever trusting His God-breathed truth (**2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:21**); the Bible is our ***Template of Truth***;
- + Depend upon the illumination (light-shedding) and leading of God, The Holy Spirit (**John 14:17, 26; 16:13**) *speaking through the apostles*;
- + Keep in mind always the fact that only the Triune God has always *been*; knows all things without exception; and is everywhere present, so all other speakers and teachers fall infinitely short of God’s breadth, depth, height, and reach;
- + Compare the *opinions* of humans who are fallible (error-prone) and finite (limited in all ways and in respectability) with the ***declarations of fact*** that God has put in spoken and written form;

I, the LORD, speak truthfully; I say what is right-Isa 45:19-HCSB

And we...

- + Acknowledge only those opinions that line up with Scripture as trustworthy; those that fail in that regard are to be rejected as false (**Isa 8:20**), or incomplete and inadequate at best;
- + Attempt to identify false (anti-God, antibiblical) ideas and systems that *have* failed, as well as those currently in vogue but equally destined for ultimate failure (usually nothing new, but another case of the dog returning to his vomit - **Prov 26:11** and **2 Pet 2:22**); separate the tried-and-true from the forever-false failures.

Then, it's just a matter of sticking to the path of THE WAY and The Truth to The Life eternal. We will fear, praise, and please God, all with His help.

Jesu Juva (Jesus, help)

Soli Deo Gloria (to God alone be the glory!)

AD 2014

**Isa 44:6—I am the First and I am the Last;
besides Me there is no God.**

**Rev 22:13—I am Alpha and Omega,
the beginning and the end, the first
and the last.**

OUT-OF *THE* WAY SYSTEMS

Section One

OTHER RELIGIONS

Distortions all around.

Heb 11:6 (NKJV)—But **without faith** *it is impossible to please Him* , for he who comes to God must **believe that He is**, and *that He* is a rewarder of those who diligently seek **Him**.

Rom 10:17-18 (NKJV)—So then **faith comes by hearing**, and hearing by **the word of God**. But I say, **have they not heard? Yes indeed:** *“Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”*[written AD 58]

Col 1:6, 23 (NKJV)—[the **gospel**] which **has come to you**, as *it has also in all the world...the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven...*
[written AD 62 or 63; compare **Mark 16:15!**]

When I refer to “other religions” in this work, I mean any *non-Christian*, nonbiblical belief system. Atheism/agnosticism, which we’ve already covered in

the first volume of this *ATHEOS* series, is not specifically in view in this section, although it's always in the background. The end-destination of *all* atheism-agnosticism *non*-faith, and any nonchristian faith is eternal destruction, as is clearly expressed in God's Word in many places (**John 3:16 & 18; 5:24 & 29; Dan 12:2; Matt 25:41; 2 Pet 2**, etc.). While there is only One (*THE*) Way of salvation (**Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:25-26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22**, as well as **John 14:6**), there are *countless* paths that lead only to destruction. To get to Heaven, there's exactly one Way, but to get to Hell, *any* other way will do. In this series, only 6 of the most *widely-accepted general ones* are examined, and in this particular section, only a few forms of *theism*—belief-systems in which *any* god of any kind is included by name—that *deviate from* the Biblically-revealed religion of *Christianity* are in view. In other words, all of these nonchristians—both atheistic and theistic—are in the same boat headed for the lake of fire and brimstone (**Rev 20:10**), but all those mentioned in this particular section at least profess a belief in *some* god or gods. Also, they have set their sights on *another* more blissful *existence*—be it heaven, nirvana, a better stage of reincarnation, or whatever—beyond the present, earthly life. The atheist insists that this is all there is; the theist of any school of thought looks beyond that, and usually above.

The idea that “there are many ways to God” gets no support whatsoever from Holy Scripture. The 66 books of the Holy Bible all point to and cross-confirm only one way to God, *period*. And if God's very Word says that there is only one way—*His* way—well, guess what? Then there is only that Way. So you're not getting my sinner's-eye-view *opinion* on the matter, but God's perfect, unchanging declaration of universal *fact*. The best and wisest thing that any one of us can do is to receive God's Word as eternal truth, and as eternally true in every aspect.

One of this generation's most dangerous, God-dishonoring tendencies is for so-called Christian “leaders” and clergymen to encourage us to drink the poison punch that the world is always eager to offer. One “Christian icon” who disturbs me greatly in this regard is the “Reverend” Billy Graham. [right here is where I'll lose many *more* readers who have even gone *this* far with me, but I again challenge *you, fair-minded reader* to allow me to speak my mind on this]

Now with what exactly am I charging Billy Graham? Heretical *pluralism*, in a nutshell. After consulting dozens of accurate reports from several varied, trusted, *discerning* Christians—all of whom tend to confirm each other to a great degree—a distinct pattern emerges: Graham is *NOT* convinced that Christ *IS* the *only* way to God. Some have him using the exact—or nearly exact—words of that world-religion formula we’ve already put forward: there are many paths to God/the truth/heaven. Additionally, his “crusades” have employed *many* nonchristian “counselors,” those to whom crusade respondents first go when they “come forward” to “accept Christ.” Question: Just how are they going to learn about the true God-man of Scripture, Jesus *Christ*, from *non*-christians? How can that make sense on any level? Then, many of those who go forward are directed to local assemblies that are *NOT* necessarily Christian! Of course, Graham has his rabid defenders, and they are *legion*. From these we hear the old excuses: if there ever were any nonchristian counselors involved, it had to be a rare case, or they were employed without the knowledge of crusade leadership; Mormons (and the like) are *not* Christians? Since when?; *any* church is better than *no* church, and any religion is better than no religion at all [as if a conversion out of total atheism to a muddled, up-in-the-air “faith” is gaining anything at all!]; or, “Well, *I* ‘got saved’ at a Billy Graham Crusade, so none of what you say against him has *any* validity” [or the more-pious-sounding, “Since *I* came through alright, why can’t you admit that God has *anointed* his ministry?” I reply: **Rom 3:8** instructs us, “**Let us not do evil that good may come**”; don’t use anti-God, *non*-God-approved means to achieve what you consider to be a good end!].

Maybe I should’ve defined *pluralism* above, but from what I described in the preceding paragraph, the meaning of the term should have clearly come forth: it just means a plurality (*more* than one) of whatever it is you’re talking about: in this case, a plurality of ways to God. Graham has publicly and consistently affirmed that there *is* a *plurality* of ways to God/of salvation, and he’s said as much so often in word and deed that it’s impossible that he’s been misquoted and misread *every* time. That makes him a pluralist, and that makes him a heretic by the *Biblical standard* (*singular* and *fixed!*). What’s more, a plurality of *gods* is suggested by implication, since the *true God’s* never-wavering Truth has been rejected in favor of the “emerging truths” of the world-religionists and their *gods*.

It's my earnest contention that Rev. Billy and his ilk should be more concerned with *discipling* people of all nations and *teaching* them to *observe all things Christ has commanded* than with racking up big, artificial numbers in crusade attendees and viewers and church-membership rolls. Yes, I'm looking at you, too, "mega-church" leaders! Let's all take a long, *close* look at **Matt 28:18-20**:

“And Jesus came and spoke to **them** [the twelve, minus Judas, so “**the eleven**”—verse 16], saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name [*singular*] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you** [“you” specifically, the eleven, and later, Matthias per **Acts 1:15-26**; Gr. *humin*, Str. 5213]; and lo, I am with **you** [another specific “you”—*humon*, Str. 5216] always, *even* [added by translators but not needed] **to the end of the age.**” [that last word is Gr. *aionos (aion)*, Str. 165; it does *not* mean “world” as it is sometimes incorrectly rendered].

This is, of course, what is commonly known as “The Great Commission.” Although the command of Jesus to *all believers* is to “always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you”—a command which was issued *through* the inspired apostle Peter in **1 Pet 3:15** to the “elect” (**1 Pet 1:2**), this “Great Commission” of Christ was *group-specific and time-specific*. As Michael A. Fenemore deftly demonstrates in his book, *The Twilight Of Postmillennialism* (pages 144-150 especially), in the New Testament, the meaning of *witness NEVER* is anything *other than eyewitness*; it's an example of technical usage, where a term is deliberately chosen for specificity, and readers aren't at liberty to import their own meanings based on their *own contemporary* usage. Fenemore looks at all the pertinent passages and comes to this conclusion honestly. The upshot: There are no witnesses alive on earth today in that Biblical sense; this is something with which we must come to grips. *Yes*, we are to *share the gospel*, but we're not *qualified* to witness in the way those 1st-Century chosen apostles could. The Great Commission was given to *them* and *fulfilled by them* (see again **Rom 10:18**; **Col 1:6, 23**). But we still have a job to

do in our own time, which is...what? To *share* the good news of the gospel, and to preach and teach whatever *God* has taught and commanded for all peoples of all nations in all times in His written Word. None of us alive today has been an *eye-witness* to the majesty of Jesus as He walked in visible, physical form on our planet. *But...*we today have the advantage of the *complete **written** testimony of God Himself*, and we can *share* that (!) with as many fellow humans as possible. This is one of the most important ways to serve our Lord today, and we should never forsake our duty or diminish the honor in it by “gospel-hosing” people in big numbers, as opposed to discipling them one or two or a few at a time through personal relationships. *That’s* how Christ’s church is designed to work. And dare I say this? Just maybe...we should still be worshiping in “house churches,” as they did in the First Century AD (examples: **Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Philemon**). Even if it’s only by absolute necessity now in China, the “underground house-church movement” seems to be the section of the church on earth that is currently the most alive; we might have the polish and glitz, but *they* have the *passion* ! Intuitively, we apprehend which approach is more God-pleasing, don’t we? To spell it out another way, compare the lukewarm church of **Rev 3:16** (Laodicea) with the church mentioned just prior to that (Philadelphia, **Rev 3:7-12**). The Lord does not criticize the church in Philadelphia; instead He *commends* it. But then He turns to the Laodiceans, and lowers the boom; no commendation here, but looming *condemnation*. Well, it seems to me that the Western church today has much more in common with the Laodicean church, and the Chinese—and other Word-hungry peoples—are more like the Philadelphians. Food for thought, anyway, offered for your consideration.

In volume I of this series, section two (**Totalitarianism**), much time was spent on looking at the sin of coveting, since it’s the basis for all socialism. Hopefully, we still recall that the sin of coveting is *not* committed when we desire to have what someone else possesses if that merely means *in addition to them* , or possessing something that is *good* in God’s eyes that we, too, can *lawfully* possess. Let me suggest that when people speak of “coveting your prayers” that that is not an improper “coveting” even if it sounds awkward. I *am* sure about this: whatever the appropriate English word may be, God *does* want us to earnestly desire the *sincere* (KJV) *pure* (NKJV) milk of the Word (**1 Pet 2:2**); for that we are

to intensely hunger, just as a newborn baby. The nation that God will be happy to bless is one in which there are many such “newborn babes.” The Bible is to be revered as the very Word of God Almighty, and used as much as its true value dictates. This is GOD SPEAKING, people! I humbly remind my fellow professing Christians: only *practical atheists* neglect the constant and proper use of God’s Word. I humbly remind *myself*: you, too, have been guilty of this neglect way more often than you’d ever care to admit! Maybe we should give each other a kick in the pants and *renew our dedicated efforts*. Because indifference to God’s holy Word invites God’s indifference and His just chastisement and condemnation. *And* because...without an active working knowledge of what God’s Word teaches, we’re liable to fall for any old rehashed world-spew that tickles our ears in a weak, unguarded moment. Let’s be **Ephesians 6 Christians**, ARMED with the spiritual armor we need and READY for what’s thrown our way by the enemies of the one true God.

So much for prologue in this section. This is our plan from here:

1. The writer will proceed to basically *list* a number of nonchristian religious philosophies, all of which are nonbiblical, and thus, to be rejected. Some leaders of these groups will be mentioned to aid in identifying them. Once again, NONE are to be recommended.
2. It’s hoped that the reader will proceed to note that ALL of the listed philosophies and teachings *deviate* from God’s Word in many respects; they are all ***distortions*** of it or ignore it completely. This is despite the fact that all people-groups that exist today have their root ancestors in Noah’s three sons and their wives, who were presumably well-instructed in God’s way by Noah, a preacher of righteousness (**Gen 6:8-9; 2 Pet 2:5**).

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER: Noah was the only surviving custodian (keeper) of *The Gospel of truth*, as received from God to Adam and on down, at the time of the worldwide flood. The only possible exceptions could be his wife, sons, and daughters-

in-law, but only Noah is named by God as a “preacher of righteousness.” Noah *got* it; he didn’t have any need to invent a religion, because *the one true religion* inhabited him. We know this because God confirms it in at least the two places in His Word we’ve already mentioned. This leads us unerringly to the following conclusion:

Every deviation from what Noah preached in looking forward to God’s promised Redeemer is necessarily a distortion of the original true, *universal* message.

This helps to explain how so many religions have overlapping traits and tenets and so many sound-alike (but not identical) flood legends exist: they’re rooted in what Noah taught to his sons and their families, but when the true story rippled out from there, many details “got lost in the translation.” So, contrary to what humanists claim,

man hasn’t invented “God” and all religions, but he *is* constantly telling the story wrong.

3. Jesus Christ is *the dividing line, period*. A christless religion is a false, worthless religion. A religion that includes Jesus, but not as *the God*-man, God in union with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, THE Way, Truth, and Life, is a false, worthless one, too. *This* distinction is the all-important one. Either your religion has Jesus Christ *as* God and as the only sinless man, or it does not. The only religion given by God that carries His full, unwavering approval is the one that has always centered on Jesus Christ, The only Messiah. *Biblical* Judaism always pointed forward to Christ, and now that He has established His Everlasting New Covenant Kingdom (**Jer 31; Dan 2, 4, 7, 9; 2 Pet 1:11**), *Biblical Christianity* carries the only God-approved, Christ-centered religion forward throughout the ages. Christianity grew out of Judaism, to be sure, but in AD 70 God made it *emphatically clear* that Judaism was through as a God-approved religion. He made it *impossible to practice, since their temple is gone*.

So with all due respect to those of the Jewish faith today, God rejected the Jews who rejected His Son, the appointed Messiah, and Israel has NOT been the “apple of God’s eye” for 1944 years already, and never again will it be! If The Father were to reinstate the Old Covenant/Jewish sacrificial system and temple-mediated worship, He would make Himself a *transgressor* in rebuilding that which *He* destroyed *through* the Roman armies in AD 70:

Gal 2:18—(The apostle Paul, the inspired servant of Christ is speaking): **For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.**

Since I can sense the objection, let me head it off. One might say, “It would make *Paul* a sinner maybe, but if *God* rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem, it would *not* make God a sinner!” It wouldn’t, huh? Consider the following points, and note well, all of you dispensationalists and Christian Zionists:

1. You’re forgetting—as usual—that God is always sovereign. The complete destruction of the Jerusalem Temple happened with the full knowledge and approval of God Almighty, and it was done by His hand *through* earthly agents; it was no accident of history!
2. *You’re missing the entire point of that decimation* if you’re looking for a rebuilt temple, because by destroying the Jewish temple (“heaven and earth” to them), *God Himself* made it ***literally impossible*** to continue Jewish temple worship; it can’t be done without the temple, and it was ultimately *God* who took that temple away *permanently*. The *New Temple*, composed of living stones (Christian believers) and Christ as the Head and Chief Cornerstone, has superseded it once and forever (**1 Pet 2:4-10**).
3. You’re forgetting the very essence of Christianity: Christ’s personal sacrifice on the behalf of each and every heavenbound soul. If The Father put us back under the OT/Jewish sacrificial system, He’d completely negate the incomparable and irreplaceable

sufferings and death of His only beloved Son, the *sole mediator* He has appointed (**Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5**). The Father's rejection of The Son's *once-for-all sacrifice* (**Heb 9:8-28**)—are you *mad*?!? And a *secular nation-state* that happens to adopt the name of “Israel” in recent generations is going to so impress The Father with its holy obedience that He'll be moved to overthrow the *applied perfect lawkeeping of Jesus Christ*?!? Whether or not they'll ever admit it, these are the direct and necessary implications of the dispensationalists' scheme, which is but a pack of lies from the Abyss.

A whole lot more could be said about how *both* Judaism and dispensationalism/“Christian” Zionism are out-of-The Way religious systems. Suffice it to say regarding Judaism, that it *has had* its day.

We'll reiterate: the Jewish religion as it's practiced today is non-biblical by very definition. Without the temple, through which *everything* was mediated—by The Father's commands—in *pointing to* the one and only Messiah, you simply do not have *Biblical* Judaism. What's practiced today is merely rabbinical/Talmudic Judaism, which just carries on Jewish traditions *minus* the necessary centrality of the temple and the God-commanded Levitical priesthood. And in that there's another nail in the coffin of Judaism: ***when the temple was destroyed, the genealogies that were necessary to prove descent of the LEVITES were destroyed as well!*** This is a crucial point! All of the qualifications for the OT priesthood were laid out by God, and the lines of descent had to be observed without fail. But without the genealogies that were kept in the Jerusalem temple, lineage could not be proved, and hence, the system could not continue.

The point is simple: Jews, one and all, are welcomed—actually *commanded* to repent and turn to Christ, per **Acts 17:30**—but adhering to the Jewish religion will only lead to destruction. It remains a faith devoid of Christ, and is therefore our first false and worthless faith. And anyone looking for God to undo the true Israel of God (**Gal 3-6**)

is just as deluded. How anyone can profess to be trusting in Christ as Lord and Savior and yet be looking for the re-establishment of a types-and-shadows system that *existed only to point to Him*, is beyond all comprehension. It's such a glaring inconsistency that I truly question that the same *sane* mind can hold to both tenets.

If dispensationalism were true, everything that Jesus Christ came to earth to accomplish would be wiped out as unnecessary!

No, you scheming apostates! ***Our Sovereign God has His immutable plans and immutable purposes, and the only immutable and unstoppable will in the universe!*** God will never change His plan because of some contingency or eventuality that He “didn’t see coming!” That is blasphemy! The God who created this universe is *omniscient* (knows *all*) and omnipotent (*all*-powerful). His will simply can’t be overthrown, and He would be less than holy if He’d ever compromise it in deference to sinful creatures! Get over yourselves and all of your pandering, modern headlines-driven false theology! Don’t let what you think just *has to be* true about the “end-times” devour everything you *profess* to believe about Christ. You can’t hold to both dispensational “thinking” and true belief in Jesus Christ as the *once-for-all Redeemer of souls*. This is another clear case of trying to serve two masters, the folly of which was made apparent by Jesus Himself—**Matt 6:24**. You can’t be led around by the nose by false teachers who are bent on gaining personal notoriety for seeing what millions of others have “missed” *and* believe Christ. As much as any finite human can guarantee *anything*, I can give *these* guarantees: ***every prediction*** of the still-future “second coming” of Christ; of the “end of the *world*”; or of a “restoration” of the Old (*obsolete*!—**Heb 8:13**) Covenant in favor of the New, “*everlasting Covenant*” (**Heb 13:20**)...is ***absolutely doomed to failure***. **I take God at His Word**, you see.

BOTH JUDAISM AND DISPENSATIONAL “CHRISTIAN” ZIONISM ARE OUT

If a reader thinks I’m being overly harsh in my condemnation of dispensationalist teachers and their *religion of substitution*, I can only urge that reader to consult God’s whole-truth teachings in **Romans 9-11, Galatians 3-6**, and as much of **Hebrews** as possible, but **chapters 8 & 9** especially. Then, if that Bible-reader will only allow himself to be led by the illuminating Spirit of God, any notions of the legitimacy of dispensationalism should be obliterated, *once-and-for-all*! It’s just another nonchristian religion which we must all avoid.

Having launched this “other religions” discussion with two of those that are often *deemed to be* closely related to Biblical Christianity, no matter how little they *actually* have in common with it in this everlasting New Covenant age, we’ll travel downstream to encounter other pretenders. We’ll now switch to more of a *list* style as promised, but the reader is asked to **remember how a false, out-of-The Way system has been defined: it’s either completely *christless*, or it includes a nonbiblical, distorted, sub-diety (less than true God) idol- “christ.”** Again we remind: *the TRUE Christ is the dividing line.*

ISLAM/MOHAMMEDISM (MUSLIMS)—If you’ve read my first volume in this *ATHEOS* series on **Atheism-Totalitarianism-Humanism**, you may recall that I referred to Islamism as a *political* system first, and a religion *second*. Of course, no one needed to get that from *me*, since hundreds (thousands?) of others have pointed that out before *I* realized it. When you consider that the ultimate goal for true Muslims, based on the teachings of the Koran/Qu’ran and the *hadith* (“Traditions”)—obsession #1, in other words—is *world-domination and shariah law for everyone*, the religious garb in which Islam is dressed begins to be stripped away. Nonetheless, Muslims sure get a lot of mileage out of their “religion of peace” propaganda, especially with the dunderheaded “politically-correct” crowd. Those PCers are cool with Islam because it’s at least *NOT* Christianity. As was pointed out in volume I, both atheists (no professed god of any sort) and these *monotheists* (“Allah *only* is God”) are united in their hatred of *Christian* theists. Both groups are adamantly opposed to the Triune God who has revealed Himself in The Holy Bible. Both are christless and destruction-bound.

HINDUISM is the *farthest thing possible from monotheism*, unless you want to consider 700 million (or more?) manifestations of *Brahman* to be emanating from a single universe-god (*pantheism*, where *all* is “God”). The one thing that Hindus and outsiders alike can definitely agree on is that the exact number of gods/god-forms is not known to any one person, and *unknown* to all. Talk about confusion! Where is there any stability in that? And doesn’t that severely dilute the “Godness” of this “god” that could just as easily be a cow or an entire forest as a human being? Or a spirit inhabiting a chunk of stone? Obviously, regarding our dividing line—the God-man, Jesus Christ—Hinduism is christless and therefore false. Sure, Hindus grant an elevated status to Jesus of Nazareth the Teacher as an incarnation of *Vishnu*, but He’s not seen as *the* Son of God, and not as true God; He is not, according to them, The Redeemer, nor has He even risen from the dead. Reincarnation is the name of the game, and *karma* replaces God’s Judgment. Most of what is called *New Age* has much in common with Hinduism.

BUDDHISM is an offshoot of Hinduism, and it was founded as an attempt at reforming it. Gautama Siddhartha (6th-5th Century BC) was an atheist who now is virtually considered to be a god; go figure! He’s “The Buddha”—“The Enlightened One” for Buddhists. Centered on *The Eightfold Path* to *nirvana*, the desire-free state of being, there are *many forms* of Buddhism due to an open *Doctrine of Assimilation*; it’s widely syncretistic (adopts the beliefs of several other religions and blends them in). In traditional, mainline Buddhism, Jesus is not recognized at all. At most, He’s recognized as *an* enlightened teacher or an *avatar* in some more modern forms of the religion. But Jesus as God, The Christ? No. So out with Buddhism in any form. There’s only eternal destruction at the end of that path.

HARE KRISHNA and TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION are two more offshoots of Hinduism, both of which were founded in the mid-*20th* Century AD. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness was founded in New York by Swami Prabhupada, who mined Hindu teachings from 400 years earlier to start Hare Krishna. Like Hinduism and Buddhism, the most-elevated position the devotees of Krishna are willing to give Jesus is that of a “Do as I say, not as I do” idol-god who can indulge himself in things prohibited to his followers. But usually,

Jesus is again considered to be just a teacher of some merit who pushed vegetarianism as much as anything else. Needless to say, this Jesus couldn't save anyone from anything other than arteriosclerosis, perhaps. Transcendental Meditation (TM) is another pantheistic, everything-is-part-of-God concoction of surprisingly recent vintage (mid-late 1950's, in India). That guy with whom The Beatles met and studied, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founded it. In his version of things, Jesus was one of the very few who successfully discovered his "divine essence." It's not like He existed from eternity as *The Deity* or anything! So Jesus supposedly found his own little piece of *The All* ("All is One"), and he is to be congratulated for recognizing that he possesses something that we *all* possess; the vast majority of us just don't take the time to smell the navels, as it were. Incidentally, the *mantras* upon which TM followers are supposed to meditate are in fact associated with *Hindu gods*, so Christians shouldn't be suckered-in by the "cuteness" or "harmlessness" of that practice; you're chanting the name or invoking the spirit of an idol. And that warning of Jesus in **Matt 12:36**—"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment"—isn't there to serve as mere window-dressing; He meant what He said, as always. Certainly, "idol words" more-than qualify as "idle words."

