

2016: The Year in Review

Perspective on the News

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Looking ahead into 2016 I think it's safe to say that most Americans are more than a little apprehensive about the shape of things to come. ISIS, weak economy, immigration, cultural deterioration, political correctness, rising global threats, ethnic unrest, conspiracies, Planet X, etc. ad nauseam. The only silver lining at the end of this year is the coming elections and the hope that a change in regime will bode *more better* for the average American.

While I am no prophet nor have I ever claimed that mantle, I thought this might be a bit of fun to speculate what the potentialities are for this upcoming year then revisit them again at the end of 2016 to see what I got right and what I didn't. More than likely, I will get a lot more wrong than I got right.

While I will make some predictions about what I think will happen in the coming year, there are obviously the unforeseen *black swan* events that come out of nowhere. The most prominent one that I can think of would be the 'Rapture of the Church', of which, we won't know when that will happen until it actually does. Other unknown events would be natural disasters, terrorist attacks, etc. So I will try and do due diligence to just the major things that I believe we are trending towards as a nation.

US Elections

As the GOP herd is beginning to thin out, I'm predicting that the GOP nomination will be a split between Cruz and Trump. Cruz handily taking Iowa, while Trump getting New Hampshire. This will play out in the primaries as the northeast and southeast lean heavy towards The Donald, while the mid-west, west, and south go to Cruz. It will be a close call but I think Donald will win it but that he will bring in Cruz and/or Rubio along as a running mate. My justification for this, and this is not scientific by any stretch, is that if he wants to get the Hispanic vote he needs either of them to clinch it.

Afghanistan

US Forces will reverse the drawdown and either maintain the 9,800 Boots on the Ground (BOGs) or add back more troops. Personally, I don't think President Obama wants to keep troops there but he also doesn't want to be held responsible for allowing ISIS, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban (or some combination thereof) to create a new safe haven there. Besides that, I don't think the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, the CIA or any other group in Washington will allow this to happen. Justification for this? The [NYT](#) and [Washington Times](#) are already providing cover pieces showing why Afghanistan shouldn't be abandoned. Looks like top-cover to me.

Syria

Whatever opportunities we had to change the course of events in Syria prior to Russia's involvement are now squandered and lost. We (the U.S.) will not risk an outright confrontation (or even the possibility thereof) by getting in a mix up with a former super-power. However, that is not to say Israel won't if they feel threatened. Expect the fight over the Golan Heights to heat up both diplomatically and militarily. ISIS is looking to draw Israel into the fray.

As it stands now there really isn't much left of Damascus but look for the potential for Russia to use a [thermobaric](#) or [neutron](#) bomb on what's left of it.

Justification: Since WWII, the U.S. is the only nation to actually use an atomic weapon in an actual conflict. Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) had this shame hanging over their heads for the next forty years during the entirety of the Cold War, but now will look to change that historical fact in Syria. Casualties will be minimal since most of the civilian life has already fled the scene and what remains are the hardened fighters, but this would be a good way for Russia to both clear the rubble for Bashar Assad and make a bold statement about what Russia will and won't do against future threats.

Energy

Natural Gas

Several years ago, I [speculated](#) that Israel, Cyprus, and Greece would come together to exploit the recent natural gas finds off the coast of Israel into an energy producing/exporting business together. My reasoning then was Greece was out of cash and almost out of friends. Israel has cash but their list of BFFs was quickly dwindling down into the single digits. So why not work together?

While Greece lacks the expertise or the cash to finance such an endeavor, they do have something far more important, location. Were they to allow Israel and energy companies to run pipelines through their country into the European Union, this would give the EU a much needed alternative to Russian natural gas. [News reports](#) from 2015 were that these discussions are set to happen in 2016 and I think something will be formalized in a more significant way. Of course, this will make Russia, Turkey, Lebanon and Syria none too happy.

Oil

As we've recently come to understand (H/T Vladimir Putin) ([Link](#)) about Turkey's illicit involvement in illegal oil sales from ISIS to the rest of the world, expect oil prices to go through the roof in 2016.

The Saudis are trying to drown the market in excess oil which has put Russia, Iran, ISIS and the American Shale industry in the financial hurt locker. They were able to do this because they thought they could weather the storm. But the Saudis are [blowing through money](#) at a pace a lot faster than what they really want to. This will cause them to slow production considerably thus bringing the price per barrel back up to what it had been for most of Pres. Obama's presidency.

Currency

I've long talked about the necessity for the American Dollar to collapse in order for a global reset to occur and a new currency (possibly digital) to be introduced to the world stage. It's not that I'm cheerleading for that to happen or wanting our currency to collapse, it is just an inescapable inevitability that we have to come to grips with.

According to [Revelation 13](#) by the time the Antichrist comes to power he is able to implement some global system of commerce that requires everyone to participate in. But that doesn't happen overnight. There are stages to this coming to pass and with the global reserve currency sitting on nearly \$20 trillion of debt (largely to ourselves at the expense of future generations), paying it off is simply a mathematical impossibility.

Look at this way, we have somewhere in the neighborhood of 320 million Americans. Out of that 320 million maybe half are paying into the system. At the current rate each American man, woman, and child is on the hook for \$62,500. If we took the broadest definition of currency that Americans possess (M3) it would still only account for \$17T in "currency". That would include all coins, bills, checks, credit, shares, investments, stocks, and bonds, and tangible goods. That would mean that zero dollars went to pay anything else (MEDICARE, MEDICAID, Welfare, Social Security, Military, etc.), and we put everything into paying off the debt, we'd still be \$3T short, which still doesn't cover the interest accrued.

That might sound doom and gloom but the truth is, the world is heading straight for a global currency that can be controlled and manipulated by the final kingdom and its leader, the Antichrist. It is going that way because God said it would. So what options do we as a nation have left at our disposal?

Seeing as the world has/is relying on the US Dollar (H/T Petro-Dollar status) as the main Reserve Currency our actions/inactions will have global ramifications. Really, the only viable option we have is to hit some sort of global reset button and introduce a new, global currency that will necessarily equalize the playing field. That will only come about by some global catastrophic event that will force the world to realign...which is what the *Rapture of the Church* will introduce.

So not predicting the dollar will collapse this coming year, but that serious dialogue will grow louder and louder in how we have to 'diversify' away from the US Dollar. What we will see is more and more signs that our currency is becoming increasingly unstable as inflation and deflation continues to rise. How is that?

Inflation will affect the price of must-have goods (food, medicine, fuel, energy) and deflation will kick in on the price of non-necessity goods, or luxury items (cars, televisions, computers, games, etc.) because people will start to have to choose between eating, and having new, shiny things. This, of course will cause the price of those luxury items to continue to drop, hurting those specific industries which has a ripple effect on a lot of other factors. (See also [Revelation 6:1-8](#))

Christendom

Look to see a marked increase on the call for dialogue, or “conversations” with non-Christian belief systems as part of the overarching ecumenical-itis that is sweeping through our politically correct landscape. I expect a lot more traction to be gained for the promoters of both *Chrislam* and *Hebrew Roots* as well as more concerted effort by the Roman Catholic Church to wrangle Protestants back in through *Emergent Church*, *Seeker Friendly*, and the *Social Gospel*.

Trends are showing within Evangelical circles of an increasing approval rating for LGBT lifestyles. This will be as such, that if we don't embrace these as brothers/sisters in Christ than we are hateful bigots. What this means for the New Year, is that we should expect more and more prominent 'Evangelicals' to come out of their 'Evangelical' closets in support of these deviant lifestyles. Welcome to the *new normal*. The only positive I see in all this is at least the wolves will finally start showing their true colors. (See [2 Timothy 3](#); [2 Peter 3](#))

EU Army

More prominent writers, thinkers, legislators, and commentators are more provocative in their speculations than I am, linking the refusal of our dismantlement of NATO, as step toward World War III. ([Link](#)) What I've said in the past, and will continue to say, is that NATO is the precursor to the EU Army that will rise to power in the last days. The infrastructure is all in place they just need to change the name and the patches and they will have the [Army](#) that they've been wanting/need in order to take on that mantle as the final global Superpower. Expect that 2016 will be a significant year for this dream of an EU Army to finally gain some serious traction. (See [Revelation 13:1-4](#))

Technology

2015 proved a remarkable year for the acknowledgment of the threat of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Bill Gates, Elon Musk, Eric Schmidt (Google), and Ray Kurzweil have all been talking very publically about the threat that the new race to Artificial Intelligence poses to humanity. Add to the 'new arms race' in developing [quantum computers](#) which should expedite the speed at which AI is achieved. This has prompted calls for both more regulation in how AI is developed, and also to the development of the 'trans human' who is able to biologically incorporate tech into the human body. I believe this is how the 'mark of the beast' will come to be as a type of bio-tech that is permanently affixed and linked to the wearer's [DNA](#) as both a sign of loyalty and functionality. I expect new breakthroughs this coming year that will have seemed impossible only this past year. (See [Revelation 13:14-15](#))

Conclusion

While I'm not able to incorporate everything into this brief. These are just a few of the things we should keep on our radar of this coming year. Like I said at the outset, I may very likely be wrong on some or all of these. We will just have to see how this next year plays out. In the meantime, remember that no matter what comes our way God is still in control and if He allows

these things to happen as such it is only because they work according to His ends, ways, and means. While I don't know the future, I worship the God who does.

Remember the former things of old,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like Me,
Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,' **Isaiah 46:9-10 NKJV**

Christ Will Return

The old saying goes, that *the eyes are of no use if the mind is blind*. So, it is come to this then, that we who live in the most transformative, prophetically active time since the days of Christ, see so little interest in what the Bible has to say about what will come to pass in these last days. Tragically, the disinterest comes as equally from those who profess Christ, as from those who don't. The study today is over why this is.

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1 Corinthians 2:6-9

The section of Bible Prophecy which speaks to the events of the last days, *Eschatology*, is not some fringe hobby that people dabble in with as the same seriousness as those who follow UFO's or Big Foot. *Eschatology* is a major doctrinal study that consumes around 30% of your Bible. John F. Walvoord, the late President of the Dallas Theological Seminary, dubbed it the 'capstone of Christian doctrine', because your eschatological view determines how you hold to every other major doctrine...such as Soteriology, Ecclesiology, etc. If you think about it for a second, your entire Bible, either centers around Christ's first coming, or to His second. It only makes sense that in a book in which God is revealing Himself to mankind progressively, (i.e., not all at once), is a book that hinges around His own Incarnation and His return for His people.

Yet today more than ever, so-called Evangelicals are increasingly becoming dismissive of Bible Prophecy because they believe it is a *fool's errand*, that Christ may never return, or that it impedes their ability to enact cultural change through the social gospel. This is promulgated in the Reformed Theology groups as well as thru the Prosperity Gospel and Emergent Church movements. It's like it has become popular again in Christendom, to no longer care if or when Christ will return, as if it is some distraction, we needn't concern ourselves with.

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.

1 John 5:19

As Christians, we must understand that Satan really exists, and he is a real enemy to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to the nation of Israel. He's an enemy to the Gospel because it represents his ultimate defeat and demise at the Cross of Calvary, and whatever schemes and plans he had prior to the Cross, became null and void when God provided a foolproof way to redeem fallen man through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. He's an enemy towards Israel because she represents the *Apple of God's Eye*, (Zech. 2:8) and because of the promises and covenants God made with her. (Romans 11:25-29) If a "Christian" refuses to believe that Satan really exists, then they are in a sense, calling into question, Jesus's sanity...for whom else did Jesus speak too in the desert when undergoing His forty days of temptation were it not who Scripture says it was? (Luke 4:1-13)

Satan and all of his demonic hosts then, HATE Bible Prophecy, because it foretells their sure doom. We know the things Satan hates most, because these are the things he has spent most of his time and energy, trying to destroy. Likewise, if the world is under the temporary control of Satan, it makes sense then that these are the same things the world hates. Satan has invested millennia in distorting, perverting, discrediting, dismissing, and silencing true, orthodox, and Scriptural Bible Prophecy.

Think about it this way; the world and its way of thinking, tolerate pretty much everything to one degree or another...except Biblical Christianity and Israel's existence. Child marriages, abortion, Islam, Buddhism, paganism, Satanism, murder, theft, corruption, etc. etc....the world tolerates and forgives. But if you say that Jesus is the only way to salvation, the world will destroy you, or die trying. In regard to Bible Prophecy then, ask yourself this.

1. Which does the world hate more, Pre-Millennialism or Amillennialism?
2. Which does the world hate more, a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, or no Rapture at all?
3. Why are there so many different views on when the Rapture takes place?

Can we not see the satanic attempts to distort and pervert our understanding of the "Blessed Hope"? And it be certain, it can only be a "Blessed Hope", if we are removed before the world enters into the 70th Week of Daniel. (Daniel 9:24-27) Going in, halfway, or all the way, removes any sense of 'hope' if we are to be subjected to the horror's Christ Himself said would be unparalleled in all of history. (Matt. 24:21-22)

What I find interesting, is that those Christian "scholars" and denominations who dismiss Bible Prophecy as either unimportant, or irrelevant, seemingly do so because it interferes or distracts people away from their earthly agendas. Whether those agendas are soaked in social justice, the environment, or perhaps trying to make themselves culturally relevant, Bible Prophecy definitively takes peoples gaze from looking down, to looking up. What I also find interesting, is that even our enemies, those spiritual forces who are opposed to God, believe, and understand Bible prophecy.

When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" **Matthew 8:28-29**

The demonic hosts, tremble at the thought of God. (James 2:19) They tremble at the name of Jesus Christ. Not only do they know He (Christ) exists, but they also know that there is coming a day of reckoning when they will be judged and cast into eternal punishment. They know the seriousness of this coming judgment, as some of their demonic 'brethren' were already cast into the Abyss, under chains of darkness, until that *Day of Judgment* when they are to be cast into the *Lake of Fire* forever, for their sins of mixing sexually with humans in an attempt to corrupt the genetic gene-pool prior to the Noahic Flood. (See Gen. 6:1-4, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 1:6-7) Yet, as wicked and depraved as these fallen angels are, they at least, have the common sense to fear and tremble at the very mention of God...whereas defiant and rebellious man, does not.

...and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. **2 Peter 2:10-11**

Assessment

Perhaps this increased skepticism about Christ and His return, ties back into the whole *normalcy bias* that our world has succumbed too. People do not understand the supernatural realm and are rarely exposed to it, therefore, they dismiss it, because they can't physically put their hands on it or see it with their eyes. This idea that the supernatural either doesn't exist, or is so ethereal that it's irrelevant, has become the dominant view in academia and government, and is very pagan in origin. Naturalism, secular humanism, realism, and materialism have become the only acceptable platforms in the 'public arena of ideas' for the last half of the 20th century, and has had devastating results in our education system, culture, and the Judeo-Christian way of life. Not only is these views the mainstays in our secular culture, but has effectively infiltrated and infected our theological institutions as well.

In fact, the overwhelming number of seminaries today, are largely liberal (See: Liberal Theology and Theological Education—A Cautionary Tale - AlbertMohler.com). Yet, what's frustrating is that we have lived through arguably the most transformative, most dynamic, technologically advanced, and blood-stained century the world has EVER seen...yet we act as if things have always been this way. Just think about the major events which have radically changed the world in just the last 100 years or so.

1. *World War I* (1914-1918) reshaped and redrew the boundaries of much of Europe and the Middle East.
2. *The Bolshevik Revolution* (1917-1922) created a communist superpower through the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which would enable the Cold War to be waged for almost 50 years.
3. *World War II* (1939-1945) again drew the whole world into conflict. Out of its ashes, gave *reason* for the world to create a global governing body (United Nations), and Europe *cause* to come together economically (European Coal and Steel Community) and militarily (NATO).
4. The rebirth of the nation of *Israel* in 1948, after almost two millennia of diaspora, would become the very catalyst which would awaken the sleeping giant of orthodox (i.e...radical) Islam. Both Sunni and Shia sects then became bent on destroying Israel. Israel's rebirth into the table of nations galvanized Islam into a regional nightmare bent on wiping Israel (and all those who support her) off the map.
5. Bretton Woods Agreement (1945) effectively put the world under a single, global, reserve currency...the U.S. Dollar, and linked it to the Gold Standard at \$35 an ounce.

6. *OPEC* (1960) stands for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which has come to dominate the petroleum based energy needs for the last half of the 20th century. The United States worked a deal with OPEC nations from 1973 to 1975 to create what would come to be known as the fiat “[Petrol Dollar](#)”, which meant that the US would militarily and economically remain faithful, so long as all oil transactions were made in US Currency.
7. The *creation of the Internet* (1980s) is a system of systems, which links electronic devices together via the World Wide Web (www). It’s hard to imagine life before the Internet, because it has really been the biggest revolutionary change to communication, ever. It has rapidly increased information availability, communications, and technological advancements in every sector, and has become instrumental in media, government, and the military.

I wish people could step back to see the big picture, and then ask themselves one fundamental question; “Is the world growing towards, or further from, a global government?”

Conclusion

We know that according to Scripture, the world will eventually come under the control of ten regional rulers. (Daniel 7:23-25; 8:23-25, Rev. 13:1-4; 17:9-14) From this regional consortium, will arise one man who is given power by three of these regions/kingdoms. From here, the man (who we believe to be the antichrist/rider on the white horse) will come too singularly and authoritatively rule the entire world.

But changing from the world as it is today, to what the world will look like then, will not happen overnight. Infrastructure and legislation has to be put in place, technology has to be developed which would allow for the implementation of global control mechanisms, which would mean that the conditions are such that independent countries would willingly set aside their national borders and sovereignty, in order to come together for the common good. Change like that only happens in the face of a massive, global, crisis.

Now, we’ve all been witness to the current, unsuccessful attempts by globalists today to try and generate panic on a world-wide scale, through the false alarms of “Global Cooling”. When that didn’t pan out, they called it “Global Warming”. When the scientific data didn’t support the *AlGorian* hyperbolic warnings of impending destruction, the crisis HAD to be rebranded again, to “Climate Change”. So why the hard push for something that clearly, at the present, isn’t a crisis?

Since the world already has a global government called the United Nations, it has the mechanism, but not the authority to pull all the nations together under its protective umbrella. In fact, the UN is quite impotent in its ability to do much of anything. What it lacks though, is a means to fund its initiatives through global taxation, which would then be used to create a standing army/navy/air force to enforce peace, security, and serves to enforce taxation compliance.

Currently, the United Nations currently receives the bulk of its funding through the United States, where it is also headquartered. The “Climate Change” crises were absolutely necessary in order to drum up funding for an enhanced global governance through “carbon taxes”, which would then achieve two goals; punish the rich, western nations through heavy taxes for benefitting from industrialization (wealth redistribution) and create bureaucratic overreach which is necessary to implement Agenda 21 and 2030 programs which remove sovereignty nations have over their own territories. Imagine the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on a global scale.

Conclusion

So, let’s be clear on this then, that Satan’s schemes and maneuverings in these regards, are neither random nor arbitrary. He is in the process of putting his affairs in order, in short order...because he knows he has but a little time left before all this comes apart at the seams. He knows the Bible, and knows what God told Noah after the Flood (Genesis 8:20-22), that He will keep the seasons and natural order going, until He deems fit, so all this talk of global cooling, warming, and climate change crisis’s, are simply machinations of something more sinister he has in store...which is, to bring the world together under one man, antichrist, who will then take that last stand against Christ at His Second Coming.

Satan knows perfectly well that Christ will return for His bride, the Church, before all this goes down...which is why he has invested so much time and energy in confusing the churches about the subject. He knows that this is THE crisis he will use to bring all the governments of the world together into his already well laid plans. He just doesn’t know when this will all go down. So, the overwhelming lack of interest, the skepticism, and outright scoffing of the Bible, and Bible Prophecy that we see today, is in keeping with the two thousand plus years’ worth of deception and corruption that Satan has invested in keeping people in the dark.

And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” **Luke 17:7-8**

We need only look back at Christ’s first coming, and the scarce knowledge and awareness that their Messiah had come, to see how Satan works in keeping the world blinded to God’s prophetic timeline. As we near His Second Coming, do we not see the exact same thing taking place, even in the churches? On the one hand, the Church, has come under intense persecution throughout much of the world. On the other, the churches have largely fallen asleep and no longer know where we are on God’s divine timeline, nor do they know where they are going. Believers are starting to give up on God’s promise of returning for His own. Rest assured...

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.”

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen. **Rev. 22:20-21**

This Kind of War

In military terms, the *Center of Gravity* (COG) is a concept that links some central thing, to whatever an army, a population, an enemy, force, or nation centers their strength around. It could be national pride. It could be ethnic or tribal allegiances. It could be advanced technology, a perhaps a particular industry. It could be ideological, religious, or political. As an example, American's, used to center their COG on defending freedom and promoting the American way of life, both here and abroad.

Carl Von Clausewitz was a Prussian General and about as famous a military theorist you could get, made famous this term which has been long debated by both scholar and general as how best to apply it in regards to military strategy. The thought was, that if you could identify and then attack an enemy's *Center of Gravity*, you could effectively defeat said enemy by weakening them to the point of collapse.

We live in a day and age in which everything is accelerating at a dizzying pace, and the church writ large (i.e....Christendom), is trying really hard to make itself relevant by blending in to a world that is continually changing. In fact, the only thing changing faster than our technological advancements, are the cultural norms. As believers, our *Center of Gravity* must be God's Word, for without it, we would neither know God, nor know the means of salvation vis-à-vis *the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:1-5)*, or how to live and function while operating in enemy territory. But churches are continually and more intensely, being pressured by society to compromise their own COG, for that of the world's by compromising on doctrinal truths. As believers, we must come to grips with the reality that we are at war, all day, every day.

In order for us to grasp the level of conflict we are in, we must first understand that every philosophy, every ideology, every religion, every source of wisdom or knowledge that is not from God, comes from Satan regardless of how harmless or benign it may appear. Some two-thousand years ago, the Apostle Paul, as moved by the Holy Spirit, also addresses this kind of war...

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **Ephesians 6:12-13**

On Truth

While somewhat difficult to explain in regards to a simple, comprehensive understanding, it is simply coming to terms with the absolute truth about our reality here, so stay with me on this:

If the God of our Bible is real, and everything in our Bible is true...then everything that is, must conform to that truth no matter how it is being presented by whichever society or era you find yourself in. Charles Spurgeon once wrote, "The Word of God is the anvil upon which the opinions of men are smashed." So it is for instance, that the Genesis account of Creation, in which God speaks into existence *ex nihilo*, everything that is, in six, 24 hour days, has to be as it

is described in Scripture. If you accept and believe that, then no matter what the science of the day proclaims contrary to that, you stand on God's Word.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. **Colossians 2:8**

Interesting to note how by the 1800's, the ages of *Rationalism, Enlightenment, and Modern* were in full swing and there were philosophical and "scientific" theories aplenty being tested on the general populace with little regard as to the effects they would have. For example, let's look at the two big ones of the 19th century; Darwinian Evolution and Karl Marx's development of Communism. With the luxury of hindsight, we've seen the effects that both Darwin's Theory and Marxism have had over the past 150 years. Tragic would be an understatement.

Yet at the time, these were radical and 'cutting edge' ideas. They were revolutionary and went against the status quo of the day. Decades after they were formulated, they were lauded by the academic elites as being 'the truth' and the Bible mocked as being archaic and woefully inadequate to deal with the new scientific breakthroughs and geo-political issues of their day. Yet today, they're both considered laughable and disastrous models.

As for Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel (who did not live to see their disaster play out), we got a Bolshevik Revolution, a Second World War (think NAZI), 70 years of communism complete with Iron Curtain, Stalin's purges, Mao Zedong, Great Leap Forward, Korean and Vietnam Wars, and an overarching Cold War- with hundreds of millions of war dead and entire generations lost. As for an economic and philosophical model, Marxism (as it's come to be called), was and will always be, an utter failure...because it attempts to redefine human nature it is not, as naturally altruistic.

As to Darwin's theory, scientists are beginning¹ to realize that there is a lot more to our existence than what they once thought. Much of Darwin's ideas are laughable² today, even by secular scientists. Our world, when broken down to the molecular level, is far more complex than they could have understood it to be. Simply put, had technology been available to people then, we would not have had generations taught that we came from slime out of the primordial soup or that our existence here is purely accidental. They wouldn't have had academic support by which much of what *Social Darwinian* rested upon, such as 'survival of the fittest', eugenics, and racism. And yet, for all of Darwin's so called genius, and for his dismissal of Scripture as being the one, true, source of truth, Scripture concludes...

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. **Colossians 1:16**

On War

We humans exist in a physical, dimension whose boundaries are time, gravity, and space. We are confined to planet earth, with little prospects of successfully existing anywhere else due to our own physical and mortal constraints of requiring oxygen, heat, water, food, and gravity to live. Our enemy however, is not bound by these things. Satan and his fallen angels are spiritual

beings who have their own *Center of Gravity*, and it is centered on attacking, corrupting, and destroying the three things that stand in the way of their only chance of thwarting God's plans: the Church, the Jew, and Jerusalem. You will see very clearly that the world hates, mocks, and despises, the Church (true Christianity), the Jew, and Jerusalem...irrespective of religion, ethnicity, or academic grooming.

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

1 John 5:19

Having previously attempted to wage war on God directly, and subsequently cast out of heaven (along with a third of his fellow, fallen angels) to the earth, Satan realizes that a direct attack is a last resort. In the meantime, he has been busily attempting to circumvent God's plans and in God's structuring of our reality here. The fact that man has been given free will to decide on whom he will follow, has given Satan the notion that he might have a chance at succeeding. While Satan was cast out of heaven initially, he has retained the ability to transform himself in order to present himself in heaven, yet, there is coming a day when he will also lose that privilege and be cut off from the Third Heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) altogether. In your bible study, simply consider the chronology of events here: Ezekiel 28:11-19, Isaiah 14:12-15, Job. 1:6-7, and Rev. 12:7-12

At the halfway point of the Tribulation (3.5 years into Daniel's 70th Week), Satan will attempt another coup d'état in heaven, and will lose again. But this time, Michael the Archangel will cast him out down to earth, and he will be confined to our physical realm. Because of this, he will furiously possess the man we know as 'the Antichrist' and spend the next three years, feverishly pouring out his persecution upon the Jew and Jerusalem. This is in part why Christ intervenes at the Second Coming, because if He doesn't, no flesh would survive. (Matt. 24:21-22)

Notice, I didn't say the Church?

That is because the Church is nowhere to be found inside the confines of the 70th Week of Daniel, also known as 'the time of Jacob's Trouble'. (Dan. 9:24, Jer. 30:7-11) The Church, that is the universal body of believers from Pentecost until today, who make up the corporeal, corporate, multi-membered yet singular, body of Christ...will one day be taken/caught/snatched up to meet the Lord in the air. (John 14:1-3, 1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:50-55, Rev. 3:10)

In regards to a military maneuver, the Rapture is in effect, a triumphal victory parade upwards through Satan's domain (Eph. 2:2), with full honors and angelic escort. This is why the timing of the event itself is shrouded in secrecy (no man knows the day or hour), and why it could happen at any moment (imminency), and why the 'shout', the 'trump of God', the immediate resurrection of the dead, and the translation of the living- from mortal to immortal, has to happen in that order...as we will be marching straight through the enemies stronghold. It is Christ, triumphantly presenting His workmanship 'the Church' (Matt. 16:18), to His enemy...and Satan not being able to do a single thing about it. Jesus in effect then is deconstructing Satan's COG by effectively removing one of the three main targets who had been under his satanic persecution for millennia.

Those who come to faith in Christ after the Rapture of the Church, will be the next group who Satan (via the False Prophet and Antichrist) targets and will produce an untold number of martyrs in the process, from all tribes and kindred's. (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 13:7) At the midpoint of the Tribulation when the Tribulation martyrs runs out, Satan then turns his furious focus on the final two objects of his wrath, the Jew and the Jerusalem. It is at the mid-point that the Antichrist becomes indwelt by Satan himself, and sets himself up in the newly rebuilt, Jewish Temple and declares himself to be God (Dan. 9:27, 2 Thess. 2:4, Rev. 13) and attempts to finish what Holocaust did not, total annihilation of the Jewish people. (Matt. 24:15-21)

Jerusalem then becomes the flashpoint for all of humanity as the nations of the world, led by Antichrist, descend upon Har Megiddo (Armageddon) in which they prepare for all-out war. It is here that Christ returns, peeling back the sky for everyone to see, and returning triumphantly with the Church, to destroy Antichrist, the False Prophet, and the nation's armies. Satan's very best, the Antichrist and False Prophet, are cast alive into the Lake of Fire, and Satan himself is bound for a 1,000 years in the abyss thus ending man's long march to ruin. (Zech. 14, Rev. 19-20)

Conclusion

Going back to what the Apostle Paul wrote though, is understanding that we are at war, and understanding that the Charles Darwin's and Karl Marx's of the world, aren't our enemies per say, they are simply the pawns in which the enemy uses to try and destroy Biblical truth and the human race. Think of these men as you would Islamic suicide bombers, who instead of using explosives, use false ideologies, false religions, and humanist philosophies to kill, maim, and destroy...and they would willingly blow themselves and everyone else up...for a lie from Satan, the *father of lies*.

And while we are still at war, realize fellow believer that this war is coming to a close very soon. Having already won the victory at the Cross, Jesus Christ, thus became the *Center of Gravity* for all of human history. Either people were looking forward to His coming at the first, or we look back at what was won. And now, having joined with Christ through salvation, all we are waiting on now, is the victory parade upwards.

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." **Luke 21:28**

Maranatha!