NEW AGE RELIGIONS IN GENERAL: Christless in any Biblical sense. Lip service is given to Jesus as an "ascended master" who, as TM also teaches, discovered his own "Godness" (here too, everything & everyone is God) in a way that all but a very few miss; that's how one "ascends" to a higher spiritual plane. The trappings of new age religions are familiar: use of crystals, channeling spirits, yoga, meditation, astrology, and Shirley MacLaine exclaiming in dreamy realization, "I am God!" An ascended *mistress*, maybe? An alternative name for New Age is *Cosmic Humanism*, and the reader may recall what little real compatibility was found between Christianity and Humanism of any kind (NONE). Cosmic Humanists are "updated" evolutionists, usually favoring a theory of punctuated equilibrium to Darwinian evolution. But without a place for the Biblical God in their scheme, Biblical Creationism is excluded by default. After all, if the universe itself is an uncreated All-god, who or what could be said to be the creator of anything else? Applying the great dividing line, New Age/Cosmic Humanism is christless and worthless as the result of rejecting the One who created all else.

Nor is Christ the Creator in SCIENTOLOGY, that L. Ron Hubbard business (*Dianetics, The Modern Science of Mental Health; The Way to Happiness*). Tom Cruise and Kirstie Alley infamously promote this, among other trendy Hollywood-types and ultra-gullible folks in general. Two clues about its validity: 1) it wasn't founded until 1954 AD; and 2) it got its start in LA (Los Angeles, CA), where the world headquarters are. The unique keyword-concept is that of *thetans*, or potential *personal universe-rulers*, who just need to be aware of their own unlimited powers and immortality to become gods. This awareness can be achieved by working with priestlike *auditors* who can hear one's confessions ("engrams" or "hang-ups"), and help that one to shed those negatives on the way to a salvation from the cycles of reincarnation (that "doctrine" just won't go away, will it?). In Scientology, sin and hell are myths, so a Savior is equally mythical, but then, anyone reading thus far could've guessed that, right?

Two "way out there" loose ends are BAHA'I (WORLD FAITH) and WICCA ("White Witchcraft"). Baha'i was founded in Iran in 1844 and HQs in Haifa, Israel. Let's see,...that's 3 red flags already! Baha'i attempts to construct a pantheon (god-group) of far-flung *manifestations* of "God," the ultimately *unknowable* divine being. These include Jesus, it's true, but also Adam, Moses, *Buddha*, *Krishna*, *Muhammad*, and *Baha'u'llah* ("*Glory of Allah*"), a co-founder and its namesake. As a matter of fact, that fellow is now the *highest* manifestation, since he superseded Muhammad, who had superseded Jesus. Kind of a neat trick if you can pull it off, no? If there's any kind of distinguishing tenet of Baha'i, it's that it teaches that all religions share the same source, and all are in pursuit of the same thing: *world unity*. So if everyone just follows the "Glory of Allah" in everything he's taught, all will be unified in peace and total harmony. There's no Biblical God or Jesus who can be known, but the way to world unity *is* known, and it is Baha'i, so now you know what there is to know. On to Oneness and Unity! This is quite sad, since the Bible tells us that God *can* be known, and Jesus has declared Him (**John 1:18**); all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ (**Col 2:9**).

WICCA is nothing more than witchcraft in service to nature as the Goddess. It's the unofficial religion of radical environmentalists who think the earth itself is the only thing really worth saving. Besides, human beings are in no need of

divine salvation, since they are not sinful. [Oh.] It's not to be confused with Satanism, but it's just as damnable and worthless as a christless, false religion. I had an Anthropology professor who claimed to be a Wiccan. She was intelligent, calm, and personable, but she did have these strange ideas, and, it must be admitted, she *was* a witch (even if one of the "white/good witch" variety). So beware of smiling faces and smooth demeanors; what people *believe* is what's important, especially what they believe about Jesus Christ. Wiccans don't give proper place to Jesus, so to them He is the Judge—and not the Savior—of their souls.

PSEUDO-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

Moving on now to those false religions that claim some part of or affinity with Christianity, it might be a good time to call upon the Holy Spirit for increased discernment. Feel free to pray for that as I pray for it myself. Whereas the false religions we've already looked at are usually fairly easy to spot as not-even-close paths to truth, among this next group of impostors are some pretty convincing salespersons. But just as we've alluded above—and as the song says—"Smiling faces...sometimes they don't tell the truth." I have no way of proving this, but I'm quite certain that the Serpent (Satan) charmingly "smiled" at Eve when he tempted her to question God's grace and provision in the garden of Eden by saying, "**You will not surely die** [insert reassuring smile]. **For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil** [another smarmy smile that would communicate the idea that God's just holding out on Adam and Eve, unfairly keeping from them something that rightfully belongs to them; *coveting*, anyone?]. In any case, **there's nowhere near a 100% correspondence between smilers and truth-tellers.** It's very important to keep that in mind. One thing that may help is the fact that the Bible doesn't refer even *once* to a *smiling* Christ as He delivered truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He did weep, however (**John 11:35 & Luke 19:41**). And when He chased out the temple moneychangers in righteous anger, do you suppose that He was grinning and winking and joking along the way? (**Matt 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18**). No, He meant business! So the point here is simple: concentrate on the *content* of the teaching, and not so much the manner of presentation. **Buy the goods, and not the package.**

CHRISTADELPHIANS reject—ironically, given their name—the eternal existence of Christ (see **John 1:1-2 & 17:5** or **Col 1:17** for the Biblical rebuttal). They claim that He came into existence when born of Mary, so He can't be God as He is described in His Word. They're also annihilationists who deny the existence of Hell, so they are among those who think they know more about the afterlife than Christ, the Creator of all things (**John 1:3; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2**). Their “christ” is a false one, so also is their religion.

CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS, too, have Christ in their name, but not in their theology. According to them, not only was Jesus Christ not God, but since “God” is defined as all that truly exists, and *matter is an illusion* (chomp on *that* one, you card-carrying evolutionary *scientists*!), he wasn't even a man, but an *idea*! They speak of the “allness of spirit” and the “nothingness of matter.” It might help us to call them, not pantheists, but *pan-spiritists*. “The only reality of sin, sickness, or death is the awful fact that unrealities *seem* real to human, erring belief...” Got it? Once again, we see that if sin and death are myths, so is the need for a Savior, and so is the savior himself just another myth. As of 2005, according to *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, there were 2200 churches full of adherents, so they're convincing loads of people that their “healing miracles” are real. Sad.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES are unitarian, of course, and therefore not Christians. A Father-/Jehovah God-only “God” is definitely not the Biblical one. The reader is likely aware that the publications of the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society take precedence over Jehovah's very own *Word*, the Bible. What's more, the only “bible version” that's allowed for use by Jehovah's Witnesses is their house translation, the *New World Translation*. In that convenient re-rendering, **John 1:1** describes the Word as “a god,” instead of saying that the Word *was* [and *is*] God [eternally, timelessly]. They have Jesus pre-existing as the archangel Michael; dying on a stake, and not a cross; resurrecting *bodiless* and returning in 1914 in spirit; and now biding his time before he returns with the angels to destroy all non-JWs, so you'd better get with the program! But since salvation to life in Heaven is limited to 144,000, all those saved (baptized JWs in excess of that closed-off number) will reside in this *new*, revamped world as part of “the great crowd.” You mean those smiling people didn't tell you that part? Go figure!

Speaking of frequent doorsteppers, the MORMONS (CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, or LDS) are also unerringly friendly as they present their ever-erring, false brand of “Christianity.” There’s a chance that the reader will recall what I said earlier about TV sitcom character Archie Bunker’s concept of “Gawd” in effect “working his way up to *become* God” (“He doesn’t make no mistakes, buddy boy, that’s how he got to be Gawd!”). Well, oddly enough, the Mormons subscribe to that tenet: God the Father was once a man, but he progressed to godhood and set the example for all of us to follow. By the way, the Son and the Holy *Ghost* (different entity from the *holy spirit*, which is said to be an *impersonal emanation*) are *gods* (plural) also, in the LDS scheme. The Mormon “god the father” has a body (against **John 4:24**) and has a wife, “Heavenly Mother” (Bible chapter and verse, please?!?). Together, they *created Jesus*, the Creator *Himself* (!) as a *spirit child*, and then when “the Father” *had sex with Mary*, the *body* of Jesus was the result. There’s a lot more we could say about their wild distortions and whole-cloth fabrications, but haven’t we heard enough to convict them of christlessness? We’ve only to add that both the JWs and the Mormons teach a salvation of works that consists largely of strict obedience to sect leaders and door-to-door “witnessing.” But if you live anywhere in America, you probably guessed that, didn’t you? [insert smile]

UNIFICATION CHURCH (MOONIES). Officially known as “Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity” (there’s your “Christianity” connection, folks), this one was founded in 1954 by Sun Myung Moon, hence the nickname, “Moonies.” Let’s cut right to the chase: Moon (mhM AD 2012) saw himself as God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Lamb of God, and worthy of worship *from* Jesus. In fact, he said he *was* “the second coming of Christ,” so it’s a real shame that he made necessary a *third* coming of Christ by dying off before he could *complete the mission of Jesus*, as was his lot in life. Maybe you heard also that he declared himself in 1992 as the Messiah? [Why did it take 38 years to come out with this revelation?] Oh yes, and he and his wife are the True Parents of all humanity! [Sorry, God the Creator, Adam and Eve; you’re all out of a job]. So it’s really such a shame that authorities failed to honor their true father and mother by putting the True Father in prison for over a year for tax evasion. Yeah, and all of those *brainwashing* accusations...what was *that* all about? No respect!

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY. There's that misplaced term again— "Christianity"—in the name of the cult. It's christless just the same, and it has much in common with "Christian Science" in that all that is spiritual is real, but matter is not, and Christ-*consciousness* is what Jesus (only a man) managed to achieve. No devil, evil, or sin exist, but reincarnation is again the vehicle towards spiritual enlightenment, which means salvation. Sounds mystical enough to have been invented in the East, but it's the brainchild of a Missouri couple (1889).

With some reluctance, we must add QUAKERISM (SOCIETY OF FRIENDS) to this list of Out-of-THE WAY thought systems. The problem is that they (most Friends/Quakers) *do* acknowledge the deity of Christ (while some deny it outright), but their concept of Christ is totally *inward* because they refer to Him as the ever-directly-teaching "Inner Light." They derive this from an expansive reading of **John 1:9: That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world [or, That was the true Light which, coming into the world, gives light to every man]**. It can easily be seen what they've done: they've elevated the *general revelation of the conscience*—which indeed does "give light to every man [reasoning human being]" but does nothing to save human beings from the guilt and temporal and eternal consequences of *sin*. Dealing with *sin* is what *Jesus Christ crucified*—*outside* of us—had to do. That *specific* revelation of what Christ has done for His people, THE Gospel that's applied to individual souls by the Holy Spirit, is what's lacking in Quakerism. And a Gospel-less religion is not a saving religion, and therefore just a spinning-wheels exercise in futility. So this is another pseudo-Christian religion.

Also in this category is LIBERATION THEOLOGY, which is nothing more than "christianized" socialism-communism. It's built upon idolatrous redefinitions of Christ and His mission. According to such unbiblical teachings, Christ is the Messiah of the *oppressed* peoples of the world *only*, and members of those groups aren't held accountable for their individual sins, since Jesus will save them entirely on the basis of their oppressed social status! James Cone is largely responsible for getting this bizarre distortion going in the 1960's, and for him, the whole idea was for everybody to become more "black" since those were the kind of people his idol-christ would save. In all liberation theologies, *social justice* is the

central tenet of the “faith.” Forget a Savior of people from every tribe, nation, and tongue—rich *or* poor, “white” *or* “black” —who place their trust in Jesus Christ alone to save them from the guilt and punishment of sin. Sin is not the issue with liberation theologians; *skin* ...is the issue. The extent and degree of one’s “blackness” is what gets one to heaven, and the more *social justice* one *does*, the *blacker* one is (in solidarity with all oppressed people), and thus, closer to heaven. It should be apparent that this, too, is an unbiblical religion of works for only those who toe a man-made, unbiblical line. It’s a first-rank, bald-faced distortion of what God’s Word actually teaches. Oh, and FYI: ***Jeremiah Wright*** is one of those blatantly false teachers who have piggybacked on some Christian traditions and added his own set of politically-driven aberrations to formulate his “gospel” of salvation by social justice. And do I have to remind you just who it was that sat under his lie-riddled teachings and imbibed them for upwards of 20 years (without objection)? Yeah, that *Barack* guy who’s doing his very best to re-define America just as Black Liberation Theology (and the ***Nation of Islam***) have re-defined the true, triune God of *all* people. Be aware of this fact: the only “christianity” in the life of Barack Hussein Osama-Obama is this idolatrous form.

But not to be outdone in racial line-drawing and wild distortions of both history and Christianity, there is the CHRISTIAN IDENTITY movement. The idea here is to redefine Jewish *physical* descent from the “ten lost tribes of Israel,” who supposedly showed up in great numbers in Western Europe *only* as the “true” Jews who were (and still are) the apple of God’s eye. This movement, in its Americanized version, goes well beyond its original *British Israelism* roots in terms of racism. These people are indeed ***white supremacists*** and have a close affinity with groups like the KKK, even if not on an official, public basis. Theologically speaking, their interpretations are only *superficially* biblical, and then only to nonchristians and extremely naive and gullible professing Christians. So, like black-power/liberation theology proponents, they invoke a false christ to save them *and* usurp the role of God in defining Himself and His own plan of salvation through His Word. It seems to me that both of these pole-opposite movements started with their own race-based goals and reverse-engineered history and the Bible’s teachings to get there. Here again, we can easily see that if we don’t receive God’s truth *as is* in the Bible, there’s no stopping point for distorting it.

THEOSOPHY is a kind of unitarian-mystic hybrid, which by that fact alone already rules it out as a true, (*trinitarian*) Christian path. It's included in this section because to the undiscerning, theosophy (literally, "God's wisdom" or "wisdom of God"), like a lot of UNITARIAN teachings, can sound "religious" or "biblical" or even authentically "christian." This is easily achieved by mixing Bible-derived concepts with elements of Eastern mysticism (Buddhism/Hinduism), as if they're compatible. My introduction to this aberration was a book titled, *Mysticism and the Origin of World Religions*, by Australian, Wade Cox. I noticed two things early on in reading it: 1) the author at many times *sounded* like a genuine Christian who'd just imbibed so much world-religion theological-philosophy (*theosophy*) that he tended to present it as a viable, plausible alternative to the revealed religion of God put forth in the Bible, and 2) if one isn't well-grounded in the *Biblical* faith, many of those mystical teachings could appeal to the natural man (**1 Cor 2:14**). In other words, since the Bible teaches us that the spiritual things aren't understood without God's granting, we lend our ears to a source that *will* provide—we *think*—some of those spiritual explanations. Theosophists lay claim to *direct knowledge of God* that does *NOT* come through a study of God's Word or the inspired *personal* teachings of Christ and His apostles while on earth. They believe in an *unmediated* but complete link to "God," so in elevating and expanding the powers of the God-given *conscience*, they end up rejecting Biblical *special, saving revelation* that can only come through Jesus Christ.

When I followed up on this Wade Cox fellow, I tracked him down as the "Coordinator General of the World Conference of the CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF GOD," and in that capacity, he is the writer of "Statement of Beliefs of the Christian Faith," which can be accessed at www.ccg.org. As he clearly indicates in this statement, his is a non-trinitarian (*unitarian*) faith. The number one problem—in his view—with Christianity is its *triune* God. He takes great pains in his introduction to disabuse one and all of this and other related "fables." A new age tenet—the centrality of the *environment*—comes out, as does the perpetual need for all to follow the Old Testament dietary laws, which are necessary for man to restrain him from ruining the environment, at least until "Messiah comes again," at which time He will *reinstat*e the entire *Mosaic system*! I hope I don't need to say at this point that this is neither a "Christian Church" or "of God!" Avoid!

A VERY BRIEF SECTION SUMMARY

Even if a *billion* purported ways to enlightenment/salvation/God or gods/the spiritual, heavenly realm are proposed throughout earth's history, there are ***only two religions*** and only ***one Way to God***. On the one side are all man-made religions—which may just as well be one, for in the end, there's really no difference—and on the other side, there is God's revealed religion. ***God's revealed religion is the official and only saving-faith religion for all ages. ALL man-made religions are necessarily false, misdirected, and worthless.*** God's *universal* gift of *conscience* (see again **Romans 1 & 2:14-16**) is *not* the gift of universal *salvation*. God's inspired, error-free, infallible Word is replete with references to the *elect*, the *chosen*, the *remnant*; those who find “**the way which leads to life**” on the *narrow path* are but “**few**” (**Matt 7:13-14**). The Bible identifies **THE WAY** as Jesus Christ, and *only* Jesus Christ, the unique, God-appointed God-man, fully God and fully human. **As He said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).** Any other path is a path to eternal destruction.

HARD SAYINGS: “MERE” (NEAR) CHRISTIANITY

In 1942-44, “Christian apologist” C.S. Lewis compiled and released *Mere Christianity*, which he wrote to demonstrate the sensibility of mere/basic/generic Christian religion. Somewhere around 20 years ago, I read that book, crossed it off my “be-sure-to-read” list, and wondered aloud about how it had been oversold as a classic. [Pertinent disclosure: for at least 3 good reasons, I am no fan of C.S. Lewis or his theology, but now is not the time to go into that]. To this day, I'm still not impressed, but I now understand why it gained such a widespread, loyal following. That book was *ecumenical and inclusive to a fault*. Lewis had tried to find the lowest common denominators among “Christendom” — Christianity as *culturally-defined*, or *as seen by the world*—and he ignored the very real differences between the three so-called “branches of Christianity.”

Now, before I launch into saying some things that need to be said by *someone*, I can assure you of two things right here and now: 1) I *can't stand* personal

confrontations and usually go to great lengths to avoid them, *but...* 2) when people try to redefine Christ's own blood-bought Church, my courage tends to rise along with my dander. The result is that I find it necessary at times for "hard sayings" to be said, and said by little ol' me, if no one bigger will step up to the challenge.

We'll limit this to two pages or so on what I call *NEAR*-Christianity, or faiths that claim to confess Christ completely, but upon some closer examination, fall way short of that. Again, I know this will lead to hard feelings in some cases. But I'd rather have family, friends, acquaintances and readers all resenting me now for saying these things—in the sincere hope that each of those persons ends up *not* fighting with the *true Christ*—than resenting me *eternally* for *not* saying enough to warn them away from destruction. This is serious stuff! Hate *me*, if you feel the need to do so, but never Christ.

The first of the three now in view is ROMAN CATHOLICISM. I believe that the Protestant Reformation that began c. 1517 was completely necessary to get both the visible "Christian Church" *AND* the *only, true invisible church of Jesus Christ* back into the **Word of God**, both *materially* (the Bible), and in a *personal* way with respect to Christ Himself, the Word of **John 1**. In the true church that Christ Himself built, the body of Christ (**Matt 16:18; Eph 2:20; 1 Cor 3:11; 10:16; 12:27; Rom 12:5**), the only Head of The Church is Jesus Christ; Christ is "the head of *every* man," (**1 Cor 11:3**)—that certainly includes every sinful-by-nature "pope." Furthermore, no two so-called popes have been 100% in agreement with each other, yet the Roman Catholic church has a doctrine of "papal infallibility." How can that be? Has the meaning of *infallibility*—"*incapable of error*" been so stretched and downgraded that a common, finite sinner can speak in *omniscient holiness* at one time, only to be *contradicted* by *another* common, finite sinner who speaks in *omniscient holiness*, disagreeing at a later date? That's completely counter to what the Bible teaches. Only God is infallible, *period*. Only God's Word is never self-contradictory. And this is why the Protestant Reformers correctly cried out, *Sola Scriptura!*—by the "Scriptures *alone*"—are doctrines and practice to be determined. Catholics, on the other hand, give church *traditions* and *papal* words the same authority as God's Word.

There is only one true God, in three Persons, and not one of them is named “Mary.” Neither was that faithful but sinful woman—“*All* have sinned” (**Rom 3:23; Gal 3:22; Psa 14:2-3**)—a co-mediator (1 **Tim 2:5**). Salvation is by God’s grace alone through faith in Christ alone; no one else has a hand in saving anyone (**Acts 4:12; Eph 2:8-10**—good works **do follow** genuine faith, but do not even partly earn salvation). All of this and much, much more (transubstantiation, tradition as equal in authority to the Bible, prayers to “saints” and for the dead, *etc.*) all adds up to clear evidence that Rome has distorted the true Christ. And if this is true, the Roman Catholic Church is far, far away from being *THE* church outside of which “there can be no salvation,” but is instead a diminished-christ false religion that can offer no true salvation to anyone. I’ll say it again: if I don’t make a serious attempt to warn my fellow human beings from pursuing a path to eternal destruction, I can’t possibly say that I love them in any real sense. Please understand this, and don’t hesitate to embrace Christ *honestly* and *fully*.

EASTERN ORTHODOXY is cut from the same cloth and should be equally avoided. Whatever part of the Eastern Church you’re talking about (Greek, Russian, Syrian, Armenian, Coptic, *et al*), the *mystery* of the union of God with man is always central. From what I’ve observed and read, if you took the doctrine and preaching of *Christ-crucified* (**1 Cor 1:23-24**) to the outermost fringes of “Orthodoxy”—or removed it completely—you’d still have essentially the same religion. Here’s what the Orthodox “Christians” do: they take the mediatorial role of *Christ* away and hand it back to their own man-made priestly order. They’re big on His resurrection, but have little to say about His sinner-saving death that necessarily preceded it. Well, *yes*, that death was cruel torture, gruesome and bloody and gory, but that’s just what it took, and it was as real an event as any other in history. And it was *THAT real, well-observed, non-mystical event* that freed all true Christians from the power, guilt, and justly-deserved eternal punishment of *sin*, which is *another* concept that’s hardly ever given emphasis in Orthodoxy. Sin and death are ugly, you see, and they just want to keep things pretty, picturesque, and “pious.” The focus is on the “worshiper’s” *pious experience* of *mystical union*, and not on the One who is to be worshiped *His* way only. Indeed, to obey *is* better than sacrifice (**1 Sam 15:22**), and especially on *this* side of the once-for-all-time sacrifice that the *lone* Mediating High Priest has made!

But on go these pretenders with their incense and icons, whipping up mystery, re-inserting it where Christ has dispelled it, complicating what He's made simple and free. Orthodoxy repeats nearly all of Rome's errors and invents its own distortions (*e.g.*, no pope, but a patriarch-archbishop-metropolitan group "head of the church"; Scripture, tradition, and the *first 7* ecumenical councils, all *together* recognized as holding supreme authority). By this, we can now see that two-thirds of "Christendom" is lacking a true, Biblical Christ.

Protestant ARMINIANISM is a wolf in sheep's clothing, too. It's the result of the natural man's tendency to always be looking for a way to contribute his own "penny's worth" towards salvation. For Arminians, a second *man*-centered way to God is fine, but not God's *one* way as described in His Word (**John 14:6**); that one way is *monergistic*—the work of *One*, namely God—and they insist that instead, sinful men who are dead in trespasses and sins (**Eph 2:1, Col 2:13**), can *regenerate themselves* to genuine saving faith, thereby working *in tandem with God* (*synergism*). In other words, what the inspired Apostle Paul said in his letters and what Jesus Himself said about the necessity of the Father to *draw* anyone who would come to Christ (see **John 6:44 & 65**) doesn't hold up: Arminius and John Wesley knew better than Paul and Christ. In the Bible, regeneration to life (bringing a spiritual *corpse* back to life) *precedes* faith. But Arminians say that *faith* precedes regeneration, as if it's the work of the corpse, bringing itself to life! They teach a nonbiblical "prevenient grace" (like the Catholics), *conditional* election based on "foreseen faith" (despite **Psa 14:1-2**, etc.), and ability to resist the call of *Almighty* God (really?). They *deny* the perseverance/*preservation of* the saints (saved sinners), which also makes *individual humans sovereign* in salvation.

DISCLAIMERS: Not *all* of those in Arminian churches are *consciously* Arminian, though they willingly and regularly sit under the preaching and teaching of such errors. It's certainly possible that such individuals truly exist, who do **not** *consciously* attribute any part of their salvation to themselves or their own good judgment. Such persons can be true Christians, and I sincerely hope that they're all heavenbound. *However*,... we must warn those who deliberately, knowingly, steadfastly hold to Arminian teachings, that they are on the *wrong* path! If you think you've somehow saved yourself, you're probably *not* saved!

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OUT-OF *THE* WAY SYSTEMS

Section Two

STILL-FUTURE ESCHATOLOGY (Endless end-times speculation) Dishonoring Christ and the Truth

Would you like to be done with all the nonsense? Would you prefer to hear what Jesus Christ and His hand-picked, personally-taught, inspired Apostles and Bible writers had to say *over and against* what *uninspired*, games-playing speculators are perpetually putting forth? If so, you're in the right place. We will listen to the truth, pay attention to it, come to understand it, and move forward in it with the utmost confidence. We will search for the *whole* counsel of God (**Acts 20:27**) with respect to what's true about the "last things" (*eschatology*). The *man-made* blanks will be filled in, and indeed, the Truth will set us free (**John 8:32**).