1. <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna13070896#.VnBP3Y-cHIU>
2. <https://www.wnd.com/2009/11/116601/>

Debunking False Eschatology's: Part I

Since the first century stoning of Stephen by the Jewish leaders, Christianity has always suffered under some form of oppression, suppression, or persecution. By AD70, with Jerusalem in ruins and the Jewish Temple pulled apart stone by stone, the Christian's traded persecution by the Jews, to the Romans. Yet, persecution was always a visible symbol of the world's hatred of Christ. Corruption, was often that unseen enemy that secretly, and silently slithered its way into the Church, to turn its members astray.

Although the *early church fathers* (ECF-the disciples of the Apostles) differed on varying doctrines, they were primarily chiliast in their eschatology. This view is what we would call today, Pre-Millennialism. They believed in a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth, and that He would establish His kingdom. To those who didn't hold to this, they considered heretical, because they were departing from what Scripture and the Apostles actually taught. From Lambert Dolphin's excellent summation of the ECF's strong and widespread Pre-Millennial view, he writes and quotes;

Philip Schaff, the dean of American church historians and himself a postmillennialist, provided the following summary of the early church's view of the millennium:

"The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment. It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius." Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VIII vols. (Grand Rapids. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), vol. II, p. 614 (<http://www.ldolphin.org/premillhist.html>)

From the first through the third centuries, there arose two prominent schools of theology in the Middle East; one in Antioch (modern day Syria), and the other in Alexandria, Egypt. Alexandria had come to be the new center of Greek philosophical learning and academia, and thus had a strong cultural influence. So when Christianity began to become a dominant force in Alexandria, Gnosticism influenced how they shaped their views of Christianity.

Yet, the allegorical approach struggled to gain acceptance during the first two centuries, primarily because of the ten periods of intense persecution by the Romans. How could the *Kingdom Age* be now, if the "kings" were imprisoning, torturing, and killing all the Christians? But with Emperor Constantine gaining the empire in 306AD, and then subsequently converting to Christianity, a new golden era seemed to be on the horizon. This is when the allegorical approach really began to take off, because then it became far more politically correct to believe they were "the kingdom", then teaching that Christ would physically return and overthrow the kingdoms (including Constantine's) of the world to establish His own.

Once the allegorical view became the majority view, it quickly and soundly dismissed the idea that Christ would return literally and physically. This view, championed by theological giants like Augustine, is what we call the Amillennial view of eschatology. (A-meaning a negative, like Atheist, or Apolitical) The Amillennial view then transferred all the promises and blessings from a non-existent Israel, to their Gentile audiences. The Kingdom as it were, was not some future event to look forward to in some distant day with Israel at the head of the nations, and Christ at the head of Israel, but to them, the Kingdom was spiritual, and it was now.

The Amillennial view became the default eschatological view of the rising Roman Catholic Church, which not only helped them assimilate many different cultures into the church, but by promoting the idea that they were kingdom, gave themselves immense power and authority. For the next thousand years, they kept their translations of their Bibles purely in Latin, which made the new converts (or the illiterate and/or who couldn't speak Latin), completely reliant on the Roman Catholic priests to read it to them. Of course, this kept the RCC prominently in power, and they exercised great power over kings and kingdoms for many centuries through the Middle Ages. This Amillennial (and later Post Millennial) view dominated Christendom from the time of Augustine well past the Protestant Reformation.

Assessment

This is in part, why opponents and critics of Pre-Millennialism, the Pre-Tribulation Rapture and Dispensationalism, often accuse our view as only being a 'recent' teaching since the 1830's. The truth is, it was taught; first in the Scriptures, and then by the (ECF) for the first few centuries before being suppressed by a popular, and more powerful and politically correct view of eschatology. Another thing to consider is, from the 1st century through the 18th, owning your own Bible was a privilege that few could afford. The invention of Guttenberg's Printing Press in 1440 helped put more Bibles into circulation, but illiteracy was rampant and the average person usually had to rely on clergy to teach them what the Scriptures actually said...which came with its own set of problems.

Augustine of Hippo, was a pagan convert to Christianity around the turn of the fourth century AD. His views on Scripture, were still highly influenced by the Greek syncretistic view of the dualistic and Gnostic understandings of good and evil. (**Syncretism** is the combining of different, often contradictory beliefs, while blending practices of various schools of thought.) He converted to Christianity and greatly influenced the founding and formation of the Roman Catholic Church system through his vast writings. Dr. John F. Walvoord writes;

The importance of Augustine to the history of amillennialism is derived from two reasons. First, there are no acceptable exponents of amillennialism before Augustine, as has been previously discussed. Prior to Augustine, amillennialism was associated with the heresies produced by the allegorizing and spiritualizing school of theology at Alexandria which not only opposed premillennialism but subverted any literal exegesis of Scripture whatever. Few modern theologians even of liberal schools of thought would

care to build upon the theology of such men as Clement of Alexandria, Origen or Dionysius. Augustine is, then, the first theologian of solid influence who adopted amillennialism.

The second reason for the importance of Augustinian amillennialism is that his viewpoint became the prevailing doctrine of the Roman Church, and it was adopted with variations by most of the Protestant Reformers along with many other teachings of Augustine. The writings of Augustine, in fact, occasioned the shelving of premillennialism by most of the organized church. The study of Augustine on the millennial question is a necessary introduction to the doctrine as a whole.

(<http://rediscoveringthebible.com/WalvoordAmillennialismAugustine.html>)

Subsequently, when the Protestant Reformation came to be almost a 1,000 years later, the Catholic monk Martin Luther, in his attempt to reform Roman Catholicism, was expelled and would create his own movement which rejected the Catholic system of penance, purgatory, indulgences, and priests, in favor of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone as the sole authority). Yet he, and those who followed, didn't change the Amillennial eschatology but simply brought that over with them when they left the RCC system. So the Lutherans, Episcopalians, Anglican's, Presbyterians, and others, still to this day, maintain in large measure, the Amillennial view of eschatology.

Preterism came out of the Roman Catholic Church around the 17th century, in an attempt to quell the Protestant assertion that the Pope was the Antichrist, and his RCC, the Beast. According to Wikipedia:

“Historically, preterists and non-preterists have generally agreed that the Jesuit Luis de Alcasar (1554–1613) wrote the first systematic preterist exposition of prophecy - *Vestigatio arcani sensus in Apocalypsi* (published in 1614) - during the Counter-Reformation.”

Again, it aligns itself with the Amillennial view, which denies a future, visible, and physical Kingdom with Christ at its head, but goes even further by saying, that either all (or most) of all Bible prophecy had been completed at Christ's first coming.

Conclusion

What we see when using historical hindsight, is how true Biblical eschatology was corrupted over the last two millennia, first by the Gentile converts with their cultural, educational, and theological baggage they brought with them, and then by the changing views of who and what the Church actually is (*Ecclesiology*). Both the Pre-Millennial and Dispensationalism views aren't new, they've just been rediscovered once men of God began to go back to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. The same could be said of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. M. Luther didn't invent *salvation by grace through faith*, he simply rediscovered something that the Roman Catholic Church had long suppressed. These views (Premillennialism

and Dispensationalism), once held by many, became suppressed and censored by the rising Roman Catholic Church, and were limited to small pockets of believers here and there. In summary:

1. The early church was predominantly Pre-Millennial from the 1st – 3rd centuries.
2. The early church widely understood in varying degrees, that God’s progressive revelation to man was dispensational in nature. An excellent article here breaks down the departure from Scripture over the first three centuries. <https://bible.org/article/theology-adrift-early-church-fathers-and-their-views-eschatology>
3. The burgeoning ecclesiastical and largely Gentile Church, in large part, suppressed and corrupted the role and nature of Israel either by assuming it through varying degrees of *Replacement Theology*, or by ignoring it through Reformed and/or Covenant Theology.

This historical explanation should then rule out any historical claims that the Amillennial and Preterist camps make in saying their view is the “original” view. In fact, it should be abundantly clear, that the Amillennial, Post Millennialism, and Preterist view, were and still are, heretical in their assertions. So instead of throwing out the term “heretic” loosely, let’s define what the definition of heresy is according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: *A belief or opinion that does not agree with the official belief or opinion of a particular religion.* I think an even more in-depth definition that I’ve come across, is one that comes from the website *Let Us Reason*.

“Heresy can be defined as any departure from Christian orthodoxy which is a teaching, doctrine or practice that goes beyond the apostles teachings — the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). Biblical heresy is often a denial of the core beliefs held in the Church that are founded on the Bible. In this sense it applies to groups which reject basic Christian doctrines and separate themselves from the historic church.”

Clearly, the Bible teaches that a literal, physical, tangible Kingdom will come in the future to the earth, with Israel at the head of the nations, and Christ at the head of Israel. [Daniel 2:44-45, Isaiah 2, 11, 65, Zech. 14:16-21, Luke 1:31-33, Acts 1:6-8, Rev. 20] The only way you can dismiss this, is if you ignore, redefine, and allegorize what the literal interpretation says, and then teach that it means something else. That is not what we are to do with our Holy Scriptures, nor were we given permission to do that. (Rev. 22:18-19)

Yet, that is exactly what Amillennialism, Post-millennialism and Preterism does. They (promoters of these views) looked at the conditions of their day, and they saw the nation of Israel gone, and the Roman Empire finally embracing Christianity, and turned the Pre-Millennial view on its head in order to remain ‘culturally relevant’ (i.e. politically correct). So if the Bible doesn’t teach the Amillennial, Post Millennial or Preterist view, why do so many Christian denominations still promote them as legitimate views?

(See here: <http://www.gotquestions.org/origin-Catholic-church.html>)

Conclusion

In order to take either view, again, one must completely disregard what the Bible actually says, and then redefine it to say what the interpreter wants it to say. In other words, the views of Amillennialism and Preterism deny what Scripture says, and then offer their own interpretation. You might be asking, 'so what'? True, one's eschatological position does not impact one's status in regard to salvation, but it has huge implications on one's sanctification and maturing in the faith. Roman Catholicism has long exerted power and control, not only over its constituents, by keeping its adherents in bondage to a works-based salvation but has also exerted vast influence over kings and kingdoms both politically and militaristically for centuries.

They have done this, because they believe they are 'the kingdom', and their Pope, is the "*Vicar of Christ*" on earth. They have been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews and Christians during the Crusades, 30 Years War, and the Inquisition, as well as leading millions of people to hell with a false gospel centered on one's own good works as justification for salvation. This is not a slam against Catholics who truly believe that they are doing the right thing, but this is absolutely a slam against Roman Catholicism as a religious system. This is also a slam against the heretical, eschatological views that have long been given a pass as irrelevant. Ideas have consequences.

Heretical teachings have consequences. The consequences of Amillennialism is a misplaced of "Kingdom Now" and militantly forcing itself on the world at large, in an attempt to change a world that the Bible says, is currently under the sway of the 'wicked one'. (1 John 5:19) The Bible is also clear, that things will progressively get worse and worse, until the whole world comes under the control of one man, Antichrist. (Rev. 6, 13) Yet because the Amillennialist, Post Millennialist and Preterist outright deny what Scripture says, they are in actuality, working to build a world in which falls right in line with what the Antichrist will inherit.

Furthermore, the theological damage these views have, in part have helped decimate generations of believers who no longer are looking up, but are skeptical, critical, and have fallen away from the faith in large measure, because their 'blessed hope' (Titus 2:13) has been removed and placed with visions of a fallen world and a Bible they aren't sure they can believe in anymore. The real tragedy is, that because these views remove the imminence of Christ's return, and the expectation we should have as believers, many will not be ready when He does come back for the Church.

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. **Rev. 3:3**

The Sound and the Fury

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” **Daniel 12:4**

Not to restate the obvious, and in case you hadn't noticed...the world is speeding up. Now, the world is still spinning at roughly the same speed it always has, which is 1,040 mph for a full rotation every 24 hours. But even if we are sitting still, we are moving through space at about a 1/2 kilometer per second...yet, you and I don't feel that movement.

The world is speeding up in regard to the accumulation of knowledge and information, and through those, technology is leap-frogging us faster and faster into the place where God said we would be, many thousands of years ago through the Prophets and Apostles. No longer are we waiting for signs to confirm what we believe, but like Peter wrote, we are (as they were) eyewitnesses to the prophetic word being confirmed. (2 Peter 1:16-21)

Information then, being the primary initiator of change, is in and of itself, weightless, yet weighty. Information available increases with each passing generation. It was thought that back in the Roman era, accumulated knowledge doubled roughly every 1,500 years. (This being the total accumulated knowledge of what men knew about the world and everything therein) By the 1750's, knowledge doubled about every 250 years. By the 1900's, by about 150 years. By the 1940's, about every 25 years. Today, knowledge is doubling roughly every 24-28 months and still increasing.

But information carries weight, depending on what it says and what it means. Think about a child who has done something wrong, having his or her mother state...*wait until your father hears about this when he gets home.* Or for defendant waiting to hear the outcome of his or her sentence. Learning about the death of someone either near to you, or perhaps someone famous. So too does the discovery of new fields...such as splitting atoms (nuclear fission) by Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman, which inadvertently, thrust the world into the atomic age.

Yet, what took men like Einstein and Hahn lifetimes to discover, we today, can read and understand in a relatively shortened, condensed period by reading and studying their work. This then applies to any field of endeavor, whether it's medicine, history, aviation, physics or theology. There are even studies now being

conducted, in trying to develop skills which are automatically learned through direct uploads, such as was the case in the 1999 movie 'The Matrix'. This still being a highly controversial and disputed subject, it's not known now if it would take years, or hundreds of years before this is mastered. But if I were a betting man, I would think it sooner, rather than later.

Technological fantasy, such as teleportation, instant learning, flying cars, etc....only seem fantastical, until they're not. What I mean by that is, if you were to ask an expert (military or scientist) in the 1920's or earlier, about a singular bomb whose destructive power was so great, that it could literally wipe countries off the map, they would have said it was impossible. Or perhaps they would have said that such technology would take hundreds of years to develop.

Yet only two short decades later, such a bomb existed when the US detonated *Fatman* and *Little Boy* over Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Then, only nine years later, we detonated a 15-megaton fusion (hydrogen) bomb at the Bikini Atoll, in an operation code named *Castle Bravo*. Seven years after that, the Soviets exploded "Tsar Bomba" in the Siberian archipelago Novaya Semlya, which was and still is, the largest detonation ever recorded in human history.

In regard to travel, man had been limited from the beginning up until the 19th century, to primarily three modes of travel: walking, riding an animal, or by sail or row boat. It wasn't until the 18th century that man discovered how to harness the power of steam, and then began applying it to various contraptions to power machinery. Man, then applied this to boats and then later, to trains. True, these were primitive in regard to the speed at which they moved men and material, but it opened up a new form (or type) of travel and reduced the workload on man and beast. From then until now, we have had planes, automobiles, turbine jets, rockets, hovercraft, and everything in between. We've broken the sound barrier, and we've even been able to send satellites to the far reaches of space, as well as robotic craft to survey the surface of Mars. Scientists even now are working diligently and are feverishly close to being able to teleport matter.

The point being is that we would be remiss to dismiss the potential for technological breakthroughs as being impossible. Again, they're only impossible, until they're not. This then confirms what the prophet Daniel recorded, in that man's ability to know and travel, would be greatly increased (or ever-increasing) from his day forward until the time of the end.

Gog and Magog

Juxtaposed to the prophetic understanding Daniel was foretold about concerning the increase in knowledge and travel, is that of Daniel's contemporary, the prophet Ezekiel in his seemingly paradoxical prophecy concerning the future Gog and Magog battle. The Battle of Gog and Magog is a coalition of nations who would come against this future, unified Israel. To clarify, this battle fits no historical profiles of any wars or battles Israel or Judah has had to face in the past. Condensed we see...

... 'Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. ⁴ I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.... "On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know *it*? ¹⁵ Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army....It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes." **Ezekiel 38:1-16**

For certain, this writer believes this to be a war still future, yet I have always struggled with the idea that men would be going back to horse and swords to fight, particularly since we've come so far over the last millennia and in particular, the last two hundred years of perfecting warfare. Nor do I believe these passages to be overly figurative, as if Ezekiel were equating horses and swords to guns and tanks. I believe he saw what he saw, and his exclusion of modern non-electrical weaponry such as machine guns, doesn't mean he didn't also see them.

So although this is a bit of speculation on my part, I think it has some points worth considering. If you've read any of my previous articles, you know I believe there may be a gap between the Rapture of the Church and the start of the Tribulation. How long a gap I'm unsure of, nor do I think we can know this side of the Rapture. But here is how I believe it might transpire.

1. The Rapture of the Church not only removes believers from the earth, but in the process, but also physically disrupts life on planet earth as they know it, possibly causing an EMP-like event. (Luke 17:24) Although I'm loathed to credit him, Perry Stone may have been on to something on this particular topic that a lot of other people quite frankly, overlooked. If the Rapture also

physically disrupts life aside from the sudden absence of believers and children, what purpose would that serve?

At a minimum, at least four purposes.

- a. It masks the Rapture from close scrutiny because of the chaos and gives cover to the final world government. Never has the world been so hopelessly reliant on the Internet and digital systems to function.
 - b. It immediately decimates the global economy and renders our current system of digital/hybrid currencies useless. This of course would force a change to our current economic model and temporarily erase geopolitical boundaries.
 - c. Never letting a good crisis go to waste, this then allows for Gog and company to take advantage of this situation...ie...this being the hook that God uses to turn them around. This also coincides nicely with the first two Seal Judgments (riders on the white and red horse).
 - d. What emerges (in relation to governance) after the fact clamps down on who has access to the new digital currency and information. This reek of the Hegelian Dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) already being put in place by both by those who seek a global government. (Think how quickly the Patriot Act passed after 9/11)
2. After the initial disruption of this EMP-Rapture event, the world is then forced out of necessity, to re-align itself into ten regional governments once power is restored and resources reallocated. Once the internet is brought back online, it is controlled through an inter-regional agency through a loyalty-test, and in the “Mark” which makes receiving the internet possible (knowledge, information, buying, and selling), necessary.
 3. Due to the loss of power and the brokering of regional powers, the internet is only restored to those nations who have agreed to regionalize and participate in the newly aligned, digital system that we now, are in the process of handing over.

With regard to Gog’s attack on Israel, I don’t have the time to go back through who Gog is, but read here for a highly detailed read on why Russia is Gog. The Russians view this as the perfect opportunity (while the world’s distracted) to turn and attack Israel. But it’s not only Israel they want, but also control of the Suez

Canal. Since communism kills the entrepreneurial spirit in a society, communist nations must rely on taking from others, to promulgate their form of governance. For instance, Nazi Germany and Hitler were praised in the 1930's for their boom in economic prosperity, but that "boom" was only based on a *Four-Year Plan*, (see also Matt Ward's article) because the German high command then knew it wasn't sustainable...which perfectly dovetailed into 1939's invasion of Poland.

The Russian economic situation today is precariously fragile, as a large portion of their income is based on natural gas and oil. With the prices being as low as they are, their military buildup has been significantly stunted, and they are spending money they simply don't have, which is why, they must initiate some military action soon...hence the interest in Syria and Iran. They're regaining a foothold to reposition their forces. In this case, the American's are playing checkers, but the Russians and Persians are playing chess. It would seem that they're thinking many steps ahead.

In regard to Israel dwelling safely, it would seem from man's perspective that they haven't known that since the day they were reconstituted as a nation in 1948. From the outset, they've been either fighting hot wars, or dealing with a perpetual intifada from the Muslims surrounding them...and for the past 60 years or more, Russia has been in large part been the ones who has been arming the Muslims. But to the idea of "safely" perhaps we are looking at it from the wrong perspective. (See also Isaiah 11:11, Ezekiel. 36-37) Perhaps the *dwelling safely* is from God's perspective in that He has secured their right to live in the land irrespective of what man does.

I will bring back the captives of My people Israel;
They shall build the waste cities and inhabit *them*;
They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;
They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.

I will plant them in their land,
And no longer shall they be pulled up
From the land I have given them,"

Says the Lord your God. **Amos 9:14-15 (circa 750 BC)**

The Rapture's in the Air: Part 1

If you've ever been on an airplane departing from a busy terminal, maybe you've wondered how your 747 is able to punch into the clouds upon departure, and seemingly make the necessary turns and adjustments in the clouds to get you from point A to point B. Commercial flights usually operate under what is known as Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). When flying IFR, the pilots do not look outside except for takeoffs and landings, but in flight, they are solely reliant the navigation instruments to determine everything from airspeed, altimeter, navigation, and rate of climbs and descents. Likewise, they would also be receiving instructions from an Air Traffic Controlling (ATC) agency who is giving them commands on where and when to turn, when to climb or descend, or to maintain current headings and altitudes.

In IFR, there are different kinds of instrument approaches you can use, depending upon what kind of instruments your aircraft has available to it. One of the most common ones amongst aircraft is the VHF Omnidirectional Range, or VOR. Without getting too technical, a VOR offers you direction, but does not give you distance, unless it intersects with another VOR airway. The VOR itself sits on the ground usually near an airfield, and serves as a marker for your approach, should you need it in case of bad weather. Unique to a VOR, is the 'cone of confusion' you enter, as you pass overhead of the VOR. In other words, the closer you are to the actual navigation aid, the more sensitive your instruments become to it, causing rapid oscillations and false readings.

As both an aviator and a student of prophecy, I cannot help but draw the parallels between the increasingly vitriolic attacks on the Pre-Tribulation Rapture doctrine, and this 'cone of confusion'. I am of the firm conviction that the doctrine of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is the only biblical eschatological position regarding the timing of the Rapture and as evidence to its validity, the increasing hostility towards it, and the confusion on the subject, means we must be very close indeed.

The truth is, the Rapture of the Church is going to happen whether we like it or not. The Rapture of the Church is in effect, the victory 'ticker tape' parade through Satan's domain where Christ our Redeemer, escorts us to our new heavenly abode. Yet, before He does this, the dead are resurrected and the living are instantaneously translated into immortal bodies. It will also happen in accordance to the way Scripture says it will, which is before the seven year Tribulation begins. So think about it this way...Jesus is returning, and He is giving us 'superman' type bodies, and we get to leave this crummy, sin-ridden world...and "Christian's" are angry about this? That dog don't hunt.

It strikes me as odd that the level of anger and vitriol, which is leveled against those of us who hold the Pre-Trib view, especially coming from other "Christians". It seems that a lot of folk are apprehensive and irritated that Christ would have the audacity to return without their say-so. Again, with all the savagery directed at us "Pre-Tribber's", you would think we were attempting to add a fourth deity to the Trinity or something. When you boil it down, the encapsulated inside the Pre-Trib view is the following:

- That Christ ushers in His Kingdom, not men

- The Church is NOT Israel, nor is the Tribulation for the Church
- That God delivers His Bride (the Church) before He pours out His wrath on the earth
- That God's wrath begins with the first Seal Judgment

What has become fashionable as of late, primarily amongst critics of the Pre-Trib view, is to issue financial taunts in the form of the “\$10,000-You Can't Find One Pre-Trib Verse” challenge. While even though we do offer verses which are Pre Trib in nature, the fact remains that their challenge is disingenuous at best, and outright blasphemous at worst. Either way, they won't pay, or can't pay, and offer only interpretational excuses so as to discredit any verse we do offer as evidence. But, we have something greater than a single verse, we have the entire canon of Scripture, both Old and New, which verifies and testifies to God's faithfulness in regards to His judgments. Besides, we already know the answer to the pivotal question Abraham presented on the plains of Mamre when he asked the Lord, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? (Gen. 18:23)

We can rest assured that our view, still and always will be, the only biblical version of the “Blessed Hope”. Although I will not be able to address all four of these in a single sitting, they will be addressed, and hopefully in a manner that piques your interest to search these things out for yourself. The following represent popular areas of contention:

Part 1

1. The definition of wrath
2. Who's who in the Tribulation

Part 2

3. The identity of the Restrainer
4. Imminence

Wrath v. Deliverance

And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. **Luke 17:26-30**

First and foremost, a believer's supernatural deliverance in Scripture, is in direct relationship to the size and scope of God's judgment. In describing the time just before His return, Jesus uses both Noah's and Lot's day as examples for what it would look like in the Day prior to His return. In Noah's time, the common argument **against** the Pre-Trib view is that Noah had to endure the Flood via the Ark...thus, the Rapture must be Post-Tribulational.

While it is true that Noah and family endured the wrath whilst floating safely on the Ark, maybe we should take a moment to consider that Noah and family's removal from the earth wasn't necessary. After all, God's plan wasn't to destroy the world itself, or why would He have Noah save the animals? Since their permanent removal was not a part of God's program, He preserved

them through the flood, so they could repopulate the earth after the flood waters receded. (Gen 9) The Ark then was simply the mechanism of deliverance, which allowed for Noah's escape through and above the floodwaters. A true picture of the Pre-Trib Rapture would be Enoch's mysterious departure prior to Noah's day. (Gen. 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:5-6)

Subsequently in Lot's day, deliverance this time was not thru the judgment, but away from it. Since the judgment was limited to, just the two wicked cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, His warning came before the judgment, and judgment was withheld until he left with his family. In this instance, Lot and his family's deliverance was in their departure from the cities before fire rained down. (Gen. 19)

Nevertheless, in either example Christ used, deliverance was before the judgment that fell, not during or afterwards. So a consistent understanding of deliverance, reads prior-to the divine judgment being issued out. Again, when God pours out His wrath, He faithfully removes the righteous first.

So what then defines *wrath*? Merriam-Webster defines it this way:

- 1: strong vengeful anger or indignation
- 2: retributory punishment for an offense or a crime: divine chastisement

Jesus, in the Upper Room Discourse, was pretty pointed in stating that in this life, we would have trials, tribulation, and be hated by all nations for His name's sake. (John 14-16) Christ then prays for Himself, His disciples, and then all of us in the following chapter (17) for strength and deliverance in the form of perseverance to become overcomers. This is in keeping with the biblical construct that, the world is currently under Satan's temporary management, and he's got the whole system rigged against us. (Luke 4:4-6, John 14:30, Eph. 2:2, 1 John 5:19)

Likewise, nowhere in the New Testament are believers promised respite in this life, because we (the servants) are not greater than the Master (Jesus Christ). If they hated and killed Him, we will not be immune from it. The fact that the western world has embraced Christianity to one degree or another isn't necessarily a good thing. On the one hand, it has reduced physical persecution here in the west for a brief period of time, but only because Satan is working something far more nefarious in the forms of division and corruption.

Frankly, we should be more frightened if the world comes to love us, because that means our doctrine has really strayed from the course. (2 Timothy 3, 2 Peter 2-3, Jude, Rev. 2-3) In regards to Eschatological views, simply look at which views the world will tolerate, and which they will not, as another indicator of Biblical validity. To date, I believe that the Pre-Tribulation view is the most hated. Therefore, if Satan runs this world, and He hates the things that God loves, well, you get the point.

However, these trials and tribulations we undergo in this age, does not presuppose that God's judgments are equal and/or on the same level as satanically inspired persecution. God allows it, but only to a certain degree and only to further accomplish His plan. However, these are not divine wrath. In other words, as long as there are Christians and Jews on this earth, and as long

as Satan is allowed to run loose, there will be persecution against God's people so long as He allows it. Christian's have faced persecution in every generation and on almost every corner of this planet for the past 2,000 years. IF Christian persecution were the only barometer for deliverance, Christ would have returned millennia ago.

But it is not.

Persecution, corruption, suppression, and censorship are simply a part of everyday life here on planet earth...just as Jesus said it would be. The aforementioned are NOT what THE Tribulation is about. In fact, *The Tribulation* is not even really the name of the time we are dealing with, but is referred to it as such in common vernacular. We are in fact dealing with *the time of Jacob's Trouble* (Jeremiah 30:7-11), which is also known as *the 70th Week of Daniel* (Daniel 9:24-27).

Who's who in the Tribulation?

The problem with trying to fit the Church into the seven-year *Tribulation* is that the Church has no role to play in it. It would be like trying to fit the cast and plot of *Benny and the Jets*, into *The Sound of Music*...it just don't fit. If we were to understand first, who and what the *70th Week* is for, then that point would become very evident that it has nothing to do with the Church. So let us see what the Tribulation is for, and then who is who inside the confines of it. From **Jeremiah 30:7, 11**

7 Alas! For that day is great,
So that none is like it;
And it is the time of Jacob's trouble,
But he shall be saved out of it...

...11 For I am with you,' says the LORD, 'to save you;
Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you,
Yet I will not make a complete end of you.
But I will correct you in justice,
And will not let you go altogether unpunished.'

As any student of the Bible should know, the Lord gave Jacob the new name Israel in **Genesis 32:28**. In fact, it is the first time the word 'Israel' is used in the entire bible. In Jeremiah's passage, God makes three unassailable points:

1. This is the time of Israel's trouble
2. God will make a 'full end' of the nations, in which national Israel has been scattered too
3. God will punish (discipline), but not destroy Israel

Given the entire context of these verses, the time of Tribulation is what is in context here and is yet future (since nations still exist). Ask yourself then, in light of the entire chapter,

- Where does the Church in which Christ built, fit in?
- Does the Church (the *Bride of Christ*) still need to be corrected in justice?
- Does the *Bride of Christ* still need punishment?

- Where is the Church mentioned in these passages?

Maybe that should be the \$10,000 question.

Part II next week.

Until then, *MARANATHA!*

The Rapture's in the Air: Part 2

Last week, we took some of the common arguments against the Pre-Tribulation Rapture and put them to the test to see if what they promote holds water. I want to again hit on an understanding in regard to our God and the way He does business...primarily in that a believer's supernatural deliverance in Scripture, is in direct relation, to the size and scope of God's judgment. This week we continue with "Who's who in the Tribulation".

Just as was the case with Jeremiah 30's passage, we now turn to Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy for further clarification of who this particular time is for. The future *70th week* of Daniel then is a week of years constituting a seven-year period and becoming the summation of the entire *70 Weeks* (490 years) prophecy as was given to the Prophet Daniel by the angel Gabriel. **Daniel 9:24** states;

"Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.