We will take Christ at His Word without exception.

Directly above is our working theme. This is how we're going to go about things in this last section of the third and last book of this *ATHEOS* set. I issue an open challenge to anyone who thinks there's a better way to the truth than to be led by the Truth Himself (**John 14:6**). We will embrace what the Truth has said.

JUMPING RIGHT INTO IT: THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS DISCUSSION

When we use the term “eschatology,” we’re referring to the study of the *last/farthest* [Gr. *eschatos*] things/events of the world or age [Gr. *aión*]. Simple synonyms are “end-times teachings” and interpretations of “the end” as described primarily in the Bible. There *are* many extra-biblical eschatologies, like Islam’s “twelfth imam” doctrine, for example, but just about any eschatology imaginable has to have *something* to do with events described in the Bible. To really narrow our focus here so that we can answer the most specific questions that most of us have, we’ll be concerned with the “Big 4” *last-things* events, which are:

- 1. The return/ “second coming” of Christ;**
- 2. The resurrection and “rapture” event;**
- 3. The “end of the world/age”.**
- 4. The general “Great White Throne” judgment;**

The “rules” for our engagement with the holy Scriptures of God that we will follow are straightforward:

- 1. We will constantly have it in mind that God can *not* lie. (Num 23:19; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18);**
- 2. RULE #1 CUTS BOTH WAYS: If we find that Jesus, as God Himself, has “lied” (deceived deliberately OR by speaking in ignorance), we are all Savior-less!**
- 3. We will take all of the HOLY SPIRIT-INSPIRED WRITERS at their word as well, since their words have been given to them by God, the Holy Spirit (see Acts 5:3-4; Matt 12:31-32; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:21);**
- 4. RULE #4 CUTS BOTH WAYS, TOO: If any eschatology requires an “updated” re-interpretation of what any inspired Bible writer predicted, it stamps itself as NONbiblical and false, it calls God Himself a *liar*, and *also* leaves every one of us without a Savior.**

5. ALL of our eschatology must be derived from the Bible; Extra-biblical sources can only be used to *confirm* Bible truths to those who seek such confirmation or to establish historical fact beyond the time span of Biblical writings;
6. We will respect at all times the interpretational principles (*hermeneutics*) of...
 - original audience relevance (to *whom* were the words spoken or written, by whom, and when);
 - considering the *context*, general/specific, and as part of a book; what exactly is being discussed in a particular passage?
 - genre* consideration (type of language employed) of the context; historical narrative/poetic/apocalyptic (prophetical) or other?
7. We will shed any erroneous (false) pre-suppositions (what we *thought* we knew, coming into the study) as soon as we see what *is* true by the definition of the 100%-truth-telling God; we won't continue to shoehorn 'em in!
8. We will let what is *clearly declared* govern our understanding of what is less clear; EXAMPLE: *clear time statements* will be most useful in understanding the *nature of fulfillment of prophetical texts*;
9. The path on which God has led us—*through* the truth, *to* the truth—is not to be abandoned; it's far safer to be “out there on a limb with Christ” than as part of a rotten tree destined for the flames (where there's *no* safety);
10. THE SUMMARY RULE: It all boils down to this: We will let God and His inspired Bible writers tell the absolute truth in the way they've chosen, and the way they meant it to be understood; all else is to be rejected as false, worthless chaff.

Matt 3:12, *chaff for the fire* OR 24:35, God's *imperishable* Word.

BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY IN CHART & COMMENTARY FORM

DO YOU WANT ALL OF THE ANSWERS AND *ONLY* THE ANSWERS?

If you're the "bottom-line only, please" type, you may want to skip beyond this "how we arrived at the answers" section, and proceed right to pages 94-116.

There you'll find the **results** of the Bible-text analysis that follows below. On the other hand, if you can appreciate the truth-finding *process*, it's quite likely that you'll appreciate and hold onto the conclusions even more by continuing here.

"BIG 4" EVENT #1, THE RETURN OF CHRIST/ SECOND ADVENT OR COMING (BACK)/THE *PAROUSIA*

WHAT IS IT? This is the return to earth of the risen and ascended Jesus Christ for the two purposes of A) resurrection of *all* of the dead and rescue (rapture/catching-up) of His living *faithful*, and B) judgment upon the enemies of God and persecutors/killers of His people. The Greek word for this *specific coming-event* is *parousia* [par-oo-SEE-ah], Str. 3952, *a being near/ advent/ return/ coming/ presence*; Young's has it as *a being alongside, presence*. For our purposes in this work, we'll use that one-word descriptor (Parousia), since that is the word used most often in the original Greek text of the Bible's New Testament. We will look at usages of *parousia* (3952), as well as *erchomai*, Str. 2064 (translated as "coming") whenever there is evidence that the coming referred to is connected with the predicted, *one-time event* of the return of Christ *with His angels* for deliverance and judgment. "Visitation" (Gr. *episkope*, Str. 1984, an *inspection* or *a looking over*) also applies (**Luke 19:44; 1 Pet 1:12**), emphasizing the *presence* aspect of a/The *Parousia*. When properly understood, that Greek word involves more than an in-and-out "cameo" appearance. It usually refers to an *extended* visit or stay, which can sometimes mean years at a stretch, as it did when Nero was away from Rome for years during his *parousia* in Greece. Two more terms found in the KJV are "presence/face/countenance" (Gr. *prosopon*, Str. 4383) and "appearing" (Gr. *epiphaneia*, Str. 2015, and Gr. *apokalupsis*, Str. 602).

Now, don't let this technical background bog you down. Once we get rolling through the Biblical texts which employ these terms, we'll pick up the rhythm and rhyme of this quite naturally, and things will fall quickly into place.

CHART FORMAT NOTES: A **P** (single letter in capitals & bold) will denote that the **PAROUSIA** (second-coming/return event) is named or implied in the text. An **R** will denote **RESURRECTION & RAPTURE**. An **E** will denote **END (OF THE AGE)**, and a **T** will denote **THRONE/TRIBUNAL (JUDGMENT)**. One thing to look for is how all Big 4 events tend to cluster together in one time slot.

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Matt 16:27-28, Mark 8:38-9:1, Luke 9:26-27	Spoken by Jesus, AD30, to “the people” and “His disciples”: Mark 8:34	His coming <i>with His angels (P)</i> to “reward” each according to his works (judgment)(T)

WHEN WOULD THIS TAKE PLACE? There were *some standing there* who would live long enough to *see it (P)* and be *rewarded* at that time for their works, good or bad (T); *not all would die* (“taste death”), but “some” (not “most”) would NOT die before this happened; two or more would survive until it happened. This passage limits the time frame of the **coming of Christ in judgment with His angels** to the LIFETIMES OF THOSE PRESENT IN AD 30 WHEN THIS WAS SPOKEN. At *most*, the *outer* limit for this **P-T** occurrence would be roughly AD 130...*IF* “some” (2 or more) were only 10 years old at the time and lived to be 110! As we are now living 1984 years *PAST* AD 30, *ALL* of those then living are long gone! (Unless you’re convinced that there are some 2000-year-old Jews with us yet today!) The proposed fulfillment of Christ’s prediction by the Transfiguration is shot down quickly: No angels; only about a week later (probably *all* were still alive, and *none* had “tasted death”; no judgment (rewarding for good or bad) occurred; NOT viable! That proposal is rejected.

FACING THE FACTS: This passage by itself already limits the time frame for Christ’s return with His angels in judgment to sometime in the first (or early second) century AD. Other passages will confirm this and narrow it further. But unless Christ and His *inspired* apostles and NT writers were *all* mistaken in pointing to only *one judgment-coming of the Lord Jesus*, His one-off **Parousia**, no Christian today can *still* be looking for **The Second Coming of Christ**.

TEXT	SAID / WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Matt 24:2-14 Mark 13:1-13 Luke 21:5-19	Spoken in response to what the disciples of Jesus asked Him on the Mount of Olives in AD30	P (“His coming”) and E (“the end of the age), & the accompanying signs

WHEN WOULD THIS TAKE PLACE? *They* (those very people listening to Him speak) were warned about being led astray by false christs. *They* (1st-Century disciples) would be delivered up to affliction and killed. It was during *their* lifetimes that the **End** would come, and whoever survived until the end of *the age* would be saved (rescued from the wrath that engulfed Judea, Jerusalem, and the temple).

But that end—the only “end” with which NT Bible prophecy is concerned—wouldn’t come before the “gospel of the kingdom” had been “preached in all the world” (Gr. *oikoumene*, Str. 3625, the *inhabited earth*, or the Roman Empire of that day). This prediction—and its fulfillment—have nothing to do with the Fiji Islands today or with every modern nation-state that pops into existence or undergoes a name change! For fulfillment of what *was* predicted by Christ, we need only to look less than a generation down the road, when in AD 62 or 63, the inspired apostle Paul and inspired gospelist-historian Luke both confirmed in **Acts 1:8, Rom 1:8 & 10:18**, and especially in **Col 1:6 & 23**, that indeed, the gospel *had* already been preached in/to “all the world” and had reached “every creature under heaven.” Granted, some hyperbolic language is involved there (exaggerated for effect and emphasis), but the Holy Spirit let those writings stand as valid, and as part of His God-breathed Word, so ours is only to receive it as truth; the “Great Commission” that was specifically designed for and assigned to First-Century *witnesses* was carried out specifically and fulfilled specifically by those who received that sacred assignment.

Of course, that does not “get us off the hook” today. Rather, we should be thrilled to be given opportunities to reach the lost of our day with that most powerful tool, the *completed canon of Scripture* ! What an amazing gift that is, and we need to realize it and regularly thank God for it! (**Isa 55:11, Matt 24:35**).

FACING THE FACTS: The gospel DID get out into “all the world” as Christ—who as God can *not* lie—predicted. The way *He* meant the phrase is the way *we* must understand it. And when He said that those gathered around Him in AD 30 were the very ones who would be hearing of wars and rumors of wars and living in a time of famines and earthquakes; that THEY themselves would be afflicted and killed and widely hated for Christ’s name’s sake; and that THEY themselves would see these signs that were *close to the end*, well then, guess what? That is what is *true*! I couldn’t care less if Lindsey, Camping, Missler, Graham, Hagee, Hindson, LaHaye, Price, Robertson, Van Impe, Mike Evans, and 70 *busloads* of similarly-deluded false prophets claim that Jesus was mistaken, and we’re still waiting for the gospel to get to every modern-day nook and cranny before THE END OF *THE WORLD* can occur! They prove themselves to be—over and over again—*dangerous charlatans* by saying that THE END is near *AND* we still have a lot of world to cover BEFORE THE END can come! Do you not see this glaring *mother-of-all inconsistencies*? It might help some if we back up a bit.

You can’t have *both* an imminent, any-day-now world wind-down *AND* still have all kinds of nations today that have *yet to hear* the gospel, *THE* required benchmark that *must be reached before* that supposed right-around-the-corner END! So which is it? Are we close to this unbiblical end of theirs or not? For the life of me, I can’t fathom why Christians who *profess to* trust in everything Christ has said don’t call these false teachers out on this! It’s shameful & mind-boggling! Remember, too, that by and large, these are the same people who are calling for the *negation of Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice* and a *return to* the OT/Mosaic/Jewish (and types-and-shadows) sacrificial system! As we’ve already seen, that’s another religion entirely; this dispensationalism is definitely NOT the Christian religion of complete faith in the *person and work* of Jesus Christ! Dispensationalism is really nothing more than neo-Judaism propped up by some Christian terminology. The Jews of today and the dispies want the same thing: a restored Jerusalem temple, a restored sacrificial system, and the “*real*” Messiah to finally show up! Do you think I’m joking? I couldn’t be more serious. Read their stuff. Listen to it—as long as you can stand it—and observe how all modern events are pointing to that rebuilt-temple scenario and how “all Israel will be saved” *LITERALLY* and the physical HEAVENS *AND* earth will all burn away! It’s *rot*!

TEXT	SAID / WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Matt 24:15-35 Mark 13:14-31 Luke 17:22-37 Luke 21:20-33	Still Jesus speaking to His closest disciples (“in private”) in AD 30	ALL THESE THINGS in Matt 24:3-34 (P-R E-T all included)

WHEN WILL **ALL** THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE? First, what *are* “these things?” Well, only...

1. The “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel (**Dan 9, 11, 12**) “standing in the holy place,” v. 15. Whatever the exact meaning, it refers to something that took place in history *at a time predicted by God*, and in verse 34, He gave us an enormous clue; stay tuned.
2. The warning is issued, “Let those who are **in Judea** flee to the mountains.” NOT “let those in Erie, Pennsylvania and those in Thule, Greenland, and those who are sailboarding in the Pacific...flee to the mountains.” *What* mountains? And what do armies standing in “the holy place” in First-Century Israel have to do with *my* fleeing from them 1940+ years after the fact?!? [The warning was to THEM in First-Century Judea, you see! This is NOT directed at us today! Just how many folks today in the U.S. are hanging around on their house-tops (v.17) or facing severe travel restrictions on the Sabbath (v.20) ?]
3. **THE Great Tribulation**—unprecedented and never surpassed—according to the Lord Jesus Christ, v. 21 (who again, can NOT lie).
4. A wave of false prophets who *could* (in that age) produce *actual* signs and wonders via the powers permitted to Satan for that time.
5. The *genuine* “coming [*parousia*, **P**] of the Son of Man” (v. 27) “on the clouds of heaven” [*erchomai*, v. 30]. Let’s see those false christs do *that*!
6. Immediately after the Great Tribulation upon Christ’s followers, the *elect*—who could *not* be deceived because God kept them from final, fatal deception (see v. 24)—were gathered by the angels (v. 31), so the **R** twins, Resurrection (of the dead out of Hades/Sheol) and Rapture (of the *living* elect) are tied in, too.

7. When *God's people* had been safely *delivered* from the doom that belonged to the unfaithful Jews (“His blood be on us and on our children”—**Matt 27:25**), that unrelenting doom came. So between the rescue of God's people and the destruction of God's enemies, judgment is being executed all around and punishments meted out. This is when the “Great White Throne” Tribunal was about to be set up (described in chapter 25). The work of the angels as gatherers AND destroyers (through or alongside the Roman/“all nations”-mercenary army) is right here by implication.

So-o-o-o...only all of *those* things are all included under Christ's “all these things” in verse 34 when He says,

Assuredly, I say to you, THIS GENERATION WILL BY NO MEANS PASS AWAY TILL ALL THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE. (NKJV)

FACING THE FACTS: If Jesus had to state this more clearly to suit some skeptic, just what words would He have had to use?! When we admit that “*this* generation (and it's not “*that* [future/far-off] generation,” by the way) meant THOSE people living THEN, when Jesus said the words, well then we *know* that since Jesus could not have lied and still be God, that

ALL OF THOSE THINGS *DID* TAKE PLACE, *WITHIN* THAT FIRST-CENTURY GENERATION!

On our receiving end of things, we should only be inquisitive about the length of a *generation* in Biblical terms. We find much support for the idea of a Biblical generation spanning *about 40 years*, and that's the number agreed upon by most scholars. Examples of this include the Exodus generation (40 years in the wilderness, see **Psa 95:10**), and David serving *his own generation* (he was king for 40 years total, see **Acts 13:36**). Of course, it doesn't have to be a fixed *number*, but *generation* (Gr. *genea*, Str. 1074) *always* refers to people who are living at the *same time* (contemporaries of each other), fixed *in the same era*.

If that's true—that Jesus meant to say that, *within about 40 years, all these things would take place*—that positions all of the events He referred to as things that took place *by AD 70* (40 years from the time He spoke). This would roll back our “outer limits” in the “Big 4” time frame we supposed by looking at **Matt 16:27-28** (and parallels) from AD 130 to AD 70, but we'll find as we go further, that that is very reasonable and even *called for* by close study. First, though, let's finish our look at **Matt 24-25**, and then proceed to hone in on more Parousia passages that can be found throughout the NT outside of the four gospel accounts.

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Matt 24:36-25:46 Mark 13:32-36 Luke 12:35-59 Luke 17:34-37 Luke 19:12-27, 41-44	This is the Olivet Discourse continued, AD 30 (no breaks from subject matter, or for chapters in original Matt 24 and 25; all connected)	The Parousia, separations in judgments at the end, followed by general GWT Judgment (R, E, & T)

WHEN WOULD THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE? This was already answered by Jesus in **Matt 24:34** and its parallels, **Mark 13:30 & Luke 21:32**. There is no spot in this entire discourse where Christ indicates another time slot for any of these events. One ludicrous assertion that's made by some who can't go with the natural flow of the discourse is to have Christ changing subjects *and centuries* in v. 36 when He says, “But of that day and hour no one knows...” as if “*that day*” is another day (time) entirely that has nothing to do with what He's been talking about for over 30 verses! They have our Savior patiently and thoroughly answering the questions asked by His intimate disciples, only to shift gears *without notice* to events *well beyond their lifetimes*, and thus of no real concern to *them*, the ones who wanted to know about the timing of His coming and the end of the age. As I said, it's *ludicrous!* It goes against everything that we know about the relationship Jesus had with His chosen inner circle: to others—kingdom outsiders—He spoke in parables, but from *them*, His hand-picked students, He kept nothing of spiritual (kingdom) importance (**Matt 13:10-13; Mark 4:10-11**). One more aspect to examine in verse 36: It's true that *at that time* (AD 30), Jesus did *not know specifically* the “day and the hour” in which He would return to earth.

This particular verse (36) is the first one to be quoted when people try to claim that “the day and the hour” can’t *ever* be known until it happens!

However, and this is a *huge* “however,” when the RISEN AND ASCENDED CHRIST communed with The Father and then passed on *to* the Apostle John in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (the last book of the inerrant Bible) the *details of the day and the hour*, ALL had been made known to Christ, and He in turn revealed to John that the time was *near/at hand*, that things would happen *shortly*, and that He was “*coming quickly*”; ***all those terms applied in relation to AD 62 or 63, when John wrote what Jesus revealed.*** My point? Simply that nobody today can still insist that even Jesus didn’t (*ever*) know the precise day and hour of His coming. After His ascension, He most certainly was “let in on” the details by God the Father:

Rev 1:1—The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which GOD GAVE HIM TO SHOW HIS SERVANTS—things which must shortly take place.

So **Matt 24:36** can no longer be used as a crutch or a fall-back or even as a blanket excuse: “Hey, *we* will never know that information because *even Jesus didn’t* (or still doesn’t) know!” Nonsense. We can know by receiving what He told us—through John—in the Book of Revelation. Got it? And look here in **Matt 24:45-49**: Just who is it who’s decribed as an “*evil servant*”? Lo, and behold!—it’s the one who says in his heart, “My master is *delaying His coming.*” Just how long are many going to continue on like that evil servant and insist that *our* Master has delayed His coming, just to fit their last-things schemes? Food for thought, especially in light of **Heb 10:37** (the Lord will NOT tarry; He will NOT delay). And please do remember that a deceptive or ignorant “christ” is no Christ at all, and therefore no savior to *anyone*. That weak-willed, plan-changing, ineffectual christ that dispensationalists especially are always proposing is a worthless idol, a pawn of sinful men. The triune God is immutably sovereign, truthful, and faithful to His promises. Any “scheme” must fit under all of that! “Trust and obey” is the kingdom watchword, not “divide & conquer.” The visible church is in such disarray today largely because of these wrongly-dividing apostates (**2 Tim 2:15**).

TIMING FOR “THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT”: **When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, THEN He will sit on the throne of His glory (Matt 25:31)**. Clear, isn’t it? So the Parousia is tied in time to the general (*all-nations-gathered*, v. 32) Throne Tribunal, the GWT judgment referred to in **Rev 20:11-15**, THE Judgment at THE END. Remember also, that in order for this Great Judgment to take place, “all nations” that were standing before The Judge had to be gathered first; this necessitates the **R** events, Resurrection and Rapture. Who would’ve been there to judge without the *gathering*? In brief review then, we have ALL of the “Big 4” events at the core of Biblical prophecy ALL occurring in the same short time span.

We have only two objections to head off in this part of the discussion. First, some will insist that the End that the NT writers wrote about is the end of the (physical planet) *world* and/or *time*. They’ll insist, for example, that the fiery destruction of the entire earth (and even the entire, *morally-neutral universe* beyond the only habitat of sinful humans, this Earth) is in view in **2 Pet 3**. Sorry, but no; hate to disappoint you all-out destruction fanatics. The “harsh” truth is that Peter employed the apocalyptic language of the prophets to make his point with his First-Century Jewish readers, who in turn got his message without much difficulty: huge things were about to happen in the *spiritual* realm. This is hardly an exceptional passage in Scripture. In God’s Word, the unseen *spiritual* things are always the true subject matter and focal point, and the physical/seen things are used to illustrate spiritual truths. This is the case throughout the Bible (see **Acts 17:6** for a quick example: what “world” was “turned upside down?”). And this is definitely the case in Peter’s epistles as well.

Will the world(s)—the physical planet, or the greater universe, for that matter—ever cease to exist? Well, this is almost impossible for us to imagine, but the Biblical answer certainly seems to be, “No!” For proof, please first consult **Psa 78:69; 89:37; 93:1; 96:10; 104:5; 119:90; 148:6; Ecc 1:4; Eph 3:21**, and then keep in mind the fact that “**all things were created through Him and for Him** [Jesus Christ]—**Col 1:16**. Think about this: if all things were created *for* the Son, why would the Father EVER destroy what the Son created? He’d be taking back His gift to His beloved Son! All was made FOR Him, remember? *GOD* said that!

And it won't do to say that God *did* destroy planet Earth in the worldwide flood because we're still atop it! It was radically *re-arranged*, but it didn't go "poof" out of existence! A God of such magnitude Who can bring such a vast, complex universe into existence can certainly sustain its existence for one second longer...*forever*. Who or what can limit God?! (**Dan 4:35**).

The other objection that some raise is that *some* of the things predicted in the **Matt 24-25** discourse of Jesus seem to have occurred (like the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, an undeniable historical fact), while other events that supposedly should have happened at the same time apparently did *not* occur, so the timing is off for those. Again, *sorry*, but no. Just because Christ didn't fit His holy actions and timing to *your* expectations does not mean He didn't do what He promised to do, and *when* He promised to do it. You lose, finite and flawed sinner; I'll go with Christ. When *He* says *what and when*, we *know* what and when.

THE *PAROUSIA* IN PAUL'S EPISTLES (*REAL LETTERS TO REAL PEOPLE WHO LIVED A REALLY LONG TIME AGO; SO LET'S "GET REAL!"*)

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
1 Thes 2:19	AD 51-52	presenting the brethren (even <i>them</i>) at the coming (P arousia) of Christ
1 Thes 3:13	(ditto)	establish <i>their</i> hearts at the coming (P arousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints (R)
1 Thes 4:15	(ditto)	"we who are alive and remain until the coming [P arousia] of the Lord"... "shall be caught up together" (R apture)
1 Thes 5:23	(ditto)	<i>their</i> spirits, souls, & <i>bodies</i> preserved unto the P arousia

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
2 Thes 2:1	AD 51 or 52	the coming (Parousia) of our Lord and <i>our (their)</i> gathering to Him (Rapture)
2 Thes 2:8	(ditto)	the “lawless one” revealed & destroyed with the brightness of the Lord’s coming (Parousia)
2 Thes 2:9	(ditto)	the <i>lawless one’s</i> coming (<i>also a parousia, extended presence</i>) “after the working of Satan”

SUMMARY of 1 & 2 Thessalonians *parousia* passages: within the lifetimes of at least those who “remained alive” in the *years closely following AD 51 or 52*, would be the coming of the Lord (**Parousia**), the gathering of the dead AND living saints (**1 Thes 4:15-17**), or the **Resurrection AND Rapture**, and the coming (and destruction of) “the lawless one.” Also nestled in there is the great “falling away” that had to *precede* the “day of Christ” (**2 Thes 2:2-12**). A **Throne-Tribunal** (mass-judgment) event is indicated in **1 Thes 1:5-10**, where it’s tied to the time “**when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels**” and vengeance is taken “in flaming fire” on those who would be “punished with everlasting destruction from the *presence* [Gr. *prosopon*, Str. 4383] of the Lord.” Clearly, in the inspired Apostle Paul’s mind, all of the “Big 4” events—the **Parousia**, **Resurrection-Rapture**, and the **End of the age**, when the great **Tribunal** (GWT) mass-judgment would take place, were all on a fairly-close horizon. Remember that Paul sought to *comfort* those first-century Thessalonian believers (see **1 Thes 4:18 & 5:11**). If all of the most blessed events were *not* in *their* futures (resurrection-rapture-rescue from wrath and persecution), why even tell ‘em about any of that? **THEY were** undergoing persecution and tribulation (**1 Thes 2:14-16; 3:3-8; 2 Thes 1:4-8**). To dangle a deliverance in front of them that actually belonged, not to them, but to people *50 generations after they were dead* would have been the worst cruelty (not to mention a pack of lies). But Paul knew what all of the false prophets of today do not. That whole “last things” package was set to arrive while some of those very Thessalonians were still alive.

(Continuing with Paul's letters where the *Parousia* is mentioned):

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
1 Cor 15:23-26	AD 57 (about 5 years after 2 Thes written)	those in Christ "made alive" (R) at His coming (Parousia), "then comes the End " (v.24)
1 Cor 16:17	(ditto)	the coming of Stephanas, etc. also described as a <i>parousia</i> , or a visitation/presence of some length (consistent usage shown)
2 Cor 7:6, 7	later in AD 57	2 uses of <i>parousia</i> in reference to the coming of Titus to give Paul comfort & consolation; a visit of greater length than a pop-in/doorstep conversation is again indicated
Phil 1:26	AD 62 or 63	Paul's coming (<i>parousia</i>) to the faithful in Philippi for "your [<i>their</i>] progress"; he would be there long enough to instruct them further in "joy of faith"

WHEN WOULD THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE? It's more than obvious that the visits discussed here in these passages would've had to take place while the participants were alive, right? Does anyone today seriously doubt that those visits were accomplished in real-time history? Why then, is it any different when Jesus and His hand-picked, personally-instructed disciples and other NT writers spoke confidently in the Spirit of God about the much-prophesied coming/presence/visitation/*parousia* of the Lord within that generational time frame? How does that suddenly become unbelievable as accomplished historical fact? Think about it!

FACING THE FACTS: Even though the Lord's **Parousia** centered on huge *spiritual* changes, the *physical evidences* of His coming *in history* are undeniable.

THE *PAROUSIA* IN THE REAL LETTERS OF JAMES, THE
 HALF-BROTHER OF JESUS, TO REAL PEOPLE IN THE
FIRST CENTURY AD (again, not to us in the *21st*)

TEXT	SAID / WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Jas 5:7	AD 61 or 62 (about 5 years before the Jewish-Roman War started)	the (<i>his</i> , First-Century) brethren <i>should be patient</i> until the coming of the Lord (Parousia)
Jas 5:8-9	(ditto)	the coming of the Lord is “at hand” (P); “the Judge <i>is</i> [then, so <i>was</i> to us] standing at the door!” (T) at the End of the age

WHEN WOULD THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE? If THE **Parousia** (“THE coming of the Lord”) was “at hand” in AD 62, and The Judge was *already then* figuratively “standing at the door” in anticipation of the GWT Judgment/Tribunal, how far off could those two age-ending events possibly have been?!? Is Jesus still looking intently at earth from a heavenly “on-deck circle,” awaiting the Father’s go-ahead? Or is He (The Judge) *still* standing at the door, still intending to judge that “wicked/perverse/sinful/faithless/evil/adulterous generation” that died out around 1940 years ago?!? Wake up, people! The *inspired* servant of Christ (James) wrote with a sense of urgency that the **P-E-T** events were all “at hand”—close to *them* (he and his First-Century brethren), so they are in *our* far distant *past*. And as we said before, when those 3 of the Big 4 events are specifically alluded to, the unmentioned 4th event (**R**esurrection-**R**apture) is implied by association with the **Parousia**, the **End**, and the GWT **T**ribunal; all OT prophecies and NT “updated” predictions place them in the same era, where they *converge*.

FACING THE FACTS: Here we see once more that we have the choice of believing sincere Christian writers who knew Jesus even *face-to-face*, who wrote the *God-breathed* words of the perfect Author, who *knew* what they were talking about...OR...the prideful pronouncements of the purveyors of “prophetic” propaganda. I sincerely hope and pray that we can *all* move towards the Truth.

THE *PAROUSIA* IN THE APOSTLE PETER'S REAL LETTERS
TO REAL PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE FIRST CENTURY AD

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
2 Pet 1:16	AD 64 or 65 (when Nero's persecution was ongoing, and the Jewish-Roman War was a year or two away)	refers to the "power and coming [<i>parousia</i>] of our Lord Jesus Christ" in the <i>past</i> tense, (so to His <i>first</i> coming, to which they'd been eyewitnesses); but note that His time with His chosen 12 was about 3.5 years (that first <i>parousia</i> was 3.5 years long, as they saw it)
2 Pet 3:4	(ditto)	"where is the promise of His coming?" (Parousia)—this is the question asked by the scoffers (v. 3) in "the last days" (defined in Heb 1:2 & 1 Jn 2:18); this time, it <i>does</i> refer to the "second coming" that had not yet occurred by AD 65; Peter says that it <i>is</i> coming indeed because the promise of God is <i>not slack</i> (time is NOT an obstacle for Him, as it is for us)
2 Pet 3:12	(ditto)	" <i>looking for</i> and hastening the coming [<i>parousia</i>] of the day of God" at the End of the age; "Day of God" corresponds to the "Day of the LORD" in OT prophecy; <i>they</i> were "looking for it" in AD 64-65.

WHEN WOULD THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE? “Last days?”= *THEN*—see **1 Pet 1:20**, where the same inspired writer said not only that Christ was manifest “in *these* [those] *last times*” but also for *you* [*them*; Gr. *humas*, Str. 5209, a specific plural “you,” like “you all”/“y’all”]. The *Biblical* last days *were* the days at the *end of the age*; the last days of physical planet Earth are nowhere envisioned in the Scriptures. The (old) “heavens and earth”= the Old Covenant/Testament, Mosaic, Jewish sacrificial system in both of its component parts: religious leaders and rulers and God’s laws given to the people through them (heavens) and the people themselves (earth)—see **Isa 51:16; 65:17; 66:22**. This whole system had been “reserved for fire until the day of judgment” (T). We know from **1 Pet 4:5-7** that He who was to judge was “ready” to do just that (then, in AD 64-65), and that then, in AD 64 or 65, the “end of all things is [was] *at hand*.” That’s just what James also said about the “coming of the Lord,” remember? As always, we see this *convergence* of end-times/last things events. They all cluster around the Parousia/Return of Christ for deliverance (resurrection-rapture) and judgment at the end of the age. For the inspired apostle Peter, “the end of *all* things is [was, THEN] at hand/drawn near.”

FACING THE FACTS: The Biblical last days are clearly behind us. *We* are now living in the *everlasting New Covenant* age of the reign of Christ the conqueror, whose kingdom shall have no end: **Isa 45:17; 55:3; 61:8; 63:16; Dan 4, 7, 9; 1 Tim 6:14-15; Heb 13:20; 2 Pet 1:11**. Blasphemous assertions by dispensationalists and other futurists aside, ***Christ’s kingdom is in place now and forever***. There’s nothing left for Him to accomplish, and the only “redemptive event” on God’s schedule is the ongoing *expansion* of the kingdom throughout all of the ages of mankind. Postmillennialists and preterists can lock arms here.

A FEW MORE WORDS ON THE “NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH *IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS*”: Don’t miss the importance of that last phrase as an *identifier* of the new heavens and new earth. In this new system, the kingdom of God is present via the indwelling Holy Spirit, so wherever there is a Christian, *there* is the kingdom of God (see **Luke 17:20-21**). The kingdom of God is *within you/in your midst*, said Jesus the King. Where the Lord, our *righteousness* (**Jer 23:6; Rom 3:22; 1 Cor 1:30**) indwells, *there* is God’s kingdom.

THE *PAROUSIA* IN THE APOSTLE JOHN'S FIRST LETTER
(A REAL LETTER TO REAL PEOPLE IN HIS *OWNERA*)

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
1 Jn 2:28	AD 61 or 62, probably just after his gospel, and a year before the Revelation was recorded	have confidence and not be ashamed before Him [Christ] at His coming (Parousia)

WHEN WAS THIS TO TAKE PLACE? When He (the Son) would appear to *them*—to John and the “little children” to whom he had written—*very soon*. How soon? It was, c. AD 62, already “**THE LAST HOUR**” (see v. 18, just a bit earlier in the same context). John uses “we” in much the same way as Paul did in **1 Thes 4:15-17**. Both apostles hoped to live to see the Parousia/Day of the Lord alongside the folks they wrote to, but neither has been given any guarantee by God that that would be the case. However, we have good reason to believe that both John and Paul sat on two of the twelve thrones that were set up in the “regeneration” (Gr. *paliggenesia*, Str. 3824, *rebirth/spiritual renovation/Messianic restoration*) of **Matt 19:28** (see also **Luke 22:30 & Rev 20:4**).

Are you seeing how everything starts to click in place? The martyred apostles died at various times prior to Christ's Parousia; they were resurrected (the “*first resurrection*” of **Rev 20:4-6**) in order to *judge* and “reign” with Christ for the “thousand years” (we'll get to an explanation of that phrase later). So if the Resurrection-Rapture event occurred “**immediately after the tribulation of those days**”—**Matt 24:29** (when believers were turned into martyrs awaiting resurrection), **at the beginning of Christ's Parousia**, the newly-resurrected, martyred saints could be ready *at that time* to judge “the twelve tribes of Israel” who had put them to death (**Matt 19:28; 23:37**). Now *that* is a picture of God's perfect justice and unsurpassed faithfulness to His chosen ones! That way, *during* the period of The Parousia (often an extended period of even a few years in Greek literature of the First Century AD), as the wrath of God was poured out on the Messiah-rejecting Jews, the martyr-judges were given lots of cases to judge!

THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, AS WE SEE IT EMERGING

If you're thinking in terms of a sequence of events, it could be represented as:

- 1) **Great Tribulation upon the people of God to test the genuineness of their faith;**
- 2) **The Parousia of Christ began with the harvest-gathering; Resurrection of the dead and Rapture of the living faithful;**
- 3) **Wrath on the Jews, “filling the docks” of the heavenly courts, where the martyrs judged the 12 tribes of Israel on 12 thrones;**
- 4) **The Great White Throne (general/mass) Judgment of Jesus Christ took place, sealing the age;**
- 5) **The Age “that now is” became the age that *was*, and the “age that is to come” arrived, and is in place forever;**

SIGN EVENTS (Where do the “signs of the end” fit in from what we’ve seen so far?)

- 1) Gospel preached in all the world, then comes the end: **BEFORE** #1 above (by AD 63, before the Neronian persecution).
- 2) The Great Apostasy/falling-away: **DURING** #1 above, when severe afflictions and persecutions weeded out the unfaithful (roughly late AD 62 to mid-66).
- 3) Appearance of the “man of sin/lawlessness”: **DURING** #3 above. Only a hint for now: a *Jewish zealot* who actually “sat” in the temple “as God.” Time period: AD 67-70.
- 4) The “abomination of desolation” “standing in the holy place”: at the commencement of #3 above, when the Roman/world-mercenary armies gathered in northern Judea and began marching towards Jerusalem and the temple, desolating all as they went.
- 5) Parable of the fig tree: “all these things” make up *the* sign that the end of the age is *near*, “*at the doors*” (**Matt 24:32-33**). AD 60’s.
- 6) “Times of the Gentiles” (**Luke 21:24**): **DURING** #3 above; the 42-month duration of the Jewish-Roman War, ending in AD 70.

“BIG 4” EVENT #2, THE RESURRECTION OF (ALL) THE DEAD AND RAPTURE/CATCHING-UP OF THE LIVING FAITHFUL

We’ll now turn our attention to those passages of the Bible where the resurrection and “rapture” are indicated and timing clues are also present. Our first objective, we should recall, is to try to pinpoint the time in which these *concurrent* (simultaneous) events were prophesied to take place. Whether still in the future or in the past, the rapture/catching-up is always Scripturally-linked to the resurrection “out of”/“from” the dead (ones). And please take note of that fact: in the NT Scriptures, we *never* encounter the phrase, “resurrection of the *body*” or “resurrection of the *flesh*.” Those phrases have come into our consciousness from the *creeds*, NOT the Bible. If you doubt me, go ahead and look up every occurrence of “resurrection” in the Bible, and see if even one mentions “body” or “flesh.” Oh, I know **Job 19:26**(OT) is often translated, “in my *flesh* I shall see God,” but as Bible scholars point out, “in” can just as viably be “apart from” (my flesh). Furthermore, look at what precedes the phrase: “And *after* my skin is *destroyed/struck off*, this I know, that...in OR apart from my flesh I shall see God.” Now, given part 1, in which way does part 2 make more sense? I think what is clear is that Job had unwavering faith (“this I *know*”) in the fact that after his time on earth, when death destroyed his flesh, he would *somehow* see his Redeemer, eyes in his head of flesh or not. That’s the point of the passage, as far as I’m concerned, and I can enlist the inspired Word of God, comparing Scripture with Scripture,—as it’s rendered in **Gen 3:19** and **1 Cor 15:35-55**—to back me.

In **Gen 3:19**, we’re told that we are dust and to dust we shall return, but that’s where the earthly body ends; there’s no returning to dust and rising *from* the dust again! And **Dan 12:2** refers to those who sleep *in* the dust who would awaken to everlasting life or everlasting contempt, but *that dust* isn’t resurrected! Paul confirms this with his careful, painstaking lesson in **1 Cor 15**. Only the uncorrupted (untouched by sin) body of the risen Christ was suitable to enter heaven; Christ DID ascend with the same body He’d had while in physical form on earth. *But*...all other bodies have been corrupted by sin and returned to dust forever; the *mortal* (CAN die), corruptible/corrupted can NOT inherit the *immortal* (CAN’T die), *incorruptible* life in heaven. Those are two different

realms, with different rules for existence. We simply can't take our old carcasses—even in reconstituted forms—into heaven; NOT ALLOWED! What we *do* get, however, is much-much better: ***new, heaven-worthy “spiritual bodies”*** that are similar to those of the angels and Jesus Himself! Read again the words in Paul's God-breathed letter, **1 Cor 15:44-49: spiritual bodies**. If God calls them that through His servant Paul, then that's what they are! Amen!

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Dan 12:1-3	6th Century BC	“the time of the end” v. 4 & 9; “the end”/ “the end of the days” v. 13; includes unprecedented “time of trouble” (see Matt 24:21); deliverance via the Parousia of true Israel (see Rom 11, Gal 3,4,6); general resurrection (R) to to judgment (T) at the End

TIME CLUES IN THIS TEXT: All of this would occur way off in the future from *Daniel's* time. He's told the words (of this prophecy) are “closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” Also, “*When the power of the holy people [ancient, OT Israel, in covenant with God until they broke it] has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.*” (compare **Matt 24:34**). The time span for the fulfillments would be for “a time, times, and half a time,” or 3.5 years (see the same figure in **Dan 7:25 & Rev 12:14**, as well as the exact equivalents of 42 months in **Rev 11:2 & 13:5** and 1260 days in **Rev 11:3 & 12:6**; also see “half a week” (of 7 years) in **Dan 9:27**; ALL of these are related to the time of the end).

FACING THE FACTS: The same prophecy that Daniel was told would be *sealed* until the time of the end was updated and left *UNsealed* when “the time of the end” had arrived, **Rev 22:10**: “**Do NOT seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.**” In other words, what was far off in the 6th Century BC was “at hand”/near when John recorded his vision in AD 62-63.

John 5:25-29 said by Jesus c. AD 30 “the hour *is* coming” when *all* the dead would come forth to the resurrection (**R**) of life OR condemnation (general GWT judgment(**T**)); recall **Dan 12:2** [is that hour *still* coming?]

John 6:39-40;44;54 (ditto) the Son would raise up (**R**) all the Father had given Him at “the *last day*” (Gr. *eschatos hemera*, Str. 2078, 2250= *farthest/final/ending day* [of a *period/age*]) (**E**)

PUTTING THE TWO TOGETHER: Since the *resurrection* hour was coming (in AD 30), and that *raising* would occur *on the last day*, it means that the last day itself was coming, fairly close already in AD 30, and *really* close in AD 62, when John (the same inspired writer) said it was “*THE last hour*” (**1 Jn 2:18**).

John 11:23-27 exchange between Jesus and Martha, c. AD 30 Martha: “...in the resurrection [**R**] at the last day.” Jesus didn’t correct her on the timing, and see **1 Jn 2:18**: “last hour” in AD 62; **Heb 1:2**: “in these last days” (AD 62-63); *those* last days!

Acts 24:15, 25 record of events c. AD 60 both the **R**esurrection AND the GWT Judgment (**T**) were ABOUT TO happen (Gr. *mello*, Str. 3195, ready/on the verge), sometime very near to AD 60

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
1 Cor 15:20-28	AD 57	<p>“those who are Christ’s” would be raised (R) “at His coming (P), “then comes the End” when “all things are made subject to Him” (Tribunal) P-R-E-T all linked in time; one near, <i>all</i> near!</p>
1 Cor 15:51-52	(ditto)	<p>“We [<i>they</i>, in AD 57] shall not all sleep [die], but we [<i>they</i>, AD 57] shall all be <i>changed</i> [Raptured] ...at the last trumpet” (End of the age); the dead are raised (R), & the (then) living were <i>changed</i> & caught up to heaven (Raptured)</p>
Phil 3:11	AD 62 or 63	<p>Paul was clearly hoping to <i>live</i> until the Resurrection-Rapture event, since he already knew that he’d be <i>resurrected</i> if he died before then; by God’s grace, he’d already “attained” that <i>status</i>, so his hope here was to be “caught up” while still living (1 Thes 4)</p>
2 Tim 2:17-18	AD 64	<p>the Resurrection had NOT taken place by AD 64, but it was on the “horizon” then; that this text is used as a hammer against those who NOW (<i>correctly</i>) say that the R event is past (arrived on schedule) is proof of their arrogance in ignorance and lack of regard for audience relevance, context, and the <i>total</i> truth of God’s Word! Note these well and avoid ‘em!</p>

1 Pet 1:3-12 AD 63 or 64

they (c. AD 64) had a *living hope* to see “the *revelation* [*apokalupsis*] of Jesus Christ” (**P**) and all of the attendant events, Rapture-rescue being the most important to them as they underwent “various trials” in “the last time,” (**E**) when salvation was “*ready to be revealed*.” Now that’s a whole bunch of clues, folks! Verse 12 wraps up: all that had been prophesied was taking place *then*, before *their* eyes!

Rev 20:4-6 AD 62 or 63

the “first resurrection” of the martyrs who’d be killed because of their *witness* (Gr. *marturia*, Str. 3141, the original meaning of “witness”) of Jesus; “blessed and holy is he who has (*had*) part in the first (**R**); the “second death” had no power over them; they joined Christ to judge and reign (**T**) for the “millennium” period.

1 Cor 15, 1 Thes 4 AD 52-57

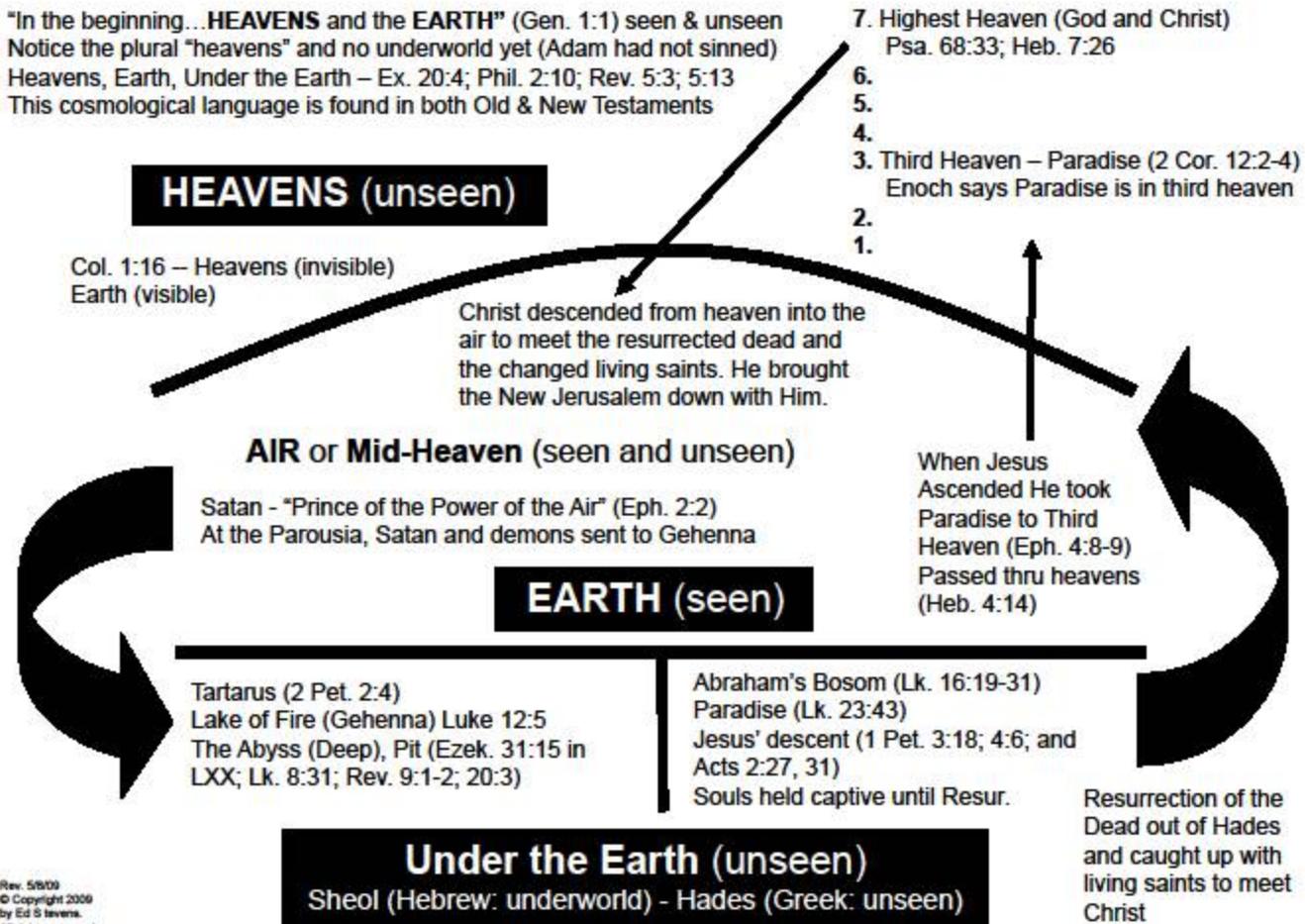
these definitive “catching-up” (**Rapture**) texts *both* tie that event to the (general/mass) **R**esurrection, and it’s obvious that Paul (writer of both) hoped to live to see that day: “We shall not all sleep [die]; we who are alive and remain...” It was near!

A GREAT VISUAL AID FROM EDWARD E. STEVENS

(used with his permission; see the original and much more at www.preterist.org)

Below is a wonderful tool to aid in our understanding of the concepts of the heavens (plural) and their relationship with Earth; Hades (Gr. form of the Heb. *Sheol*), the *temporary* place for departed, disembodied spirits, as *differentiated from Hell / Gehenna*, the *final* abode of the unsaved; the Resurrection of the dead (ones) *out of Hades* at the time of Christ's Parousia, and the Rapture (bodily *change* and catching-up of the living saints, also at that time). Stevens has done a good job of packing several truths into this concise graphic, so we thank him!

Cosmology of Christ's Return



**“BIG 4” EVENT #3, THE *END* (OF *THE AGE* / “ALL THINGS”/
THE JEWISH/OLD COVENANT/MOSAIC/SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM)**

Probably the first and foremost obstacle to understanding the Biblical concept of “The End”—in every generation—is the fact that history isn’t going to end with *us*. All kinds of people in *every* generation since the *first* generations after the birth of Christ (AD), when Jesus and His disciples walked on this earth together, have been convinced that “the end” could occur in their own lifetimes. Only ONE generation... *WAS*...correct! Do I need to say which one?

Readers, please note, one and all: I use two very simple, straightforward *hermeneutics*, or *interpretive principles* to try to best understand God’s Word:

- 1. Always take God at His word; He knows all and can’t lie.**
- 2. Always look for the way in which God is given the most glory; the very universe exists only for His glory, so all choices, concepts, and plans must tend in that direction.**

To me, this is the surest and most efficient way to get to the truth. If and when confusion begins to start in again, we just have to recall principle #1, and when we sort *God’s factual pronouncements* from the scattergun opinions of finite and sinful human beings, most choices move from “gray areas” into black-and-white zones. But when we’re bound and determined to *make* every issue a “gray area,” we’re just adding obstacles to our own path and even shooting ourselves in the foot. This is never more true than when it comes to last-things studies. It does NOT have to be as difficult as we insist on making it. God *wants* His beloved to understand eschatology because a proper, Biblical understanding of it will cause us to give Him due glory for what He both promised AND accomplished! Looking on the flip side, where is there glory for God if He’s seen as a mind-changing, beaten-back-by-sinners and Satan, *failed* promiser of big things and deliverer of none? Or a God who just doesn’t understand the concept of time? Almighty God doesn’t need any crutches, thank you! If God and His inspired Bible writers said *as and when*, we can be 100% sure it *WAS as and when*. If the Bible says *end of an age*, and not the *world*, then end of the age it is!