If you were to take the whole passage of **Daniel 9**, it becomes abundantly clear who Daniel was asking forgiveness for and on behalf of...national Israel. Here, we see the angel Gabriel comes to assure Daniel that God has a plan for the Jew's (your people) and for Jerusalem (your holy city). Again, the Church is nowhere to be seen in this, as Daniel (along with all the other OT prophets) had no concept of who or what the mystery of the Church was then, because it had not yet been revealed, and wouldn't be, until Christ first does in **Matthew 16:17-20**. And just as we don't see the Church in the first 69 weeks, neither will we in the 70th week.

As another point of confirmation, we see in the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Jesus addressing the Church (ecclesia) 19 times in chapters 1-3...yet doesn't mention the *ecclesia* anymore from chapters 4-19 while describing the 21 divine Judgments that are poured out upon the earth. That

may be an argument from silence, but the silence is deafening. Note this as well, the phrase *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches* accompanies each of the seven letters to the seven churches.

Yet, inside the Tribulation, we see this warning given in **Revelation 13:9**, which states *if anyone has an ear, let him hear*. No mention of the church here, nor is there any reference to the *ecclesia* on the earth in any form or fashion. If the Church were still in it, this would have been the perfect opportunity to mention it. At best, critics of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture liken the ‘saints’ as the Church on the earth during the Tribulation. I like to point out, that ‘saints’ is a fairly generic term, which is used before, during, and after the time the Church was formed by Christ and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. So the usage of ‘saints’ as an indicator of who one is, must be understood in light of the context in which it is given.

The Restrainer

One of the most salient points in understanding why the Church is not inside the confines of the seven-year Tribulation, is that Paul exhorts the Thessalonians in his second epistle that they can’t already be inside that specific time period because the *man of lawlessness* had not yet been revealed. The *man of lawlessness* can’t be revealed, until the Restrainer is removed. The Restrainer can’t be removed, until the apostasia has arrived. See the sequential process in **2 Thess. 2:3-8**.

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the *falling away* comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know **what is restraining**, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then** the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

1. Falling away; apostasia occurs first
2. This occurs in conjunction with the removal of the Restrainer
3. And then the lawless one will be revealed

The apostasia, as opposed to general apostasy or a gradual process, must be a singular event. Apostasy has been present since the 1st century, as Paul, Peter, Jude, and John all had to contend with it in their day and onwards. This author believes that apostasia is the actual departure at the Rapture. This is the same timeframe that is tied to the removal of the Restrainer. The Restrainer is first identified in a gender-neutral identity (vs. 6), then in the masculine form (vs. 7).

Were this speaking of *Michael the Archangel*, or *Satan*, they would only be referred to as a ‘he’ or ‘him’ since they are both male in embodiment. Were the *restrainer* human government or religion, or some other type of institution, it would be a thing, and not referred to with a personal

pronoun. The only One who this could be referring too, is neither male, female, or in any type of bodily form...but is also a living being, so as to distinguish from a 'thing'...is God the Holy Spirit. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as a 'He' numerous times in John 14-16, and thus we should conclude, that the clues Paul leaves here can only be Him.

Furthermore, this Restrainer, must be God the Holy Spirit, since evil is present simultaneously all over the created order, and He must be powerful enough to curtail it. We see in verse 9; *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders*. It first removes the Satan as a candidate, since Satan wouldn't hinder himself. Secondly, it removes Michael the Archangel since Michael doesn't (or doesn't presently) confront Satan with anything more than a rebuke. (Jude 1:9) It would seem that just as it was in Noah's day (Gen. 6:3), and again before the Holy Spirit was given in Acts 2, there is coming a time when the Holy Spirit's active role here in the earth will be changed. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, so it's not that He can disappear from the earth, but He will be removing (the apostasia) the Body of Christ via the *harpazo* (catching up) of those He permanently indwells. (John 14:16, Romans 8:9, Ephesians 4:30)

Imminence

I've recently had someone argue against the doctrine of imminence, by stating that since Peter was foretold that he was going to have to die in a certain manner, which would rule out imminence since Peter would not expect to be taken up in the Rapture prior too. (John 21:18-19)

For me, that argument carries very little weight, and seems to ignore the general expectation that Paul, John, James, and the others had in regard to keeping that "blessed hope" alive, even in their generation. Marshall Hawkins writes concerning this "seeming" dilemma.

Time for this gap between Peter's middle age and his old age is allowed for by the progress of revelation. It was not until the book of James (written just about A.D. 50), and then later in Paul's writings that the imminence of the rapture is revealed. Twenty years would have elapsed between the prophecy and the writing of James—enough time for Peter to have aged sufficiently. . . . By this time imminence was a viable doctrine for most of the church since they would have no idea whether Peter was alive at any one moment or not. . . . For those accompanying Peter at this time, the rapture was also imminent because Peter may have been seized and martyred at any time, making the rapture possible immediately afterward. *Marshall Hawkins, "Rebuttal of the Posttribulational Denial of Imminence" (Unpublished ThM thesis, Capital Bible Seminary, 1979), p. 45. Cited in McAvoy, "Critique," p. 83*

Let me conclude this discussion on imminence with a bevy of passages linking our faith, with the any-moment return of Christ and its biblical significance.

1 Corinthians 1:7, 1 Corinthians 16:22, Philippians 3:20, Philippians 4:5, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 1 Timothy 6:14, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 9:28, James 5:7-9, 1 Peter 1:13, Jude 21, Revelation 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20, Revelation 22:17, 20

[Excerpts from Dr. Tommy Ice's Imminence and the Rapture]

Conclusion

As I mentioned earlier, a believer's supernatural deliverance in Scripture, is in direct relationship to the size and scope of God's judgment. When the Tribulation comes, it will encompass the entire world and there will be no place for man to escape to on the earth, thus the reason why the removal of the Holy Spirit indwelt Church, has to be off the planet. This reasoning fits exactly with what Jesus States in **Revelation 3:10**...

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

The Mid-Trib, Pre-Wrath, and Post-Tribulation views try to promote the notion that 'prepared' believers are somehow exempted from the judgments and persecution that will come upon believers in the Tribulation. Yet, we see in **Rev. 6:9-11** and **13:7** martyrdom has become global, and that the Antichrist is given the ability (or permission) to overcome the 'saints'. In fact, the ONLY ones' are sealed supernaturally, are those 144,000 Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel, who are listed out by their respective tribes. (Rev. 7:1-8) So the question then becomes....where and what is the believer 'kept from' during the Tribulation in which martyrdom is the only for sure guarantee?

The only view, which ensures and supports the biblical view of imminence, is the Pre-Tribulation view. The Tribulation is a highly chronicled time, broken down by days (2,520), months (42 x 2), and years (3 ½ x 2) marked by 21 divine judgments, and a clear mid-point with the Antichrist standing in the *holy of holies* in a newly rebuilt Jewish temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (Matt. 24:15, 2 Thess. 2:4, Dan. 9:27). The question then is, how can any view of Christ be considered imminent, (no man knows the day or hour) when there are clear signs and markers counting down to the day, the Lord will return at His Second Coming?

The Spaces In Between

Neither the Old Testament, or the New, paints a happy picture of peace and prosperity for mankind leading up to the time and including *the 70th Week of Daniel* (aka the Tribulation). It would seem as it were, that the world will continue to atrophy until the point in which the geopolitical, societal, and religious situations become so bad, God will once again intervene in the affairs of mankind, in order to redeem those who are His and to continue the plan He's had since before the creation of the world.

It is in the dispensational understanding that God chose to reveal His plan progressively, with each era, receiving a little more of what the overarching plan is. In other words, God didn't chose to reveal everything He could, to Adam. He didn't reveal everything to Abraham. Or to Moses. Etc. This is an important concept to grasp, because it not only explains how God has chosen to operate but will also explain the 'why'.

The Fall - Flood

At the Garden, and before the fall, Adam was given dominion over the earth and all therein. He essentially, was God's chosen agent to rule (or administrate) if you will, over His theocratic kingdom. When Adam and Eve sinned, they committed open rebellion against their Creator, and essentially handed over that kingdom, to the enemy, Lucifer. In other words, they forfeited their right to rule and bequeathed it to the usurper. (Gen. 1:26-28, 3) Since that time, Lucifer (or Satan) has remained the defacto, albeit, temporary, administrator or manager of the earth ever since. (Luke 4:5--6, 1 John 5:19)

From the fall of Adam, until the time of Noah, we have this period that the Bible has relatively little to say about but covers a period (based of genealogies found in Gen. 5), of around 1,656 years. The observations about the following can be made of this specific time period;

1. There was no written *Word of God* (that we know of) in which man could use to understand God's intent and purpose for their lives here on earth.
2. It is assumed, that men and angels, were in much more direct relations than at any point after the flood. We see the results of the fallen angels, and potentially, Satan's attempt to corrupt man's genepool through this 'hybridization' of the *sons of God* and the *daughters of men*. (Gen. 6:1-4, 2 Peter 2:4-5, Jude 1:6)
3. It is then assumed, that there were also good relations, or sanctioned relations, between angels (not fallen) and mankind, who served God in relating to man, God's plans and intentions. Enoch prophesied and presumed to have had some writings that was copied and/or preserved down through history. (Jude 1:14-15)

The net result then being, mankind's wickedness exponentially grew until the point, in which the threshold of man's redemption had been crossed, and God would have to wipe man off the face of the earth and start over with only Noah and his immediate family. Considering the longsuffering and patience of God, (who's character hasn't changed from then until now), the

condition man was in must have so egregious, and irreversible, that God had no other choice. Again, in God's omniscience, this was not a surprise, but perhaps, a foreseen reality that still pained God to have to see play out. (Gen. 6:5-7)

The Flood - Babel

The next global, divine intervention we see play out, is at the *Tower of Babel*. So, it shouldn't surprise anyone that as we (this generation) draw closer to the final moments of human history that we not only see this convergence of prophetic signs, but we also see the amalgamation of cultures and beliefs back towards a singular system. This return to unification as it were, being the largest, yet most overlooked sign, which serves as clear, providential evidence of where we are on God's calendar.

Consider the old Genesis 11 adage; *what God has separated, let not man put back together*. After all, we started out as one race and one system, and it seems only natural that despite the genetic, cultural, and linguistic differences that God separated man with back at the Tower of Babel- humanistic man would ultimately, at the end of the age, try and return back to. A side note that might confuse some, is that Genesis 10, 'the table of nations', is actually after Genesis 11's account at Babel. It's a summary, if you will, of what actually happens. We see the actual separation spelled out in Genesis 10:20, 32

But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. **Gen. 11:5-9**

The *tower at Babel* is significant, not in that God fears ziggurats or skyscrapers, but in what man was trying to accomplish by building it. First, man was attempting to create a means of escape, should the flood happen again. Also, it would serve as a means to reconnect with the divine order, as it was prior to the flood. Consider the following observations:

1. It is as innate to man to want to ascend into the heavens, as it is of animals to follow their natural instincts. The reasons man wants to ascend, is that man was created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-28), and man was built with eternity in his heart (Ecclesiastes 3:11). In other words, man is not just a physical being, but also a spiritual one. And when Adam and Eve fell at the Garden, they forever severed that divine connection they once had.
2. Man's actions at *Babel* were in open rebellion against God's directions in Genesis 9 to spread out over the face of the earth, and were an attempt to build a tower, whose heights would presumably save mankind, in the event that another flood came along. It would seem then, that God's rainbow covenant with mankind (Gen. 9) was either not repeated, or were lost to subsequent, post-flood generations.

3. The Apostle Paul wrote that Satan's domain is not in some dark, shadowy cavern of Hell, but in the air. (Eph. 2:2) Satan's domain is in what we would call, the first and second heavens, or the atmosphere and space surrounding earth. Building a tower that reached into Satan's domain that many years ago, with the intentions they had, is something that could have sped up man's timeline were it not divinely frustrated.

Again, this means is that man is not just physical, but is also spiritual being. Man desires something greater than himself, yet without God, he cannot attain it. This was why man turned to the *dark arts* and secret knowledge in the past, in order to gain access to that divine power that he once had access too. The significance in relation to today's world is, that technology has come to replace the *secret arts* in unlocking the things man desires most.

From Babel - Christ

Going forward from Adam's day, we see a narrowing process in which out of the race of mankind, a particular people were set aside. (Gen. 12:1-7, Exodus 19) Out of these people, a particular family. (Gen. 22:15-18) Out of that family, a particular tribe. (Gen. 49:8-12) Out of that tribe, a particular bloodline. (2 Sam. 7:12-16) Out of that bloodline, the Messiah. (Matt. 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38)

Jesus's coming then, as foretold from the beginning, (Gen. 3:15), was shrouded in secrecy, so as to prevent the usurper, Satan, from further agitating God's plan of redemption. Now, God doesn't fear what Satan knows, or what he can do, because Satan is only allowed to do what God allows. But, to minimize the amount of divine interference necessary, and to continue to allow men to have free will, God chose to hide His plan in plain sight. He did this through the manner of progressive revelation, in that it was revealed to many writers, from three continents, over a period of 1,600-2,000 years.

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1 Cor. 2:6-8

From Christ - Rapture

In Matthew 16, at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus revealed to His disciples that He would build a Church (ecclesia), and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Later, just before His crucifixion, Jesus further clarified that when He left, He would go and prepare a place for them. And if He left, He would come again to take them (and us) to be where He is. (Matt. 16:17-20, John 14:1-3) It is in this understanding that Paul would later expound upon the actual process of this 'catching up'. The dead (their spirits) would be rejoined into a new, resurrected body. The living would be 'translated' from mortal to immortal. In this new condition, all who had either died 'in Christ', or were still alive 'in Christ', would become a Bride to the Messiah awaiting our Wedding Feast. Our departure would thus force the enemy's hand to enact a covenant, which

would then trigger the start to the final seven years of human history. (Daniel 9:27, 1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-56, Rev. 3:10)

From Rapture - 2nd Coming

Once the Church (the Bride) is removed from the earth, the final week of years (Daniel's 70th) will find its role in culminating unrepentant man's tragic history here on earth. This final seven years will be 21 divine judgments that are poured out upon the earth as God prepares the nation of Israel, the nations, and the earth itself, for new management. Christ returns this time, not as the suffering servant, but as the reigning King. He will destroy the armies at Armageddon, cast the Beast and the False Prophet alive into the Lake of Fire, and establish His Kingdom at Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem also comes down to a low-level orbit around the earth, as the Church and Apostles administrate various ruler-ships under our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jeremiah 30:7-11, Daniel 9:24-27, Matt. 24:15-31)

Conclusion

Like the memorialized dash (-) on a tombstone representing an insignificant symbol grossly misrepresenting the expanse of an individual's life, we exist somewhere in the dash of human history, situated between the birth and death of a race of beings, whose tragic and redemptive story will be told and retold, explained, and unpacked into eternity future. As a race, we can scarcely fathom the glorious future God has in store for those who love Him. For those who have rejected God's plan of salvation, all of eternity will be spent in agonizing torment in the blackness of darkness forever. (2 Peter 2:17, Jude 1:13)

God the Father set a plan in motion that would afford man both the opportunity, and the freedom to choose good or evil. To accept His plan of salvation, or their own. He has only intervened as necessary to keep His plan going in the right direction, neither bullying man at every turn, nor abandoning them to their own devices. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16) It was and is a perfect plan, for an imperfect man, with an angry adversary thrown into the mix futilely attempting to change the course of his own doomed destiny.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **Ephesians 2:4-7**

Signs of the End: 1 of 5

Neither the Old Testament, nor the New, paints a positive picture of peace of the world leading up to and including *the 70th Week of Daniel* (aka the Tribulation). God has intervened three times in the past on a global scale, and will twice more in the future. The Bible states that conditions will become so wicked in the future, that if God doesn't intervene, no flesh would survive. It would seem as it were, that the world will continue to atrophy until the point in which the geopolitical, societal, and religious situations become so irreconcilably wicked, that God will once again intervene in the affairs of mankind in order to redeem those who are His, in perfect synchronization with the plan He's had since before the creation of the world.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. **Ephesians 1:3-6**

It is in the dispensational understanding, which we recognize that God chose to reveal His plan progressively, accordingly to the era, receiving a little more of what the overarching plan is. In other words, God didn't chose to reveal everything He could to Adam. He didn't reveal everything to Abraham. Nor to Moses. Yet, the varying amount each received, would collectively speaking, paint the total picture of God's plan for the ages. This is an important concept to grasp, because it not only explains how God has chosen to operate, but also why.

Man's Fall to the Flood

At the Garden, and before the fall, Adam was given dominion over the earth. He was God's chosen agent to rule over the Creation kingdom as theocratic administrator. When Adam and Eve sinned, they committed open rebellion against their Creator, and essentially handed over that kingdom, to the enemy, Lucifer. In that light, they forfeited their right to rule and bequeathed the title deed to the earth, to the usurper. (Gen. 1:26-28, 3) Since that time, Lucifer (or Satan) has remained the defacto, albeit, temporary, administrator or manager of the earth ever since. (Luke 4:5--6, 1 John 5:19)

From the fall of Adam, until the time of Noah, we have this period that the Bible has relatively little to say about, yet covers a period (based of genealogies found in Gen. 5), of around 1,656 years. The observations about the following can be made of this specific time period;

4. There was no written *Word of God* (that we know of) in which man could use to understand God's intent and purpose for their lives here on earth.
5. It is assumed, that men and angels, were in much more direct relations than at any point after the flood. We see the results of the fallen angels, and potentially Satan's attempt to corrupt man's genepool through the 'hybridization' of the *sons of God* and the *daughters of men*. (Gen. 6:1-4, 2 Peter 2:4-5, Jude 1:6)

6. It is then assumed, that there were also good relations, or sanctioned relations, between angels (not fallen) and mankind, who served God in relating to man, God's plans and intentions. Enoch prophesied and is presumed to have had some writings that was copied and/or preserved down through history. (Jude 1:14-15)

The net result being, mankind's wickedness grew exponentially until the point, in which the threshold of man's redemption had been crossed, and God would have to wipe man off the face of the earth and start over with only Noah and his immediate family. Considering the longsuffering and patience of God, (who's character hasn't changed from then until now), the condition man was in must have so egregious, and irreversible, that God had no other choice. Again, in God's omniscience, this was not a surprise, but perhaps, a foreseen reality that still pained God to have to see play out. (Gen. 6:5-7)

Curiously, Jesus stated that the Days just prior to His return, would be like the days before the Noahic flood. This brings some interesting things to mind we often don't consider.

1. The only way Jesus could have known what the days of Noah were like, is if He were there. So in saying it without coming out and saying it, He is declaring His eternity and Godhead by stating what life was like in the days of Noah, which at that time was 2,500 years prior. This is in the same vein as when He told the Pharisees in **John 8:58** that *before Abraham was, I am*, He here is stating as a matter of fact, what life was like then. Nothing in the Tanakh (Old Testament) mentions the conditions that Christ is saying here as 'buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage'. (Luke 17:27-28)
2. Jesus then, having perfect knowledge of the Antediluvian (pre-flood) world, would also know about the Nephilim, which were the offspring of the *Sons of God* and the *daughters of Men*. Interesting that He would reference this as being similar to the time just before His return, in that man has once again, crossed (and continues to cross) the threshold of unlocking the genetic secrets of mankind, as well as other technological barriers providing for instantaneous communication and information, space travel, teleportation, etc. Just as it is with the discovery and scientific efforts to resurrect ancient animals (mammoths, sabre tooth tigers, etc.), so to would discovery of those giants (if not already) to bring them back via genetic manipulation. We are the only generation since then that has had that capability.
3. There isn't any point inside the confines of the *70th Week* itself that will bear any sense of normalcy as to support 'marrying and giving in marriage', etc. A massive departure of believers simultaneously, one divine judgment after another, and all-powerful satanic signs and lying wonders will rule the day. The days of Noah and Lot must represent the time leading up to the *70th Week*.

Conclusion

While we struggle with the increasingly antagonistic and antichristian decline of the United States and Europe, we need to recognize that this is exactly where the Bible says we would be in

the last days. It is difficult to maintain a positive outlook on life when so many things are falling apart in the world, and it seems as if evil has the upper hand. Let me assure you, that it only 'seems' that way. We know how the story ends, and if our story ends a little earlier than before Christ physically returns for His bride, just know that either way, you will be in the Rapture either being resurrected, or translated alive. Also remember, that Jesus and the other writers in the Bible remind us of one important thing concerning the accuracy and comfort in the study of Bible prophecy...*and now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.* John 14:29

Signs of the End: Part 2 of 5

And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. **Luke 17:26-27**

The catastrophic flood of Noah's day not only wiped all traces of the antediluvian peoples from the face of the earth, but also changed the geographic landscape of the earth's continents. It was during one of Shem's descendants, Peleg's (Gen. 10:25) era, which the earth was divided. There is much speculation and discussion about what this exactly means, but a curious note in the *Book of Jasher* (2:11) says--*It was Peleg who first invented the hedge and the ditch, the wall and bulwark: and who by lot divided the lands among his brethren.*

Along with centuries old scholarly discussions on the subject who have debated between some violent and sudden form of continental drift, or the separation by mass migrations of the offspring of Noah, either way, it happened during Peleg's day, which was around 111 years after the flood. Keep in mind, that Genesis 10, provides an overall summary of Noah's descendants and their dispersion across the face of the earth and is summarized as such in verse 32. When proceeding on to Genesis 11, take note that mankind is united there on the plains of Shinar near *Babel* so that Genesis 11:1-9, is an expansion of just one of the grandsons of Noah (as mentioned in chapter 10), prior to their global dispersion from Babel.

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord." And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that *is* the principal city). **Genesis 10:8-12**

The Flood - Babel

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

My position on this has changed over the years, going from what was the traditional view for the location for the site of Babel (southern Iraq), to now, more northern Iraq/Syria. A more detailed summation of this is outlined in Answers in Genesis, but the conclusion is one in which I tend to agree with. The below is the summary of that article:

It has been shown in this paper that, based on biblical, historical, geological, and geographical evidences, the Tower of Babel was most likely built in the Khabur River triangle of North Syria, somewhere inside a triangle marked at its points by Tell Brak, Tell Aqab (near Amuda) and Tell

Fakhariyah; and could not have been located anywhere in southern Mesopotamia, as has been traditionally believed.

There are a myriad of reasons why northern Iraq/Syria makes more sense, but the top three for this author are:

1. If you were building a tower, which in part, was to serve as an escape for a future flood, you wouldn't build it in a flood plain. You'd start in the mountains or on higher terrain.
2. It is likely, given the proximity to the time of the flood itself, most if not all of southern Iraq, would still be under water. It remained marshlands up until the time of Saddam Hussein, who drained it in an attempt to punish the Shia Muslims native to that area back in the late 1980's, early 1990's.
3. The current borders we have, are largely artificial arrangements from the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), which resulted in the British and French carving up the Middle East upon the conclusion of World War 1 and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Historically, by the time of the Babylonian kingdom- through the Seleucid Kingdom (312-63BC), Babylon and Syria were largely synonymous.

But the location aside, we now turn to the "why" of the tower.

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. **Gen. 11:1-9**

The *Tower at Babel* is significant, not in that God fears ziggurats or skyscrapers, but in what man was trying to accomplish by building it. First, man was attempting to create a means of escape, should the flood happen again. After all, the flood, during the time period of Genesis 11:1-9, was still recent history. Interesting to note as well, that where the timeline is given for the descendants of Shem (so and so begat so and so, and lived xxx years), there is none for Ham and Japeth. So it is possible that Peleg was alive during Nimrod's day, who began the world's first dictatorship. But the tower was also significantly disturbing for a far deeper reason, in that it would serve as a means to reconnect with the divine order, as it was prior to the flood. Consider the following observations:

4. It is as innate to man to want to ascend into the heavens, as it is of animals to follow their natural instincts. The reasons man wants to ascend, is that man was created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-28), and man was built with eternity in his heart (Ecclesiastes 3:11). In other words, man is not just a physical being, but also a spiritual one. And when Adam and Eve fell at the Garden, they forever severed that divine connection they once had.

5. Man's actions at *Babel* were in open rebellion against God's directions in Genesis 9 to spread out over the face of the earth. It would seem that God's Rainbow Covenant with mankind in Genesis 9, was either not remembered, or was lost to subsequent, post-flood generations.
6. The Apostle Paul wrote that Satan's domain is not in some dark, shadowy cavern of Hell, but in the air. (Eph. 2:2) Satan resides in what we would call, the *first* and *second heavens*, or the atmosphere and space surrounding earth. Nothing good would come of building in the 'high places' that reached into Satan's domain.
7. Some have suggested that they were attempting to build a 'star-gate' or inter-dimensional portal to reconnect with the supernatural world as they once had before the flood. Considering that we are doing the exact same thing now with projects like CERN, it's not unreasonable to assume that man was incapable or unwilling to attempt it.

Beyond Babel

When Jesus was describing what the conditions on the earth would be like at the end of the age, He didn't reference back to the time of Joshua, or Moses. He spoke specifically to a time before the earth was divided by nations, when the supernatural, violence and wickedness ruled the day. But He also spoke about a specific incident, which occurred after Babel, which was infamous for its wickedness when He said...

Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Luke 17:28-30

We get the clearer picture in Genesis 18-19, of what life was like there in Sodom and Gomorrah during Abraham and Lot's day. Clearly, God didn't destroy the world with a flood for marrying, eating and drinking. Neither did He wipe Sodom and Gomorrah off the face of the earth for eating and drinking, buying and selling. The pre-flood world was a **time** of extreme corruption, deviancy, and wickedness. Sodom and Gomorrah was a **place** of the same making. A microcosm if you will, of what life was like before the flood. (See 2 Peter 2:4-8, Jude 1:6-7) Babel was the way station between the two.

Conclusion

Consider the old Genesis 11 adage; *what God has separated, let not man put back together*. After all, we started out as one race and one system, and it seems only natural that despite the genetic, cultural, and linguistic differences that God separated man with back at the *Tower of Babel*- humanistic man would ultimately, at the end of the age, try and return back to that

The *Tower of Babel* incident, forced God's hand to act in the interest of mankind. Granted, it wasn't a surprise to God, as He is omnipotent, but He knew He would have to act on account of the disastrous potential there. It shouldn't surprise anyone that as we (this generation) draws closer to the final moments of human history that we not only see this convergence of prophetic

signs, but we also see the amalgamation of cultures and beliefs back towards a singular system. This return towards unification as it were, being the largest, yet most overlooked sign, serves as clear, providential evidence of where we are on God's calendar.

We've seen in just this past century, man's ability to overcome this separation with the endorsement of English as the universal language. This is because for the two centuries prior to American dominance, the British Empire was worldwide, and they of course, spoke English. Just as the geo-political conditions were perfect for Christ's first coming, (*pax romana*, universal Koine Greek language, Roman roads), so too is our day primed for another direct divine intervention.

We have the technological means to overcome linguistic differences through artificial translators. We have launched into space. We are attempting again to build inter-dimensional portals. We have made the world small again with the advent of the Internet age. Wickedness and violence are the norms of the day. Homosexuality and other deviant lifestyles are being promoted as the "new normal" by the highest levels of political office around the world. Anyone who dares to stand against this onslaught of lawlessness, unfortunately, often feels the wrath of the full weight of the political, societal, and media powers upon them.

Man's attempt to reconnect with the divine outside of Jesus Christ and the Bible, simply reinforces the reality, that man is not just a flesh and blood being, but also spiritual. Man desires something greater than himself, yet apart from God. This was why man turned to the *dark arts* and secret knowledge in the past, in order to gain access to that divine power that he once had access too.

The significance in relation to today's world is, that technology has come to replace the *secret arts* in unlocking the things man desires most. We are crossing divine 'red lines' which once crossed, can't be undone. As we get closer to that point of no return, God is going to recall those who are His, back to Himself to unleash the full weight of His wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth. So while the days seem dark, and the world is fully engaged and mocking God's seeming disengagement from the affairs of man, we must remember His words...

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. **Revelation 3:10-11**

Signs of the End: 3 of 5

The next event in which God has directly intervened into the affairs of mankind, was and still is, the most significant one. It is where God, robed Himself in the flesh of a man, through a birth which defied the very laws of nature in which He established, came and lived a perfect and sinless life. At the culmination of His life, and at the appointed time, He then willingly died for men at the hands of the Romans (Gentiles) and the Jews, so that He could redeem mankind back to Himself. This Man, who left heaven, became in effect, our Kinsman Redeemer. Those before Him, looked for His coming. Those after, look back at what was wrought there at the Cross of Calvary. His 33 ½ years, have become in effect, the epicenter of all human history.

In His life, Jesus Christ validated the prophetic Scriptures by fulfilling His manner of birth, place of birth, time of birth, and His youth...thus proving without a doubt, that the OT prophet's words are in fact, the very words of God. In His death, He became the Passover Lamb which would take away the sins of all mankind and thus, conquered sin. In His resurrection, He defeated death. His death provided the justification that in Himself, one can only find eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and the necessary redemption to his or her Creator. His resurrection then proving, that life really only begins, after one dies and enters into the eternal order.

Going forward from Adam's day, we see a narrowing process in which out of the race of mankind, a particular people were set aside. (Gen. 12:1-7, Exodus 19) Out of these people, a particular family. (Gen. 22:15-18) Out of that family, a particular tribe. (Gen. 49:8-12) Out of that tribe, a particular bloodline. (2 Sam. 7:12-16) Out of that bloodline, the Messiah. (Matt. 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38)

Jesus's coming then, as foretold from the beginning, (Gen. 3:15), was shrouded in secrecy, so as to prevent the usurper, Satan, from further agitating God's plan of redemption. Now, God doesn't fear what Satan knows, or what he can do, because Satan is only allowed to do what God allows. But, to minimize the amount of divine interference necessary (think Noahic Flood), and to continue to allow men to have free will, God chose to hide His plan in plain sight. He did this by way of progressive revelation, in which His plan was revealed piece by piece, over a period of 1,600-2,000 years, to men from all walks of life, and geographically situated on three separate continents.

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1 Cor. 2:6-8

The beauty of God's word is as such, that despite the time, distance, and unfamiliarity between the men He chose to speak through, yet their message flowed together harmoniously and complemented each other without contradiction or error. When, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus spoke to the two disciples, and began removing their disbelief, doubt, and sorrow by using the Old Testament Scripture which all pointed to His coming, and the things He would have to do, in order to bring mankind back to His Father.

Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. **Luke 24:25-27**

In His first advent (meaning arrival), Christ came as promised in the OT, and offered the Kingdom to the Jews of His day. His message was... *from that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matt. 4:17) and it was a legitimate offer specifically for the Jewish people (Matt. 10:5, 15:24), with the prerequisites for its arrival laid out in the *Sermon on the Mount* (Matt. 5-7). This message would later change towards the end of His ministry due to the continued rejection by the Jews and their leadership, in which *from that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.* (Matt. 16:21)

The Jew’s rejection of Him was already known by God before He ever sent His Son to them. (Isaiah 53:3, Dan. 9:26, John 15:25), yet God still sent Him because He is faithful, even when we are faithless. (2 Tim. 2:13) This plan to redeem mankind, was thought of before Creation occurred (Eph. 1:4), and would find its first major fulfillment, in the coming of God to man in the form of Jesus Christ. It was at that specific time, that God knew the conditions would be perfect for the initiation and distribution of the Gospel of Salvation (Gal. 4:4-5);

1. The Greek language was the common language of the day, and happens to be one of the most precise and specific languages ever developed by man
2. *Pax Romana* (Roman peace) was in effect, which allowed for the quick transmittal of the Gospel throughout the known world then.
3. The Messiah would have had to come before the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora (AD70) (Dan. 9:24-27), but before the Jews’ lost their right to judicial punishment (Gen. 49:10). This in effect, left a small window of time for His life and death that the Jewish people should have recognized. (Luke 19:41-44)

Prior to His death, when questioned, Jesus explained to His disciples in great detail about the things to come preceding the end of the age. On the *Mt. of Olives* Jesus began laying out for them general signs of the end, which although present in every generation, would be like birth pangs, and becoming increasingly intensified and ultimately culminating in one generation. (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) He first began by sharing with all the disciples upon departing the temple, how the temple would be destroyed (vs.3) with not one stone left upon the other.

As they arrived on *Mt. of Olives* itself, four disciples out of the group came up to Him privately and inquired about His previous comment about the destruction of the temple. It was Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark 13:3-4) who He would begin one of His longest discourses on, regarding the time and events surrounding His second advent. Remember, He had been previously telling them since Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13-28), that He was first going to have to go to Jerusalem and be handed over to the officials to be executed. Now He was talking about

events that would necessitate long periods of time such as the destruction of the temple, false messiahs pretending to be Him, earthquakes, famines, wars, and then, an ultimate desecration of the Holy of Holies...which would by implication mean, another temple would have to be rebuilt. He concludes the signs of the end, by the description of the end with...*then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* (Matt. 24:30) But He did not leave them in the dark necessarily. And in capping off this discourse, He gave them the *Parable of the Fig Tree*.

The Fig Enigma

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. **Matt. 24:32-35**

The disciples, being Jews and having a working knowledge of their Scriptures, would have understood the parable to be a reference to Israel, since several OT prophets and writers had used figs and fig trees as being symbolic references to national Israel. Not only that, but having seen Jesus earlier in the week, curse a barren fig tree on the way into Jerusalem, and seeing the immediacy of that curse being carried out as early as the next morning, should have sparked some curiosity and understanding in their minds about the true nature of the parable Jesus was saying. So, follow the logic here...

Figs and fig trees had come to be symbolic of national, political, Israel. This would have been understood by His disciples. [Judges 9, Jeremiah 24, Zech. 3:10] Jesus had already explained in the Olivet Discourse prior to the Fig Tree Parable, that the temple would be destroyed, and all those signs would have had to occur.

Earlier that week, Jesus curses a barren fig tree, and note the mention that the ‘disciples heard it’. “Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.” *And His disciples heard it.*” **Mark 11:12-14**

The next morning, the tree was shriveled up. So when Jesus says, learn this parable from the fig tree...He was referencing the fig tree they saw Him curse. *Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.”* [Mark 11:12-14, 20-21]

Jesus, the Creator, would have known already that it wasn’t the season for figs. This was intentional so that He could use it later as an illustration for the ‘Parable of the Fig Tree’. *Now learn this parable from the fig tree...* that national Israel’s unwillingness to accept Him was a sign that Israel had not yet reached its season for bearing fruit. They (that generation—Matt. 23:36, would not see the Messiah, nor would Israel again until the season was right (vs. 37-39).

Jesus, pointing back to the barren fig tree, references the understanding of the season as being similar to seeing all the signs He listed out for them in the Olivet Discourse. Only that generation (who saw all the signs) would be the ones who would not pass away, until all these things find fulfillment.

Conclusion

For those people (primarily the preterist and amillennialist) who promote the idea that the disciple's generation were the only ones who saw all the signs (destruction of the temple, wars, famines, etc.) and we need not look any longer, should remember, that the destruction of the temple as mentioned by Christ, was not included in the Olivet Discourse proper, per say and is separate from the signs of the end of the age. Jesus mentioned the destruction of the temple to all those with Him as they were departing the temple, **not** as they were sitting on the Mount of Olives. It was only the four disciples who privately came up to Him later on the Mt. of Olives to further inquire about the signs of the end of the age. So the generation mentioned in the *Parable of the Fig Tree*, would be that generation which saw the signs Jesus alluded too as being marker's for the end of the age.

Those signs include; wars, rumors of war, false prophets and false Christ's, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in many places, would be like birth pangs. In other words, they would escalate in both frequency and intensity, until reaching a culmination point that the 20th and 21st centuries could certainly qualify for. More people have died in the 20th century due to war, famine, and pestilence, than the previous 20 centuries combined. Likewise, there has been many coming who have either claimed to be Christ, or claimed to represent Him, and have led tens of millions astray. Furthermore, the increase in frequency and intensity of earthquakes has within the last ten years, reached a fever pitch.

But Jesus pointed to a specific event in Matthew 24:15, in which the *Abomination of Desolation* would be the key sign for those in Judea, to flee as fast as they could. (vs. 16-22) This is interesting primarily, because Christ had begun this entire block of Scripture with the comment that not one temple stone would be left on top of the other...which most certainly would include the Holy of Holies. For a Holy of Holies to be there to be desecrated, there needs to a Jewish Temple.

For a Jewish Temple to exist, there needs to be a Jewish government in power who allows it to be rebuilt. For a Jewish government to exist, the Jews would have had the land and people given back to her in order to be established as a nation again. Then there needs be a Jewish government that has the political will to allow a new temple to be rebuilt. For this to occur, would mean that a largely secular and religiously complicated Jewish government, after decades of failed peace efforts, comes to the final conclusion, that there can be no appeasing the world and allows it to be built regardless of the political fallout. But first...*they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.* **Luke 21:24**

Signs of the End: 4 of 5

Prelude to War: The Rapture

The next major event in which Christ breaks into human history, is the Rapture of the Church. This oft contested and vigorously debated event, will absolutely happen. Where the confusion lies, is when. Some hold that it already happened in the past. Some hold that it is still yet future. Even some are either ignorant of, or care not, when and how it occurs.

Speaking to His disciples at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus revealed to His disciples that He Himself would build a Church (ecclesia). But this wouldn't be just any 'church', nor would it be a religion or denomination. This one could only be entered by God's grace, through our faith, and admittance to, could only be by the baptism of the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ Himself. This was no ordinary Church, because the very *gates of hell* itself (appropriate imagery considering the location) could not prevail against it. This Church wouldn't be built by around traditions and rituals, but on one founding principle: that Jesus is the Christ, and the Son of the living God. (Matt. 16:17-20)

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. **John 14:1-3**

Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus further clarified that when He departed, He would go and prepare a place for them. But He did not leave them without hope. He said that when He left, He would send a Helper (the Holy Spirit) who would draw all men unto Himself. (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7) This Holy Spirit would be the one who baptized those who believed, into this multi-membered, singular, body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:13) Believer's would be 'sealed' until the day of redemption, and that day, being the *day of Christ*, the day of the Rapture of the Church. (Eph. 1:13-14, Philippians 1:6, 10, 2 Thess. 2:2)

So the disciples saw their Lord crucified. They saw Him risen from the dead. They witnessed Him walk through walls, yet eat, appear and disappear, yet be touched. They witnessed His ascension into glory, and they witnessed the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They witnessed and saw the power of God the Holy Spirit as He moved amongst God's chosen. And so it has been these last two thousand years. God drawing men, women, and children, from every tongue and tribe that has existed to these many years.

Yet, this time of the church will not last forever. God very clearly through His apostles and His Son, lay out rather succinctly when and how this Church age will one day, draw to a close. It's at this closing, that God will go back to settle His unfinished business with the Christ rejecting world and bring Israel to the point in which they cry out 'blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'. (Matt. 23:39, Rev. 1:7, Zech. 12:10, Jer. 30:7-11)

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so

God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. **1 Thess. 4:13-18**

It was given to the Apostle Paul to explain this mystery, a mystery (mysterion) being something that had not yet been previously revealed in Scripture, Paul explained to the Thessalonians and later to the Corinthians, that the dead would still participate in the Rapture event. In fact, those believers who had already physically died, were in heaven already in their spirit form awaiting that Day so as not to continue on 'naked', or without a physical, glorified body. (2 Cor. 5:1-5) This is consistent with Paul's teaching that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:6-8) Both Peter and Paul alluded to the imagery that our bodies we currently inhabit, are as 'tents', compared to the glorified bodies (buildings) we will one day inhabit.

But one has to wonder, why...

1. ...are the dead included in the act of the Rapture? And if they (the dead in Christ) are already in heaven, why not just keep them where they are, and instantaneously transform them there?
2. Why are we meeting Christ in the air, as opposed to either earth, or heaven?
3. ...is there even a Rapture event to begin with?

Conclusion

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Eph. 6:12

I believe the answers to these questions are very much in line with that of a military operation. It is very much true, that as believers in Christ, our battle isn't with sword or gun, but with philosophies, with vain thinking, and with pseudo-"Christian" organizations who prey on the weak-minded and scripturally illiterate. We battle the satanic and demonic doctrines, behind the men and women, who are influencing millions. And thus, the Rapture is a formal declaration of war, by way of removing of His ambassadors unto Himself, in enemy territory, against the enemies of God. (2 Cor. 5:20)

'Vengeance is mine, I will repay' says the Lord. (Hebrews 10:29-31)

Those who have died in Christ since Pentecost, will return with Christ to receive their reward of a glorified, immortal, imperishable body, in the air, to showcase them, along with the living, in front of the entire demonic host. This is why Christ calls us up to the air, and not directly into Heaven itself. This is why the dead are included in this event. This is why there is even an event like the Rapture to begin with. Clearly, both in word (Rev. 3:10) and in type (Rev. 4:1-2), the

Rapture happens before God pours out His wrath (all 21 judgments) upon the earth. It is this author's belief, that prior too, or at, or just after the Rapture, Satan is cast out of Heaven once and for all. His access is caught off, and being confined to earth, his fury is then directed squarely at Israel. How is the Church kept from the very time of something that impacts the entire earth, and all those who dwell on it? Answer; the Rapture. If you read Revelation 12 and understand that it is a broad sweeping summary of thousands of years of history, you then understand that the woman is Israel, and that she gave birth to the Messiah. You'd see Jesus's entire life, death, and Harpazo (Rapture in Latin) captured in a single verse (12:5).

There then is a gap between His ascension and our deliverance now going on 2,000 years, as the next passage seemingly jumps into the last 3 ½ years of the Daniel's seven year, 70th week. We know somewhere between verse 5 and verse 6, there was 2,000 years of history, out of which, 1,878 years Israel spent in her own wilderness of Diaspora. It is this author's belief, that it is possible, that at the Rapture we displace Satan and his demonic host who once had access to the throne room of God to accuse us, has been cast down forever. (Job 1:6-12, Rev. 12:10)

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." **Rev. 12:7**

In **Revelation 3:10**, Jesus says that the overcomers (1 John 5:5) are promised something...

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. This is that time, in which Paul corrected the Thessalonians about in **2 Thess. 2**, that the antichrist (lawless one) can't be revealed, until the Rapture occurs by removing the Holy Spirit's open presence in the planet, via the Church, through removing the vessels He's sealed into.

It's not that the Holy Spirit could be removed or set aside, because He is God and He is omnipresent. But what is understood, that just as the Holy Spirit was present on the earth, prior to His given and fiery show at Pentecost, so too will He exist after the Rapture...it's just that His role will be different than it was during the *Church Age*. But until that Day, we keep looking up...

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ^{who} will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,

according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. **Philippians 3:20-21**

Signs of the End 5: The Second Coming

The final event in which Gods interjects directly into the affairs of fallen man, is what we know as the Second Coming. The reason we call it the Second Coming, is that this will be the second time Christ physically returns to the earth. This is opposed to the Rapture of the Church, where we believers are physically *caught up* to meet Christ in the air and go back with Him to the Father's house for a period of time. No, when Christ comes at the Second Coming, there will be no mistaking it for He will return and the whole of creation will serve as a witness. The sky will split open, and the armies of heaven will follow Him, making the grandest procession a king had or will ever make.

The Second Coming is as different from the Rapture of the Church, as His First Coming was from His second. In the first, He came wrapped in human flesh, as a humble servant. In His second, He returns in His glorified form as the victorious *King of kings*. The first coming He allowed men to mock, beat, and crucify Him...but at His Second, He speaks a word and millions are slain. He masked His divinity at His first coming, so He could redeem men, as a man. He will not mask His divinity in His second coming...for every knee will bow at His Kingship. At His first, only a Star marked His place for a few shepherds. At His second, the world will see the sky's parting and be in terror. He is the rightful heir, and the world that remains in that time, will be awestruck at His coming and even those who are in hell will see His coming. (Rev. 1:7) The sky will part for Him and the armies of Heaven will follow. **Revelation 19:11-16** says...

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

Those who mock the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church and say there is no singular, specific passage that points to the Rapture happening before the 70th Week, are in denial of one specific point. That point being, that there is likewise no singular Old Testament passage that states Christ will come in two stages; first as the humble Servant, and then second as the reigning King. They can't do it, because there aren't any. There are passages that speak to His death (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53), and there are those which speak to His ruling and reigning. (Psalm 2, Isaiah 11) The reason they can't, is because that is the way God designed our Scriptures. He knew that if fallen

and unregenerate man, who under the suppression and control of Satan, would not have allowed God's plan of redemption to play out as it did.

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **1 Corinthians 2:7-8**

Yet, even though Christ did what no man could do by conquering sin and death at His death, burial, and resurrection, the world viewed His time here largely as a failure. In fact, if you were to ask many a Jew today, why they don't believe Jesus was the Messiah, they would state emphatically, that He failed to usher in the Kingdom. This then has been their problem since that first century, where the Jewish people have since had a partial blindness placed upon them. (Romans 11:25-29) They are unable to recognize that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled every one of the prophetic passages from the Tanakh which spoke to His First Coming. Jesus stated, that they (the Jewish people) would not see Him again, *till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'* (Matt. 23:39) This according to Zechariah 12 and Revelation 12, will not happen until past the halfway point of the Tribulation. Christ will return, and the Jewish remnant alive then, will finally recognize Christ for who He is...the Messiah and King, the rightful heir of the throne of David.

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. **Zech. 12:10**

Before the Second Coming, were we to work our way backwards from that moment, we would see the world and its inhabitants, being tenderized and pummeled by a series of 21 divine judgments. The judgments are sequential, and they decimate the population of the world by upwards of 3/4th. That means, were the 70th Week of Daniel (the Tribulation) period to begin tomorrow, with a current global population of seven billion, at the end of it, only around two billion would remain. The judgments are also two-fold; first to destroy a Christ rejecting world, and the second, to bring those who would be saved, to redemption, namely, Israel. (Jeremiah 30:7-11) So working backwards from the end, the outline is as follows:

- The Second Coming-where Christ physically and visibly returns to the earth in judgment and war. Upon completion of this war, Antichrist and the False Prophet are cast alive into the *lake of fire*, and Satan is bound in the Abyss for 1,000 years. (Rev. 19:20, 20:1-3)
- The Battle of Armageddon-where the Antichrist and the armies of the world gather to siege Jerusalem-all who participate against Christ are slain (Zech. 14:12-15, Rev. 19:17-21)
- The destruction of Babylon (both spiritual and commercial) (Rev. 17-18)
- The seven Bowl (or Vial) Judgments-unknown, but considering the increased severity, probably many (Rev. 16)
- The seven Trumpet Judgments-1/3rd of the population is killed (Rev. 8-11)
- The seven Seal Judgments-1/4th of the population killed (Rev. 6-8)

Assessment

So let us recap and summarize the major events we have covered thus far;

The Flood

The first major intervention into the affairs of man, is the Noachic flood. From the expulsion from Eden, to the flood, we see around 1,656 years have transpired. The world had rapidly

declined to the point that our omnipotent God knew, that He would have to destroy most of mankind, in order to save it. Theologians and scholars have overwhelmingly concluded, that due to the prime conditions on earth, man's long-life spans, and lack of genetic imperfections, the global population then would have been in the billions, and only eight people were brought through it.

The Tower of Babel

The next major divine intervention after the Noahic Flood, is the *tower of Babel* incident. This would have likely occurred around 200-350 years after the Flood. Two interesting sites speaking to this are here and here. The second link is from a Jewish site and posits that the population (he does the math) is around 920,000. I have also included the strong possibility, that the traditional site were we think the tower was (now, southern Iraq) was likely still under water. See here for that link. According to Genesis 11, God knew that nothing would be impossible for mankind to do so long as they were united, and again we raced to a point in which God needed to intervene, to save man from Himself.

The Coming of the Christ

As foretold in numerous Old Testament Scriptures, a holy and righteous God, would have to become a man, in order to redeem a fallen man. We see this as early as Genesis 3:15, but would from Adam's day, take 4,000 years to see its fulfillment in the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The Christ (Messiah) was foretold to have to be 'cut off' at the 483rd year mark from the proclamation to rebuild the walls and streets of Jerusalem. (Daniel 9:24-26) That proclamation, was given by king Artaxerxes to his Jewish cupbearer, Nehemiah in 445BC. (Neh. 1-2) The Messiah would also have had to be born before legal right was taken from Israel (around 6AD), but before the temple was destroyed in 70AD by the Romans. (Gen. 49:10, Dan. 9:26, John 18:31) The Christ would have had to be born before Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, so as prove His historical lineage, both of which, were lost beyond 70AD. The Christ would have had to be from the tribe of Judah, and from the lineage of David. Matthew 1 attests to the lineage from Jesus's stepfather, Joseph, and Luke 3 recounts the lineage back to David from Mary's father...but both from the line of David through Nathan, of the tribe of Judah. The only historical figure from history, who fits that bill, is Jesus of Nazareth.

Rapture

The Rapture of the Church is not about making one generation the lucky lottery winners who never see death. The Rapture of the Church is all about removing the Church whom Christ built (based on His death, burial, and resurrection) and finalizing His foreordained commitments and promises to the nation of Israel. Jeremiah 30:7-11, Daniel 9:24-27, Luke 21:24, Romans 11:25-29, and many other passages speak to things and events which will happen to the nation of Israel that either haven't happened yet, or have not found their completion since Christ's first coming. In other words, Christ is removing His bride the Church, in order to wrap up His unfinished business with the nation of people who He initially came to offer the Kingdom too. The Church has no business being in the 70th Week of Daniel. While true, there will be those (many) who come to faith in Christ after the Church is removed at the Rapture, they are not the Church. In order to be in the Church, one HAS to be sealed by the sealing of the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption. (Eph. 1:11-14, 4:30) We are a purchased possession. (2 Cor. 1:21-22) We are

given the righteousness of God and have become new creations. (2 Cor. 5:17-21) We have no business (according to Jer. 30:7-11) in the Tribulation. That is not by John Nelson Darby's design, but by God's.

2nd Coming

This is that final intervention by God into human history, where we see God's vengeance, finally right all the wrongs that have happened since Genesis 3. Jesus comes, along with His saints (Zech. 14:5, Jude 1:14, Rev. 19:6-8, 14) break open the sky and wage immediate and devastating war against the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and their armies. After this, Jesus judges the nations in the 'sheep and goat' judgment, and only those 'sheep' are allowed to enter into the Millennial (1,000 year) perfect and long awaited, reign of Christ from David's throne in Jerusalem. The Church, will come down with the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21) and will rule and reign with Christ for that thousand years. The Millennial reign then, serves as the "front porch" of our eternal destiny with God.

Conclusion

"The non-intervention of God bears very heavy interest, and He is greatly to be feared when He does nothing. He moves in long orbits, out of sight and sound. But He always arrives. Nothing can arrest the judgment of the Cross, nothing shakes the judgment-seat of Christ"
PT Forsyth, *The Justification of God*

The intent with these series, was to show that God has not sat silent, away, and uninterested in the affairs of man. He has long been working to bring about our redemption, through a series of shaping and forcing functions which have steered us to where we are today. Countering that, is Satan and his host of fallen angels. Why God has allowed Him as much free play as he seemingly has, is unknown by us at this point, but it is believed, that our free will has much to do with it. Yet, here is what the Bible foretells of what has happened, and what must happen. While not being exclusively exhaustive in everything, I believe this provides decent outline of things to come. Having said all this, may our prayer ever be, *Maranatha*. Come Lord Jesus.

1. <http://biblicaltimeline.net/towerofbabel.html>
2. [Ask the Rabbi, JewishAnswers.org » Noah, Tower of Babel, & Population Growth](#)
3. [Where in the World Is the Tower of Babel? | Answers Research Journal](#)

The Chimera Complex

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had ten horns. **Daniel 7:7**

We know that according to Scripture, that there is coming a governmental system upon the earth that will absolutely dominate the rest of the world to the point that everyone, everywhere will be subservient to their authority. We also know that given our current chaotic political and economic conditions that a ‘one-world system’ seems about as likely as pigs sprouting wings and soaring with the eagles. Yet as unlikely as it appears to us now, that system will come, because that is what the Bible foretells.

So the million dollar question then is, how do we get from the world we are in today, to that future system? Further broken down, are the subsets of the same question.

- How do we get from a world with an estimated 31 separate and distinct forms of government, to a world subjugated by one?
- How do we get a world’s political system, which is riddled with corruption and bureaucracy, to be one in which can efficiently and authoritatively monitor all the economic transactions (buying and selling) on the planet?
- How do we get a world that has as many philosophical ideologies, as it does religions, come together and willingly agree to subjugate themselves under one theological system?

I think as difficult as the questions seem to be, that it can be answered by use of a comparison.

Imagine if you will, trying to explain to someone in 1969 what an iPhone was. Imagine trying to explain to someone in 1984, that one of the biggest issues of 2016, is whether or not men should be allowed to use women’s restrooms. Try explaining to someone in September of 2002, that by 2016, our President would be lobbying for unrestricted, and unmonitored illegal mass migration of undocumented Muslims into our nation.

In other words, some things just defy imagination.

But things do not just happen overnight. There is always a process that is usually preceded by a period of desensitization that minimizes the shock value when it inevitably happens. This process is called *incrementalism*. Little by little, bit by bit, we are currently enslaving ourselves into a system that will make it absolutely impossible to escape from. So for all those post-trib preppers out there who think they can weather the Tribulation storm in their underground bunkers, better think twice.

But it’s already too late. Enslavement to this system, has been in the works for the last 60 years, and is only accelerating.

Technology is advancing to the point, that no one will be safe once this new system comes online. Debit and credit cards, Internet, online banking, smart cars and televisions, 24/7 surveillance, and about a billion other things we have come to depend on just to survive in our modern world, has made us all prisoners to the system. It's not that one can't live "off the grid" these days, but it is infinitely harder now, than it was even 20 years ago. Think back to the year 1900. Living off the grid was the standard. You had to work hard to get 'on the grid'. That has now completely reversed itself in less than 116 years.

The system today, is by design, meant to keep us all under the thumb of 'the system'. Whether you call that system the government, 'big brother', the Illuminati, the United Nations, the Bilderberger's, or whatever, the fact is, we all are increasingly being wrapped up in this geopolitical and economic spider-web that offers no chance of escape. But in order for this to take place, we need *the process*.

Currency Enslavement

The first step in globalization began back in December 13th, 1913 with the Federal Reserve Act. This began the process to control and harness the financial constraints of a burgeoning and potential superpower. The US had massive natural assets, and vast room to expand. Through two world wars, the US would end up controlling most of the gold available in the world in the 1940's. Think about it this way, the singular financial system that the world currently relies on to provide any semblance of stability, is the US dollar. Yet, the future beast system, controls **all** buying and selling, and would by necessity, need to eradicate the use and need for fiat (or paper) currency since cash is largely untraceable. So unless the Antichrist is American, and the Beast system an American one, something must happen to the US Dollar and our currency structure in order for the passage below to come to pass.

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. **Revelation 13:16-17**

Which is why we now see cash being criminalized, and people penalized for using it. Two methods have been employed to do away with fiat currency, and the first is by devaluing it through massive debt. Weimar Republic anyone? The second is by incentivizing the use of credit, debit, and digital currency. Either way, people are becoming forced (channeled) into using (relying) on a digital system which is easily traceable, trackable, and will be necessary to monitor the unwashed masses (you and I).

Education Indoctrination

Next you would need an education system that systemically, and intentionally, dumbs down the general population. A recent historical finding discovered some elementary tests from the early 1900's that would stupefy a majority of college students today. Thanks to the likes of the John Dewey, Julian Huxley, and other 'progressive' educators who enthusiastically traded God for secular humanism, creation for evolution, and the Constitution for Marxism, we have a serious education problem in the United States. We no longer rank first in any educational category

anymore...and haven't for some time. But while the 'progressives' targeted those in public schools, the *political correctness* movement of 1920's social Marxism began its long march west through the seminaries and universities. Its purpose has had a profound effect on the last two generations.

The concept of PC was developed at the Institute for Social Research, in Frankfurt, Germany, in the early 1920s. The institute considered why communism in Russia was not spreading westward. The conclusion was that Western civilization, with its belief that the individual could develop valid ideas, was the problem. At the root of communism was the theory that all valid ideas came from the state, that the individual is nothing. The institute believed that the only way for communism to advance and spread was to help Western civilization destroy itself, or else force it to. ([The Effect of Political Correctness on Politics - American Thinker](#))

Freedom Security

If nothing else, the Iraq War (2003-2011) taught us the value of biometrics. The Department of Defense (DOD) has since developed the *Sentient World Simulation Project*. To do this, they need facilities capable of storing and processing trillions of terabytes of information, of which they have three that we know of. What this project does is build an online simulation of the world today, complete with digital replicas of ourselves, based on our 'digital footprints'. This being the digital trace you and I leave behind on the net by our social media usage, reading, shopping, browsing habits, and online banking and investing. Even George Orwell couldn't have dreamed this up.

Add to that drones (including micro/nano robotics), GPS targeting, facial recognition data, and image enhancing technology (infrared, night vision, etc.), one would be hard pressed to hide anywhere, anymore. The point being in all this, is that we are perfecting the perfect surveillance society in which no one will ever, be able to get 'off the grid' anymore.

Progress Control

Technology has come to be the number one accelerator in almost every aspect of our lives. We know historically that the rate at which technology doubled in the 1st century was about 500 years. By the year 1500 AD, technology was doubling about every 250 years. Today, it's doubling every 22-24 months. Instant communication, advanced travel, weapons of mass destruction, information collection and dispersion, space exploration, medical knowledge, and many other areas are all moving at a breakneck pace to keep up with each other. Add to that, the barriers once thought impossible, are now being leap-frogged over. Things like genetic manipulation at the germ-line level, teleportation, artificial intelligence, robotics, holographic technology, advanced flight capabilities, and cloaking technology have all moved from Science fiction, to science fact.

Geo-Politics Regionalization

Nationalism at the governmental level, has in the past century, wrought massive destruction with the advents of World Wars I and II. Out of the ashes of both, came the call for global leadership that would prevent the onslaught of a future, global war. After WWI, the *League of Nations*

lacked the political spine and political mechanisms necessary to give it any real authority. What it lacked, was corrected after WWII with the *United Nation*'s. It put the right political mechanisms in place to give the stakeholders, i.e....the Security Council, the teeth to make it stay together. Today, the United Nations has expanded into almost every facet of human existence. Adding to that, about a dozen other trans-regional organizations that at a minimum, lay some claim to regional authority. So from 1900 until today, we have seen a massive shift from nationalistic world, to a world largely run under the guise of regional and global authorities.

Assessment

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

Revelation 13:1-2

The beast that is referenced both in Daniel and later in the Revelation, are the same future system of government. What is of interest though, is that Daniel does not record for us the final form of this global, tyrannical, world government. Whereas the other beasts which are represented in previous empires with animal symbolism, i.e.,...the lion with wings, bear, leopard with wings and four heads, it only mentions the last one as 'dreadful and terrible'. But here in Revelation 13, we see that this final empire, is a combination, or chimera, of all the previous ones.

As you might already know, a *Chimera* was a monster of Greek lore that combined the qualities of many animal's, into one, namely a lion's head, a goat's legs, and a dragon tail. Why this final government is unique though, is that it's taking the tyranny of a dictatorship, merging that with the technology of a technocracy, to enforce complete control, and marrying that to a theocratic rule where this universalistic faith, is ultimately redirected toward the Antichrist himself.