IN BIBLICAL TERMS, WHAT HAS AN END, AND WHAT DOES NOT?

WHAT CAME TO AN END

WHAT WON'T END

The **age** “that now is” gave way to.....the **age** “that is to come” (in AD 70)
(**Matt 12:32; 24:3; 28:20; Luke 18:30; 1 Cor 10:11; Eph 1:21; Heb 9:26**)

The **Old Covenant** ran its course, but....the **New Covenant** is everlasting
(**Jer 31:31-36; 2 Cor 5:17; Heb 8:6-13; 12:18-24; 13:20**)

The OT **types-and-shadows signs**
and the **sacrificial system**
(**Col 2:16-17; Heb 8:1-6; 9 & 10;**

The **Levitical** priesthood
(**Heb 6:18-8:6; 1 Pet 2:4-9; Rom 12:1**)

The **reign of sin and death** (no
escape, deliverance, or recourse)
(**Rom 5-8; 11:27; 1 Cor 15**)

The **physical** kingdoms of Assyria,
Babylon, Edom, Egypt, Medo-Persia,
Rome, etc., AND *Israel*

The “worlds” of those listed above (+)
(**Isa 34; Dan 7; Ezk 25-32; Isa 65-66;**

Prophecies, visions, charismatic gifts

(**Dan 9:24; 1 Cor 13:8-10; Isa 40:8;**

Old heavens and earth (the whole
spiritual system)

the NT **fulfillments in Christ and**
expansion of His kingdom
Isa 11:9; Dan 2:44,7:14; Luke 1:33)

Priesthood of *all believers*

sin nature of mankind, but now,
after sin & death defeated by Christ,
the way out & beyond is established

the **spiritual** kingdom, the *true*
Israel of God (**Gal 3-4; 6:16; Luke**
17:20-21; John 18:36; Matt 21:43)

the worlds (**earth & the universe**)
Psa 78; 89; 93; Ecc 1:4; Eph 3:21)

The (written) **Word of God** stands
forever
Matt 24:35)

New heavens and earth (the
whole, everlasting *spiritual* kingdom)

Now that we have a good idea about what kind of *end* the Bible indicated throughout its pages, we'll move onto the business of pinpointing the time in which that end was to take place. We'll return to the chart-commentary format, as we look at OT & NT texts that together point the way.

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Dan 7-12	6th Century BC	events at “the time of the End”: during the 4th kingdom in the vision (Roman empire, following the Greeks; that right there should dissuade anyone from the futurist view! Do you see <i>Greece</i> dominating the world now, or envision that it will <i>ever again</i> reign, with <i>Italy</i> waiting in the wings? Yet, <i>the angel of God</i> said the time of The End would <i>follow</i> the dissolution of the <i>third</i> kingdom, which is <i>named</i> as Greece, when a 4th “king shall arise.”

WHEN WOULD “THE TIME OF THE END” BE? *All* of the clues in this entire, 6-chapter prophetic section point to an era that is now in the distant past, far removed from our own time, and even more from the distant-to-us future!

FACING THE FACTS: When the dutiful *angels interpreted* the visions for Daniel (**Dan 7:15-28, 8:15-26, 9:21-27, 10:14-12:13**), kingdoms were named and a timetable was given. The seventy-weeks (of years) prophecy, in which the starting point is given as “*the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem,*” and the period would extend “*until Messiah the Prince*” (first 69 weeks, or 483 years), provides a definitive, historical time frame. When the rest of the prophecy is considered and the math is calculated, we find that the First Century AD is marked out as the time of fulfillment. This isn't surprising!

Matt 10:1-23 Jesus speaking to “the twelve” c. AD 30

on this occasion of their “training mission,” they’re given powerful spiritual gifts and sent out to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” with a real sense of urgency; when they’d later carry out the mission in the course of obeying Christ’s “Great Commission” (after His ascension), **THEY** would be delivered up to councils and **THEY** would be beaten *in the synagogues*, etc. Question: How many Christians are being beaten by Jews in the synagogues *these days*? But Jesus told **THEM** in the *First Century AD*, that **THEY** would not get through the cities of Israel (as Paul was going to the Gentiles) before He returned! Also, only he who would *endure to **the end*** would be *saved*. Obviously, **THE END** was something that was going to happen within the span of *their* potential lifetimes; there’s not even the smallest hint that Jesus expected them to endure to an end that was *thousands of years beyond* the “threescore & ten” (70 years, **Psa 90:10**) of a normal “old age.” The kingdom of heaven was “at hand,” and the **End** of the age was also close.

Matt 13:24-30, 36-43	Jesus spoke in parables to outsiders, but then explained the meanings to His chosen disciples, c. AD 30	the <i>harvest</i> , the End of <i>the age</i> , putting the reaping by the angels, which accompanied the (P)arousia, the (R) events, AND the GWT Judgment (T) <i>all</i> at the End of the age ; more precisely, Christ said, “at the end of <i>this</i> age,” which was the age that indeed <i>ended</i> . The age that was to come after “the end” is the UNending age in which we now live
Matt 13:47-50	(ditto); above was the Parable of the Wheat & Tares, this one was the Parable of the Dragnet	what shouldn't be missed here is that again we see the <i>gathering by the angels</i> , which is always tied in time to the (P), (R), and (T) events, <i>and</i> the End of the age. The consistent theme throughout the Bible is of an age “that now is” (when the words were recorded), which <i>would</i> end and be replaced by an age “that is to come” that <i>wouldn't</i> end. “Is” became <i>was</i> .

Matt 24 (revisited)	Jesus to His disciples, AD 30	some of the closest disciples of Jesus had just asked Him <i>when</i> would the temple be so utterly destroyed; <i>what</i> would be the <i>sign</i> of His coming (Parousia) AND the End of the age; they seemed to put all of it together as an event-set that could very well happen in <i>their</i> lifetimes, and Jesus does NOT say to them to “Go thy way, <i>Peter</i> ” ... John, Andrew, etc., as the angel said to <i>Daniel</i> , “for you shall rest and arise to your inheritance at the End of the days.” No, He even <i>referred</i> to Daniel’s prophecy (v. 15) as part of what the First-Century disciples could expect to see “at the End of the age.” Consider this: if The Time of The End wasn’t coming in the lifetimes of those inquiring disciples, all Jesus would’ve had to say was, “Don’t worry about it; it won’t happen until <i>you</i> are all long gone, so relax.”
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Luke 21:22

This is (in part) Luke's version of Christ's "Olivet Discourse" c. AD 30 (see chart, next page)

the "days of vengeance," when "***all things that are written may be fulfilled.***" Sure sounds like *consummation* language! Isn't it logical to connect the *fulfillment* of "***all things written***" with The *End* that was in view from the beginning? The "Days of Vengeance" virtually scream, "Final payback time!" Look to **Matt 23:36** for confirmation: (Jesus pronouncing the "7 Woes" upon the scribes-pharisees-hypocrites, leaders of the Messiah-rejecting Jews)—**"Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon THIS [1st C.] generation."** And upon THEM—who killed, persecuted, and *scourged* (in the synagogues) His wise men, scribes, and prophets—would come "all the righteous blood shed on the earth" (**Matt 23:32-39**). It all came to a head when the Days of Vengeance came to Judea and Jerusalem (AD 70)

THIS CHART ALSO COURTESY OF ED STEVENS, used with permission

The Olivet Discourse Cannot Be Divided

Matthew 24

SECTION A (events associated with AD 70)?

Matthew 24:1-34

- ① vv. 17,18 – “let him who is on the housetop not go down...”
- ② vv. 26,27 – “For just as the lightning comes from the east...”
- ③ v. 28 – “Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”

SECTION B (events still future to us)?

Matthew 24:35ff

- ④ vv. 37-39 – “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah”
- ⑤ vv. 40,41 – “there shall be two men in the field; one...taken, and one...left.”

Luke 17

ALL ONE SECTION (AD 70)!

Luke 17:20-37

- ② vv. 23,24 – “For just as the lightning, when it flashes...”
- ④ vv. 26,27 – “And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man”
- ① v. 31 – “On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop...”
- ⑤ vv. 35,36 – “There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left.”
- ③ v. 37 – “...Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered.”

See the explanation for this entitled, “About The Chart”

ABOUT THE CHART

Some hold the idea shown on the left above. They think Matthew 24 speaks of two different time periods: (SECTION A) Events Associated With AD 70, and (SECTION B) Events Still Future To Us. They apply the events mentioned in verses 1-34 (SECTION A) to the first time period (AD 70), and the events in verses 35 and following (SECTION B) to our future. Luke's statements in chapter 17 (on the right above) show that this idea cannot be correct. Luke 17 discusses the same events as Matthew 24, however there is not a hint that two different time periods are under consideration. Luke lumps all these events together as if they would all happen in the same “day that the Son of Man is revealed” (vs. 30). Luke gives no indication that he is talking about two different groups of events that would occur at two separate comings of the Son of Man separated by thousands of years. *Notice on the chart above how Luke records the same events as Matthew, but in a different order. Matthew's order is 1-2-3-4-5, but Luke's order is scrambled 2-4-1-5-3!* Luke has an event from SECTION A followed by one from SECTION B, then another from SECTION A followed by SECTION B, and finally one from SECTION A. This presents a problem to Futurists: If Matthew 24 really has two sections (or two different time periods) under consideration, then Luke's account is incorrect, because he mixes the five events up as if they are all to happen in one time period. Either Luke is mistaken (and therefore uninspired), or it is wrong to divide Matthew 24 into two sections. Of course, the solution to this is that both Matthew and Luke speak of the same events which would all happen in the same time period. And, Matthew 24:34 tells us when that time period was to occur: the “generation” alive when He spoke those words (the generation from AD 30-70)! This is all the more apparent when we compare Matt. 24:34 (“this generation”) with Jesus' comments a few hours before in Matt. 23:36 (“this generation”), as well as his statements to the disciples that “some of those standing here shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom” (Matt. 16:28).

1 Cor 1:8	AD 57	they were “eagerly waiting for the revelation [Str. 602, <i>apokalupsis</i>] of our Lord Jesus Christ [P],” who would also “confirm you [them] <i>to the End</i> ,...blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So both the Parousia and The End were <i>First-Century</i> events, when the letter writer and the recipients were alive and eagerly anticipating both.
1 Cor 10:11	(ditto)	“to whom the end of the ages did come”—Young’s Literal Translation (echoes above)
1 Cor 15:24	(ditto)	“then comes the End, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father.” This is just what Christ did in AD 70, when He fulfilled all things written, nullified the power of sin and death, and presented the restored kingdom to His Father. <i>Mission accomplished in the First Century AD. Why stand ye gazing, 21st C. men of earth, looking for Him to return to tie up “loose ends” of prophecy? He’s done everything that was predicted, and He did it all right on schedule. The End has yielded to the new beginning, and this age will know no end!</i>

2 Cor 4:4	AD 57	<p>The age to come (that <i>came</i>, about a dozen years later). This text is brought in as a testimonial on the side of those of us who believe we now live in the age that was to come. THE POINT: if this is <i>not</i> that new age, then we are <i>still</i> living under the reign of Satan, “the god of <i>this</i> age.” That’s the alternative, reader. Was “the ruler of <i>this</i> world” (John 12:31) cast out or not? Because if he wasn’t, Jesus hasn’t won any victory for us, and He and all of the NT writers deceived us as much as any demon. Is <i>that</i> what you believe? Think!</p>
Phil 4:5	AD 62 or 63	<p>“The Lord is at hand” (then, AD 62). If the Lord was said to be “at hand” (near, or about to come) in AD 62, the same time that James used the <i>same words</i> in Jas 5:8, then when <i>Peter</i>, too, says only a year later...</p>
1 Pet 4:7	AD 63 or 64	<p>“The End of all things is at hand,” how can any Christian disregard the <i>God-breathed</i>, written testimony of these <i>three</i> writers (and others) that THE END was truly near in AD 63? In what kind of Scripture-twisting environment are we allowed to make “at hand/near” extend <i>50 generations</i> into the future?!? That’s bogus!</p>

“BIG 4” EVENT #4, THE “GREAT WHITE THRONE GENERAL, MASS-JUDGMENT (TRIBUNAL)

The last of the “last things” prophesied and predicted in God’s Word is the general, all-nations judgment that was to come at the end of the *age*. Once again, we have to shed the mental baggage of an end of the *world*, as physically considered. If this presupposition (foregone conclusion) still resides in the reader’s mind, it will continue to cloud his or her understanding of Biblical teachings. But if any reader earnestly seeks to embrace the whole counsel of God, and as part of that, the whole truth of what the *Bible* presents to the open-minded, one key the Holy Spirit will use is the truth that this world—better, this *universe*—isn’t headed for a final conflagration. What was to be “burned up” or “melted” (**2 Pet 3**) *WAS* destroyed in the years of our Lord (AD) 66-70. The *elements* that were melted and dissolved *weren’t* what we’d find today in the *periodic table* (Gr. *stoicheia*, Str. 4747, “elements”=*principles/rudiments/first steps*; IMPORTANT COMPARISONS: **Gal 4:3,9; Col 2:8, 20; Heb 5:12** (other NT usage; compare *contexts* to gain the proper understanding of what “elements” means).

The point of the preceding is simply this: the idea of an *unending* planet earth and a universe that also rolls on forever is tremendously hard to grasp as long as we disregard the way that **God’s Word uses different types of language (genres) to communicate truths**. Doesn’t God have the right to use *apocalyptic* language when He speaks of prophetic subjects? He certainly granted that right to the Old Testament prophets, through whom *He* spoke (**2 Pet 1:21**)! Look at passages like **Isa 34:3-5 & 19:1** and **Nah 1:3-5**. The language that’s used in those texts is the same type of language employed by Peter in **2 Peter 3**; he’s *recalling* **Isa 65-66** in particular. The Jewish Christians of Peter’s generation were well-versed in those OT prophecies and quite familiar with apocalyptic language, so Peter was able to use such language to great advantage with them, the *original* audience (real recipients of his real letter). To our shame today, we too often read ourselves into the Bible’s texts and try to forcefully import all of *our current* ways and (false) teachings. This tendency shows an utter lack of respect for the ultimate Author of *all* Scripture, which is *God*, the only one who can NOT lie, who sees the end from the beginning (**Titus 1:2; Isa 46:10**).

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Dan 12:1-13	6th Century BC	great tribulation, deliverance of God's people and resurrection (R) to judgment (T); all at the <i>time of the End</i> , which was identified by the inspired NT writers (Peter, Paul, James, and John) as <i>their</i> own generation in the First Century AD.
Matt 3:7-12	c. AD 26, the beginning of the personal, earthly ministry of Jesus <i>AND</i> possibly the millennium	the " wrath <i>about to come</i> " (Gr. <i>mello</i> , Str. 3195); the <i>ax of judgment</i> was already THEN said to be laid at the root of the trees, in position to go to work, and The Judge already THEN was portrayed with His winnowing fan (separating tool) in His hand, awaiting the harvest (R) that was to come at the End of the age (Matt 13) . John was identifying the <i>leading edge</i> of the New Testament, everlasting kingdom of heaven, a fact which Jesus confirmed in Matt 11:11-15 : John was the last of the OT prophets, and the kingdom was beginning to arrive in AD 26, with judgment <i>close</i> .

Luke 12:49-51Jesus to His disciples,
c. AD 30

Judgment (**T**)—symbolized by fire—would have to wait until *after* Christ horrifically suffered and died, so in His honest humanity, He wished that all could be behind Him, and that the fire of the judgment could be kindled! Notice here that the idea of winnowing is expressed as *division*, and how one regards *Christ* is the dividing line, the point of separation/sorting out. Although Jesus doesn't give any real *specific* clues in this text about the timing of the judgment, any true Christian can clearly see that the Father would not make His Son—in whom He is well-pleased—*wait to kindle* the fiery judgment of *those who put Him to death and persecuted His own church-in-the-cradle for thousands of years* past THAT evil/perverse/wicked generation! It would be the definitive case of “Justice delayed is Justice denied!” Consider the promises to the martyrs (**Rev 6:9-11**) and those to whom the Rapture *was* indeed promised!

TEXT	SAID / WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Matt 16:27-28	Jesus to His disciples, AD 30	At the time of His Parousia , (in the glory of His Father, with His angels), <i>then</i> He'd reward/repay each accord- ing to their works (T)
Matt 24:27-25:46 (ditto)		The coming (<i>Parousia</i>) of the Son of Man would bring in the universal (all-nations) judg- ment (general, Great White Throne Tribunal); REMINDER: This is <i>always</i> the case, that <i>the</i> Parousia means the Harvest- time (R esurrection- R apture) at the End of the age, and <i>then</i> would <i>soon</i> follow the time of the great mass- T ribunal. All of the “Big 4” (P-R-E-T) are constantly, consistently tied together in time (<i>same era</i> , with no huge, multiple-century gap between any of the events). Neither put together what God has put asunder (like despies do) <i>NOR</i> ...put asunder what God has joined together (which dis- pies <i>also</i> do, as well as all “par- tial-preterist” futurists. These major redemptive events are grouped closely together in the Word of God (by which I mean <i>both</i> Jesus The Word & the Bible)

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
John 12:31	Jesus, c. AD 30	<p>“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” Remember: if Jesus <i>didn’t</i> render sin, death, and Satan powerless with regard to all of His people—between the cross, the parousia, and <i>judgment</i>—Satan has yet to be cast out, and he still rules this world. Futurists, you just can’t have it both ways! If the person who spoke in this passage has <i>not</i> achieved the dethroning of Satan, there is NO savior in whom <i>any</i> can trust! Now, we <i>know</i> that isn’t the case, for—like Paul—we too <i>know</i> in whom we have believed (2 Tim 1:12); our trust is <i>not</i> misplaced!</p>
Rom 13:11-14	AD 58	<p>“The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” The Day of the Lord was near, and that meant judgment (T) was, too.</p>
Rom 16:20	(ditto)	<p>“The God of peace will crush Satan under your [their First-Century] feet <i>shortly</i>.” See again John 12:31; Rev 1:1-3 & 22:20.</p>

TEXT	SAID/WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
1 Cor 4:5	AD 57	Paul warned the Corinthians about pre-judging things on the basis of appearances; THE Judge would sort all things out (T) soon enough at His coming; it was in this same real letter to real, First-Century people, that Paul wrote that <i>they</i> were the ones upon whom the ends of the ages had come (10:11, & see Heb 9:26); also, the time was <i>short</i> (7:29); <i>again</i> we see that where there's Christ's coming (P) at the End of the age, there is the judgment (T).
Jas 5:7-9	AD 61 or 62	The Parousia of the Lord was near <i>AND</i> The Judge was pictured as “standing at the door” (T); both imminent in AD 62.
1 Pet 4:5, 17	AD 63 or 64	God was “ ready to judge the living and the dead ” (THEN, in AD 63, and <i>the time had come</i> “ for judgment to begin at the house of God. ” Clearly, mass/general judgment is what's in view, since both the living <i>and</i> the dead were soon to be judged; tribulation upon the “house of God” would mark the start of it.

TEXT	SAID / WRITTEN WHEN	WHAT PREDICTED
Rev 20:11-15	The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST <i>to</i> John, AD 62/63	Where the “Great White Throne Judgment” (T) gets its name; corresponds to the general, mass-judgment depicted by Jesus in Matt 25 ; the reigning/judging during the “thousand years” by the apostles and martyrs connects to Matt 19:28 (“in the regeneration”— <i>paliggenesia</i>); SUGGESTED PARALLELS: the regeneration=making all things new= <i>transition</i> period in which the old covenant system (“heavens and earth”) gave way to the <i>new</i> , everlasting covenant system (NEW heavens and earth); so the Scriptural chain links Isa 51:6 & 16; 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3; & Rev 20-21 . All of these texts unite to indicate a single point in time, which is pinpointed in the “bookends” of Revelation 1:1 & 22:6 : these things “must <i>shortly</i> take place”; Also: the time is (was) <i>near</i> (in AD 63, Rev 1:3) and “ <i>at hand</i> (in AD 63, Rev 22:10); Finally, Jesus said that He’d be coming <i>quickly</i> (Rev 22:12 & 20). So He <i>DID!</i> Amen!

THE “MILLENNIUM”—HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND *THAT*?

It’s certainly a fair question, especially since we just looked at **Rev 20**, the only text where the “thousand years” phraseology shows up, and I didn’t address that issue on that page. So let’s address it now. I only ask the reader to please not trot out ahead of me in order to plant some immovable presuppositions (foregone conclusions) in our path. Speaking from experience, that will tend to block or delay our progress towards proper Biblical understanding. Because after years of setting up those mental roadblocks, it finally dawned on me that I was presuming to dictate to *God*, the ultimate Author of all Scripture, how *He* must say things in order for *me* to understand them. In other words, in the case of “the millennium,” it *had* to mean a *literal thousand-year period* in earth-history, so all we had to figure out was when the 1000 years would start/had started, and all would fall neatly into place; “The case is *SOL*-ved,” says Inspector Clouseau! Wrong.

Let me begin by saying two things: 1) Relax, we won’t go down deep on this and over-complicate things; just the reverse; 2) The answer starts with another fair question: Is all of the book of Revelation to be taken *100% literally*, or is it fair to say that it’s a book that contains many *symbols*, and it’s structured along the same lines as *all OT prophecy*? [careful, now, I see you; what’re ya doin’ with that roadblock in your hands? put it back where you found it, please!]

We can walk through this together, and quicker than you maybe anticipate.

100% LITERAL, OR POSSIBLY SYMBOLIC? (Looking at the text of **The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place (Rev 1:1)** [chapter & verse in bold before passage considered])

1:16—*Literal* sword coming out of the mouth of Christ or symbolic?

1:20—The 7 stars (*literal* heavenly bodies) *ARE* the *literal* angels/messengers of the 7 churches: are they *equated*, or is it symbolic? And are the 7 lampstands *literally* the 7 churches? Or are these *metaphors* like the ones used by Jesus in His parables? (see **Matt 13**).

100% LITERAL, OR POSSIBLY SYMBOLIC? (Looking at the text of **The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place (Rev 1:1)** [chapter & verse in bold before passage considered])

Continuing on...

- 2:20**—If this is *literally* the same Jezebel of **1 & 2 Kings**, she can still seduce men into sexual immorality and idolatry at the age of *600+*, and despite the fact that she died and was eaten by dogs centuries ago! (**2 Kings 9:30-37**) Literal or symbolic?
- 3:16**—Would Jesus *literally* vomit out the lukewarm, *literal* church members of Laodicea? And from the same *literal* mouth from which that *literal* sword also issued? Symbols!
- 3:20**—Is Christ still standing at a *literal* door and *literally* knocking? If so, *which* literal door has been knocked upon for over 1950 years? Wouldn't someone have noticed this poor man's futile knocking at the same door in the same place for 49 consecutive generations? Or is it *symbolic*?
- 5:8**—Are the golden bowls of incense *literally* the prayers of the saints? Were they *literally* formed (with a literal chemical structure) and fitted into literal bowls that *actually contained* those prayers that were turned into fragrant wisps? Or is it a *symbolic metaphor*?
- 5:11**—Did John *literally number* (*count*, or even calculate a *close estimate* of) those beings around the throne as equal to *one-hundred million PLUS* “thousands of thousands?” What *literal* count results from that description, and how did John arrive at that precise count? Or is it *symbolic*?
- 5:13**—Was *every* creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea *literally* heard saying, “Blessing and honor” etc.? If so, this would include living AND non-living creatures (*lifeless*, like rocks, air molecules, and minerals); talking AND *non*-talking creatures; etc., etc.

100% LITERAL, OR POSSIBLY SYMBOLIC? (Looking at the text of **The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place (Rev 1:1)** [chapter & verse in bold before passage considered])

Continuing on, though in the hope that the number of those who *still* take Revelation “100% literally” should already be reduced to nearly zero. [*Hope*, I said.]

6:9-10—Did John *literally SEE* souls (invisible) physically-located under a *literal* altar, and were those *bodiless souls* literally capable of vocalizing their cry without vocal cords? Symbolism!

6:12-13—Did the *literal* sun, the very *opposite* of darkness actually *become* black, and did the physical, *literal* stars (plural) of heaven—all or most of which *dwarf* our earth in size—*literally* fall to earth only, instead of knocking it out completely? *Symbolism* !