Imagine North Korea on steroids. We are seeing a precursor to this in nations like China, which keep an iron fisted Communist government, but allowing for capitalization underneath it to reap massive financial gains by exploiting slave labor. It will ultimately morph into a theocracy, with the False Prophet directing all worship toward the Antichrist. Perhaps this is why it's shown as a chimera.

This final government will begin as a regional partnership, which is made up of ten areas. Not sure what exactly that looks like, but here is a list of what it could potentially be based on economic power *potential* based off GDP, citizens, and natural resources; the number at the end in parenthesis reflects current *military* power ranking based on capabilities to project that capability abroad, effectively.

1. EU (minus Mediterranean countries) (5)
2. North America (1)
3. China, North Korea (2)

4. *Union of the Mediterranean* (including Med. European nations, N. Africa, Israel, and Saudi Arabia) **(3)**
5. Japan and South Korea **(6)**
6. South and Central America **(8)**
7. African Union **(10)**
8. Russia, Balkan's, former Soviet Satellite nations, Iran **(4)**
9. South Pacific (India, Australia, N. Zealand, Philippines, Vietnam, etc.) **(7)**
10. Central Asia **(9)**

Conclusion

Given the vast disparity in populations, forms of government, natural resources, economic prowess, military capabilities, literacy, birth and death rates, etc...one has to wonder how we could bring all these under one, singular, global system. Since we know that Scriptures teaches absolutely, that there will be a Rapture-event, in which all true, born-again Christian's will be removed from the earth, that of all places, the United States will be the most impacted by it. We have the most Christian's in the greatest variety of positions within the military, government, banking, law enforcement, medical, professional, and specialty skill sets of any nation.

Even if only 10% of professing American's are removed at the Rapture, that's still around 30 million American's. That means our already fragile system, will collapse quickly, dragging the rest of the economies of the world down with it...which is why they are so feverishly working now, to perfect the digital currency, technological surveillance, and all the other means by which to control the world. Although things look dark now, take heart in the fact that our enemy is working overtime to prep the battlefield as it were. Satan doesn't know the day or hour either of our Lord's return, but he knows the season, and is making ready every asset at his disposal, which means that our redemption is closer than we can even imagine.

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." **Luke 21:28**

Living on a Prayer

Hello, my name is Anonymous. No, not *that* Anonymous (i.e...anarchist group), but just the ordinary, everyday, average person primarily residing in 'fly-over' country. I'm not special according to the world's standard. I'm mostly invisible to the movers and shakers of the great here and now, unless I were to commit some egregious, news-worthy crime. Otherwise, I'm just a number, a statistic, or a percentage point on some survey...according to the world's standard of worthiness. Feeling marginalized yet? If not, keep reading.

I have a voice and an opinion on political and social matters, but my opinion carries about as much weight as a torn Wal-Mart sack. Mostly, it's liking or debating issues on Facebook or Twitter. I've often been accused of focusing too much on the next life, as opposed to this life. Although I am convinced in what I believe (i.e....Pre-Trib Rapture, eternal security, Trinitarian, inerrancy of Scripture, etc.), being so scripturally literal mean means my voice and my circle of theological peers is an increasingly shrinking one. It also means finding a church where I can worship with like-minded believers, has become like winning the lottery...the odds are not in my favor.

That is not to say, my life here is as invisible as I make it appear. To my family, I am a father or mother. To my spouse, a wife or husband. If I am unmarried, I might be a brother or sister, and an aunt or uncle. At least (maybe), I am a co-worker or peer, supervisor, friend, and subordinate to my higher bosses. I mostly live paycheck to paycheck. I try to live a somewhat comfortable lifestyle, but *comfortable* is a very subjective term.

Few if any recognize me in public, and my circle of influence (either for good or bad), is relatively small. I make ends meet, and it often feels as if I'm just trudging along, having life happen to me, rather than making it happen for me. So, with all these things considered, let us take a quick self-evaluation to see if any apply.

Choose any/all that apply

- I don't have a local fellowship I feel comfortable worshipping with
- My family has written me off as a 'prophecy-nut'
- I'm not allowed to teach or preach at my local congregation because of my eschatological/theological views
- I have financial or medical problems.
- I struggle both financially and medically
- I struggle with a habitual sin
- I struggle with anger, anxiety, depression or other mental/emotional/spiritual problems
- I struggle with over/under eating
- I am fearful for the future of my children
- I am fearful for the future of my country
- I am fearful for my own future
- I am alone

Assessment

“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. **Rev. 3:8-9**

Few people go through life without any major issues and those who do, should consider themselves very blessed. If you’ve checked any of the above (which should be a majority of you), know that you are not alone. We all have struggles and we all go through trials and temptations in this life. But not knowing you personally, or your specific circumstances, I’ll use myself as the proverbial guinea pig. I am a writer of sorts, having contributed to this and a handful of other websites over the years.

I am nothing of note per say. My opinions and opines don’t make the news, nor are they shattering public perception about any particular topic. I’m not breaking any literary boundaries, or new theological ground. Much of what I write, has been written about many times over...over the past decades and centuries. I’m often discouraged that I am not doing enough, and what I am doing is primarily ‘preaching to the choir’. And while I might be prone to a pity-party here or there... (Pete Garcia---pity-party of one, sir, your table is ready) ...I tend not to stay there long (check please!).

It is because I am keenly aware of the physical suffering and persecution going on around the world, and I grieve as many do, for those who come to faith in Christ while living under the banners of Islamic, Hindu, atheist, or communist nations. While we here in the West have thus far avoided physical persecution; the mental, emotional, cultural, and governmental iron-fisted hammer of political correctness and secular humanism are swinging harder than ever...and it is wearing people down.

Not content with just chipping away at the edges anymore, no the Godless are swinging directly at the very pillars of a society...i.e....the family unit. Whether it is gay marriage, gender confusing education, transgendered bathroom rights, skyrocketing divorce rates, abortion, genetically manipulated embryos, or any number of issues, Satan knows the way to destroy a nation, is by destroying the family. While the structure of the family unit is not exclusive to just Christian families, it would seem, that the wrath of man as it were, is specifically targeting Christian families. If you’re Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Atheist, or otherwise, the laws of this land are either not targeting you, or your cultural standard has found a liberal *exception to policy* stamped across your lifestyle. That shouldn’t be all that surprising though is it? I mean, if Christianity is the one true faith, and every other view (John 14:6) is of the devil, then Satan has no need to attack his own pillars of destruction. He need only target one.

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway* of the wicked one.

1 John 5:19

If that weren’t enough, I tell you, as hard as it is just being a Christian in the 21st century, it’s even harder being a Pre-Millennial, Pre-Tribulational, Dispensational believer in these last days. It’s not that we just have the godless attacking us and our way of life, but an increasing number of those within professing Christendom, who are increasingly acquiescing to any number of

heretical and damning doctrines of demons. Whether that be liberalism, humanism, eastern mysticism, materialism, legalism, or Universalism, mindsets, they are no longer attempting, but are succeeding in redefining what Christianity is and isn't.

Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." **2 Peter 3:3-4**

The scoffers mentioned above isn't the world, as the world doesn't waste time or energy thinking about Christ. No, the scoffer's sadly enough, are those who are within Christendom mocking the idea that Christ is ever coming back. If Satan is currently managing the affairs here on terra firma, (he is according to **Luke 4:5-6**) I would expect to him to stack the deck against both Christians and Jews as we draw down to the final moments of human history. Not only that, but he would prefer it if Christian's formed a circular-firing squad, aiming there attacks at each other as to sow discord, confusion, and enmity between ourselves by confusing doctrines.

I equate living at this specific point in time, a time when the world seems to be enthusiastically and energetically sending itself to hell in a handbasket, to living paycheck to paycheck. But instead of paychecks, we are living from prayer to prayer, increasingly asking for God's protection, sanctification, and perseverance to continue on in a world that has given itself wholesale over to the wicked one. Scripturally speaking, we were forewarned that these times would be like this. Paul writes... *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.* And indeed we are living through them. In His overview of the last days, Jesus said... *"If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."* We were told these things beforehand, so that we could be mentally, emotionally, and spiritually prepared for the hardships of this life.

Although we are in the world, we are not of it. There is a spiritual battle raging all around us, and it is only ever escalating as the time is drawing closer. We are ambassadors for the coming King, and His Kingdom and we are at the precipice of war. (2 Cor. 5:20) We see the battle lines being drawn and the sides being chosen. (Eph. 6:12-17) But war, as in the case with any war, is always preceded by the withdrawal of its ambassadors before the first shot is fired. This life, as dreary and awful as it can be, is temporary. (2 Cor. 4:16-17) For some, it's more temporary than others, but know that this will not be like this forever. Everything that is made has a shelf-life. The world we currently inhabit has a shelf-life. And while things appear to be growing increasingly dark and dangerous, be of good cheer fellow pilgrim...

Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him My new name.* **Revelation 3:8-12**

Armageddon It

As the beloved, late Jack Kelley was often fond of saying, “I think people should get raptured according to their eschatological view”. Seems only fitting after all...at least the ‘post-toasties’ who think they can weather the storm of the 70th Week with an underground bunker and some survival gear can get their money’s worth. But I fear my prayers for eschatological-justice will most likely proceed no higher than my ceiling. And much to their chagrin, all these vehemently anti-Pre-Trib Christian’s are just going to have to settle for being Raptured prior to the start of the Tribulation, whether they like it or not.

I don’t get what the attraction to this view is. That goes for Pre-Wrath and Mid Trib views as well. Any view that places the Church inside the seven year period known as *Daniel’s 70th Week*, has some major eschatological and ecclesiological issues. Jesus stated that this period of time would be the most horrifying in all of human history, (Matt. 24:21-22) and we have huge swaths of Christian’s today who think we are either already in it (but they can’t say for sure when it started), or they think we have to go through it (because we deserve it). The good thing about our God is that He is merciful beyond any human definitions of the word. If we all got what we truly deserved, we’d all be doing head stands in the *lake of fire*.

Look, Pete Garcia didn’t invent the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Jack Kinsella didn’t invent the Rapture. Hal Lindsey didn’t invent the Rapture. John Nelson Darby didn’t invent the Rapture. The Apostle Paul didn’t even invent it. God put that on Paul’s heart to unveil this mystery that even was hidden from the disciples when they walked with Christ. To believe that the Rapture was just a sly deception put on by Paul, is tantamount to saying his epistles aren’t part of Holy Writ or else we deny divine inspiration. Peter stated that what Paul wrote, was in fact scripture (2 Peter 3:14-16)...so if Paul was wrong, then so was Peter. You can see how this unravels from here.

But we had pictures (and types) of this in the OT and NT with the likes of Enoch, Elijah, Jesus, Paul, and John, who all experienced their own supernatural *catching up*. Examples of being supernaturally transported from one place to another would be with both Ezekiel and Philip. All of that to say this...that it is an undisputed fact that God has easily and repeatedly demonstrated His ability to supernaturally move people from one place to another.

One thing I don’t understand are churches who don’t teach on a Rapture event at all. Either they’re amillennial, post-millennial, or indifferent either way. If a church purports to be a Christian one, than their belief has to be rooted in something correct? If it is God, than God has to be the Creator, and outside the boundaries of His own creation in order to both create it, and manage its affairs. If that is the case, and God spoke the universe and all therein into existence, than why is it so hard to believe He can also retrieve both the living and the dead in a moment of time? Why is the Creation, the Flood, and the parting of the Red Sea...believable events, yet somehow the Rapture of the Church falls outside the realm of possibility? It would seem to me, that these people put God Almighty, in a mighty small box.

The Cripplegate recently released an article that I thought, was spot on. The author listened and compared 12 different preachers teach on Revelation chapter 6. Six of the preachers were

amillennial, and six were premillennial and the difference between the two frankly, was startling. I would encourage anyone reading this, to read that before continuing on with this. Its ok, I'll wait....

Assessment

Ok, so you've read it, and like me, see the glaring issues people have, when they stray from the straight up, literal (not woodenly literal) approach to letting scripture speak for itself. When you stray from what the scripture actually says, you have to go into creative-mode to start filling in what you want the text to say...which is highly subjective. This kind of interpretive approach is also called 'eisegesis' (reading into a text a meaning), and it by far has had the most far reaching and damaging effects not only upon eschatology, but on the unity of the Church. For instance;

-Imagine a business where everyone was allowed to interpret the rules of operation in their own way. How long would that business stay open?

-Imagine a hospital where the healthcare providers and doctors, all got to interpret standard medical procedures in their own way. How long before someone was killed or maimed?

The answer to both is, *not very*.

Point being, is that if we ran our society as we interpreted our Bibles, we'd quickly get to the point where everyone did what was right in their own eyes. That's has another name for it, and it is called anarchy. So what we wouldn't tolerate from a hospital or a business, we seemingly make little fuss over with what we believe God's word says. This has allowed for the fracturing and splintering of the Protestant churches.

The opposite of eisegesis, is known as 'exegesis', where the reader pulls from the text what it actually says. The reader could then cross-reference their understanding of that passage with other passages that may be related. While not bringing every believer utilizing this in perfect harmony with each other, it considerably allows for greater harmony and consistency of interpretation. In other words, were all Christian's to take a historical-grammatical-literal reading of the scriptures, there would be far fewer denominations and confusion over major doctrines.

So why do so many well-meaning Christians have such divergent views on the Bible? Well, I can tell you with 100% certainty that it's not the Bible's fault, but rather men's interpretation of the Bible. This has a lot to do with our translations and understandings of the ancient languages. There are also things like 'agendas' and 'biases' that have been particularly effective in distorting particular doctrines such as eschatology. But the real question is, *why would people even want to change the true meaning of the text?*

I think at the root of it, is that people are inherently sinful (no brainer there). Furthermore, when you put sinful men and women in positions of power and authority, it more often than not, corrupts them even more and they begin focusing more on building up their little kingdoms in

the here and now, and focusing less on the Kingdom to come. Take for instance, the Roman Catholic Church system.

The RCC dominated Christendom for the better part of a thousand years from the 6th-16th centuries. Roman Catholicism espoused an eschatological belief that the millennial kingdom was not really a 1,000 years, but was figuratively speaking of the eternal and ongoing reign of Christ...IN heaven. They got these views from a North African theologian named Augustine in the 4th century, who initially taught that a physical reign of Christ on the earth was far too carnal to be taken literally.

True to his Greco-Roman philosophical upbringing, Augustine looked for a deeper meaning beyond the plain meaning of Revelation 20 and other passages which speak of Christ ruling and reigning on the earth and through the use of allegorizing the text (eisegesis), he taught that the millennial reign was an ongoing spiritual one. He got a lot of his ideas from a 3rd century teacher named Origen, who was credited with being the first Christian theologian to begin seriously allegorizing scripture.

But if Christ was busy ruling in heaven, then Christ would “need” a man here on the earth to be His representative (according to their logic)...hence the title ‘vicar’ (think vicariously) of Christ was given to the Roman Catholic Pope. The pope was supposedly from the line of ascendancy from the Apostles, and was supposed to be the sole representative of Christ here on the earth. If the pope is sitting on his papal throne, he is said to speak ‘ex-cathedra’, which means his words and statements are to be “infallible” and presumably from the mouth of God Himself. Given the historical flip-flopping and anti-Christian nature of more than a few ‘papal-bulls’, we know that they aren’t scriptural, and they weren’t from God. From the RCC we also got the atrocities from the Crusades and the Inquisition, and the profiteering from Indulgences for purgatory.

The Protestant Reformers, although making a well-deserved and long-overdue departure from the RCC in the 16th century, didn’t go far enough in righting the wrongs of the interpretative-distortions that had polluted much of Christendom. Although they got things like salvation right (soteriology), they neglected reforming other key doctrinal areas like ecclesiology (study of the Church) and eschatology (study of last things), thus carried over some of the same theological baggage from the RCC they had long sought to escape from. And while having the correct eschatology isn’t necessarily essential to one’s salvation, uncorrected error begets more error.

For instance, if you were a 17th century Lutheran, and you remained an Amillennialist, you would likely not see a distinction between the Church and Israel. At that time, Israel was not a nation again, so the likelihood of a national Israel seemed about as likely to happen, as Atlantis rising from the deep and taking her place amongst the nations again. But if you ignored the distinctions between the two, you either believed the Church superseded Israel, or replaced them altogether as God’s chosen. Out of this error, stems *Supersessionism* and *Replacement Theology*. And while not creating the Nazi propaganda, it certainly augmented the flawed logic behind it with the weight of historical gravitas from the likes of Martin Luther and others who grew to hate the Jew’s. Error begets error.

The rise of Dispensational thought in the 1800's has been accused of many things as of late by critics who equate it's explosion onto the scene with the same sentiments they have for the development of aberrant views such as Mormonism and Jehovah Witness movements. Yet, despite all their cantankerous rancor, all Dispensationalism really is, is a return to the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation without the overlaying of Protestant creeds and traditions (still wet with Catholicism). In so doing, Dispensationalist simply make note of the differing stages man has undergone while serving under an unchanging, and eternal God. Where progressive revelation was the driving force for the writing of Scripture, progressive illumination was the driving force for properly understanding said scripture in light of the totality of scripture and the unfolding of time.

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” **Daniel 12:4**

Conclusion

Although the Bible has undergone numerous translational transitions (from Hebrew to Greek, Greek to Latin, Latin to German, English, Spanish, etc.) the original languages...Hebrew and Greek, have remained the bedrock of the standard we measure our interpretations from. While not the most captivating aspect of our Christian theology to analyze, hermeneutics (how we interpret the Bible) certainly has the widest and most profound reach in how we understand our faith. Abuses of hermeneutics led to the *Dark Ages*. It also led to the rising of divisions, schisms, cults, and other aberrant views that have permeated the last two thousand years of Christendom.

It is this very reason, that Christ told his disciples that *“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.* (John 16:12-13) The Holy Spirit will guide us if we ask earnestly, and He will lead us into all truth. That truth, is not subject to our own private interpretations (2 Peter 1:20), but only that of God the Holy Spirit. Since God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), but the author of communication, He has deemed the scriptures as His manner of communicating to us. We have neither the authority, nor the knowledge to begin inserting our own interpretations into what God has clearly laid out for us. If God had intended for each of us to cherry pick, wildly speculate, and allegorize His word, He wouldn't have given us the scriptures we have, but something more akin to Nostradamus's confusing Quatrains.

The Golden Rule of Interpretation

When the plain sense of scripture
makes common sense, seek no other sense;
therefore, take every word
at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning
unless the facts of the immediate context,
studied in the light of related passages

and axiomatic and fundamental truths,
indicate clearly otherwise. **D.L. Cooper**

Thus, the standard Christian's must hold to in these waning moments of human history, is that the Bible is inerrant in all its themes and doctrines. It is inconsistent (dare I say double-minded) to say that the doctrine of salvation can be taken at face value, but eschatology cannot. When Jesus said "I am the door", (John 10:9) Christ was using symbolism to convey that He alone, was the entrance to salvation. How then do people struggle when Christ is said to have a 'double-edged' sword proceeding from His mouth upon His return...when Scripture tells us that Word of God is sharper than any double edged sword? (Hebrews 4:12-13)

The abuses of interpretation today by a growing majority of so-called "Evangelical" churches, who are promoting post-modernism, human secularism, political correctness, or other liberalistic ideologies, and so many others are intent on redefining God's word to fit a culture who is in rapid decline. Their version of the Bible is about as accurate as the butchering of biblical stories by Hollywood because they lack the Holy Spirit who gives understanding of our supernatural and divinely inspired Holy Bible.

In their eyes, Noah was no more than an environmentalist; Moses was just a military leader; Jesus was just a good man secretly married to Mary Magdalene, the Bible is just another 'holy book' to be placed on the shelf next to the Koran and Hindu Vedas, and **Armageddon** is just an earth-killing asteroid. They are the blind leading the blind, and it is growing worse by the day.

And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
¹⁵ For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And *their* eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.’

Matthew 13:14-15

Long Road to Ruin

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. **Acts 20:29-30**

With the passing of Jan Crouch last week, it brought to mind what we as Christians believe about ourselves in regard to what we consider doing God's good work here on the earth. Moreover, what the world has come to think about the Americanized version of Christianity they see all over the television. It used to be that the West sent out missionaries all over the world to the jungles and unchurched folk throughout the 18th-20th centuries in an attempt to preach the gospel and keep the mandate of making disciples of all nations. Nowadays, the modern missionary has a three-piece suit, fancy cars, mansions, and a wife who probably spends more on makeup in a month, than what most people around the world make in a year.

The late Jan and Paul Crouch founded a televangelism empire with the Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN). If we were to measure what the late Jan Crouch and her late husband Paul were able to accomplish in regard to earthly standards, they should be a resounding success. This empire operated successfully for decades and fiscally speaking, dealt in the realm of hundreds of millions of dollars. Operating successfully for 43 years and owning and operating six broadcasting networks. Their audience reach hits around 95% of American households who own a television. Not too shabby.

Yet, the bulk of televangelism isn't built around preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because let's face it, telling people that their destined for hell unless they repent isn't all that popular a message, or even just theologically sound doctrine, because solid doctrine points you back to my first point. No, televangelism is usually built around the age old, time tested, snake-oil salesmanship. Televangelism is a multi-billion-dollar industry that primarily feeds on the failed hopes and dreams of the poor, building up the emotional needs of the spiritually ignorant, and a stop-gap for the mostly churchless.

The hook is to make the view believe that if they sow their "seeds" of faith' (seeds = money), that this somehow taps into the divine realm where God is forced to either meet their need or give them a tenfold (as a minimum) return on their spiritual/financial investment. Presumably, since the Crouches' and many, many others were able to tap into this desperation and make a comfortable living, what does that say about the state of biblical Christianity here in the West?

Assessment

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. **Jude 1:12-13**

The whole seed-faith doctrine began with men like William M. Branham and Oral Roberts in the 1950's. With them, and the clowns dancing around the stages today proclaiming 'blessings' on people and "healings", it seems to me at least, that they didn't start out intending to become an apostate intentionally. Most in the ministry start out with good intentions. Even Judas Iscariot at the beginning, probably believed he was doing the right thing. But two things are abundantly

clear, the first is the road to ruin is always built with good intentions, and because it is inherent in our DNA to seek after self, which is a result of our sin nature. (Romans 3:10) Even so, I imagine at the outset, the Crouches' didn't intend on ending up as they did, but success has a way of corrupting us. Now, not to give him too much credit, and while Satan isn't omnipotent or omnipresent, he is quick study on the nature of man, and knows that if he can't destroy the Church, he is dang sure intent on corrupting it. And the same can be said for nations. The United States was an experiment that took the best forms and practices of governance from many other nations and combined them into a constitutional republic that was protected by a divided government and a Bill of Rights. This allowed for the unprecedented economic explosion by unleashing the potential of the American worker to make his or her own fortunes. Along that same vein, early televangelist were simply entrepreneurs taking those same economic principles that had worked for many in the corporate world, and applied it to the realm of mainstream Christianity, where the pickings were ripe for the taking.

Unfortunately, the "Greatest Generation" which came out of the horrors of World War II, entered into a period of economic prosperity the likes of which the world had ever seen. This newfound abundance had a detrimental effect on orthodox Christianity by making it mainstream. Living the "American Dream" was as much a right as it was a destination and belonging to a church or denomination became only slightly more important than it was as joining the Mason's or the Rotary Club. American church goers were lulled into the concept of being fed spiritually, rather than feeding themselves, and we got complacent. In our complacency, we grew spiritually lazy, and content with where we were. It became more important to look the part, than to be the part.

President Ronald Reagan once said;

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.

The same could be said for Christianity. We don't pass the salvific and finished work of Christ on to our children genetically, neither can it be obtained by our money. We might pass our denominational leanings on to our children, but never eternal salvation. Salvation has to be understood and believed by the individual. That means then that where biblical Christianity and government meet, is not with the former should rule over the latter, because we as fallen (yet forgiven) humans would only offer up empty, bureaucratic religion. Rather, that the latter, should provide the open forum, where Christianity could compete on equal footing in the arena of ideas.

Christianity went toe to toe with polytheistic Rome and eventually won. But consider if the world were all like North Korea or all under Islamic rule. True, Christianity spreads under tyranny, but it doesn't mature because most Christians in those circumstances are purely in survival mode, sticking to the basics since there isn't time nor energy devoted to deep diving on non-salvific doctrines due to the sheer amount of wickedness forced upon them. Thus while freedom allows for extended pursuits into the deeper things of God, it does allow for the wickedness of man to be exploited.

And while our Founders had the right intentions and all came out of the Judeo-Christian mindset, I'm sure they couldn't even fathom religious cornucopia that would be available these days. Had they known or had the foresight, they probably would devoted more wording and energy to

preserving the very religious system that even allows for a Bill of Rights to even function. (I'm pretty sure they didn't imagine a future US President one day promoting Sharia Law over Christianity). That same freedom of religion we as Christian enjoyed for two hundred years, would eventually become an albatross around the neck of true biblical Christianity as today, every quack pot religious idea is given equal weight to that of Christianity. (Think [Jediism](#), Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, Satanism, etc.)

But since this world is currently under the temporary control of Satan, (Luke 4:5-6) he has done everything in his power to thwart the spreading of the Gospel. Unfortunately for him, when he persecuted the Church, it only caused it to spread like wildfire. Since the 3rd century, he has found a much more effective tool against biblical Christianity, which is to corrupt the churches from within Christendom.

It began in Europe, and by the middle of the 19th century, the European mainline churches led the way into embracing liberalism. Liberalism led to heresy, apostasy, and eventually, the death of those churches. That luke-warmness spread from the European seminaries across the Atlantic to the American ones, and the disease continued to multiply amongst many learned theologians of influence. The freedom we had been afforded, had allowed for one of the most comprehensive hermeneutical pursuits Christianity had ever seen from the likes of Dispensational theology. But without true persecution and adversity, American Christianity began turning soft and by the mid-twentieth century and began producing a generation of theological light-weights. That might sound harsh, but how many churches today would tolerate the preaching's of a Billy Sunday, and/or Charles Spurgeon?

Conclusion

One of the greatest lies Satan ever told the world was "you don't need to make a decision about Christ right now, you have all the time in the world". Complacency wrought about by economic prosperity had been extremely effective in transitioning the American church goer from being the spiritual head of their homes, to being zombie-esque pew warmers at church. The talent pool of shepherds coming out of the increasingly liberal seminaries, became increasingly estranged in their theological teachings, while latching on to all sorts of unbiblical doctrines and practices because they could and none would be the wiser. Add to that a society in decline and you had all the necessary ingredients for a nation bound for apostasy.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. **Matthew 24:3-5**

At the time of Christ's ministry, the Roman Empire was at its height of empirical and militaristic power. Rome also happened to be polytheistic in their religion, not really caring who people worshipped, so long as they paid homage to Caesar as well. Jesus, a Jewish Man from a backwater province of the Roman empire, along with 12 other rag-tag Jews that none of the Romans (save Pontius Pilate) had ever even heard of, made the audacious claim that one day at the end of the age, 'many would come in His name, pretending to be Him'. He didn't say that there would be many different gods coming forth, but that many false prophets would come and pretend to be Him.

And this is why the world moved away from the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman gods...because you can't counterfeit something that isn't real. Satan seized on what makes Christianity.... Christian, and he twisted it. This is why for the past 200 years up until today, we have had an explosion of pseudo-Christian groups, along with heretical movements primarily coming out of the United States and spreading around the world. From the social justice gospel to the word-faith movement (name it claim it), the emergent church, Hebrew Roots, liberal theology, replacement theology, Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, universalism, and many, many more have been flowing out like a counterfeit missionary movement.

And not to pick on TBN that much, but they took the concept of multiple gods, seemed to the Roman pantheon with their gods TBN and the like may not openly promote the 'god of thunder' or the polytheistic Mormonism, but they tend to present many different 'Jesus's', who presumably can't function divinely without our money...er, I mean 'seeds of faith'. The constant barraging for money, along with the negative press these 'wolves' in suits bring about when their caught buying their jets and mansions, has left a bitter taste in the mouths of those who are watching from without. They aren't alone.

To the church at Laodicea Jesus said;

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—**Revelation 3:14-17**

Even so, MARANATHA!

Why the Holy Spirit is the Restrainer

Confusion and denial over the role and Deity of the Holy Spirit has been a pervasive heresy in Christendom since Modalism was first introduced in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, a new confusion has been recently reintroduced. Although this view is not over the Deity of God the Holy Spirit, but over the varying roles in which He has participated in since Genesis 1:2, and what He will do on into the future.

In 1990, Marvin Rosenthal introduced a book entitled *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church* which offered up an alternative view to the Pre, Mid, and Post Tribulation Rapture views that had been debated for millennia. Subsequently, Mr. Rosenthal's work opened a flood gate of similar and divergent views as he was followed by Robert Van Kampen and many, many others who have carried this particular eschatological torch to our current day.

The Pre-Wrath view supports the idea that the remnant faithful are delivered in a Rapture event at the Seventh Seal Judgment. For Pre-Wrath, the Seal Judgments are ongoing once opened and allows for the Church to proceed three-quarters of the way into the seven year, *70th Week of Daniel*. Three quarters of the way in takes them past the midpoint but delivering them just prior to the *Day of the Lord* and the subsequent *Wrath of God*.

The Pre-Wrath view has brought certain issues to light and one is a 'make or break' passage for whether their view (or ours) is legitimately biblical or not. There simply isn't any other way around it. That passage, is over the identity of this mysterious "Restrainer" and what that entails as the Apostle Paul mentions; (NKJV, emphasis mine)

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, (1) with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ (2) and for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. 2:8-11)

The problem, is that this verse (vs. 7) forces the narrative of the following verses (vs. 8-11), to mean only one thing...essentially, that X can't happen until Y does...which means, the Antichrist (man of lawlessness) CANNOT be revealed, UNTIL the one who restrains the Antichrist, is taken out of the way. That is simply the normal reading of the text and the way it was intended to be understood.

So the dilemma that both the Pre-Tribulation and Pre-Wrath Rapture views face then, is that if the Holy Spirit **is** the Restrainer, than Pre-Wrath (and Post Trib) cannot be true, because we see in the First Seal Judgment (Rev. 6:1-2) unleashing the Antichrist upon the earth...and that means the Holy Spirit must be removed/moved out of the way before this man can be revealed. And since Christian's are 'sealed by the Holy Spirit' as a guarantee until the day of redemption, the Holy Spirit's removal would also remove those individuals He indwells and seals.

If the Holy Spirit **is not** the Restrainer, than the Pre-Trib view cannot be true because the Holy Spirit in His current role would remain on the earth, along with all those He seals and indwells as mentioned in the previous scripture references.

Now, both views will argue incessantly about numerous other passages and words (think Matt. 24 and Parousia), but the one question everyone has is, why didn't Paul just clarify who the Restrainer was and end any ambiguity about it back in the first century? So first let's take stock and differentiate between what we know, what we don't, and what we assume.

Just so we are all on the same sheet of music, according to Strong's, the English word Restrains (or letteth in the KJV) in the Greek is *katechō*. It means

1. to hold back, detain, retain
 1. from going away
 2. to restrain, hinder (the course or progress of)
 1. that which hinders, Antichrist from making his appearance
 2. to check a ship's headway i.e. to hold or head the ship
 3. to hold fast, keep secure, keep firm possession of
2. to get possession of, take
 1. to possess

There are four main candidates for the "He", "he", "He who lets", "He who restrains" in 2 Thess. 2:7. These candidates are:

1. The Holy Spirit
2. Human Government
3. Michael the Archangel
4. Satan

If we remove those who couldn't fit the singular, masculine, third person pronoun ('He' instead of 'they' or 'them') we get...

1. The Holy Spirit
- ~~2. Human Government~~
- ~~3. Michael the Archangel~~
4. Satan

Michael the Archangel is removed because he alone, couldn't restrain lawlessness over the face of the earth. It would need to be him, and a whole lot of angelic hosts assisting him, thus, they would be 'they' or 'them'.

According to Scripture, a 'house divided against itself cannot stand' (Luke 11:17), thus Satan would not work against himself to restrain lawlessness, since he is the father of it.

1. The Holy Spirit

~~2. Human Government~~

~~3. Michael the Archangel~~

~~4. Satan~~

So that really only leaves one viable candidate...God the Holy Spirit.

What we know

1. That the Holy Spirit is God, and is omnipotent and omnipresent. (Psalm 139:7; Acts 5:3-5)
2. That God the Holy Spirit has been present on this earth since He 'hovered over the face of the deep' as detailed in Genesis 1:2.
3. The Holy Spirit's role in the Old Testament after Creation, has been to come upon particular individuals to accomplish certain things; Bezalel (Ex. 31), Seventy Elders (Num. 11:25), Balaam (Num. 24), Othniel (Judges 3:9-10), Samson (Judges 13:24-25), Saul (1 Sam. 11:6), David (1 Sam. 16:13-14), Daniel (Dan. 4:9), and Jesus (Isaiah 11:1-3) to name a few.
4. That the Holy Spirit has the ability to physically move people around and up; Ezekiel (Ez. 3:14), Philip (Acts 8:39), John (Rev. 4:1-2).
5. The Holy Spirit existed on the earth, BEFORE He was given on the day of Pentecost. (See previous OT verses)
6. That the Holy Spirit has been referred to by different names; Helper, Comforter, Spirit, Holy Ghost, Spirit of truth, etc.
7. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2) marked a fulfillment to a promise (John 14:26, 15:26) given by Jesus that they (believers) would NOT be left alone as orphans, but would have the Holy Spirit forever and that Christ would return (John 16:16-18) thus marking a new era/dispensation in which the Holy Spirit now sealed believers permanently as detailed by the Apostle Paul. (2 Cor. 1:21-22, Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30)
8. We know that currently, Satan has some form of temporary dominion over the earth. (Luke 4:5-6, Eph. 2:2, 1 John 5:19)
9. We know that The Antichrist is a man, (Dan. 8:23, 9:26-27, Rev. 6:1-2) who has the full backing of Satan, and is able to perform lying signs and wonders (2 Thess. 2:8-11, Rev. 13).

10. We know that the Restrainer (or the One who restrains lawlessness), has to be taken out of the way, before the ‘man of lawlessness’ can be revealed.

11. Angels, even an Archangel, is a created individual who is not omnipresent.

12. A house divided against itself, cannot stand.

What we don’t know

1. We don’t know specifically why Paul didn’t explain what he meant in 2 Thess. 2:7

2. We don’t know exactly what the role of the Holy Spirit will be in the *70th Week of Daniel*.

3. We don’t know how long it is between the Seal Judgments opening, or how much they overlap each other in regards to the other judgments.

What we assume

1. We assume that Paul was attempting to authenticate his second letter to them in 2 Thess. 2:7, by using that particular phrase (restrains-*katechō*) as a personal descriptor of the Holy Spirit, which is something he hadn’t previously used in writing, but only in person to them, which is why he uses ‘He who restrains’ to validate this second letter and refute the forgery he previously mentions at the beginning of the chapter. (2 Thess. 2:1-2)

2. We assume that this Antichrist will have the supernatural abilities that surpass the average human. He (and the False Prophet) are able to perform supernatural feats that as of today, we don’t have the ability to do, or rather, humans are restrained from doing. God allows that particular barrier to be removed which allows Satan to fully manifest his powers through this man. 2 Thess. 2:9 states *the coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders...*

Conclusion

I have previously wrote about this, and include it [here](#) as well to offer up for your consideration. Revelation 13 chronicles the rise of this man along with the False Prophet, and they are essentially able to take over the entire world. If the Restrainer were simply an angel, say Michael the Archangel, he would not be able to stop Satan and his legions of demonic hosts. So if Michael singularly couldn’t do it, and would need help (say from other angels), then it would not be singularly the Restrainer, but Restrainer’s. And the references wouldn’t be to Him, but to them.

The only Person who could singularly, thwart or restrain all evil, is God the Holy Spirit. We already know that Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as a “He” in the Upper Room Discourse. (John 14-16) We know that in this age, He was given to fill and seal the believers until the day of redemption. We know that He will guide and direct us into all truth. We know that He moves people and leaders to act in certain ways, to accomplish His will. We also know He can physically transport people over long distances or into other dimensions.

So why is it a stretch to say He also is the one who restrains all evil? Granted, we have evil in the earth today, but through the Church, God has used us as the agents of restraint (salt and light), and depending on how faithful we are to the task of ‘making disciples of all nations’, to one degree determines how much evil is allowed. Compare what the United States used to represent, as compared to Nazi Germany, Iran, North Korea, the Soviet Union, or communist China. Granted, we have fallen far from where we were, but there is still enough salt and light in this nation to keep the flame flickering...until God snuffs it out through the Rapture of the Church. Probably one of the most underrated points of contention FOR the Pre-Tribulation Rapture, and our necessary removal prior to the start of the 70th Week is, the *fruits of the Spirit*;

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23)

No one in their right mind would argue that these things will be present through the seven year Tribulation. Juxtaposed to this, is the *Olivet Discourse* which states;

And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:11-14)

The Holy Spirit, through the vessels He inhabits, i.e....the Church, to varying degrees, has held the flood of evil from completely enveloping the world in total darkness. Remember the Dark Ages...when Christianity was suppressed by the Roman Catholic Church for hundreds of years? Marry the *fruits of the Spirit* up with the barrier God put in place to prevent man from taking on supernatural qualities, and the world is largely like it has been for the past two thousand years. Miracles happen yes, but we aren’t seeing the same supernatural events and feats like we did in the Old Testament in today’s world.

Taking the Holy Spirit out of the way at the Rapture, isn’t removing His omnipotence and presence from the earth, any more than before coming down as cloven tongues of fire at Pentecost. What changes is the Holy Spirit’s role in these final seven years. Again, I don’t pretend to know exactly what that is, but people will still come to saving faith much as they did before the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost some 2,000 years ago. The testament in Revelation 7 & 13, that many will still come to faith after the Rapture, isn’t proof the Church is still here, its proof that God’s mercy is boundless, and He is longsuffering that none should perish.

Even So, Maranatha!

As We See the Day Approaching

The Holy Bible expends a great deal of energy and effort, explaining both God and man's relationship to time. God declares of Himself that He alone is omnipotent, omnipresent, and knows the end from the beginning. The Bible declares for man, that he is but a vapor or blade of grass compared to time, and that we are here one as if for one fleeting moment and gone the next. God, having created time for man, has existed in power and majesty for all of eternity, and if you were to compare our current existence, whether you believe our world to be only 6,000 years, or a billion, is still all relatively short compared to the total existence of God. We simply have no way to mentally reconcile the concept of eternity, yet, at the moment of our death, we are immediately thrust into it. You see, although we cannot comprehend it while living as finite beings with finite minds, we were made with eternity built into our hearts.

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. **Ecclesiastes 3:11**

God has existed since eternity-past and will on into eternity future. Where does God come from? What did God do before He built our universe? What will we do for the rest of eternity once the timeline God lays out in the Bible plays out to its total culmination? We don't know. But perhaps this is why the Bible (courtesy God the Holy Spirit) spends an inordinate amount of time speaking to God's eternal characteristics. So, although we don't have all the answers now, we can trust that God is holy, righteous, loving, and just. We know that God is a Creator God, and I would assume, that for the rest of eternity-future, we (believers from all ages) will be in perfect fellowship with Him and doing things that He has in store for us.

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years..." **Genesis 1:14-15**

God created time for man. God doesn't need time to exist, nor does He need the celestial bodies to know when exactly He is. When asked by Moses who should he sends him, God told him that His name was the "I AM", which from the Hebrew word 'haya' means, 'the becoming One'. He is always in the present, no matter when He is. The best concept of how this works, is the parade in order to explain how God can always see everything simultaneously. Imagine you are watching a parade go by and you're standing on the side of the road and along with everyone else watching the parade pass before you. You can't see what's coming until it's within eyeshot and you can't see where they go after they've passed. But God is like that news helicopter reporting on the parade as they fly a thousand feet over the top of it...and they can see the whole parade from start to finish all at the same time.

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven... **Ecclesiastes 3:1**

God gave time to man as a gift so we (who are not omnipotent) could judge, measure, and understand the times in which we live. Since ancient times until today, our understanding of time has been adjusted several times through the use of varying calendars; Hebrew or prophetic, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Persian, Julian, and Gregorian to name a few. Man, through varying civilizations, has attempted to reconcile the time and seasons according to what they understood

about when they were. The best and most perfect calendar though, would be the one in which God gave the Israelites, which is the 12, 30-day months equaling a 360 day year, otherwise known as the prophetic year. The point being, is that aside from the Bible, we don't know exactly when we are on God's calendar, but because we God's written word, we have a pretty good general idea, which is somewhere near the six thousandth year since Creation.

Assessment

According to Scripture, the Antichrist will look to change the calendar again (Daniel 7:25), but to what end we don't fully understand. But since the Antichrist is powered by Satan, and Satan was present at Creation, he also knows when exactly we are, even if he doesn't fully know when this all will come to an end. By the time the Antichrist gets on the scene...after the Rapture, Israel and Jerusalem (along with Judaism) will be the only remaining visible human semblance to God left on the planet. What I mean be that is, immediately after the Rapture of the Church, when all true believers are removed physically, that only leaves the unbelievers, the Jews, the pagans, and the apostate church. While Judaism is not Christian due to their inability to accept Jesus as their Messiah, God still has unfinished business with them through unfulfilled covenants that need closure. (Dan. 9:24-27; Jer. 30:7-11, 2 Sam. 7:12-16) This is the when and why the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11) begin their ministry in Jerusalem during the seven-year Tribulation...testifying that Christ is the Messiah to the nation of Israel. I believe these two Witnesses that appear, are the same two who appeared with Christ at the Transfiguration. (Matt. 17:2-4; Deut. 19:15)

As believers in the 21st century, we have the luxury of not only having Scripture, but also the rapid and incredible advancements in technology and archeology, which has given us a better understanding at looking back at recorded human history to see how humanity has progressed, or rather, digressed. All throughout the New Testament, both Jesus and the various writers all contend that as time progresses, things would progressively unravel and become increasingly perilous. The fact that mankind has progressed to where we are today, with our weapons of modern warfare, advanced communications, and burgeoning global population, is fulfilling exactly what the Bible said would happen two thousand years ago. The Bible also states that we as believers should KNOW when we are, based off the evidence the Bible lays out for us. The fact that most of the major Christian denominations ignore the prophetic scriptures, even fulfills Bible prophecy.

Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." For this they willfully forget...

2 Peter 3:3-5

Jesus told the Pharisees in His day that they should have recognized the season, meaning, the Old Testament Scripture was replete with evidence for who, when, and where their Messiah would arrive. (Matt. 16:1-4) Jesus told Jerusalem that they should have recognized the time of their visitation, and specifically hones in on the day...this your day...that day being Palm Sunday as the day their Messiah was foretold to visit them. (Luke 19:41-44) After explaining for the first

time in Scripture what the mystery of the Rapture was (harpazo-catching up), Paul tells the believers in Thessalonica (and by extension us) that we wouldn't be caught unawares to the season of our Lord's return.

4 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. 5 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. (1 Thess. 4:15-5:4)

The unfortunate chapter break between 1 Thess. 4, and 1 Thess. 5 has led many to dissect these as two separate trains of thought. If you read vs. 4:18 on into 5:1 without stopping, you see that the comfort in vs. 18, directly correlates with the knowledge that Paul is given them about what is going to happen. IOW, knowledge of said event = comfort for the believer. There is no ambiguity and uncertainty (both of which breed fear), because Paul is telling them what their fate is should they live to see the return of the Lord.

In Luke 17:24-30, Jesus describes the time of His return as being like the days of Noah and Lot. What's unique about this passage though, is that Jesus (who as God is thoroughly familiar with the events of both Noah and Lot's Day) remained purposefully generic in His description, not dismissing the wickedness of those particular periods of time but noting the normality of it all. In Luke 17, Jesus doesn't mention the violence and wickedness, but only speaks to the average, ordinary, every-day events such as buying and selling, marrying, and given in marriage, etc.

What this tells me, is that by the time Christ is set to return, great violence, wickedness, greed, and sexual perversion have become so common place in the world that people just accept it as the new normal. (Gen. 6, 19; Ezek. 16:49-50) Think about our day today, in which abortion (50 million plus), murder, rape, divorce, terrorism, euthanasia, gay marriage, drug use, slavery, adultery, government and economic corruption, war, crime, racial tensions, genetic manipulation, corporate influence flood our news and information outlets. These collectively are simply signposts pointing to the nearness of the end of the age, which means they soon herald His return for the Church and the start of the final seven-year Tribulation which will rock the world to its very foundation.

Conclusion

God didn't tell us all these things prophetically for His benefit as mentioned before, He transcends time. He told us through Scripture so we wouldn't be in the dark about what His plans are for the future, and to comfort us when times grow dark and perilous. Imagine a Bible with no mention of what happens in the future. What if the book of Revelation consisted of only

one verse: In the end, God wins. How comforting is that? How reassuring is that? Sadly, that is how a lot of modern Christians, churches, and denominations treat the Bible already, and you can see that their focus (since it's not on Christ's return) is centered on earthly things. These would also be those who are caught up in every changing tide a culture goes through. These are they who believe that Christianity can evolve, and can embrace the things the Bible states God abhors.

The tendency of many is to give up or give in as the culture around us falls apart. Know and trust, that God has seen the end from the beginning. (Isaiah 46:9-10) Known to God from eternity are all His works. (Acts 15:18). Let us rest assured in one thing, the more we look up, the less time we have to fixate on a world that is falling apart. The more we look up, the less likely we will be shaken in our faith, despite what the world says. The more we look up, the more we will want to share that news with those who are lost and going to an eternal hell. The last thing Satan wants anyone to do, is to have a sincere, biblically based understanding of when Christ is going to return...because that ingrains in that believer, the finality of God's holy prophetic word.

It reinforces that God has not abandoned us. It reinforces that Jesus loves us and will return again. (John 14:1-3) This fallen world is pressing us to quit, give in, give up...and it seems to have no end in sight. But we find strength in His word which says there is an end, and the end is nigh. Although it's getting harder and harder to find like-minded believers to encourage and build each other up, we must realize, we might be growing smaller in number (also foretold in Rev. 3:8-10), we don't walk alone.

And let us consider one another to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. **Hebrews 10:24-25**

The Distress of Nations, with Perplexity

Most Americans are unaware of a decline in our individual liberty, and the reason is obvious: the decline rarely takes the form of sudden deprivations but, instead, takes the form of unnoticed erosion and thus, we come to regard whatever state we are in, as a normal condition.

Leonard E. Read

Several years ago, I was driving down the road flipping through the radio stations when I came across a show already in progress. Intrigued, I listened to the narrator speaking intensely with the sound of tribal drums beating in the background. He was intensely describing how early man hunted wooly mammoths. Early man (according to the host) knew they couldn't kill the mammoths with spear and stone, so they had to get innovative in how they hunted. As they closed in on a herd, the tribesmen would start beating drums, shouting, and making a loud commotion catching the herd off guard.

This in turn would get the mammoths agitated and panicked, prompting them to begin moving in the opposite direction, whose path was already lined with more hunters and drums in hiding in whom, when close by, would also begin making noises, beating drums, and shouting as loud as they could. This effectively channelized the unwitting and fleeing mammoths towards a ravine or cliff. The mammoths were so big and their hides extremely tough and the tribesmen knew they couldn't kill them with what they had, so instead they had the mammoths kill themselves by running them off a cliff. I don't subscribe to caveman theories, but I do recognize that this is a valid hunting technique, and the example of which, has been stuck in my mind like a splinter ever since.

The show as it turned out, was that of Alex Jones. Now, I'm no fan of Mr. Jones's sensationalists programs, nor his post-trib eschatology, I would however agree with him in that what we are seeing with today's globalist movement which are largely; Establishment Republicans and Democrats, Bilderbergers, the Trilaterals Commission, George Soros Inc., European bureaucrats, climate alarmists, etc...is very much along the same lines of thought as the mammoth hunt. They are attempting to channelize us with crisis after crisis, onto a pre-determined path that ultimately results in the tragic and senseless suicide of our Constitutional Republic. The bottom line is that they need the US to systematically fall apart, in order for them to rebuild the world after their own design.

Assessment

If you've read many articles like this one and kept up with current events over the last eight years, most of what I'm saying isn't any real surprise to you. You'd know that the government is rapidly transitioning into something it was never intended to be, primarily that of a socialist oligarchy. What is shocking to most people, is not that our freedoms are eroding, but how long that state of erosion has been in place. Many are just now seeing the pieces falling together.

In other words, the transition away from a Constitutional Republic began in earnest in 1913 with the midnight passage of the Federal Reserve Act and has been painstakingly gradual through the remainder of the 20th century by use of a tactic known as *incrementalism*. But the rapidity we

are seeing now in a post-9/11 world, with our government's sweeping anti-constitutional rulings and edicts, are just the finishing touches on an urban population that is largely out of touch with what right looks like anymore. The powers that be (pick a recent administration), seem to know something that apparently the rest of us don't...primarily that if they don't act quickly, they may not get to act at all.

Understanding how much time we as a nation have left, will in large measure be determined in the upcoming 2016 presidential election. I have no desire to rehash the tens of thousands of examples in which the government is becoming tyrannical; nor do I want to beat the dead horse of all the Socialist /Marxist /Secular-Humanist agendas' that have already been identified and noted for what they are. What I want to address is the three legs with the five 'W's' of the particular path we are racing down today.

We know according to Revelation 13, that the world will eventually end up under a singular global system ran by a man identified by the Apostle Paul as the *man of lawlessness* (2 Thess. 2:3-10) and by the Apostle John as the *rider on the white horse*, and *the Beast*. (Rev. 6:1-2, 13) He will control the entire earth. So how do we get from where we are today, to where Scripture says we will be tomorrow (whenever that tomorrow may be), is interesting. This coming of the Beast consists of two things; **infrastructure**, and **opportunity**.

Framework

Of note, is that the infrastructure for global governance must first exist, of which I'd say through the internet, global commerce, and regionalized political and military arrangements, is largely already in place. This regional and global framework has been in the making since before World War II through things like;

- The Federal Reserve Act of 1913
- The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916
- The League of Nations (1919)
- The United Nations (1945)
- NATO (1949)
- European Coal and Steel Community (1951) [Precursor to the EU and all the subsequent treaties and agreements]
- OPEC (1960)
- Law of the Sea Treaty (1982) [Pres. Reagan refused to sign]
- The Patriot Act (October 26th, 2001)
- The Trans Pacific Partnership (2015)

All of these, and only about a million other things, have helped build a globalist infrastructure that inextricably links the world together in a way that no other century of human history has

even seen. To sum up the past two centuries in a brief synopsis it would be this: the nationalism, socialism, Marxism, and other 'isms' of the 19th and 20th, resulted in two World Wars, two major revolutions (Bolshevik and Maoists), all of which resulted in the deaths of over 200 million people and forced the world to move towards regionalization and globalization as a means to avoid the mistakes of those generations. This is the framework of which the Beast will capitalize on to cement his authority over the entire face of the earth.

Timing

The other thing which must follow the framework is **opportunity**. If we here in the 21st century have learned anything, is that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Simply follow the news of any given day, and you'll see leader after leader, being charged or suspected of corruption, treason, ethics violations, moral ineptitude and neglect, or any other countless number of charges. None of our current crop of political leaders would ever just hand over their power and authority of their own volition. In terms of how the Beast comes to power, there must be opportunity, and that opportunity must come in the form of crisis.

We've also seen how the global system has tried time and again, to present something, anything, as a crisis that they can somehow use to their advantage; global cooling, global warming, climate change, Ebola and other pandemic diseases, banks too big to fail, oil, water, food, immigration, AIDS, Islamic terrorism, information wars, etc. Not to say that these weren't actually issues, but they were never big enough for the big sweeping changes that organizations like the UN had hoped for. No, nothing short of another global war, an earth-killing asteroid, or some kind of alien invasion or first contact will do. There is one crisis that is coming that I believe will be THE crisis to force the nations to realign. The reason I am so absolutely sure it is THE crisis, is because it's the one thing that none of them (the godless, Christ rejecting leadership) are not even talking about. If it is mentioned, it's laughed at and mocked. The Crisis? The Rapture of the Church.

Conclusion

With the recent rise of Presidential nominee Donald Trump, and the departure of Great Britain from the European Union (Brexit), along with an upsurge in anti-immigration nationalist parties across the US and Europe, the citizens of the west are rising up in revolt against their globalist overlords. It would seem that the majority of the middle-class people are tired of funding (via taxes), the destruction of their way of life. They're also tired of politicians and bureaucrats who are belligerently avoiding common sense legislation, and their blatant borderless agendas. In other words, the world is swinging back hard in the other direction.

The only problem with this is, that the swing back to the populist/nationalist movement doesn't fit with Satan's globalist, one-world agenda. IOW, if Satan wants the framework in place for his man to take over a singular system, then the nations pulling back apart, works in direct opposition to what's he's spent much of the last century piecing together. This reinforces the idea in my mind at least, that the Rapture happens sooner, rather than later. Just as a friend wrote in his article, the world's leading developers and innovators of technology, predict reaching immortality, Mars' colonization, and other rapid advances in science that the Bible doesn't

mention. So either the Bible is wrong, or man never reaches the point where they can achieve them. The same goes with geo-politics.

Since the Bible only mentions a 10-pronged system that ultimately is brought under the reigns of one man, (Rev. 13) then the nationalist, populist dreams of a better world, will never actually come to fruition. The Rapture will serve as the perfect storm that marries up the framework of a one-world system already in place, and the perfect timing of opportunistic tyranny with zero spiritual resistance. But the Rapture as an event itself, will have some serious second and third order effects that happen in its wake.

Certain nations will be hit extremely hard due to diversity that true, born-again Christian's inhabit (i.e....the US), and others not so much. (i.e....Saudi Arabia and Iran). And since the world's economy and political stability relies on a stable US, the fact that if we are crippled (due to millions of missing Christians and children), then the world will be brought to its knees in delusion, madness, rage, and perplexity...and nothing will bring this world together faster, than the perfect crisis.

Jesus said that in the days just before His return that the world would be going about its business as if everything was normal. (Luke 17:22-30) Paul wrote that His coming would be as a 'thief in the night', and that while the world was clamoring for peace and safety, that sudden destruction would come upon them. (1 Thess. 5:1-3) Neither of these biblical scenarios can be inside the 70th Week of Daniel, since that time is divided up 21 divine judgments, chronicling and marking that seven year period in more detail than any other portion of time. So neither is life "normal" nor would the world be caught unawares once it begins.

So based on the speed and severity of the world's current problems, and the fact that things are only progressing at every level to the 'worse and worse' category, should we anticipate a soon Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church? Note Jesus's words concerning the timing of His coming...

And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing *them* from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then *they* will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Now when these things *begin* to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. **Luke 21:25-28**

The Sinner in the Saint

One of the greatest paradoxical mysteries in all of the known universe, is that of the mystery of Christ in the believer. How can an all holy, all righteous, divine Being who is Creator and will not tolerate even the tiniest infraction of His divine law...dwell, inside His fallen, sinful, creation? Certainly, the Apostle Paul wrestled with the significance of this concept and was given the understanding to explain for our benefit. He says;

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the *stewardship* from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, ²⁶ the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ
Jesus. **Colossians 1:24-28**

According to Scripture, the age we live in now, has been on the mind of God since eternity past. Being omnipotent, and knowing the end from the beginning, God knew that there could only be one way. When a person becomes spiritually born again by God's grace through our faith, they must take on the righteousness of God, through the Son's sacrificial atoning work on the Cross. (John 3:3, Eph. 2:8-9, 2 Cor. 5:21) At the moment of conversion, a believer does not go from being evil to being righteous per say, but goes from being spiritually dead, to being spiritually alive. Although we are spiritually regenerated from within, we still must dwell in the shell of the fallen, fleshly, man which causes the believer to have two natures, the divine, and the sin nature.

Think about it this way, before a person becomes born-again, what God sees in that particular individual, is only them in their sinful, fallen, spiritually dead, state...of which He will not and could not share His glory in and with. For starters, we couldn't physically exist with Him in a fallen state. Moses had to hide himself in the cleft of a rock and could only cast his gaze at the shadow of God walking past, and he still glowed for days. John on Patmos, witnessed the resurrected and glorified Christ (or Christ in His natural state), and he fell over as dead. Physically, we couldn't survive the experience of witnessing God in our flesh, without God dimming down (if that is a way to put it), His own Being. We must be born again, in order to receive the glorification (think upgrade) to our mortal status.

When a person becomes a believer in the finished work of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Cor. 15:1-5), they realize that there is nothing they can do to earn what God the Son has already accomplished on Calvary's cross, (John 19:30). Then by placing their faith in that finished, perfect work, instead of relying on their own feeble efforts, they have in affect, allowed God the ability to quicken their dead, spiritual nature, in which He substitutes His own righteousness, in place of theirs.

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ

reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Cor. 5:17-21

At that point, the believer is no longer seen by God as fallen man, but redeemed man. God see's the Son's blood if you will, painted over the believer, much as it was painted over the door at the first Passover. That God would choose to inject if you will, Himself through the Holy Spirit into and sealing the believer, is beyond our comprehension. If anything, it shows us that God is infinitely loving, and infinitely good, and infinitely merciful while still remaining infinitely holy and infinitely righteous. So He is able to both keep the divine order in tact by not violating His own laws, or violate the principle of free will, which is necessary for man to willingly come to their God of their own volition.

In terms of the grander scheme, God chose to redeem fallen man, by becoming a Man, while remaining fully God, which would also allow Himself the ability to both serve man as our brother, and kinsman redeemer. At some point yet future to us now, Christ will first redeem His bride at the Rapture of the Church (the catching up), and then redeem Israel and Creation through the seven year Tribulation. We see this played out in type in the book of Ruth, (the Gentile-bride), and what we will see played out in reality, in Revelation 5-6, where Christ takes the title deed to the earth (which was lost from Adam), from the hand of the Father and begins opening the seal judgments, because only He is worthy to redeem man, as He is both God and Man.

Assessment

Where many Christian denominations, teachers, and individuals get things wrong concerning the doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology) is, that they confuse the 'tenses of salvation'. When you are born-again, you become as Paul writes, a new creation. You are that proverbial caterpillar who is transformed into the butterfly. Once that happens, you can never go back to being a caterpillar. Once you are truly born-again, you can't be un-born, spiritually speaking. In other words, since you can't earn your salvation by your works, neither can you 'un-earn' or lose your salvation by your works. If salvation is a gift of God (it is), then it's not based on our own efforts, by solely God's mercy and grace. (Romans 4) The tenses of salvation are;

1. *Justification*- are saved from the penalty of sin. It is a one-time event for the believer (happens at the moment of salvation)
2. *Sanctification*- being saved from the ravages of sin. It is a lifelong event for the believer (happens throughout the life of a believer)
3. *Glorification*- will be saved from the presence of sin. It is a one-time event for the believer (happens at the Rapture of the Church)

Salvation happens when we come to the end of ourselves, and trust wholly in the finished work of Christ at the Cross. We come to Calvary as sinners, unable to save ourselves. **Sanctification** happens over the life of a believer, and it is Christ who promises to 'finish the good work He

began' in us. (Philippians 1:6) Sanctification is that maturing process every believer goes through from the point of their rebirth, until the time when either Christ call's us home through death, or we see Him in the air at the Rapture which is the **Glorification**.