6:14-15—Was the *literal* sky (earth’s visible atmosphere) to *literally* recede/split apart, & roll up like a scroll, and was every mountain and island to be *literally* moved out of its place? And to *where* ? Or is this symbolic (see **Isa 34:4** for a strong, direct hint!) Finally, *WHAT* mountains and rocks were left to fall on *WHAT survivors* of *plural stars literally falling on earth* !? Literal or symbolic?

7:1—Were 4 angels *literally* standing at the 4 *corners* of our earth, a *rounded sphere*, and were they *literally* holding back “the four winds of the earth?” And how was John able to *literally see* these earthly details—as well as invisible angels and winds—from his vantage point in heaven? Or was *symbolism* possibly involved?

8:8—Did literally a third of “*the sea*” (which/where?) *become* blood?

8:10—Did *another* “great star” *literally* fall from heaven, only to affect *a third* of the rivers and springs of water? And why were *any* bodies of water left on a planet upon which several, larger stars had already fallen? Why were *any* men left to drink *anything*?

8:12—How is it *literally* possible that a *third* of the sun was struck, and by what? Same for a third of the stars and the moon? And only a third of “the day” did not shine? How do days *literally* shine?

- 9:16**—200 million horsemen were to *literally* amass at a single, literal, geographic location (on 200 million *horses* that required food and water to literally be there), or could some symbolism be involved, perhaps? HINT: if you happen to own a copy of *Young's Analytical Concordance*, look up "ARMAGEDDON" (p. 50 in my edition); for those of you who don't have access to it, here's what it says: "*hill of Megiddo*. A SYMBOLIC name (derived from 2 Ch. 35.22) for the scene of some great SPIRITUAL contest." [caps are mine for emphasis]. Now, almost without exception, the futurists locate the end-all mega-battle involving "the whole world" in Armageddon, based on **Rev 16:14-16**; they even call the event itself, *Armageddon*. To them, Armageddon = *the literal end* of the physical world and earth-history. Yet...what do we see? *After* this "end-all event," much more history takes place, including "the *world's* mourning" for the fall of "Babylon," Christ going forth on His white horse to conquer the beast and the false prophet, binding Satan for "a thousand years," releasing him *after that* for "a little while," and *then* finally throwing him into the lake of fire forever. So again we ask, "Literal, physical-historical, or symbolic?"
- 11:8**—This reinforces the point: "**The great city which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt** [symbolism pointing to an actual event]: ***where also our Lord was crucified.***" Note here also, that our Lord was crucified in *Jerusalem*, NOT Rome! All three symbol-names, Sodom, Egypt, and *Babylon*, ALL apply to First-Century Jerusalem, the ONLY "great city" that was destroyed since the first coming of the Messiah. Move forward in that truth!
- 12:1**—God's own Word spells this out for us: it's a *sign*. There was not a literal, *unbelievably gigantic* woman floating in space, *wearing the sun*, with the moon literally underfoot!

100% LITERAL, OR POSSIBLY SYMBOLIC? (continued)

- 12:4—Enter a *positively enormous, literal dragon* that’s so huge that its tail can sweep a *third* (there’s that proportion again) of the stars of heaven, and send them plummeting to poor ‘ol earth, which has somehow survived wave after wave of such attacks by celestial bodies thousands or millions of times its size. I must say, *physical realities* are *literally* out the window in this!
- 14:15-16—Did Christ’s literal sickle dig into the literal earth and literally reap? Literal or symbolic?
- 14:19—Did another angel thrust in *his* sickle so effectively that for a distance of *200 miles* (1600 stadia), the blood that resulted accumulated to 5 or 6 feet deep, *literally*? Think about that!
- 16:1-20—Some more *impossibly gigantic* angels literally pour out *HUGE*, literal “bowls of wrath” (what’s wrath’s chemical formula, by the way?), sufficient in size to be poured with great effect on the sun, and to dry up the great river Euphrates; literally *every* living creature in the sea dies; all rivers and springs *become* blood (not “like” blood); John again *sees spirits* (invisible like souls) looking like frogs and *literally* coming out of the mouths of the (literal?) beast and the false prophet; and once more, the *literal* armies of *literally the whole world* are all crammed together in Mount Meggido/ Armageddon, and it apparently doesn’t cross the minds of any of the “kings” assembled there that hand-to-hand combat on horseback is not the best way to win this definitive war. Bombs, anyone? From *outside*, or from *above*? How ‘bout it? [I *dare* you futurists to say it: “You don’t get it! They didn’t know about tanks and fighter jets and all that modern warfare stuff, so they just spoke in terms of how *they* understood warfare in *their* time. Look at the “scorpions” and “locusts” in **Rev 9**; *clearly* those are modern-day Cobra Helicopters! So the ancients relied on word-pictures to *symbolize* what they saw in their visions of the future, you see.”]
- [Yeah, *exactly*. Thanks for the pitch right in my wheelhouse.]

100% LITERAL, OR POSSIBLY SYMBOLIC? (continued)

17:9—Can literal heads be literal mountains, too? Is there such a thing as a 7-mountain-headed beast? Or is this a metaphor? And this woman who sits on 7 mountains—what did she eat to get to be that gargantuan? Is she the one who wears the sun?

19:15-21—Another instance of a *literal* sharp sword going out of the mouth of Christ? And an angel stands *in the sun*; is that in the third part that was struck, or in the remaining two-thirds that wobbles on?

So now we come to **Rev 20**. Must all of the symbolism that *drenches* this prophetic, *apocalyptic* book now come to a screeching halt? To suit the futurists—that they make keep their (new) traditions (**Mark 7:9**)—are we required to bring in a new hard-and-fast rule, that from chapter 20 on, everything's to be taken 100% literally? Of course not! We've been letting God tell His story His own way, and we're not gonna jump ship now! Let the *dispies* go on thinking that they know God's prophecy better than God does Himself. Let 'em alone, they're joined to idols (**Hos 4:17; Matt 15:14**, blind leading the blind into ditches).

Rev 20:2—Satan, a fallen-angel *spirit* is “bound” (how literally?) *chilia ete* (Str. 5507, 2094), in English translated as, “a thousand years.” Two questions: 1) *Could* this phrase mean a literal period of 1,000 (999 + 1) consecutive years of 360 (old Jewish) or 365 (modern) days? Answer: yes; nothing in the *language* as directly translated rules that out. 2) Does this phrase *have to* mean a literal period of 1,000 consecutive “earth-years” of 360-365 days each? Answer: no; nothing in either the immediate OR *larger context* (the whole book of Revelation) requires that interpretation, nor does the *genre*—*apocalyptic*, which takes its name from this very book—call for it. In other words, in this most highly-symbolic prophetic book (following in the traditional style of the Old Testament “seers”), are we BOUND to take this as a literal 1,000 years, and *nothing but* a literal 1,000 years? Answer: No way!

Rev 20:3—Satan is cast into a *literally* bottomless pit? If it's truly bottom-LESS, it's a deep, open-ended hole with an escape route where the bottom *should have* been. Since God is perfect in His logic, this is obviously a figure of speech: another *symbol*, not to be taken in a wooden, literal fashion. It's the same with the next mention of *chilia ete* (thousand years): was this *spirit* literally *bound*, confined to an *open-ended pit*, for a *literal 1,000-years*? OR...are the symbols of this mystery-book continuing? And the “little while” during which Satan is released after the *chilia ete*, how long would that be, exactly? About the only thing we can say with some degree of certainty is that it's a little while *in comparison* to the preceding figure; it's a *relative* term, not a definitive term.

Rev 20:4—Again, we are told that John *saw* the *souls* of those who'd been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and the word of God. Even as a *symbol*, this is hard to picture, much less as what John *literally* eyeballed. Then there's the third use of *chilia ete*, which here describes how long the martyrs would live and reign with Christ. There may be a clue in that: they aren't portrayed as living and reigning with Christ *forever*, so their “reigning” period apparently comes to an end. I take this to be parallel with their *judging the twelve tribes of Israel* in the *regeneration/transition period*, concurrent with the Parousia of Christ and the outpouring of His wrath upon unbelieving *Israel*. Note the thrones in this verse and in **Matt 19:28 & Luke 22:30**.

Rev 20:5-7—Last three times that what's translated as “a thousand years” occurs in the text of the Bible. The “rest of the dead” *live* (are resurrected to *eternal* life or *eternal* dying) *after* the thousand years; those who'd had part in the “first resurrection” (the martyrs mentioned earlier) reign *with* Christ *during* the thousand years; the thousand years *expire* (there's an end point), and then Satan is released for his “little while” before his final eternal residence in the fiery lake.

100% LITERAL, OR POSSIBLY SYMBOLIC?—THE MILLENNIUM(concl.)

I don't pretend for a minute to have the *definitive* answer to the question, "What is/was "the millennium," or the "thousand years." However, I do think we've seen demonstrated the fact that the *thousand years* might well have been used *symbolically*, in a *figurative* sense, rather than in a rigidly literal sense. We need only to review round-number passages like **Rev 5:11; 9:16; 14:19**, and all of those *one-third* references to reinforce the point. And remember, this is all in *THE Apocalypse*, the ultimate book of symbols that most resembles the OT prophetic books, where symbolism was the name of the game. If you're gonna do apocalyptic, you're gonna do it with symbols. But this doesn't mean I'm conceding defeat, letting all those symbols overwhelm me. No, some fine, industrious Bible scholars/teachers *have* put the strongest Biblical clues together to construct a plausible scenario/timetable, one to which I heartily subscribe. As *I* see things, the one man who has connected the dots better than anyone else in our time is Edward E. Stevens. It's *his* chart on the next two pages that's reproduced and included here in my book with his gracious permission. Nevertheless, the words you've read in these pages until this point—good or bad, for better or worse—have been my own, as I consciously avoided reading or listening to Ed's materials while I've been writing, just to see what I *personally* understood to be true, and how much of Stevens' thoroughly Biblical teaching had made a home in my brain. The three charts of his that I used were added "post-production." Here then, is the sequence of the crucial "time-of-the-end" events, if my view is Biblically correct:

1. *Beginning* of the millennium: the start of Christ's public ministry, AD 26 (baptized); Satan bound, first martyrs ascended with Jesus (**Eph 4**), AD 30.
2. *During* the millennium (regeneration/transition): martyred saints judging the 12 tribes of Israel along with Christ (**Matt 19:28, Luke 22:30**), as the gospel goes out into "all the world" (**Col 1:6, 23; "golden age of the Gospel"**).
3. *Ending* of the millennium: Great Tribulation for the faithful, as Satan loosed for a little while; *end* of the age, harvest of the faithful through **resurrection out of Hades** AND "the Rapture" at Christ's Parousia; general judgment begins.
4. Wrath poured out on unbelieving Jews everywhere, (**Matt 24:28**), Jerusalem and its temple destroyed, final GWT judgment. New heavens and earth arrive.

The Millennium, Resurrection, By Ed Stevens

c. 4175 BC

Creation &
Fall of Adam

26 AD

Beg. of Jesus'
Ministry

30 AD

The
Cross

Christ's
Resurrection

Christ's
Ascension

Death Reigned & Hades Held Man Captive
in a conscious waiting state just like the
parable in Luke 16:19-31 teaches.
Cf. Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4,9

Jesus binds the
strong man
Mt. 12:29; Lk.
10:18; 22:31;
Rev. 12:9; 20:2

Jesus tells folks
in Hades what
He is doing –
Lk. 23:43;
Acts 2:27, 31;
1 Pet. 3:18;
4:6; Jn. 5:25;
Eph. 4:8-10

Jesus appears
to his disciples
over 40 days
to tell them
what He is
doing— building
the Church

Adam lost access to
two things:
Life (justification/
immortality) & Fel-
lowship with God in
His presence

Two Results:
Death (condemna-
tion/ mortality) and
Hades (separation
from God's fellowship
and presence)

God promised a seed
of woman who would
crush Satan and
restore spiritual life
and fellowship with
God in His Presence
(Gen. 3:15).

Those who
believed began
receiving the right
to inherit eternal
life, but did not
have that life in
the presence of
God yet. It was
still a promise, a
down-payment
through the Spirit.
Martyrs during
the Transition Pe-
riod went to the
outer courts in
heaven to await
the resurrection
and judgment.

Jesus goes
to Hades (the
strong man's
house) and
preaches to
the righteous
being held
captive there.
Thief on cross
promised to
be in paradise
(Hades) with
Christ on that
very day.
John 5, 11
Jesus goes
to Hades and
announced
His intention to
redeem them.

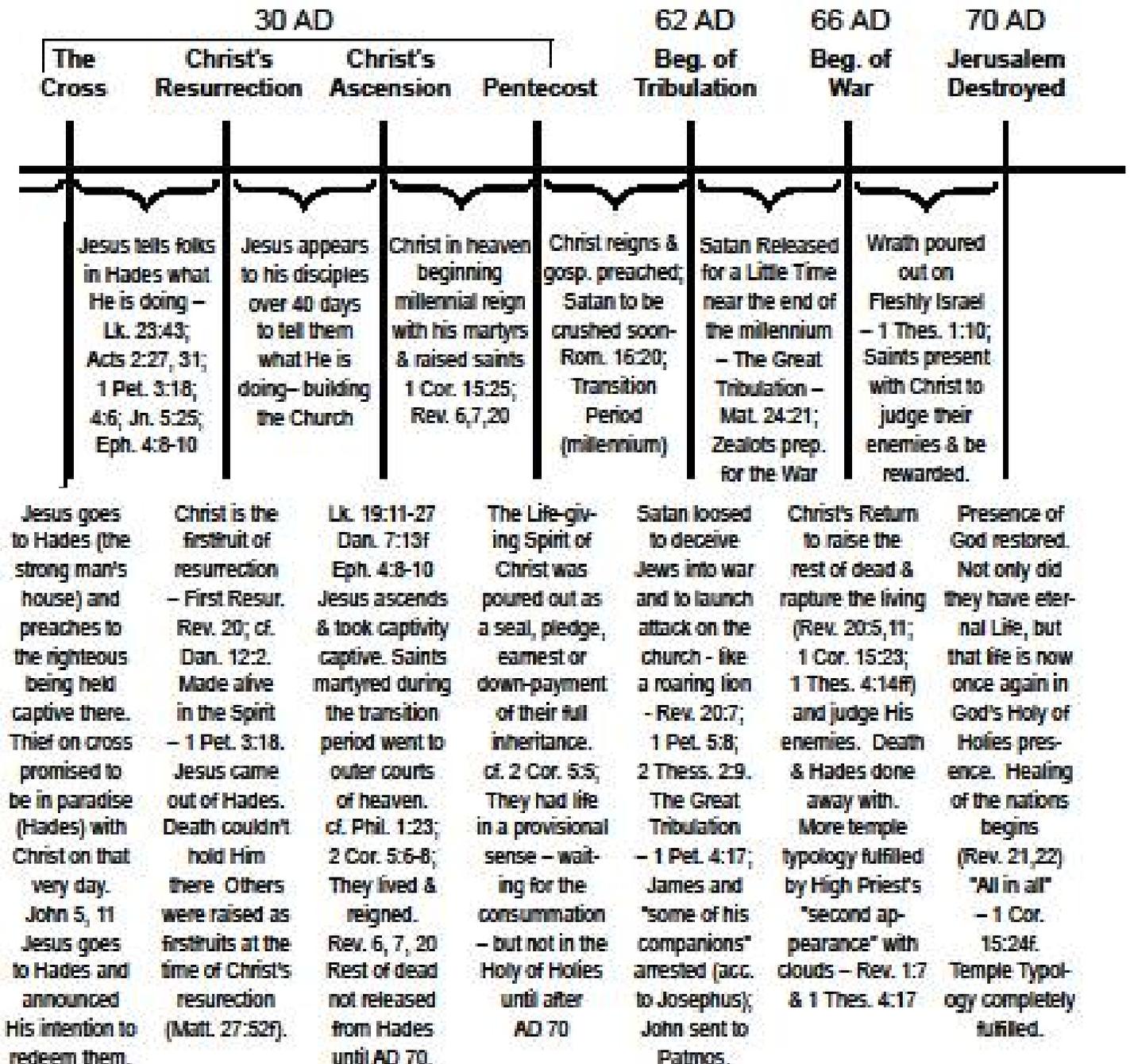
Christ is the
firstfruit of
resurrection
– First Resur.
Rev. 20; cf.
Dan. 12:2.
Made alive
in the Spirit
– 1 Pet. 3:18.
Jesus came
out of Hades.
Death couldn't
hold Him
there Others
were raised as
firstfruits at the
time of Christ's
resurrection
(Matt. 27:52f).

Lk. 19:11-27
Dan. 7:13f
Eph. 4:8-10
Jesus ascends
& took captivity
captive. Saints
martyred during
the transition
period went to
outer courts
of heaven.
cf. Phil. 1:23;
2 Cor. 5:6-8;
They lived &
reigned.
Rev. 6, 7, 20
Rest of dead
not released
from Hades
until AD 70.

The Millennium (AD 26-66)

Resurrection, Rapture & Judgment

By Ed Stevens



Millennium (AD 26-66) – Forty Year Generation

LAST WORDS ON THE MILLENNIUM

Some (many?) readers will probably continue to think that the “thousand years” can’t possibly be limited to the forty-year period we’ve proposed (AD 26-66). Well, if any lights have yet to be turned on for those readers, they’ll be turned on by God, the Holy Spirit, and not by me (in *any* case). But doubters should pause long enough to consider the fact that in God’s Word, ALL of the “Big 4” events prophesied throughout the centuries—as well as their related signs and secondary events—*cluster together* without fail. Not once do we have the inspired OT prophets or NT writers scattering them all over the historical landscape, separated by centuries, as futurists of the dispensationalist and “partial-preterist” schools are constantly doing. That they’re wrong in doing it, we can have little doubt. Their spiritual math doesn’t add up; it’s unbiblical confusion.

So moving forward in such knowledge—that even the millennium, *whatever* it means, whatever its length—fits right in with ***The Parousia***, ***The (mass-general) Resurrection*** that must directly lead to ***The mass-general-Great White Throne Judgment AT The End of the age***, we can only conclude that the *chilia etc* fits right in with those huge redemptive events in the same historical era. The millennium can no more run off and set itself up, far-removed from all of the other events that are mentioned in the same breath of The Spirit, than could the Resurrection detach itself from either the Parousia or The Judgment. All of these “last things” form a set that can’t be split apart and redistributed according to whim. And since the “thousand years” phraseology occurs *only* near the end of a symbol-laden book, it’s best to not lean on that reed for support of a scheme that disregards the rest of Scripture! The better approach is to let the *clear time-statements* of Jesus and His personally-instructed and inspired apostles do the heavy lifting, and fit the symbolic stuff *to them*. Don’t let the tail wag the dog or the inmates run the asylum. *Decently and in order* is the Biblical way (**1 Cor 14:40**).

Bottom line: I believe that the “Big 4” events all *have* taken place in the First Century AD, and that the millennium/thousand years period transpired at the same time. If that makes it a period of 40 years, so be it, and so it was. Jesus *did* say that all those things would happen to that (40-year) generation. Amen.

WHY DOES IT EVEN MATTER?

Here's how this last section began, over 50 pages ago (I quote myself):

“Would you like to be done with all the nonsense? Would you prefer to hear what Jesus Christ and His hand-picked, personally-taught, inspired Apostles and Bible writers had to say *over and against* what *uninspired*, games-playing speculators are perpetually putting forth? If so, you're in the right place. We will listen to the truth, pay attention to it, come to understand it, and move forward in it with the utmost confidence. We will search for the *whole* counsel of God (**Acts 20:27**) with respect to what's true about the “last things” (*eschatology*). The *man-made* blanks will be filled in, and indeed, the Truth will set us free (**John 8:32**).

We will take Christ at His Word without exception.”

The end-times view upon which I landed—about 15 years ago, in 1999—is the same view I can now recommend more highly than ever before. Whether this perspective is called *Full-* or *Consistent-Preterism* (“*past-in-fulfillment*”), it is, I'm convinced, *THE* Biblical perspective that gives God His due glory, principally by taking Him at His Word *without exception*. Whenever someone asks me the standard question—“Well, what's the advantage of being a Preterist?”—I immediately offer, “You can believe *everything* that Christ has said!” People will react differently to that answer, but I can't see any reason to change it; it's what I firmly believe, and let the chips fall where they may. The implications, however, for both *all-still-future* or *partially-in-the-future* proponents are easily drawn, as they float right there on the surface, and some see them clearly. It's unsettling for those professing Christians because they sense (correctly) that either *they'll have to change their view or change their Savior*.

Now why would I make an extreme, audacious statement like that?

Back on page 10 of the present work, I've said “worse.” For those of you who have faithfully soldiered on past that point (bless you!), here's what I said:

While not one individual's salvation hinges on a Preterist (past-fulfillment) view of eschatology, if that Biblical teaching is *not* true, *not one of us can be saved.*

Now, if you'll be kind enough to tell your friends to once again put their heretic-burning plans on hold for a bit, I can try to explain myself. One nice, deep breath for each of us,and now I think we're ready to go.

- + *Christ*-ians are by definition followers of Jesus Christ, right?
- + To Christians, Jesus Christ is truly God, isn't He?
- + If Jesus Christ IS truly God, can He ever lie? God's Word tells us that He can't (**Num 23:19; Heb 6:18; Titus 1:2**, etc.).
- + If Jesus Christ can NOT lie and still be God—and true Christians have no doubt that He *IS* God (*always*)—is it even possible that He has *ever* lied about anything? (True Christians must say that He has never lied or deceived).
- + If Jesus Christ, true God, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit in perfection and attributes, knows all things and speaks only Truth, is there any reason whatsoever for His *Christ*-ian followers to doubt Him (about *anything*?) THIS IS THE FORK IN THE ROAD, SO RE-READ IF NECESSARY & MAKE THE CHRIST-HONORING, RESPONSIBLE CHOICE!
- + Our sinless, ever-truth-telling Savior made some unmistakably clear statements about the timing of His return in the glory of His Father (*with* the angels), the resurrection of the dead to the all-nations judgment, and the destruction of both the generation of Jews that personally rejected and murdered Him and their temple...*ALL* at the end of the age, within *that* era.
- + If Jesus Christ had lied, spoken deceptively, or spoken in ignorance *at any time on any subject*, He would have proved Himself to be an *imperfect*, run-of-the-mill sinner, and *unqualified* to be the Holy Redeemer of *anyone*! Faith in a deceiver is worthless!
- + The “last days” to which Jesus AND the God-inspired NT writers *all* pointed are either in the past or we've been lied to by “God.”

I hope one and all can now see that eschatology *certainly does matter*. A person's view of the last things is intimately tied to his or her view of *soteriology*, which just means "doctrine or theology of *salvation*." So the central message of the Bible—that God has graciously provided **salvation** from the power and guilt of sin and sin's justly-deserved penalties (death and inevitable *eternal* destruction) for all of those who are *IN CHRIST*, who trust in Him and His perfect work alone—***hinges completely on Christ, the God-man who could not and did not lie***. There is no other name (*the Christ, the Messiah*) under heaven by which men *must* be saved (**Acts 4:12**), and that Messiah had to have told *only* the truth to be true God as well as true man. And this most certainly does apply to anything and everything that Christ said about the last things (eschatology).

CONSIDER THE HUGE RAMIFICATIONS

Think along with me for a moment. What do all Christian futurists have in common with Jews, Muslims, "other-religionists," and atheists? Yes, you guessed it: none of them believe that Christ's "Second Coming" has occurred to date. *AND...none* of those people are taking God completely at His own Word. A QUICK WORD OF CAUTION to you oxymoronic "*partial*-preterists" who take pleasure in calling *actual* preterists "hyper-preterists": put those stones down and calm yourselves. Let's define our terms, so we all know what we're talking about. A "preterist" is one who believes that *all* Biblical prophecy *has been fulfilled*, and that it was *all* fulfilled by AD 70, when the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed; that was the point of consummation and culmination, ***THE END-POINT*** towards which all Bible prophecy was directed. For all true preterists, "past-in-fulfillment" is the central, immovable tenet. All those who hold in reserve *even one* of the prophesied redemptive events must wear the label of "futurist." That just makes sense. But to any "partial-pret," I say, "Feel free to come on over to the Truth." Leave the ranks of the doubting and unbelieving and *totally* embrace Christ.

In the next several pages, the views and ramifications of *all* futurists and *all futurism* are compared side-by-side with the views of true preterists and the ramifications of preterism. Again: the contrast is between unfulfilled and already-fulfilled Bible prophecy and between doubting God and believing Him entirely.

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
We're still living in the first age "that now is"	The age to come	The everlasting "age to come" has arrived
Still unconquered by Christ; assumption that someday people <i>on earth</i> won't die	Death, the last enemy	Christ destroyed its power over all who are in Him; the way to Heaven fully cleared
The physical universe is still headed for fiery destruction	The End	The end of <i>the age</i> (AD 70), and never the world itself
Will be fulfilled when every nation (or person) in our modern world has been reached by the gospel (right before the end of the world)	"Great Commission"	Fulfilled by those to whom it was assigned (by Jesus to His chosen, eyewitness, Spiritually-gifted disciples), in the Roman empire, by AD 63
Still in our future, for both believers and unbelievers (probably 7-years worth)	"Great Tribulation" and "wrath poured out"	Tribulation-persecution for Christians: AD 62-66; Wrath on the Jews: 66-70
Still future, at the end of time/the world, or both	"Great White Throne" Judgment	12 thrones set up along with Christ's: AD 30-70? Christ only, final Judge: AD 70
Still in business as the place where departed spirits go, (<i>not</i> Heaven) since death and Hades haven't been thrown into the lake of fire, and the GWT Judgment has yet to take place (Rev 20)	Hades (Gr.)/ Sheol (Heb.)	Was abolished and figuratively thrown into the lake of fire, along with Death (Rev 20:13-15) in AD 70; Christians since go directly to Heaven at death, when they receive <i>spiritual</i> bodies

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>He's still coming, though he was already at work in AD 52! (2 Thes 2:7)</p> <p>Literal 1000 years; may have started, or maybe all still in the future; (<i>amillennialists</i> ignore it entirely)</p> <p>Physical Earth—even the whole universe (“<i>heavens</i>,” plural)—will be literally destroyed by fire; new literal, physical heavenly bodies (stars) will replace them; the new Earth will be filled with righteous people only who will never sin or die</p> <p>Still hasn't come down and been established; some hold that it is a <i>literal</i>, under-construction “mothership-type” kingdom in space</p> <p>Satan and all the powers of darkness still reign, all unconquered by Christ; “the strong man's” binding hasn't happened yet; the roaring lion is still prowling freely</p>	<p>“Man of sin” (or “lawlessness”)</p> <p>The Millennium</p> <p>New heavens and a new earth</p> <p>New Jerusalem</p> <p>Prince/ruler of this world— John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; Eph 2:2, 6:12</p>	<p>A Jewish Zealot who actually sat in the temple as God, AD 66-70 (2 Thes 2:1-12)</p> <p>Symbolic period of time, more like “golden years,” but certainly in the past (AD 26-66?)</p> <p>The OT “heavens and earth” <i>system/order</i> did pass away finally in AD 70; the <i>elements WERE</i> dissolved in the sense that the Bible intended: principles/rudiments/system building-blocks (Gal 4:3, 9; Col 2:8, 20; Heb 5:12)</p> <p>The restored, consummated kingdom which Christ delivered to the Father in AD 70, in which righteousness dwells (in all God's children)</p> <p>“The strong man” <i>WAS</i> bound at the start of the millennium, released for awhile at its end, finally defeated in AD 70; Christ indeed reigns now, and for eternity</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>Still-future to us, which means that there are necessarily some <i>very ancient</i> (2,000+ year-old) Jews who haven't yet "tasted death"</p> <p>The most hoped-for, <i>event-of-all events</i>, diminishing even the Resurrection's importance in our present era ("<i>THE</i> blessed Hope")</p> <p><i>Will</i> be the raising of <i>all physical bodies</i> to final, end-of-time or end-of-physical-earth judgment of souls reunited with their old bodies</p> <p>No change in meaning; it is today what it always was supposed to be (see above) [presents problem of false hopes given at graveside, since Heaven's not yet open for eternal residents in spiritual, heavenly bodies, 1 Cor 15, but <i>Hades</i> is still open]</p> <p>No savior; God misled us</p>	<p>The Parousia/Return of Christ in the glory of His Father, and with His angels</p> <p>"The Rapture" (catching-up)</p> <p>The Resurrection (event)</p> <p>Resurrection, since mid-66 AD</p> <p>The Savior</p>	<p>Christ <i>HAS</i> returned, some standing there in AD 30 lived to see it (Matt 16:27-28), and the age-ending Harvest and Judgment also took place</p> <p><i>DID</i> take place at the time-of-the-end Harvest, in conjunction with the Resurrection (mid-66 AD); explains silence of the church, 70+</p> <p><i>Was</i> the one-time raising out of (emptying of) Hades/Sheol of all departed, disembodied spirits as of mid-66 AD; now a long-past <i>event</i></p> <p>Resurrection was <i>out of Hades</i> (no longer applicable, since Hades no longer exists); believers since then go straight to Heaven, without ever residing in Hades; great news, Christians!— Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on [since the Resurrection out of Hades]—Rev 14:13</p> <p>Faithful, True, the King</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>Kingdom of heaven <i>still</i> “at hand”; “wrath <i>about to come</i>” hasn’t arrived, 1,988 years later; ax of judgment <i>still</i> “laid at the root of the trees”; “winnowing fan” in Christ’s hand has <i>not yet been put to use</i>, the gathering has <i>not</i> occurred; (“Partial Prets”—PPs from here on—will inconsistently say that Christ has returned in <i>A</i> judgment in AD 70, but it wasn’t <i>THE</i> “Second Coming”/Parousia)</p>	<p>Matt 3:2-12; Luke 3:7-17 (AD 26); see also 1 Thes 1:10 (written AD 52): “Jesus, who delivers <i>US</i> from the wrath to come”</p>	<p>The kingdom of heaven was only “at hand” <i>then</i>, at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus; the leading edge could already be seen, but proclaiming/preaching the kingdom, as Paul was still doing at the end of his life (Acts 28:31), had yet to be done until the <i>inaugurated</i> (“kicked-off”) kingdom became the <i>consummated</i> kingdom (Rev 11:15) in “August” (by our current calendars), AD 70</p>
<p>Jesus apparently spoke in ignorance about the kingdom being “at hand”; or it had nothing to do with the last things (eschatology)</p>	<p>Matt 4:17 & 10:7 (c. AD 26)</p>	<p>Jesus <i>knew</i> the kingdom was “at hand” and told the people of the First Century that it was; Jesus was well-versed in the OT kingdom prophecies</p>
<p>Jesus merely meant that on this training mission, those He sent out wouldn’t be able to cover all the cities of AD 26-27 Israel before He’d meet up with them again; no eschatological significance in this whatsoever [disregards the context, verses 17-22]</p>	<p>Matt 10:23 (AD 26 or 27?)</p>	<p>Jesus meant that when those disciples went out <i>in earnest after</i> receiving the “Great Commission,” and <i>after</i> He’d ascended, His return to earth (coming) would occur before they could <i>personally</i> cover all the cities of Israel (see v. 17-22 for context)</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>The “age to come” hasn’t come yet, OR it refers to life in Heaven, as the “<i>world</i> to come,” making blasphemy against the Holy Spirit possible <i>in Heaven!</i></p>	<p>Matt 12:32 (AD 26-30)</p>	<p>Jesus was definitely speaking of the <i>AGE</i> to come, and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would still be possible <i>on earth</i> in that new age, though never in Heaven</p>
<p>At least two (“some”) of the very people to whom Christ spoke (around AD 30) are still alive (!), since the Son of Man has yet to return with His angels to reward (judge) each man, and come in/into His kingdom</p>	<p>Matt 16:27-28; Mark 8:38-9:1; Luke 9:26-27 (AD 26-30)</p>	<p>At least two of that gathering of Christ’s disciples (a group that numbered more than 12, see Mark 8:34), lived long enough to <i>see</i>: the Son of Man coming in His kingdom/the kingdom of God present with power</p>
<p>The kingdom of God has <i>NOT</i> been taken from the “adulterous/evil/faithless/perverse/wicked generation” (<i>Christ</i> thus labeled it, all of those are <i>His</i> terms) 1st C. Israel and given to another <i>holy</i> nation (1 Pet 2:9)</p>	<p>Matt 21:40-45; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19 (AD 26-30)</p>	<p>Those chief priests and Pharisees <i>knew</i> that the Parables of the Wicked Vinedressers and of The Two Sons had been about them (21:45), and that sweeping judgment was in <i>their</i> near future; and so it was, AD 66-70</p>
<p>“All the righteous blood shed on the earth,” from Abel to Zechariah, etc. has <i>still NOT</i> come upon <i>THAT</i> generation of 1st C. unbelieving Israel; Jesus made idle threats</p>	<p>Matt 23:35-36; Luke 11:50-51 (AD 30)</p>	<p>The martyred saints (mostly Jewish, First-Century believers, who were murdered by the First-Century <i>unbelieving</i> Jews) <i>WERE</i> avenged in AD 66-70—see Luke 18:8</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>Since the gospel has obviously not yet been literally preached “in all the world”—much less to “every creature”—the “end” that would follow in fulfillment of Christ’s prediction is still-future; if no “end” (of the age, world, or time) has come, Jesus was way off, poignantly ignorant of realities, and a misleader</p>	<p>Matt 24:14 (AD 30)</p>	<p>The inspired Apostle Paul, following-up on another of Christ’s unfailing predictions: “<i>You</i> [specific plural] <i>shall</i> be My witnesses...to the end [farthest reaches] of the earth,” (Acts 1:8), wrote that by AD 63, the gospel <i>had</i> gone out into the entire Roman empire/ habitable world (Gr. <i>oikoumene</i>)</p>
<p>Every specific “YOU” in this passage means nothing because all of those people to whom He was speaking are long, long gone; same goes for escaping Judea by leaping from housetop to housetop, and all the other geographic-/time-specific details; Jesus wasted His breath on people who wouldn’t experience any of the things discussed</p>	<p>Matt 24:15-34 (AD 30)</p>	<p>Those geo-specific and time-specific clues all point to a certain place and time, and the several specific-plural forms of “you” (equivalent to “You, yourselves,” or “You very individuals”—Gr. <i>humeis, humin, humon</i>, Str. 5210, 5213, 5216) effectively <i>narrow down</i> potential participants to this very group of people addressed</p>
<p><i>None</i> of these things has taken place; here again, PPs are inconsistent, since they want to separate the resurrection and the <i>real</i> “Second Coming” from AD 66-70</p>	<p>Matt 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32 (AD 30)</p>	<p><i>All</i> of these things <i>have</i> taken place; Christ answered their questions carefully and honestly, and warned those who <i>needed</i> to be warned; all came true just as He said</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>Some will trot out the claim that Christ’s prediction was aimed individually at Caiaphas, and the historical record seems to prove that he died several years short of AD 66; that he died when they say he died is not in dispute; <i>BUT</i>...when a literal translation or interlinear Bible like Jay P. Green’s is consulted, the fact that the “you” is <i>plural</i> emerges immediately; nevertheless, if the futurists <i>are</i> right that Jesus flubbed this prediction (in addition to a whole raft of others), he was only a mistaken, deluded, ignorant man, savior of none</p>	<p>Matt 26:64 (AD 30)</p>	<p><i>Another</i> “you, yourselves” (Gr. <i>humin</i>, Str. 5213) applies here to the whole Sanhedrin assembly (not just Caiaphas); some of those present there in AD 30 <i>did</i> live to see what Jesus predicted they’d see; by the way, it’s impossible for this to be still-future for a very simple reason: the Sanhedrin no longer exists— “The political Sanhedrin <i>perished</i> after the destruction of the Temple in <i>A.D. 70</i> , but the religious Sanhedrin continued as the <i>rabbinic</i> patriarchate <i>until</i> about <i>A.D. 425</i>.” [from Microsoft Bookshelf 1997, italics mine for emphasis]</p>
<p>The time was <i>NOT</i> fulfilled, and the kingdom of God was <i>NOT</i> “at hand”; it had <i>NOT</i> drawn near, so why should anyone repent and believe <i>anything</i> that this obviously-false prophet had to say? Repent of what? Believe in whom? What kingdom? We see no kingdom, even now!</p>	<p>Mark 1:15 (AD 26)</p>	<p>“The time” <i>had</i> arrived for the kingdom of God to start manifesting itself; it <i>was</i> (then, already) near and at hand, and the <i>sense of urgency</i> in these first recorded words of Jesus in Mark’s gospel account is unmistakable; it was now or never for First C. folks!</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>The Days of Vengeance haven't occurred, so "all things which are written" are still not fulfilled, 1,984 years later and counting; (PPs say the Days of Vengeance maybe happened in AD 66-70, but <i>not ALL</i> prophecies (things which are written) have been fulfilled so far)</p>	<p>Luke 21:22 (AD 30)</p>	<p>Look at Daniel's prophecies for/about the "time of the end" in Dan 9:24-27 and check 'em off your checklist; armed (now, hopefully) with a proper understanding of the era in view, just what is left that hasn't happened? Compare Scripture with itself, receive it, believe it</p>
<p>Jesus was again mistaken; He told the "daughters of [First-Century] Jerusalem" to weep <i>for themselves and their children</i> because of what was in store for <i>them</i>, but all of that bad stuff wasn't going to happen to <i>them</i>, after all; Jesus was off by 50 or more generations, that's all</p>	<p>Luke 23:28-30 (AD 30) & see Rev 6:14-17 (AD 62-63)</p>	<p>Christians who take Christ at His word in every instance believe that here, too, He knew what He was talking about. Compare Matt 23:37-38—just which house was going to be left desolate? Jerusalem of <i>His</i> (that) generation, which did all that prophet-killing and stoning!</p>
<p>Satan still rules this world, and he hasn't been cast out</p>	<p>John 12:31 (AD 26-30)</p>	<p>Satan <i>has</i> been cast out, and resides in the lake of fire</p>
<p>When Jesus said He'd return to <i>them</i>, He really meant <i>us</i>; He was just lettin' 'em down easy, in a way, with what turned out to be false hope</p>	<p>John 14:2-3, 18 (AD 26-30)</p>	<p>Jesus prepared those heavenly places and returned right on schedule to take them home, as was promised to <i>them</i> (1st C. believers)</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>No chance for consistency here, since we know that John <i>did</i> die before the end of the <i>First C. AD</i> in <i>any</i> scenario (died c. 63, as prets say, or c.96, as futurists say); those who take this to mean that he <i>would</i> survive until the (second) coming of Christ have a real problem: he's around 2,000 years old!</p>	<p>John 21:22 (AD 30)</p>	<p>Point of the passage is that there was a <i>possibility</i> of John's living until Christ's return, so it couldn't have been hundreds of years off! Also, it limits the time frame to the <i>end of the First C. anyway</i>, which would've been the time that John had been "caught up" if he <i>didn't</i> die by AD 96 at the latest.</p>
<p>Peter, like his Teacher, got it wrong; the "last days" envisioned by the prophet Joel were far off in the future, and not happening then</p>	<p>Acts 2:16-17 (AD 30, Pentecost)</p>	<p>Peter spoke by inspiration when he connected Joel's "last days" prophecy to his own, First-Century time; like his Teacher, he was right</p>
<p>The times of refreshing/reconstitution/restoration (when Jesus would return from Heaven) still-future; "these days" meaningless</p>	<p>Acts 3:19-24 (same)</p>	<p>Weymouth's <i>New Testament in Modern Speech</i> & notes quite helpful here; times of refreshing=when all things made new (Rev 21:5)</p>
<p>"He <i>will</i> judge the world"; "There <i>will/shall be</i> a resurrection of the dead"; "The judgment to come"; no time indicators whatsoever, so these could happen <i>any</i> time in the future</p>	<p>Acts 17:31; 24:15, 25 (late 50's-early 60's AD) 3 uses of Gr. <i>mello</i>, Str. 3195</p>	<p>"He is <i>about to</i> judge the world"; "There is <i>about to be</i> a resurrection of the dead"; "The judgment <i>about to</i> come"; <i>imminency</i> (near AD 60 or so) consistently expressed for these events</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>Paul was engaging in wishful thinking, and was just as mistaken as Jesus and Peter about the timing of the Resurrection-Rapture</p>	<p>1 Thes 4:15-17 (AD 51-52): “we who are alive and remain”[read: <i>those of us</i> who...]</p>	<p>Paul was right, speaking by the Holy Spirit’s inspiration like Peter; his “we” does not necessarily include himself (which he <i>later</i> understood)</p>
<p>First C. folks weren’t in danger of being overtaken by “this Day” [of the Lord] as a thief; they weren’t appointed to “wrath,” but they weren’t close to “obtaining salvation” either; Paul’s wish for his First C. contemporary brethren to be preserved blameless, <i>spirit, soul, and BODY</i> until the <i>parousia</i> was just simply misplaced</p>	<p>1 Thes 5:4, 9, 23 (AD 51 or 52)</p>	<p>Paul had a very good reason for warning the very people he warned; many of his contemporaries would be around 14 or 15 years later when <i>that Day</i> of the Lord <i>would</i> arrive like a thief in the night (Matt 24:43); at <i>that</i> time, salvation <i>was</i> truly obtained, because until then (AD 66-70), redemption lacked the final stage</p>
<p>No particular group of Christians or time is in view; believers are <i>always</i> being troubled, and it’s worse today than ever; <i>we</i> (now) deserve to have Christ repay <i>our</i> troublers and give <i>us</i> rest when He finally does come with His angels and fire, taking vengeance on the evil people who beat us in their synagogues, etc. [hello?]</p>	<p>2 Thes 1:6-7 (AD 52)</p>	<p>No generation of Christians has suffered or <i>ever will</i> suffer as much as that <i>first</i> one; they were zealously persecuted by the rabid, unbelieving Jews <i>AND</i> the Roman Empire under Nero, who found in them a scapegoat; they were <i>instant strangers</i> within their own communities upon conversion; The Parousia rescued <i>them</i></p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>See?! This demonic dude <i>IS</i> already at work, <i>present tense</i> ! That means he’s alive somewhere on earth <i>right now</i> ! <i>Now</i> do you believe us that <i>these</i> are the last days? He’s out there <i>now</i> !</p>	<p>2 Thes 2:7 (AD 52) mystery of lawlessness/man of sin already at work</p>	<p>This real letter to real people was written, sent, and received in the <i>First Century AD</i>! Whoever he was, he came, did his damage, and was destroyed, <i>all</i> in that same century, <i>far removed</i> !</p>
<p>The time <i>wasn’t</i> short, but very, very, <i>ve-e-r-r-ry</i> long; “the form of this world” is <i>still</i> passing away, 1,957 years past Paul’s letter</p>	<p>1 Cor 7:29, 31 (AD 57)</p>	<p>Paul was advising folks to <i>not</i> get married/remarried <i>only</i> because the harsh times of great tribulation were so near to them in AD 57</p>
<p>The ends (meeting-points) of the ages were coming together already then, but have managed to stay apart for 1,957 years and counting</p>	<p>1 Cor 10:11 (AD 57) ends (Gr. <i>tele</i>, Str. 5056, <i>furthest</i>, plural form) of the ages (see Str. 165)</p>	<p>The <i>tail-end</i> of the age that <i>was</i> was receding from view as the <i>front-end</i> of the age that was to come (ours) was coming into view in AD 57</p>
<p>It’s really sad how mistaken Paul was: no raising of the dead, change of the living, or the last trumpet anywhere in sight for another 2,000 years</p>	<p>1 Cor 15:51-52 (AD 57)</p>	<p>It’s really sad how professing Christians can throw out the God-breathed testimony of the Apostle Paul as if it were fish-wrap; <i>he was right</i> !</p>
<p>There goes Paul again, misleading those poor First C. Christians into thinking that adoption, the redemption of their bodies, was close</p>	<p>Rom 8:19, 23 (AD 58) “eagerly expecting”</p>	<p>Paul was never one to spread false sunshine; <i>genuine</i> hope, yes, but false hopes?—never! Paul spoke truthfully by God’s inspiration. Amen!</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>Once again, Paul was mistaken; it <i>wasn't</i> high time to wake up and fly right after all, so go ahead and sleep in, First C. believers, the Day is still 2,000 years away</p>	<p>Rom 13:11-12 (AD 58)</p>	<p>Paul <i>did know the time</i>, and he was acting as the good watchman that Christ expected him to be; the night <i>was</i> far spent, and The Day <i>did</i> arrive soon (AD 66-70)</p>
<p>The God of peace was obviously delayed, since He hasn't yet crushed Satan, but He's still gonna crush him under <i>our</i> ("Church age") feet, sometime soon</p>	<p>Rom 16:20, 26 (AD 58)</p>	<p>"Shortly" in relation to AD 58 could easily mean 8-12 years (AD 66-70), but not AD 2014+! The God of peace <i>did</i> crush Satan under <i>their</i> [First C.] feet"</p>
<p>The world-order is <i>still</i> passing away, and the many antichrists that were already in the world <i>THEN</i> are still in the world today in this "last hour" that's lasted over <i>17 million hours</i> & counting!</p>	<p>1 Jn 2:17-18 & 4:3 (AD 61 or 62) <NOTE THIS!></p>	<p>The specific antichrists of which Jesus spoke (Matt 24:5, 23-24) were there—on schedule—in the First C. AD. The "last hour," while figurative, pertained to <i>John's</i> era, not ours!</p>
<p>Behave as ones who <i>will</i> be judged (no time factor)</p>	<p>Jas 2:12 (AD 61 or 62)</p>	<p>Ones who are <i>about to be</i> judged (<i>mello</i>, Str. 3195)</p>
<p>"The last days" are completely open-ended</p>	<p>Jas 5:3 (AD 61 or 62)</p>	<p>"The last days" came (then) and went (AD 70)</p>
<p>The coming of the Lord was <i>not</i> at hand, and the Judge is <i>still</i> standing at the door</p>	<p>Jas 5:7-9 (61/62)</p>	<p>The coming (<i>Parousia</i>) of the Lord <i>AND</i> His judgment happened, AD 66-70</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>That “age to come” never came; we’re still in the first age; it was never superceded</p>	<p>Eph 1:21 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>The age <i>about to come</i>, or <i>the soon-coming age</i> DID come (Gr. <i>mello</i> here, too)</p>
<p>The Lord is <i>always</i> at hand; no last-things significance</p>	<p>Phil 4:5 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>See context: 3:20-21—they were <i>eagerly waiting for Him</i></p>
<p>Paul, as was so often the case, got it wrong; the gospel must still go out into all the world <i>today</i> to match Christ’s commands and the Great Commission</p>	<p>Col 1:6, 23 (AD 62 or 63) see also Rom 10:18, Acts 1:8</p>	<p>In Acts 1:8, <i>Christ</i> predicted that <i>they</i>—in the First C. AD—would accomplish what He’d commissioned them to do; Paul <i>witnessed</i> that historic fulfillment</p>
<p>“In these last days” means from about AD 30 until our time and beyond, if necessary; never mind that it means the last days have lasted longer now than the whole Mosaic/OT/Jewish dispensation era!</p>	<p>Heb 1:1-2, 14 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>In <i>those</i> last days, believers were <i>about to (mello) inherit salvation</i> (v. 14); they did; salvation/redemption was brought into fullness/completion/consummation as the climax of Christ’s Parousia in AD 66-70</p>
<p>A coming age (eventually)</p>	<p>Heb 6:5 (62/63)</p>	<p>A <i>soon-coming (mello) age</i></p>
<p>The old covenant and age are <i>still growing old</i> and becoming obsolete, even though they were ready to vanish away and had nearly disappeared by AD 63</p>	<p>Heb 8:13 (62/63)</p>	<p>“Ready [Gr. <i>eggus</i>, Str. 1451, <i>near/nigh/ready</i>] to vanish away” in AD 63 <i>means</i> just that; the OT/Old Covenant system/age/world-order became totally obsolete</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>The fact that the tabernacle (the Jerusalem temple) is <i>NOT</i> still standing means nothing because Christ has <i>not yet</i> replaced it with Himself and the priesthood of all believers [the “good things to come” and the “time of reformation” are still on their way, 1,951 years after this letter, in which those good things were said to be <i>soon-coming</i>—Gr. <i>mello</i> , Str. 3195, is in the original text <i>again</i> ! this leaves <i>MUCH</i> unexplained!]</p>	<p>Heb 9:8-11 & 10:1 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>The tabernacle through which all OT/Jewish worship was mediated <i>has</i> been replaced by the <i>true, living Tabernacle/Temple</i> (<i>not</i> man-made), which is Christ, the chief cornerstone, and the living stones (believers)—1 Pet 2; “time of reformation” is another synonym for the transition of the ages/regeneration/restoration/restitution/time of refreshing, when all things <i>were</i> made new, AD 66-70</p>
<p>The ends/completion/consummation of the ages were only said to be “now” (then, in AD 63), but <i>we</i> know that wasn’t the case; Christ has yet to appear a second time to those expecting/eagerly awaiting Him for salvation back then; it’s all about <i>us</i> [salvation’s not yet complete]</p>	<p>Heb 9:26-28 (AD 62/63)</p>	<p>How many times did the NT recorders of God-breathed words have to write that the ages met and changed places way back there in the First C. AD? If, without exception, they pointed to a time that was <i>close to them</i>, it means it <i>was</i> indeed close! Salvation <i>is</i> complete!</p>
<p>To be used as a hammer to enforce church-attendance, especially because “the Day” (of the Lord) is <i>still</i> coming</p>	<p>Heb 10:25 (AD 63, when many Christians still met <i>in synagogues</i>)</p>	<p>“Assembling” (English)=Gr. <i>episunagoge</i>, Str. 1997, from which <i>synagogue</i> is derived; <i>THE Daydid</i> arrive, 66-70</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>All of these personal ties and knowledge between letter-writer and recipients and all the time-specific references mean nothing; the Lord <i>has</i> tarried, and that's all there is to it; our modern teachers are right, and the NT writers and Christ were all wrong</p>	<p>Heb 10:32-39, especially 37 (AD 62 or 63)</p> <p>tarry/delay?</p>	<p>If the inspired writer of this letter to the Hebrews (and how many folks <i>today</i> are called, <i>Hebrews</i>, by the way?)—I believe it was Paul—had it from the “mouth” of the Holy Spirit that the Lord would <i>NOT</i> tarry, then <i>He..did..not!</i></p>
<p>We don't seek a continuing city here, but one coming (eventually/“whenever”)</p>	<p>Heb 13:14 (62/63)</p>	<p>They didn't seek a continuing city then, because the <i>soon-coming (mello) city came</i></p>
<p>Despite the fact that <i>God</i> the Father gave this Revelation to His Son, Jesus Christ, “to show His servants things which must <i>shortly</i> take place,” and the time was near (then, in AD 63), all the prophecies of the 22 chapters have not yet taken place; it's probably because God doesn't understand time like we do, or maybe He was forced to change His plans because of unforeseen resistance/unbelief from the nation of Israel [buy one blasphemy, get one free]</p>	<p>Rev 1:1-3 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>God the Father can not lie, His Son, the God-man can not lie, and those who wrote/recorded God-supplied words and visions <i>while under the inspiration of God, the Holy Spirit</i>, can not lie; while God is outside of time, who do you suppose <i>created it?</i> If anyone understands time <i>AND</i> how it's understood by humans <i>He</i> created, it's the <i>omniscient God</i> who gave this revelation (<i>uncovering</i>) to His servants whom He loves; “near” was near; <i>all took place shortly after</i></p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>We today—1,951 years later—should still be holding fast with our contemporary brethren in Thyatira—in not following that “Jezebel” among us (verses 18-23)—until the Lord comes (after He’s done tarrying); if <i>we</i> make it to the <i>end of the world</i>, we’ll rule over nations <i>in it</i> [please think about this; does this make sense?]</p>	<p>Rev 2:24-26 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>Christ held out a promise to whoever would remain faithful among the <i>First C. church of Thyatira</i> (does it still exist?) <i>until He came</i>; since He who is Faithful and True (Rev 19:11) extended a real promise, conditioned by <i>their</i> personal responses in faith in <i>their own lifetimes</i>, we know that <i>His coming happened then</i></p>
<p>See? That “hour of temptation/trial, which shall come upon the <i>whole world</i>” hasn’t come yet! He is <i>still</i> “coming quickly,” which only means that when He finally <i>does</i> come, He’ll do it quickly; <i>we</i> just have to hold fast to <i>our</i> crowns until then! And that church in Philadelphia is not meant to be a specific church in Asia in First-Century history, but a symbol of all faithful churches throughout history; it’s open-ended [one way or another, this whole book was written <i>for us</i> and <i>to us</i></p>	<p>Rev 3:10-11 (AD 62/63)</p>	<p>The hour of temptation/trial was <i>about to come</i> (Str. 3195 yet again!) upon the <i>habitable earth</i>/First C. <i>Roman empire</i> (Gr. <i>oikoumene</i>, Str. 3625, is also used here <i>again</i>), and, in “I am coming quickly,” the Greek word translated as <i>quickly</i> is Str. 5035, <i>tachu: without delay/soon</i>; same root as <i>tachei</i> in Luke 18:8, Str. 5034—<i>speedily</i> (“He will avenge them [martyrs, at His coming] speedily”); audience relevance and historical context can’t be ignored if we want to understand the Bible</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>He was to (eventually) rule all nations, but He doesn't yet, as of AD 2014</p> <p>All of these passages are to be taken with a grain of salt as exaggerations of the guilt of ancient Jerusalem and First-Century Jews; true prophets are <i>still</i> being killed today "outside of Jerusalem" all the time, and the deaths of Abel, Zechariah, and Jesus Himself really have nothing to do with 1st C. Jerusalem; <i>today's</i> prophets are obviously intended, so <i>they</i> are endangered by Jerusalem</p> <p>"Things which must shortly take place?" Yes, in <i>our</i> day"; "Behold, I am coming quickly?" Yes, in <i>our</i> day!</p> <p>"Do not seal" actually means "DO seal"; fulfillment of this prophecy-set was <i>obviously</i> a long way off, and still may be; yes, we must let the "unjust" and "filthy" go on in their sin as long as it takes</p>	<p>Rev 12:5 (AD 62 or 63)</p> <p>Rev 18:24 & 11:8, 16:6, 17:6 (AD 62/63) also see Matt 23:29-38 & Luke 13:33</p> <p>Rev 22:6-7 (AD 62/63)</p> <p>Rev 22:10-11 (AD 62/63)</p>	<p>He was <i>about to/soon going to (mello)</i> rule all nations, so He did and He does now</p> <p><i>All</i> Scriptural fingers point to <i>THE</i> spillers of all the righteous blood shed on the earth to that point in time (<i>that</i> First C. generation); that's according to <i>God</i>, remember! It was Jesus who said that it wasn't possible for anyone other than the inhabitants of ancient Jerusalem to kill <i>His... true...</i> prophets! No true prophets now in the <i>Biblical</i> sense, and the true prophets <i>have been</i> avenged</p> <p>God said "shortly" and "quickly," so shortly and quickly it <i>was</i>, in relation to AD 62 or 63, not 2014!</p> <p><i>Daniel</i> (6th C. BC) was told to seal <i>his</i> prophecy, since it was to see fulfillment in the far-distant future; John (1st C. AD) was told the <i>opposite</i> because all was <i>close</i>; the unjust/filthy <i>were</i> judged</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me,” but if I “tarry” it could mean that justice (reward) will just have to be delayed for quite a while</p>	<p>Rev 22:12 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>Christ <i>did</i> come quickly (inside of <i>4 years</i> from this Revelation), and the martyrs <i>were</i> avenged only “a little while” after they cried out for justice (Rev 6:9-11)</p>
<p>He who testified to these things misled us; he wasn’t coming quickly after all</p>	<p>Rev 22:20 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>He who testified in absolute truth <i>did</i> come quickly, <i>soon after AD 63</i> , in AD 66</p>
<p>“Blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing” says nothing about <i>when</i> He would appear (come again), especially since v. 15 says He’d do it in “His own time”</p>	<p>1 Tim 6:14, 19 (AD 63)</p>	<p>In a real letter to a real 1st C. Timothy, Paul urged <i>him</i> to fight the good fight of faith, so <i>he</i> could be found blameless <i>when</i> Christ appeared again (the <i>soon</i>-coming age)</p>
<p>“Kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” means kept for salvation until <i>now</i>—or later—whenever <i>the</i> last time is</p>	<p>1 Pet 1:5-9 (AD 63 or 64)</p>	<p>“Ready to be revealed” to <i>them</i>, in the First C. AD, when Peter wrote; <i>they</i> were undergoing severe testing, and <i>they</i> were within 2 years of Christ’s revelation (v. 7)</p>
<p>Last times when? Not yet, or going on since AD 30 or so</p>	<p>1 Pet 1:20 (AD 63 or 64)</p>	<p>“<i>These</i> last times” (AD 63 or 64, when Peter wrote that)</p>
<p>He was ready to judge, but He hasn’t yet; the end of all things is <i>still</i> “at hand”</p>	<p>1 Pet 4:5, 7 (AD 63 or 64)</p>	<p>When God’s ready to judge, it’s gonna happen: the end of all things (<i>Biblically</i>) <i>came</i></p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>It's <i>still</i> time for judgment to <i>begin</i> at the house of God [so the unparalleled tribulation that came upon the house of God in AD 62-66—under <i>Nero</i>—and the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and Judea in general—if put all together—wasn't even the <i>beginning</i> of judgment; all of it is still in store, and Peter was deluded]</p>	<p>1 Pet 4:17 (AD 63 or 64)</p>	<p>Judgment <i>did</i> begin with the “house of God” just before the time of Peter’s letter, and it intensified in AD 64, when <i>empire-wide persecution upon Christians</i> was ordered by Nero; and note that in this text, the house of God= “us” (Gr. <i>hemon</i>, Str. 2257, “we/us/our company”) so judgment <i>did</i> begin with <i>them</i>, <i>First-Century Christians</i></p>
<p>Neither Peter nor the recipients of his letter were “partakers of the glory that <i>will</i> be revealed”; they all missed it by 2,000 years or more</p>	<p>1 Pet 5:1 (AD 62 or 63)</p>	<p>Some (many?) of Peter’s contemporaries <i>were</i> actual partakers of the glory that was <i>about to be</i> revealed (Gr. <i>mello</i>, <i>AGAIN</i>), 3 yrs. later</p>
<p>This whole passage must be applied to our day, since “the last days” obviously have not come and gone; these are general admonitions and warnings, but mostly for us</p>	<p>2 Tim 3:1-9 (AD 64)</p>	<p>Paul to Timothy (two real persons in the 1st C. AD): “from such [<i>you</i>] turn away”; men of corrupt minds <i>resist</i> (<i>present</i> tense, used in AD 64; they resisted, long ago)</p>
<p>Paul only <i>thought</i> that the Lord was <i>about to</i> [yes, <i>mello</i> is here, too] judge the living and dead at His appearing in His kingdom</p>	<p>2 Tim 4:1, 17 (AD 64)</p>	<p>Christ was truly <i>about to judge</i> at His appearing, and He arrived within 2 or 3 years to do so; v. 17: more evidence of gospel’s spread</p>