Christian's still sin, (1 John 1:8-10) because it is in our fleshly (human) nature to sin. If Christian's were physically separated from our human bodies at the moment of conversion, then we would no longer desire to sin. But since we aren't, and we must wait for that future day when Christ changes us from mortal and corruptible, to immortal and incorruptible, our sin nature is something that we must contend and hopefully overcome in the meantime. Again, Paul speaks to this;

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. **Romans 7:18-20**

Sin is what interrupts our relational process with God once we are already believers just as disobedience interrupts our relationships with our own parents as we were growing up. Sin, and moreover, unconfessed sin doesn't make us unsaved, it simply makes the believer miserable, because now he is both redeemed by God, yet out of fellowship with God...while being reviled by the world and accused by the Accuser. In other words, it is a bad place to be.

But, the believer has at his or her disposal, a reconciliation for sin. (2 Cor. 5:18) We have a Mediator for our sin. (1 Tim. 2:5) We have access to the very throne room of God. (Heb. 4:16) We have the ability and the liberty to confess our sins, and have them wiped away as if they never happened, since they were already paid in full at the Cross. (Col. 2:13-15) But this liberty isn't free per say, because it will impact how we live in the here and now.

And one day, we will have to give account for what we did with our salvation at the *Bema Judgment*. (1 Cor. 3:9-16) We are not judged for salvation, because that is already settled. What we are judged for, is what we did with our salvation. And if a believer is constantly living in unconfessed sin, he or she is hard pressed to still be doing God's will, thereby frustrating God's plan for your life and now missing out on reward that God had intended to bestow upon you.

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. ¹¹ Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. **2 Cor. 5:9-11**

But if the Bema Judgment sounds frightening, it is not meant as punishment, even though there will be reward and loss. For many have sacrificed much, and some all, to try to be the men and women God has called us to be. And God wants very much to bestow His riches on His own, so that we may share in His merciful bounty.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4-6

So it is now after salvation, begins the lifelong process of sanctification for the believer....*till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—* **Eph. 4:13-15**

Conclusion

For too little is made of the Rapture of the Church in regards to the actual purpose of it. The Rapture is that future tense of salvation, known as **glorification**. It isn't just to escape the wrath that is scheduled to visit the earth, but also serves specific purposes in regards to our physical nature. Just as it will be at the *Sheep and Goat Judgment*, (Matt. 25) where Christ separates and judges the nations between those who can and cannot enter into the physical, millennial Messianic Kingdom, the *Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church* also separates the worthy from the unworthy.

The Rapture of the Church separates His redeemed Bride (the Church), from this sinful world, and to an even further and more personal degree, separates the individual believer, from the sinful bodies in which they've had to dwell in while living in this fallen world. (1 John 3:1-3) The Rapture is the process that transports us from our current abode, to the heavenly. The Rapture changes us from our mortal estate, to an immortal one so that we may straight away, stand at the judgment seat of Christ, as we must be judged first, in order for Christ to then exact His perfect wrath on a Christ-rejecting world. (1 Peter 4:17)

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” **1 Cor. 15:50-54**

Even So, Maranatha!

Are You Ready?

Over the vast expanse of man's time spent shuffling around on this little blue rock, two constants have ever been his companion: misery and tragedy. Of course, this was not how it was intended to be, but man, given the choice, chose to go his own way. You and I are no different. We've spent most of our lives doing what we wanted to do, paying little attention to what our Creator's designs were for our lives, and instead, chose to subjugate ourselves to one thing or another. But as we see time coming to a close, and whether that *close* means our own mortality, or that the age itself is coming to an end, is still up in the air as to which will occur first. But we feel it. We sense it. The world has gone morally insane, and we are living in this surreal state of bizarro-world where evil is good, and good, evil. Change is coming and coming soon. *Are you ready?*

If the world were the Titanic, the time for avoiding the proverbial iceberg as it were, has passed. We are now on a collision course and even if we wanted to turn the ship, there is simply no more time, nor space, in which to do so. But the passengers on the deck are carrying on as if nothing could sink the unsinkable ship, and their thoughts and cares are focused on the party at hand. They aren't going to know anything is wrong until the abrupt stop happens, and the ship begins to list to one side. This isn't too far off from where we are in the world today. There is a collision course that we are heading towards, of which we are unable to steer clear any further. We are going to hit, and it's not a matter of if, but when. *Are you ready?*

Assessment

And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. **Luke 17:26-30**

The above passage states, that life will be normal when Christ returns for His Church. Granted, that normal will be the 'new normal', but juxtaposed to this, is life inside the seven year Tribulation, which will be anything BUT normal. We also know (as did those in Jesus's day) what Genesis had to say about life then. They probably had a much better understanding of it than we do today, given the historical knowledge that has since been lost after 2,000 years of Jewish diaspora.

But here is what we do know about Noah's day; (Genesis 6, 1 Peter 3:19-21, 2 Peter 2:4-5)

- The world was exceedingly wicked and violent
- Every thought of man's heart was only evil
- We know that Nephilim walked the earth

We know that in Lot's Day, Sodom and Gomorrah were; (Genesis 19, Ezekiel 16:49, 2 Peter 2:6, Jude 1:7)

- Rampant sexual perversion and promiscuity
- Morally, economically, and governmentally corrupt

Culturally speaking, today's world, with its burgeoning population of over seven billion, is exceedingly violent. Every corner of the planet has some form of war, violent crime, or terrorism ongoing. We have legalized child sacrifice and are currently around 55,000,000 murdered unborn babies. Genesis 4:10 states that Abel's blood cried out to God from the ground, how much louder is it now with around 55,000,000 unborn children slaughtered since 1973? *Are you ready?*

Financially speaking, as the leading economy of the world, the United States has blown past the recovery point of which we could have salvaged something from our economic system. If every other financial system in the world, either overtly or covertly, relies on our fiscal stability to maintain their own, (and they do), the writing is already on the wall for change. We simply cannot sustain the status quo for much longer. At \$20T in debt, we've not only bankrupted this generation's piggy bank, but those of our children's and grandchildren's as well. Expert and novice alike are all saying the same thing...we cannot sustain our current system...*Are you ready?* (Revelation 13)

Ethnically speaking, the fact that *BlackLivesMatters* is even a major movement now, which advocates the killing of whites and law enforcement, and has the backing of major media figures, almost an entire half of our political system, and the President of the United States...is deeply troubling. It would seem, that the great, ethnic civil war he wanted, is brewing right before our very eyes.

In the past eight years, we've seen a rapid increase by means of government-sanctioned, massive relocation efforts for Mexican, Central-American, African, and Muslim immigrants into the EU and US...most of whom either refuse to assimilate, or can't, into the host nation. What this means at least in the US, is that the dream of *E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one)...is dead.

This tactic of 'divide and conquer', is the only way that leftist elites can continue to propagate their evil agenda of accumulating power. They do this by force-feeding mandatory labels for everyone through political correctness, and then keep everyone agitated and divided along ethnic, sexual orientation, religious, and economic classes. They then pit all these unassimilated groups against each other, and their host nation, weakening everyone collectively while they reap the benefits of anarchy and disorder. So as you see the world tearing itself apart, ask yourself this....*Are you ready?* (Matt. 24:7)

Morally speaking, the West has turned against the very bedrock of its own foundational underpinning (or rather, that which affords us the freedom to exist as we are) - the Judeo-Christian world view. The world has decided instead, to dive head first into the deep end of the lunacy pool, and has enthusiastically embraced the satanic view of "do what thou wilt", or in common speak, do whatever you want. It doesn't matter how bizarre, unethical, immoral, or illogical it is...the world will accept you...or so the message goes. They are relentless in kicking God out of the public arena of ideas, and as nature abhors a vacuum, they have replaced Him

with Secular Humanism and Islam. The traditional roles of men and women have been flipped on their heads, to the point that even which restroom one can use, has been called into question.

We've rewritten the definition of marriage. We've turned the world's greatest military into a giant, bureaucratic social experiment that has nothing to do with operational readiness, and everything to do with ensuring its own demise. The left has done it's very best to ensure that political correctness, no matter how illogical, or undermining it has become, becomes the mainstay within our ranks and in our education system.

The left has spent the better part of the 20th century, dumbing down subsequent generations of students who now think that the theory of evolution is true, that Marxism and Socialism are superior to capitalism, and that all cultures and religions are equally valid. This generation embraces the labels the left puts on groups, and they embrace these completely totalitarian systems, which will kill billions in the future, and snuff out every ounce of personal freedom they think their fighting for. And as we watch this tragedy unfolding again, ask yourself...*Are you ready?*

Politically speaking, our government has become bloated, corrupt, and highly susceptible to the highest bidder. In a very real sense, we are no longer a Constitutional Republic, but a Socialist Oligarchy, beholden to both career politicians and special interest groups. The EU is even worse, with unelected technocrats ruling the European Continent from Brussels, Belgium. But both the US and the EU, have ceded much of their own power and authority, over to the United Nations (UN), which means that if Hillary or another democrat is elected in 2016, whatever sovereignty we think we have, will be forever lost. Ten years ago, it seemed laughable that the UN could ever control our nations. Conspiracy theorists would get online every once and a while and show a convoy of UN vehicles being line-hauled somewhere and people would get stirred up for a minute, then forget the next.

While I don't subscribe to the notion that the UN will ever physically control the United States in regard to positioning UN troops here...they'd get crushed if they tried. I do however know that the UN doesn't have to station troops here to control us, if they already own our elected officials. If leftist politicians get their way, they will cede their own authority over to a global (or at least regional) system and it would in a sense be a bloodless *coupe*.

And with BREXIT in the rearview mirror, sending shockwaves throughout Europe, the EU will now close ranks and form the super-state it's always wanted to avoid the possibility of future exits from its current remaining members. Seeing the collapse of nationalism and the rise of globalism, *Are you ready?*

Constitutionally speaking, we have leftist politicians and idiot celebs at the very height of hypocrisy. The idiot celebrities will make movie after movie, in which the characters they play grotesquely glamorizing gun violence, (shaping young and impressionable minds) then get on their idealistic soap boxes after they've made their millions, and state that individual citizens don't have the right (or common sense) to own their own guns for self-defense. Leftist political hacks use every tragic shooting and bombing, as a means to justify stripping away those Constitutional rights away from we (the little people), while hiding behind their own, armed,

bodyguards. The real battle for the 2nd Amendment, because without it, the 1st (Freedom of Speech, Assembly, and Religion) will no longer survive...*Are you ready?*

Technologically speaking, we're crossing barriers that weren't meant to be crossed; three parent children, animal-human hybrids, transhumanism, CERN, weapons of mass destruction, language translators, etc. Modern man is intent on crossing further boundaries if given the time to do so; cracking the code on extending human life to centuries, teleportation, and Artificial Super Intelligence. As impossible and/or unlikely as it sounds, man has the potential to do all these. Given the warning that God gives in Genesis 11:6 ask yourself, *Are you ready?*

Assessment

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is... Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” **Mark 13:32-36**

There are many more areas in which I could have addressed such as apostasy in the Church, the rise of false religions and belief systems, massive increase in occult and supernatural activity, the massive increase in drug abuse, etc. But seeing how crazy the world has become in just the past two decades and how much innocent blood is currently on our collective hands, should we anticipate that man has finally exhausted the patience of God? I believe we have. Thankfully God is longsuffering, (2 Peter 3:9) and His timing is divinely precise (Gal. 4:4)...and given the fact that He has already waited 2,000 years to return, I believe we are rapidly reaching the end of the season of the *church age* which would seem to fit the patterns of the other ages which belong to the annals of history.

We have no idea when Christ will return. It could be today, tomorrow, ten years from now. Furthermore, with all the prophetic signposts blowing past us at increasingly rapid speed, and the storm clouds are swirling overhead, we know the storm of the Tribulation is almost upon us. Individually speaking, we aren't guaranteed our next breath. Around 155,000 people die and enter into eternity every single day. All we do know for sure is, with each passing day, we are one day closer to His return. *Are you ready?*

The Eternal Order of the Ages

“We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America.” Barack H. Obama, 30 October 2008

I believe the then presidential candidate Obama, was and is a man of his word. He has spearheaded the transformation of this nation from that of a constitutional republic under the rule of law, into something else. What exactly, I’m not sure anymore. Perhaps a socialist oligarchy, or maybe some kind of capitalist-socialist hybrid of the Chinese sorts, no longer under the rule of law, but under the rule of ‘political correctness’.

Benghazi, IRS targeting, “Fast and Furious”, Solyndra, Black Panthers, Beergate, VA Scandal, Monsanto, Timothy Geithner, Syria’s ‘vanishing’ red lines, Ferguson, Keystone Pipeline, Email servers, Snowden, drone strikes, etc., ad nauseam. Scandals, schemes, power plays, political machinations of every sort plague our every waking moment. Men and women trying to get ahead, or get even, thinking all the while that what they’re doing in the here and now, will somehow gain them the world while the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

Now, to be fair, America had been in the process of transformation since the days just after the Civil War, when we went from being referred to as ‘these’ United States, to ‘the’ United States. Once the Federal government exerted its will over the states, she began to grow, and in that growth, a hunger for power and control stirred. Truth be told, aside from the Federal Reserve and Federal Income Tax Acts of 1913, it’s hard to pin down a specific point in time when the Constitution wasn’t under massive assault by politicians, bureaucrats, special interest groups, and other subversives, because it’s been a constant and steady stream of erosion.

It’s been ‘death by a thousand cuts’, and the Constitution has always ever been increasingly marginalized in taking power away from both the state and the individual and giving it over to some federal agency or department. Although not known for its efficiency, a federal bureaucracy is only ever at the top of its game when it comes to bestowing power and authority on itself. If anything, a bureaucracy can only ever be counted on being efficient when it comes to giving itself more authority, and in this endeavor, it has been thorough and persistent in its incrementalism over the decades.

So consistent is its persistence and addicted to the power that comes with potential authority it wishes to give itself, that a federal agency(s) must constantly find reasons (think crisis’s) to insert its own relevance into every facet of an individual’s life. Thus, the only constant we have is change, and under the current regime, that change has been on steroids.

I liken this time we live in, to the lead up of the coming global order, for those in power today, are simply laying the groundwork for the final ruler who will come, the man known as Antichrist. There is nothing being done today, no matter how disheartening and frustrating, that hasn’t already been tried many times before. We simply are watching the culmination of

corruption being expedited on a global scale, due to the advancements in technology and rapid decline in moral foundations.

Assessment

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”

I realize we are in an election year, and we are all hoping for some real change to come in terms of the type of governance we are currently experiencing. But regardless of who wins in November, real change is coming...and the world under Satan's control, does not like that one bit.

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.
Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”

Christ is returning as promised. First, He will come for His bride the Church. (John 14:1-3, 1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-55) Then, He will allow the earth to purge itself, and its inhabitants of all their violence, bloodshed, wickedness, and corruption through a series of 21 judgments. (Revelation 6-18) This will have two major outcomes, to utterly destroy the gentile nations, and to punish, yet not destroy the nation of Israel. (Jeremiah 30:7-11)

“I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
‘You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.’”

At the end of those 21 divine judgments, the Judge Himself will return in power and glory, and all the nations of the earth, and all the inhabitants on the earth at that time, will mourn at His coming. For the sky will part, and He, along with the armies of heaven, will fill the heavens, watching, as He instantaneously subdues the armies of the earth through the destruction of His spoken word. (Matthew 24:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Rev. 1:7)

Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him. (Psalm 2)

After a brief, but absolutely devastating battle for those who actually try to fight Christ, He will separate those nations as a shepherd does with the sheep and goats between those who can enter His Kingdom, and those who are cast into everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:29-44) At the conclusion of this judgment, the glorious Messianic Kingdom will begin. And while, we don't know everything that will happen in this Kingdom age, and while this short list doesn't cover everything we will do, this here is a partial list on the information we do have about it:

1. The natural order to the earth will be rightfully restored (Romans 8:18-22)
2. The Animal Kingdom will no longer fear man, nor will the act defensively (or offensively) against him or each other. (Isaiah 11:6, 65:25)
3. Israel will be the head of all nations, and Christ the head of Israel. (Isaiah 2:1-4)
4. The Church will reside in the New Jerusalem, which will float over the earth similar to how the moon does now...only closer. (Rev. 21)
5. This Kingdom stage, will last for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-6)
6. At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan is loosed again for a short season, in which a brief, but tragic rebellion will be quelled and Satan and those he deceives are tossed into the *Lake of Fire* for the rest of eternity. (Rev. 20:7-10)
7. The Great White Throne Judgment begins, and the unsaved of all ages (and possibly those who died during the Millennial reign [good and bad]), will stand before Christ the Judge to account for the deeds. (Rev. 20:11-13)
8. At this conclusion, death, hell, and all those who were not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life are thrown into the Lake of Fire for all eternity, thus, ushering in the age eternal. (Rev. 20:14-15)

Conclusion

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." **Revelation 21**

Even less is known about what transpires after the Millennial Reign of Christ as we transition into eternity future, but given what we do know about God, we should expect to see more of His creative efforts. (1 Cor. 2:9) Full disclosure here, I am in full-speculation mode now, so I'm in

no way dogmatic about the following, but perhaps, we, in eternity future, serve as a foot note for some future story. Here is what I mean.

Consider the angels. We know they were created outside of our own timeline, because they were there to witness ours. (Job 38:4-7) We know that they themselves had a certain degree of free will, because Lucifer and a third of the angels fell from glory. The difference between them and us though, is that they lacked a means of redemption. (Hebrews 1:5, 13-14)

While we know they were created, and are given glimpses of their existence prior to ours, the Scriptures doesn't go into much detail about how they were created, or how long they existed before our own creation. Likewise, it could be that our own entire human history, all 6,000 years or so, with its plan of redemption, and all of our trials and struggles, is only summed up in certain passages for some future beings, in whom God creates for His own design and purposes. Perhaps, all that we've been through ties into some future plans he has for them.

The Bible never says that He won't create any other living beings on into eternity future and use us in some capacity to rule and reign. We just know that those of us who are redeemed, are certain that we will live on with God into eternity. It could also be that Satan, who is growing to understand more and more of the vastness of God's future plans, is becoming increasingly furious at the prospect of his own certain judgment and confinement because he realizes how futile and shortsighted his own original efforts were considering the vast panorama, of all God has in store for His us.

It is difficult for us to reconcile that even though evil will be forever vanquished, that God could create other civilizations on into the future. This seems antithetical to the nature of our own understanding of our existence, because trials and struggles produce growth, and also because it's the only kind of existence we've ever known. But that is only because we are fallen creatures, living in a fallen world. At that future point, we will be in our immortalized, eternal bodies, and we won't desire to sin, nor will we desire anything that separates us from God's fellowship. We won't need an antagonist in our future story, because our natures won't require one. I imagine, that God has such wonderful and amazing things in store for us, we really can't (at the present), wrap our minds around it, thus, why the Bible is silent on the subject.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **Ephesians 2:4-7**

Now that is change you can believe in. *Even so, MARANATHA!*

Beauty and the Beast

*She can kill with a smile, she can wound with her eyes
She can ruin your faith with her casual lies
And she only reveals what she wants you to see
She hides like a child but she's always a woman to me*
Billy Joel She's Always a Woman to Me

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and all therein. He made man in His own image, and then made a helpmate for Adam, and he named Woman, since she was taken from his own flesh and bone. We know that according to Scripture that Satan came to Eve in the Garden in the form of a serpent. And after their subsequent betrayal, rebellion and murder (the day they ate thereof they would die), we see that God then pronounces curses on the Serpent, the Woman, the Man, and the ground. In Genesis 3:20, we see that Adam had named her Eve, since she was the mother of all who would eventually come henceforth from the human race. We see that the dominant theme in the cursing process between the three parties had to do with offspring and childbirth;

1. To the serpent, enmity would be between his *seed* and her *seed*. And a '*Seed*' would come which would crush his head, and he would bruise His heel.
2. To the woman, there would be pain and sorrow in childbirth. I imagine that at that particular point, she had not yet ever felt pain, but the very idea of it didn't sound good.

And it is at this point, Satan begins actively plotting against the "Seed" of Woman. First, he influences Cain to kill Abel. (Gen. 4:1-15) He then devotes the next 1,600 years or so, attempting to corrupt the genetic blood-line of mankind, by intermingling his fallen angels, with human women to the point, that only Noah and his family remain untainted. (Gen. 6:1-10) God then wipes out the earth by the Great Flood and preserves only Noah and family, to repopulate the earth once the waters subside. Now, consider the math on this. It is estimated that from Adam and Eve, until the Flood, was around 1,656 years and the population at the high end reached seven billion, and at the low end, two billion.

Now fast-forward to the post-flood world, and we already start off with three pairs of couples; Shem and wife, Ham and wife, and Japheth and wife. Needless to say, the world didn't take long to start getting crowded again. It's estimated that the Tower of Babel incident occurred as early as [106 years](#) after the Ark landed on Mount Ararat, and as late as [339 years](#) with Noah being 940 years old. Either way, mankind was growing rapidly and already back in a state of rebellion by not doing what God had instructed them to do, which was to multiply and 'fill the earth' (Gen. 9:1). Instead, they all seemed to congregate in the plains of Shinar under the leadership of a man named Nimrod. But the story only begins with Nimrod; from [Harry Ironside](#) on the birth of the Babylonian Religion.

Ancient lore now comes to our assistance, and tells us that the wife of Nimrod-bar-Cush was the infamous Semiramis, the First. She is reputed to have been the founder of the Babylonian mysteries and the first high-priestess

of idolatry. Thus Babylon became the fountainhead of idolatry, and the mother of every heathen and pagan system in the world. The mystery religion that was originated there spread in various forms throughout the whole earth, and as we shall see in a few minutes, it is with us today. It is identical with the mystery of iniquity which wrought so energetically in Paul's day, and shall have its fullest development when the Holy Spirit has departed and the Babylon of the apocalypse holds sway.

Building on the primeval promise of the woman's Seed who was to come, Semiramis bore a son whom she declared was miraculously conceived, and when she presented him to the people, he was hailed as the promised deliverer. This was Tammuz, whose worship Ezekiel protested against in the days of the captivity. Thus was introduced the mystery of the mother and the child, a form of idolatry that is older than any other known to man. The rites of this worship were secret. Only the initiated were permitted to know its mysteries. It was Satan's effort to delude mankind with an imitation so like the truth of God that they would not know the true Seed of the woman when He came in the fullness of time. To this Justin Martyr bears definite witness.

From Babylon this mystery-religion spread to all the surrounding nations, as the years went on and the world was populated by the descendants of Noah. Everywhere the symbols were the same, and everywhere the cult of the mother and child became the popular system. Their worship was celebrated with the most disgusting and immoral practices. The image of the queen of heaven with the babe in her arms was seen everywhere, though the names might differ as languages differed. It became the mystery-religion of Phoenicia, and by the Phoenicians was carried to the ends of the earth. Ashtoreth and Tammuz, the mother and child of these hardy adventurers, became Isis and Horus in Egypt, Aphrodite and Eros in Greece, Venus and Cupid in Italy, and bore many other names in more distant places. Within 1,000 years, Babylonianism had become the religion of the world, which had rejected the Divine revelation. End Quote- Harry A. Ironside

Satan had not forgotten the curse God placed on him in the Garden that day. He was 'hell-bent' on thwarting God's plan. Thus, when Christ came at the appointed time, (Gal. 4:5-6), being born of a virgin, and living out the Father's plan perfectly to include His death, burial, and resurrection...Satan finally knew it was all over but the crying. Unfortunately, his long-term defeat would not deter his short-term schemes. Satan redoubled his efforts and, in his anger, and fury at the growing "Christ-followers", an evil plan hatched in his mind. He would take what he formed at Babel, and apply this to this new growing Christian movement, mixing paganism with Christianity, and hell followed with it.

Assessment

In 1994, the late and sorely missed Dave Hunt released his best-known literary work entitled, "A Woman Rides the Beast". In it, he systematically lays out the historical, political, and religious connections that tie the 'woman/harlot' of Revelation 17, to the institution we know today as the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The Bible identifies this religious system as the one in which the Antichrist uses to promote global ecumenism that ultimately leads to his global domination. Dave points out in painstaking detail that this isn't an attempt at a modern-day witch-hunt against Catholics. It's not castigating all Catholics as evil globalists, but that the history of the RCC as an institution itself, is undeniable in resemblance to what the Apostle John is foretold in the Revelation.

Facts

The RCC portends to be the 'original' Christian faith and the word Catholic itself means 'universal'. It is headed by a single man, the Pope, who serves as the "vicar" (or physical representation) of God on the earth. Aside from all the other troubling theological and doctrinal

issues the RCC promotes, the ongoing one which seems to revive itself every few years, is the one which wants to cement Mary's role in salvation as '[co-redemptrix](#)', equal to Jesus Christ, with her being commonly referred to as 'the Mother of God'. The RCC places prominence of Mary (the Queen of Heaven) and the infant Jesus as its iconic imagery above all else. In fact, no other Christian section/faction/denomination places as much prominence on Mary as does the RCC. Can you see the revival of the 'mother-child' Babylonian religion being injected here?

The RCC reached its zenith of power between the centuries of the 800's -1500's. No other single religion has for so long had one foot in the political/economic/military world, and the other in the 'divine'. No other religion comes close to the amount of blood shed she has participated in...estimated thus far in the realm of 50 million. From the Crusades to the Inquisitions...the Roman Catholic Church has had blood on her hands...a lot of blood. (See [note](#)) She has maintained powerful political and economic connections going back over 1,700 years to the time of Emperor Constantine. She has at many times, throned and dethroned kings and queens over disagreements on who is actually in control. As for being a religion of means, she has become exceedingly prosperous, at times being the single wealthiest entity on the planet.

Given the fact that she mercilessly persecuted the Waldenses, Albigenses, Josephists, Lollards, Henricians, Arnoldists, New World Indians, Jews, Saracens and countless others that posed a challenge to her authority, it's no wonder how such an entity could accumulate so much land and wealth over the centuries. Not even the bloody banner of Islam comes close to the political, economic, and religious clout the Roman Catholic Church has wielded over the last two millennia. Islam does spread quickly, but it can only spread and keep its newly held gains by force and by deception. On the other hand, Roman Catholicism has shifted away from force to infiltrating schools, hospitals, charities, media, movies, banking, and other religions (see Emerging Church/ Ecumenicalism) to diversify its influence and wealth.

Conclusion

In light of all the historical considerations of the RCC over the last 1,700 years, is it reasonable to believe that the Roman Catholic Church could fill the shoes of this coming harlot (the Beauty) which rides the final system of government (the Beast) into total power as described to the Apostle John in the Revelation? I believe that the answer undoubtedly is yes.

The Puritans and early Protestants believed that the Pope then was the Antichrist. They saw the corruptions and violence the RCC was capable of, and convinced them that he (the Pope) and they (the RCC) were the very system we know of as the Antichrist and the Beast. Granted, their eschatology is what we would consider today as historic pre-millennialism in that they attributed the events of their day as fulfilling the pages of eschatological writ.

But what I believe we are witnessing today, is clearly not the final form of this 'Mystery Babylon' harlot who has the whole world drinking her blasphemous Kool-aid. Rather, what we are witnessing today that has so many troubled, particularly with Pope Francis, more than any of his predecessors, is the speed at which he seems to be implementing these rapid changes in positions and allegiances that are not only anti-Biblical, but now seem anti-Roman Catholic. So much so, that many within his own organization are leery of the broad brush approaches he is

using to accept atheists, homosexuals, divorcees, and others whom the RCC had for millennia, condemned as heretics.

The RCC's efforts and undermining and undoing the 500 years of Protestant Reformation seems finally to have found traction...and listening ears. Many from the Word-Faith and Emergent Church movements want a reunification back with this RCC system, perhaps because they see Christian Evangelicalism's dwindling influence in a post-modern culture. Perhaps they want to return because they share this common "Amillennial/Post-Millennial" eschatological view that they have to be the ones to "usher in the Kingdom". What better than to partner with the 'Vicar of Christ' himself? <Sarcasm intended>

I'm also of the belief that Pope Francis is not the "Petrus Romanus" or the "False Prophet" of Revelation 13 and 17 per say, primarily because he's much too old and frail to fill that position. But I do believe that he is a precursor to that man. Extraordinary times calls for extraordinary measures...and I believe a younger pope will come and he will be the one to expedite what John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have already started...but only after one key event occurs; the Rapture of the Church.

At the Rapture of the Church, the Holy Spirit's ministry here on earth will be changed, for lack of a better word. He will be withdrawn in the sense that His removal, forces the removal of all true, born-again believers from the earth, who are both indwelt and sealed by, the Holy Spirit. (2 Cor. 1:21-22, Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30). The Holy Spirit Himself is omnipresent, and similar to His involvement in the earth before the day of Pentecost, His removal doesn't mean He won't be operating on the earth in the 70th Week of Daniel. All it means is that His role will have changed into a different role. With the Church removed, the world will embrace this final, apostate, blasphemous form of the RCC.

I also get that the world is in chaos at the moment and only getting worse. People are scared and are searching for answers. Knowing that the RCC is the instrument by which this coming Antichrist rides to power on, might seem like trivial information at the moment, but think about it as being ahead of the information curve. The RCC is the instrument that helps bring about the physical and spiritual deaths of billions of people...so identifying now, who that is, is relevant. If you are in that church, get out. If you have friends or family in that church, encourage them to read an unbiased history about it and see for themselves all the damage that corrupt, works-based, pseudo-Christian religion has done. Also remember, that God loves the Catholic people. God hates the Catholic religion. It is a harlot that has fornicated with the kings of this earth, and has upheld blasphemy, as toxic cup mankind has drank for far too long. While she is not in her final stage now, she is getting ready.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the *kings of the earth* committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in *purple* and *scarlet*, and adorned with *gold* and

precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.