IF THE FUTURISTS ARE RIGHT	WITH RESPECT TO...	IF THE PRETERISTS ARE RIGHT
<p>Jude, too, was apparently having some sort of panic attack, since all the signs he thought he was seeing pertained to many centuries in the future; he was wrong, and he certainly didn't have to drop everything to write this "urgent" letter of warning [see verse 3]</p>	<p>Jude 14-19 (AD 64 or 65)</p>	<p>This whole, real, First-C. letter to real First-C. recipients in <i>their</i> embattled churches is loaded with very <i>personal</i> warnings and clear references to the <i>real</i> last days: "at the last time... <i>these</i> are the ones <i>setting</i> themselves apart" —v. 18-19, Literal Translation, Jay P. Green</p>
<p>Sorry, but their destruction <i>does</i> slumber, and it has been "sleeping in" for about 2,000 years (and counting)</p>	<p>2 Pet 2:3 (AD 64 or 65)</p>	<p>God said via Peter that their judgment wouldn't slumber, and sure enough, it came within 2 years (AD 66)</p>
<p>Those "scoffers" who would come in "the last days" may be here <i>now</i> —just look around—but they certainly weren't there in the First C., and there's just no way that the heavens and the earth, which <i>are</i> reserved for <i>fire until the day of judgment</i> have burned up, melted, and passed away! So the "day of God" has <i>NOT</i> come, and neither have the <i>NEW</i> heavens and earth, <i>so</i> "<i>All is Still-Future</i>" is our motto!</p>	<p>2 Pet 3:1-14 (AD 64 or 65; quite likely the very last book to be written as part of the New Testament, <i>binding</i> the Scriptures—see Matt 16:19—in their final form)</p>	<p>God-inspired Peter referred to other God-breathed OT Scriptures in presenting the scene of the cataclysmic changing-of-the-guard in the <i>SPIRITUAL</i> realm; let's remind one another: the universe was created <i>by</i> and <i>for</i> Jesus Christ (Col 1:16), and <i>Almighty God</i> is never going to annihilate and re-do the physical universe (the stars give Him <i>glory</i>, mind you!); the <i>beloved</i> (v.14) <i>were</i> soon found "blameless" by Him!</p>

LOOSE ENDS TIED UP: TYPICAL QUESTIONS
RAISED IN ATTEMPTS TO DISCREDIT PRETERISM

Q. If all Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled, what's left to look forward to? What's my hope? [I even had a *Reformed pastor* ask me this! So sad.]

A. If all you want from the Bible are mysterious prophecies that are going to be fulfilled in *your* lifetime, well I guess you have no hope after all. But if being rescued from the power of sin, death, and certain eternal destruction can give you hope (**1 Pet 3:15**), and if being with your dear Redeemer forever beats out all else, your *hope* is now as good as realized; it's reality because of the *fully-*accomplished redemption that all believers have in Christ since AD 70. Reading the Bible now should be more of a joy to us today than for anyone who still had to look forward to "The Great Tribulation" and "The Great Falling-away/Apostasy!" Shame on you if you think *you've* lost out on the Rapture; it was never promised *to you*! Besides, all of the worst stuff is behind us, and Heaven is wide open *to us*!

Q. What about the "Parable of the Fig Tree?" You've got to admit that it *has* to refer to the Nation of Israel being re-established in 1948!

A. I'll see your **Luke 21:29-31** (and **Matt 24:32-33**) and raise you **Matt 21:19 & 43**. First, in **Luke 21:29**, notice that Jesus said that when the fig tree and *all the trees* were budding, that you could take it (together) as a sign that summer was near, and so *the kingdom* would be near. So if the fig tree symbolizes the 1948 secular nation-state of modern-day Israel, just what do "all the (other) trees" signify? Then read through **Luke 21:32 (& Matt 24:34)**: the signs *all* pointed to a single generation of people who were already alive *THEN*. Finally, Jesus pointedly *cursed* the fig tree in **Matt 21:19**, declaring that it would *never produce fruit again*, and in verse **43**, He explains His action as a prophetic picture of what would happen to the First-C. Jews: they didn't produce proper fruit, so their kingdom would be taken from them and given to another "*holy nation*" (see **1 Pet 2:9**). Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of the *nation-state* of "Israel" figuring in God's future, fixed, and final plans. All *spiritual Israel* would be saved, the *spiritual heirs of Abraham*, including a *remnant* of physical Jews.

Q. Who is (or *was*, if you insist) “The Antichrist?”

A. The *five* occurrences of the English word *antichrist* (Gr. *antichristos*, Str. 500—*antichristoi* in the plural form, as it’s found in the *second* instance in **1 Jn 2:18**) are *all* found in John’s epistles. We *don’t* find the term used in Revelation at all, which comes as a shock to most people, I’m fairly certain. Still, some people have built whole careers and “ministries” on identifying “*THE* Antichrist” as if the inspired writer of *both* his epistles *and* the book of Revelation was ignorant on the whole subject. They’ve truly wasted their lives in search of a phantom. First point: John mentioned “MANY antichrists,” not just one. Point #2: the implication is that it’s more of a movement in opposition to *the* Christ, the Messiah who was walking the same earth and breathing the same air in the First C. AD; John refers to it as the *spirit of antichrist* in **1 Jn 4:3**, and adds that it was “already at work” (*THEN*). Point #3: while I can agree (*totally*) that there are *many* antichrists today who fit John’s *definitions* (**1 Jn 2:22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7**), *none* of them can possibly qualify as “*THE* guy” for a very simple reason: they are *all too late*, on two counts: 1) This candidate (alive today) is really, really, *really* old now if he’s been around since AD 60 or so (20 *centuries* old! remember that John said *twice* that antichrist *had come then*) and 2) Christ HAS won the war that climaxed soon after John’s writing, and so He *did* conquer all the enemies He had promised to defeat, long, *long* ago. The *Biblical* antichrist is *not* in *our* future!

Q. Man, that’s just a cop-out! Just admit you don’t know, just like you probably don’t know who “*THE* Beast” is and who fits “666” (**Rev 13:18**) either!

A. That’s technically not a question, but here I go with my best answer anyway. You’re right, I don’t know who the *beasts* (*plural*, **Rev 13:1 & 11**) *WERE*, but they (two Jewish, or one Roman and one Jewish) came along in the First C. AD and now reside in the lake of fire and brimstone (**Rev 20:10**)—two more things *we* won’t see in *our* future, thank God! 666? I don’t know, but I’m sure that many Christians who really *needed* to know who that was—because he was alive in *THEIR* day—*DID* know, so that mystery was solved way back then. I’m not gonna lose any (more) sleep about that. Like so many of us, I *used to* try to figure that out so *I* could be the one who “had understanding.” Foolish pride!

LAST THOUGHTS ON THE LAST THINGS

Having conscientiously and faithfully taken God at His Word, we've landed on a *past-fulfillment* view of eschatology called *Preterism*. For this I'll make no apologies, and as far as second- and third-guessing goes, I got that out of the way many years ago; I am a *confirmed* Full(*Consistent*) Preterist, and I'm convinced that any reader would be wise to embrace that most-Biblical, faith-affirming position as well. We only have to recall an incident or two in our own lifetimes in order to realize that truly awful consequences go hand-in-glove with false eschatologies. Think of the Heaven's Gate cult and the Koreans who stood expectantly on a mountaintop, devoid of all their earthly possessions—only to find that their timing was woefully wrong—as just two examples of hundreds we could name. Not to mention all of the political leaders who drive nations to disaster on the basis of their personal, flawed visions of the course that mankind *must* take towards one Utopia or another; some even claim *they* are “bringing in” the kingdom of Christ! I hope every reader can now appreciate this simple truth that can set each one of us free:

God did just *what* He said He would do, and He did it *when* He said He would do it; It's all right there in His Word.

SUGGESTED **ONE-STOP** RESOURCE CENTER: Edward E. Stevens, International Preterist Association (IPA), 122 Seaward Ave., Bradford, PA 16701-1515. (www.preterist.org). I don't hesitate to steer you towards Ed Stevens because I have made good use of the fruit of his careful, painstaking, ever-Christ-honoring research on eschatology and all things Christian for 15 years now. He's not a pick-and-choose Bible student, nor does he put some personal, name-building agenda out front. His love of the truth and dogged pursuit of the whole counsel of God certainly resonate with me, an avid seeker, compiler, and sometimes-distributor of the truth. We could find no better teacher, and he makes available the resources of other Preterists who might put things in a way that better suits you, while still conveying the same basic truths (*e.g.*, I've mentioned Michael A. Femore; add Ian Harding and Michael Alan Nichols). But Ed is *THE* go-to-guy!

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STUDY TOOLS

The Interlinear Bible (Jay
P. Green, Sr., Editor)

Nave's Study Bible

New Geneva Study Bible

New Testament In Mod-
ern Speech (Weymouth)

Strong's Exhaustive
Concordance

Young's Analytical
Concordance

Young's Literal
Translation

ATHEOS TRILOGY WRAP-UP

The subtitle of this three-volume set is “*6 PATHS TO DESTRUCTION*.” Of course, there are *countless* paths to destruction in this life and for eternity, so no *library* of books could even address them all. If there’s one thing human beings are good at, it’s inventing ways to harm and destroy themselves and each other. But in this series, we’ve looked at 6 *general categories* that seem to cover the range of ways to go through life *without God* (Gr. *a-theos*, as found in **Eph 2:12**). In reality—in the end—there is only **God’s** path *through* life *to* life eternal or that ever-so-broad *godless* path that inevitably leads to eternal death (**Matt 7:13**). If you’re determined to live without God now and die eternally, it’s just a matter of where you want to join the procession to Hell; just name your poison and off you go. But I sincerely hope that any reader who’s still leaning in that direction—for whatever reason—will stop for just one *crucial* moment and contemplate the **unavoidable reality of God’s existence, His just rules for His creatures, and how we are thus unavoidably accountable to our Creator-King for every aspect of our lives.**

Now, I realize how harshly that falls on our modern ears, but I’m not out to win the favor of the politically-correct crowd or the praises of men. At this stage in my life my driving passion is to find truth, embrace it wholeheartedly and without reservation, and then do my part in getting it out there to others. If I felt otherwise, there would have been very little point in writing any of these works. I could’ve easily spent all of “my” time on eating, sleeping, baseball, and music-production—all things I enjoy—but how would that show love and gratitude to God for the immense amount of freedom He’s given to me? How would I be (*truly*) serving others? How would I be *truly* giving God due glory with my *self-serving* recreational projects? So to me, writing about the *essential* truths and steering my fellow humans *away* from falsehoods just had to take priority. All readers should be encouraged to take the time to honestly assess where they stand in relation to the Creator and Sole Proprietor of the universe, and just what kind of account they could give to Him if life ended *now* (**Luke 12:20**). I’ll leave it to the millions of others who’ll soft-pedal the whole accountability-eternal destiny “thing.” In these pages, we have dealt with reality in God’s universe.

In the first volume of this series, Atheism/Agnosticism, Totalitarianism, and Humanism were all exposed as *incompatible* with both God’s revealed truth and His will for us to flourish in His universe. Atheism is supposed to be *non-religion*, but we’ve seen that it’s actually the God-*opposing* religion of fools; it’s *anti-faith*, and just how far will *that* get you in a faith-dependent universe? We saw in that same volume that “totalitarianism” involves much more than the German Nazis and Leninist-Stalinist Communists; it includes the “peaceful religion” of Islam and even leftist *American* nation-destroyers (names were named). “Under God or Under the Boot” (of men) was one slogan: the only place *real* freedom shows up in any totalist system is in the *rhetoric* in the sell-job. And humanism? Sure, it *sounds* attractive and harmless, but it, too, banishes the living, true God from all of its thought and practice, so it’s decidedly atheistic as well.

The second volume had to do with what I called, *Evillusion*, or the *Evil Illusion of Evolution*. It was actually the first one I wrote, since it has probably done more damage in this country than any of the other thought-systems, and it goes hand-in-glove with *all* God-opposing systems. Biblical Creation and *any* form of evolution—any syntheses whatsoever—are utterly *incompatible*. *Period*.

In the present and last volume, we briefly surveyed non-Christian religions and *futurist* eschatologies, all of which abandon the truth of God’s Word at many points. We saw that “Christian” Dispensationalism and Zionism have much more in common with Judaism than genuine, Biblical Christianity: they’re all still waiting for the *real* “Messiah” to finally show up and set up His physical throne in Jerusalem, where He’ll *undo* all of His own mediatorial work by *re-establishing* the OT/Mosaic/Jewish sacrificial system! That is *sheer lunacy*, people, and you need to be aware of that fact. From such “vomit” turn away—**2 Pet 2:22**.

Finally, we saw that we can either ***take the triune God at His Word without exception*** OR we can be futurists. You can’t do both. Either Christ returned and finished His redemptive work when He said He would (the *First-Century* generation), or he has been shown to be a deceptive fraud, and no savior of anyone. But He *didn’t* “tarry” and He *has* fully opened the way to God and His heaven. Give the King of Kings praise, glory, and honor, now and forevermore!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With a face made for radio and a voice made for print, it's no wonder that he writes. And as far as credentials go, we won't need to take up much space with that either. Grade school valedictorian, high school honors graduate; college graduate: Bachelor of Science degree, majors in English and Sociology. Academically, other than decades of self-directed study, that's about it.

He's worked for both the world's largest employer (the United States Government) as a "communications facilitator" (mailman), and the world's largest retailer, Walmart. In between, he spent four years at a Christian K-12 school system. Various manual labor stints and low-level management make up his whole work history, but he now has the time and opportunity to stay at home and "use his words."

Content with his current lot in life, he knows **Christ** has led him to this place. He is thankful for the truly amazing grace that the **Author and finisher of faith and salvation** has shown towards a thoroughly-unworthy sinner such as this book's author.

He [Christ Jesus] became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him—Heb 5:9
...Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith (Heb 12:2)...who made the worlds (Heb 1:2)

Now *there's* the author you ought to get to know!

If you agree that the laborer is worthy of his wages (Luke 10:7 & 1 Tim 5:18), and you have benefited in some way from any of my written works, please consider sending me any token contribution that you feel **comfortable** in sparing (that could include free books written by others). Certainly, no one *owes* me anything, but as a *personal* not-for-profit ministry of sorts—I have no outside income source to help pay the bills—it sure would be nice to get somewhere close to breaking even! But in any case, I sincerely hope that the Lord has used me to open some eyes to His truth, and that more will be moved to glorify Him.
Steve Rauen 5673 Bethel Rd SE TRLR 19A Port Orchard WA 98367

OUT-OF *THE WAY* SYSTEMS

STEVE RAUEN
DECEMBER, AD 2014



-
- + God's universe, God's rules.
 - + God defines, man merely opines.
 - + Christ is *THE WAY*.
 - + Christ-less religions and lesser-Christ religions are equally worthless and destructive.
 - + God must be believed in *all* things, from the first to the last.