Even so, *Maranatha!*

Primeval Evil

But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. **Luke 17:25-30**

Many Christians who are interested in eschatology (the study of last things), often inquire of teachers and each other, as to when they should reasonably expect our Lord Jesus Christ to return for His bride, the Church. In regard to this question and by way of a disclaimer, I don't have or pretend to know a specific time or date. Jesus stated that 'no man would know the day or hour'.

Nor do I have a specific window of time in mind for the Rapture...i.e., Blood Moons, planetary alignments, Jewish holidays or key political events, because frankly our departure via the Rapture isn't necessarily linked to any of those things. So, in regard to specifics, we shouldn't be dogmatic on the exact timing only that it happens prior to the beginning of the 70th Week. The Rapture could happen on a Blood Moon, or during Rosh Hashanah, or it may not. We only know that at a certain point, the Church will have arrived at its specific number (known only to God), and that will be when it happens...in the twinkling of an eye. (Romans 11:25)

But there is something interesting that I've come to think about recently that just struck me in a particularly new light today. I know I've talked about it before, (as have many others), but more often than not, we usually only consider *it* as either a contributing factor, or causation of some other sign, and not the main point. But consider this in regard to the opening passage from Luke 17 as Jesus gave three key markers on this:

1. Christ also being rejected also by this generation. (vs. 25)
2. The days surrounding the time of His return, would be like the days of Noah, in which, if we were to go back to that passage in Genesis 6, would reveal an overarching key indicator that I think is very much in play today, and a dead giveaway of our enemy's agenda.

...that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (vs. 5)

for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. (vs. 11-12)

3. When referencing it, Jesus didn't mention the above points, but noted the normality of everything, implying that His return, would catch the world by surprise.

...they ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage... they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built... (vs. 27-28)

Assessment

Many well-intentioned teachers and ministries seemingly get side-tracked by some of the more sensational aspects to Genesis 6 (Nephilim, giants, men of renown), but treat the above situation of ‘widespread wickedness’ only as an obvious side-effect of the angelic/genetic corruption that had been ongoing. Certainly, the fact that fallen angels were cohabitating with humans, warrants discussion, but if we were only looking at that as THE sign for the end of the age in our day, one would spend a great deal of time and energy focused on chasing inconclusive conspiracy theories. Granted, those Nephilim-esque conditions may return, but most likely not before the Rapture of the Church.

But here in Genesis 6:5, 11-12, there are two, bright-neon signs for the overall condition of the world, and that is, the intent of man’s heart was only evil, and that all flesh had become corrupted, so much so, that God repented having made man. (vs. 6) The overarching problem at hand then, was that everything God had made in perfection (it was good), had now been tainted by sin and corruption. Satan tempted Adam and Eve into sinning, thus ushering in sin and death, but what the fallen angels did between then and the Flood, certainly expedited that corruption.

But consider our day...

We are now currently living in an age where nothing is sacred. It is the ‘mystery of iniquity’ coming into full effect. *Every* institution, whether it be marriage, the family, technology, commerce, worship, sexuality, etc...*everything* is already, or is in the process of being corrupted. We are witnessing an all-out assault on everything that God considers good, and/or at least necessary for humanity to continue.

Not only are the foundational pillars of our society being attacked, but people seemingly can’t trust anything anymore. Every source has bias and everyone seemingly has an agenda. Those figures in the media who people had trusted for decades, have now proven every bit as corrupt as they people their supposed to be ‘watchdogs’ against. Coaches, priests, military leaders, politicians, ministries, charities, and every other sector and section, has gotten black eyes recently from the scandals surrounding them.

People are questioning everything today...even the very common-sense things that the most primitive of tribes going back millennia don’t have difficulties with. There are reportedly some 58 different sexual identities people are now claiming. Marriage has been redefined to mean only that it is ethically acceptable to marry what one loves (and one can hypothetically love anything, human or otherwise). Abortion has been redefined as a constitutional right, not murder. Euthanasia is now both convenient and morally commendable. Nation states should be borderless. Islam is portrayed a religion of peace, while Christianity is portrayed as that of hate, violence, and bigotry.

Every tragic event now turns into a conspiracy. The Earth being round is now a conspiracy. Criminals are the victims, and the victim’s, criminal. Corruption, violence, globalism, greed, and pay-for-play politics are becoming the norm. Corrupt leaders are above the law, and the laws now are becoming solely aimed at stripping away freedoms from the individual. Common sense

is being abandoned at a record pace, and political correctness is choking the very life out of a nation bound by its Constitution. Violence and murder is plaguing every major urban center, and this is all just in the United States, the supposed leader of the free world.

But why is this significant?

Because the US is currently at the top of the geo-economic-political-militaristic food chain. If the US goes morally astray, it has the potential to drag the whole world with it...and it is. What we are witnessing today, is the world racing towards becoming *only evil continually*. No longer content with being that 'shining city on a hill', we are consenting as a nation, to the reality, that evil is now the new normal.

But here's the rub...

Satan KNOWS his time is running out, and he is not pulling his punches anymore. It is full-throttled, pedal to the metal, *highway to hell* evil being rammed down everyone's throats. Even though the removal of the Church at the Rapture will certainly expedite the reality for all flesh becoming corrupted again (this happens with the 'mark of the beast'), God will still have His remnant. Meanwhile, the whole world is seemingly being turned on its head and readying itself to embrace this coming 'mark' and the beast system.

Consider this; if we went back 100 years ago, would the issue of a man having the legal right to use a women's restroom, even remotely be an issue the US government would decide to waste its time with? No of course not. Any politician who would even support such a notion would have been thrown out of office and locked up in the loony bin. How about 50 years ago? 40 years ago? 20 years ago?

No, no, and no.

It's only been in the last ten years (or less) that evil has so gained a foothold in our culture and political mindset, that this even warrants discussion. It only warrants discussion, because those who want to enforce it, have both completely lost their ability reason, and are the ones in control of the system.

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. **Matthew 24:12**

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus lays out the global problems growing exponentially in the last days, of note, is that lawlessness will cause people's hearts to 'wax' cold. Paul, Peter, James, and Jude also warned of this deteriorating condition on the earth as time wears on. The fact that things progressively move from bad to worse, is the key indicator that time itself is drawing down. The fact that things have rapidly begun to deteriorate on a global scale, means the window for this age is closing very soon.

Mankind has moved through various ages and stages throughout history. The Bronze Age. The Iron Age. The Dark Ages. The Age of Reason. The Industrial Age. Seeing as we are now living in the Age of Information, Satan has saved the best for last, and has begun reintroducing deception on a grand scale, to increasingly confuse an already confused generation. This, tied in with lawlessness, has caused man to be both blindingly ignorant, and obsessively skeptical about

anything and everything, to include who Christianity. This is why we find ourselves living in a generation which has by and large, rejected Christ's sacrificial work on the Cross as the only means' of salvation. We have entered into a new dark age, where truth is suppressed, reason has been outlawed, and ignorance applauded.

Granted, this rejection is primarily in western societies where the Gospel has long been available...but the window is closing fast in other parts of the world. In the East, Far East, and Africa where atheistic and/or Islamic dictators and governments are in charge, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is finding the attacks against it ramped up to levels not seen since the days of the Roman Caesar's. But even still...

...this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. **Matt. 24:14**

Conclusion

One thing I'm curious about, is why none of the disciples ever asked Jesus about life before the Flood? I know I would have been extremely curious about this had I been there. Part of me thinks that because either they weren't completely understanding the timing of the Kingdom (see Acts 1:6) and weren't all that concerned about what had happened thousands of years prior, or they already had a decent understanding of that time, thanks to the non-canonical books like Jasher and Enoch as well as the common knowledge taught by the Sanhedrin and others. So, either they asked and it's not recorded for us, or they never asked...we simply don't know. We only know definitively what Scripture itself portends to the issue. So, I find interesting that what Jesus had to say about those Antediluvian days, is so different from the Genesis accounts, either for Noah or Lot.

The Genesis account records the earth was at breathtaking levels of evil and wickedness. While Jesus doesn't discount that, He adds that life will be normal...or at least have a sense of normality to it...assuming that the world has reached a point where evil is the new normal. We can reasonably deduce, that since Jesus is God, and was intimately aware of the conditions in Noah and Lot's day, that His description focused not on the sensational aspects of Noah's day (i.e...the Nephilim), or Lot's (rampant sexual deviancy), but on suddenness of judgment that will come, and the propensity for wickedness to spread and contaminate everything...so much so, that He asks the question He clearly already knew the answer too...

And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, *when* the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" **John 18:7-8**

Even So, Maranatha!

Dark Rivers of the Heart

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it? **Jeremiah 17:9**

Two of the most tragic deceptions ever foisted upon mankind, is that a) it's not our fault, and b) that we can fix ourselves. In fact, every belief system outside of the true Christian faith, to one degree or another, plays off one or the other. The Christian faith however, lays the blame solely on our sin nature, and on our inability to fix ourselves, by ourselves...which is why the world hates Christianity, and to an even greater degree, Jesus Christ.

When Jesus began His ministry at the age of 30, He began to challenge the religious and moral authorities of His time. He stated that adultery wasn't just the actual physical act itself, but that the intentions of the heart were equally culpable. Murder wasn't just the act itself, but equally damning, was the seed of hate that first takes root in the human heart. Likewise, it wasn't what a man put into his mouth that corrupted him, but what came out, because that came from the heart, and the heart was corrupted. In other words, Christ had the audacity to call sin for what it was, a heart problem, and the Pharisees and the Sadducees killed Him for it. They killed Him because it removed our ability to remedy the sin situation through religious piety, which was their livelihood.

Assessment

Each of us (myself included), are flawed, and miserable creatures outside of God's redemptive grace and mercy. We start off in a state of untested innocence, not understanding the ways of the world. As we grow up, we start off with high aspirations of becoming something grand and noble. Most of us end up becoming something we never intended, but whether we reach our goals, or we settle for something else, we all struggle with the inner 'man', because the inner man cannot find peace in the prospective paths we go. While money, wealth, power, sex, drugs, pleasure, etc., might make our time here on earth more enjoyable, they cannot fill the void in our hearts...which yearns to be redeemed and reconciled by our Creator. But whether we find success, failure, or simply compromise, in the end, the world will have what's due it, and will find a way to corrupt us.

It is in our misunderstanding of sin, that we mischaracterize the nature of it. Pride is the heavy weight of all sins, and it affects everyone to one degree or another. We might think that no matter how bad we have it...*at least we aren't like so and so over there*. It was pride that first corrupted Lucifer, the chief of all creation prior to mankind, who thought he deserved a promotion. (Isaiah 14:12-21; Ezekiel 28:11-19) Even though pride affects us all, the successful are far more susceptible to its damning charms.

These six *things* the Lord hates,
Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him:
A proud look,
A lying tongue,

Hands that shed innocent blood,
A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
A false witness *who* speaks lies,
And one who sows discord among brethren

Proverbs 6:16-19

So egregious is the severity of the nature of our sinful state that God has done everything within His power, in accordance with His mandate of our freewill, to prevent us from dying in our sins. He removed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, to ever prevent them from eating from the Tree of Life while in a state of sinfulness. He did this, because that is the same condition, that those who die in sins find themselves in once they enter eternity. Always dying, but never able to die. As Paul put it in 2 Thessalonians 1:9, that *these shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.*

Everlasting means forever, while destruction is associated with a onetime event...such as, a building being destroyed. It's only destroyed once, unless it's rebuilt. But something that is being eternally destroyed, is constantly being in a state of destruction. This makes me wonder if perhaps, this is why Satan introduces the Nephilim into the world through the intermingling of the fallen angels with human women, not only so he could corrupt mankind genetically, but also, to create beings who were powerful enough to get back into the garden so that man could have access to the *Tree of Life* again and be doomed forever?

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. **Gen. 3:22-24**

Conclusion

So let us set aside all pretenses and admit something upfront...we all struggle with sin. I struggle with mine, and you with yours. We all have a tendency to go through seasons if you will, of when we seemingly have it altogether...and at other times, not so much. A good analogy would be to say that as born-again believers, each of our paths in life, takes us up-stream in a world that is flowing in the other direction towards a waterfall, which spills over the rocks of eternity, into the lake of fire. Were it not for Christ's redemptive work on the Cross of Calvary, we would all be heading there.

But, as Christians, we trudge along, and often, we slip and go under. Either we are trying to get up and work our way back to fellowship with God, or we allow ourselves to be carried along with the undercurrents of this dark river. Admittedly, it is much easier to allow the river to simply carry us in the direction it wants to take us and we needn't do anything but allow the comforting dark waters carry us where it wants to take us. But while the waters are calm on the surface, the undertow is vicious and unforgiven.

What that means for believers, is that we are *tethered* to God the Father through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and the permanent sealing by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 5:19-21; Eph. 1:11-14, 4:30) So we couldn't go over the waterfall, but that's not to say, we couldn't be carried downstream and bounce off some rocks along the way. That was never God's intention. We know that in our flesh, we are weak. In Paul's flesh, he was weak. So if he was weak, I'm pretty sure I am (and you) are going to struggle along the way.

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. **Romans 7:14-20**

So man is made up of three parts; body, soul, and spirit. (1 Thess. 5:23) The spirit, when revived through salvation, is brought to life. But the spirit is still encased in this body (the tent), we inhabit while in this existence. The soul then (the heart/mind), is that which becomes the battle ground for which is carried out, the actions of the flesh. This is what Christ pinpointed as the problem. Where salvation through Jesus Christ corrects the spirit, by reviving that which was dead, sanctification, is where man seeks to reconcile his fellowship with God. We can't add one iota to our salvation through our works (Hebrews 10:10-14), but our works become instrumental in what we do (or don't do) for God while in this life. (Titus 3:1-8; 1 Cor. 3:9-15)

So let us not make the mistake of confusing our works because of salvation, for the gift of salvation. If saved, our salvation is secure in Christ's finished work on the cross. But as the river analogy goes, we aren't built to stay where we were, but to move forward against the flow, and to press onward toward the prize (Phil. 3:14). Ultimately, all believers have one goal in life, and that is *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—* (Eph. 4:13-15)

This then becomes our aim while in this life. We aim to be Christ-like, not trusting in our flesh to accomplish anything, but resting in His finished work, which makes our struggle moving up stream, more of holding on to that tether, rather than walking in our own power. But that is for this life. For the next, we have the threefold reasons why we must be changed when we are brought back to God through the Rapture.

1. The Church is being built by Christ, for a specific purpose, and is not destined for God's wrath, thus, is excluded from the time and the place of the 70th Week of Daniel...all seven years of it. (Rev. 3:10, 1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9, John 14:1-3)
2. When God the Father triggers the time for judgment, He recalls the Holy Spirit, who brings with Him, those He has sealed. (2 Thess. 2:7-8; Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:21-22)

Remember, the removal of the Holy Spirit doesn't mean that He still can't be here working, only that His mission has changed. Much the same way that in Acts. 2, the Holy Spirit was given...even though the Holy Spirit was very much active on earth prior to the day of Pentecost.

3. The Rapture is meant to purify the Church, the bride of Christ, through physical transformation of both the living and the dead. The living are transformed from mortal, to immortal, and the dead, are transformed from being bodily naked, to being given their permanent bodies. (2 Cor. 5:1-5)

So be of good cheer as we navigate the dark waters of our hearts, and of this world. You do not walk alone. We need not lean on our own understanding, or in our own efforts, but in Christ's. He has done all the heavy lifting (yoke easy, burden light), and we simply need to trust that He is able to save us to the uttermost, and to watch, and wait Him to return, as promised.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O Death, where *is* your sting?
O Hades, where *is* your victory?"

The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. **1 Cor. 15:50-58**

Even So, Maranatha!

True/Lies

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

1 John 5:19

We now live in a day and age in which more information is available to the average person, than at any other point in human history. An entire library's worth of books could be downloaded onto a single hard drive. We could gain more information and understanding of human history in the course of an hour's study with Google, than our predecessors could just a generation ago. Knowledge is weightless yet has weight. Knowledge is formless but can be accumulated. As one idea builds on another, we simply find ourselves as the generation of whom became the beneficiaries of millennia of human reasoning. But the real tragedy of living in this 'veritable' *age of information*, is that truth is no longer seen in terms of absolutes but is now measured in degrees.

The simple fact is, that truth is being suppressed at all levels, by more agencies and forces, than at any other point in human history. At a time when knowledge has become the most accessible and powerful commodity that man can possess, it is also the exact same time, when it has become the most dangerous. Knowledge is being aggressively censored politically, economically, geographically, religiously, historically, and educationally primarily because, truth threatens to undo that thing which evil men seek...which is world domination.

The lesson that these men (and women) have learned from history, is that bullets, bombs and armies might conquer the world for a moment, but it cannot hold it. Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, and Hitler all tried their best with their mighty forces, and when the leaders die or the threat wears off, the natives rise up. Military might is not indefinitely sustainable. Knowledge can be corrupted, thus negating all the gains made in whatever arena it might be engaged in. Economics change as currencies and financial systems evolve. But what those globalists who seek world domination have realized, is that none of these alone can accomplish the mission. They must be linked together and each weaponized. These are.

1. Religious (ideological belief)
2. Governmental (both political and militaristic)
3. Economic (technologies, currency, and science)

This is also exactly how the Scriptures record, that one man rises up in a future system, who masterfully garners all three. [Revelation 13](#) then records a governmental system which rises up, who then through political machinations, whittles their leadership down to one man. This one man has a religious ally, who first coalesces the world's religious into one ecumenical religious system, who then directs its worship to that one man. A totalitarian system of economics is also introduced, in which no transactions, anywhere, are allowed save that person has the mark of loyalty. The 'mark' could be the form of currency, or it could just be the system which allows for people to use their own currencies. Either way, if one didn't have the mark, they cannot buy or sell.

Assessment

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. **2 Cor. 4:3-4**

It is interesting that at the moments of greatest biblical revelation, is exactly the same time when the world presses hardest against God's truth being revealed. The truth, in regard to the factual history of mankind and the creation of the universe, can have only happened one way. The true narrative of history is not subjective in nature, but objective. In other words, history isn't open to whatever interpretation we want to make of it, because it only ever happened as it happened. And since there is only one true Narrator in this saga, God the Holy Spirit, it only makes sense that the Bible, which is a compilation of 66 books, written by 40 men over a period of 1,600 years, is both precisely accurate and inarguably cohesive in its design.

From the time He first hovered over the waters before creation, God the Holy Spirit has moved through the earth revealing truth to mankind. When this occurs, revelation and understanding both opens the understanding of the believers and confounds the world in its wisdom. When this occurs, biblical mystery becomes unveiled and man begins to understand a more about God's nature, their relationship to God, and the things that will happen in the future. But divine information is not unveiled all at once. Like the master tactician who lays enough information out there for the plan to move forward, but not enough that the enemy would be wise too, God has revealed His plan according to the Dispensations that man has found himself in. This would be why not everything was revealed to Adam. Or to Noah. Or to Moses. Or even to the Apostles. But when biblical truth becomes known, the demonic world scrambles to counteract the damage being done to their carefully woven, false narrative, they've laid to blind the world.

1st Century-the birth of Christianity had the pagan Romans and Jewish Sanhedrin oppose them

3rd Century-Gnosticism morphing into an ecumenical movement merging paganism with Christianity

7th Century-Explosion and expansion of Islam across the Middle East and Africa wiping out most of the Christian Middle East

8th – 15th Century-Dark Ages, biblical suppression by the Roman Catholic Church

20th-21st Century-Human secularism, pseudo-Christian movements, and New Ageism, and ecumenicalism

Conclusion

By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. **1 John 4:2-3**

The world hates the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and is desperate in its attempts to destroy, corrupt, or thwart the message, any way it can. What boggles my mind is, if the Bible is true (it is), and the world and all therein has come from God (it has), then the biggest story of our day, should be (it's not) that Jesus Christ came, died, and rose again, AND is coming back very soon. The world intelligentsia, media, military, scholars, skeptics, movers and shakers, have all pretty much relegated the return of Christ in the same category with UFO's, Bigfoot, and the Illuminati. The only time the Rapture or the return of Jesus Christ even makes the news these days, is if some cult or nut makes a claim for a specific day when He will return. Even then, they only note it so they can make the belief altogether, when that day comes and goes.

You can readily see how much trouble the world is in, with its burgeoning populations and the simple fact that, most of it is not Christian...at least in the Biblical sense. I've wondered how much longer God will allow the world to go, before returning. We often take 2 Peter 3:8-9 as meaning, God chooses to hold back as long as possible, in order for some to repent. What if it's the other way around? What if the longer God waits, the less people come to the faith, (Luke 18:8), so out of His kindness and mercy, He speeds it up? Longsuffering then, is tempered with a number (Romans 11:25) that completes the age of the gentiles and ushers in that final week, in which God concludes His dealings with the nation of Israel.

Jesus stated that Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and the *father of lies*. He is not omnipotent, thus can't know the future any more than you or I could. But what he lacks in omniscience, he makes up for in information. He is the fly on the wall in secret meetings. He is the one whispering in men's ears to do evil deeds. He is a master of knowing what makes man tick. He has an overwhelming amount of authority, currently, in this world, and thus, has plunged the world into a web of lies and deceit. But it reminds me of something C.S. Lewis once wrote concerning the truth...*a young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading.*

For the world is jam packed full of evidence, all pointing to God. The world is jam packed full of historical evidence of the existence of Jesus of Nazareth. Philosophical, ethical, and moral truisms all point to the validity of the Christian faith as a belief system. In fact, the onus is not on the believer to prove that there is a God, but on the skeptic that there isn't. We've been so conditioned by the world to try and prove that what we believe is valid, that we forget, that if we really believed what we say we believed, we would no more need to prove that God exists than we need to prove that gravity exists.

This is not to say we shouldn't study, or that we shouldn't make the argument, because some may be persuaded. But we ought not walk around thinking that the world is the way it should be...because it profoundly isn't. What we are living in today, is the façade. The real world will come, when the Lord Himself peels back the sky and He and His armies decimate the current rulers and Christ establishes His own eternal kingdom. That is the reality...so start living like it. (Me included!)

The apostolic church thought more about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ than about death and heaven. The early Christians were looking, not for a cleft in the ground called a grave but for a cleavage in the sky called Glory. Alexander MacLaren

Maranatha!

The End of the Beginning

Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning. Sir Winston Churchill

As mortal and finite humans, eternity is a very difficult concept for us to wrap our heads around. We struggle with it so much because we simply have nothing tangible that we can associate with the concept. But as humans, we must realize that the overwhelming bulk of our existence will be spent in eternity-future. It is to this understanding that we recognize we are in the last days, and also at the end of this stage of the story. More importantly, that we are not really at the end, but only at the very beginning of it.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **Ephesians 2:4-7**

Regarding what God has in store for us, the Apostle Paul stated that “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9) Put in another way, we have no conceivable way to understand all that God has in store for those of us who belong to Him. It is simply beyond any human understanding in this realm. They say that time is relative, to which, I would agree. But what if time itself were no longer a constraint we ever needn’t worry about again? Again, it is difficult for us now to comprehend what existence itself would be like without being relegated to time in some form or fashion. But that is a problem for the living. The dead know perfectly well what eternity feels like.

Assessment

For those who have already died in Christ, the way they are now, will always be their future (if I can relate to it that way). Granted, there are a few details that I am glossing over for those who have already died in Christ, having yet received their glorified, immortal bodies which will happen at the Rapture. There may also be campaigns afoot into eternity future which may involve far more grandiose plans, than what God has made known to us within our own existence. This world, this life, and all the history associated, may in fact play some integral role for something yet future. Of this, admittedly, I do not know.

But what we do know, is the closeness and existence with the Godhead in Heaven for all eternity. It is the compilation of all things good, righteous, holy, divine, pleasurable, interesting, joyous, and blissful all rolled into some divine, overarching existence we will find ourselves in, forever.

The dead are no longer corrupted by time, but have been made immortal, so that we may in some small measure, partake in God’s immortality. This though, is only made possible by receiving the one true and safe passage, which is Christ Jesus. He is the [Door](#) that all must pass through, to

receive eternal life. This is why salvation is not predicated on lineage, social status, heredity, or wisdom. Salvation can only come, when a person comes to the end of themselves and realize, that they cannot save themselves, but must fully trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:1-5)

Once a person receives eternal life by placing their hope and trust in Christ, they are immediately changed. Their spirit, once dead, is now revived, sealed, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is here, that a person becomes a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19-21) and is already placed into the heavenlies. It is in a way, like calling ahead and making a reservation at a fancy restaurant, where a place is already being prepared for you and only awaits your arrival, to be filled.

Another interesting thought is that the future then, what lies beyond the Millennial Kingdom, has not yet been written. Was this done for brevity's sake, or for the fact that we probably wouldn't be able to wrap our minds around all that lies into eternity future? One thing I am sure of, and it will not be us sitting around on clouds strumming harps. No, based on what we know of God now (according to numerous examples within Scripture), is that we will be busy. I do not believe that God does things arbitrarily, but always acts with a sense of purpose to compliment, aid, change, or complete, His will. There will be purpose in our being with Him, and in our glorified bodies beyond the necessity of simply being with Him.

Godhood

The ancient Gnostics and the modern-day Theosophists, Buddhists, Hinduists, and New Agers all liken us to be a part of God, or that we are a physical manifestation of it. Their goal was to bring man to the realization that through meditation, secret knowledge, self-realization, and channeling, we could achieve this divine state apart from the God of the Bible.

But the Bible is very clear on this matter; we are not God and can never, ever, ever be Him. We are only created creatures made in the likeness of Him. When one becomes born again, we become a *new creation* in which God infuses part of Himself (the Holy Spirit) into us, much the same way that radiation changes our DNA when we are exposed to it. We are not naturally part of that radioactive material we were exposed too, but through exposure, it fundamentally changes us all the way down to the molecular level.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. **2 Cor. 5:17-21**

Relativity

But what is time? In simple layman's terms, time is the measurement of moments, from one to another. A Femtosecond is one thousandth of one trillionth of a second, or 1/1,000,000,000,000,000th of a second. Even smaller, the Attosecond, is one quintillionth (10⁻¹⁸) of a second, or 1 (0.000000000000000001). The smallest measurement of time that within the laws of physics, 'Planck Time', is equal to 10⁻⁴³ seconds. That would be a 10, with 43 zeros behind it. Anything beyond that, would be indistinguishable to us in any known research methods.

It is unknown yet, as to which of these, a 'twinkling of an eye' would occur (1 Cor. 15:52) in our transformation from mortality to immortality as occurs at the Rapture of the Church. I don't know if it's that time speeds up to such a degree, that we have the Disney version of the transformation (think Beauty and the Beast moment where the prince is lifted up, spinning, while being transformed), or if we are simply doing what we do at any given moment, and we immediately find ourselves in the glorified state.

For instance, I could be sitting here typing this article, and as I type this *word*, immediately, I'm transformed. Perhaps, from the human perspective, it is immediate. But from the eternal perspective, which does not regard time (a day as a thousand years), as relative to anything; our transformation could be more of the spinning, sparkling change, as if there were some of God's ceremonial showmanship in our transformation process. Either way, I don't pretend to know, I only present these as things to consider.

Conclusion

I've often wondered what God did in eternity past. I believe that God has always existed, and yet there was the time (I have no better word) immemorial before Adam and the Creation, in which God existed. What did He do then? Was there other histories and civilizations of eons past to which God tended? What I don't think, is that God sat in the darkness or in whatever heavenly abode He surrounds Himself in doing nothing. Whatever it was, I'm am positive we will find out in due time. All we know, is that as this age comes to an end, the next one, the eternal one, begins. This is where we will all spend the rest of forever inside of. Thomas Watson once wrote "Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset; eternity to the wicked is a night that has no sunrise." That is both an exhilarating and terrifying thought...depending on where you stand with God now.

When this world comes to a close, the next will open up for us in such a manner, that this current one will dim and fade into obscurity. The Apostle John recorded in Revelation 21:4 for us, that *God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.* " Granted, as believers, we are new creations in Christ, but we still live in a fallen world, and in a fallen state of being. In relation to all the former things, these being; pain, sickness, anger, lust, hate, pride, envy, sadness, violence, perverseness, duplicities, wickedness, and all the other things to vile to even list, we understand that God strips that all from us on that Day. Whether we as Christians go in death, or at the Rapture, man is irrevocably reconciled to His Creator to co-exist with Him forever.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

The Last Trump

So, this is coming out before the debates tonight, and there is some risk on my part, to predict things that may or may not happen. With that said, my track record isn't half bad...I'm usually about 50% right on stuff, so take that with a grain of salt. So what I'm trying to say is, I could be right, or I could be wrong...and barring any major calamities or other *black swan* type events, here is how I see things playing out.

Last January 4th, I wrote "2016: The Year in Review", and I got some stuff right, like Trump winning the primaries, but was wrong on his running mate. Hey, I never said I was 'Miss Cleo' or anything...just a guy with an opinion. <sarcasm intended> But what I saw then, even though I wasn't a fan (still not) of Mr. Trump, is that he was the only candidate that was able to accurately tap into the public angst of what is boiling over in this country.

BLUF: (Bottom Line Up Front) ---Trump blowout in November.

It doesn't seem that way now does it.

Out of curiosity, I went back to previous national elections, and predictably the media is doing what they do, which is to try and make this a neck and neck battle until the bitter end, because they live off ratings and viewership. So, if they actually reported what the polls were, or the size of the candidate's rallies, you'd see this being how I see it, a landslide for the Republicans. I think this November, the Democrats and the Clintons are going to be swept away in a river of angry constituency forever. I know that sounds like hyperbole, especially in light of the current media mantra, but let me explain.

I'm not a poll expert. I'm not that professor who has his own formula for accurately predicting presidential winners since 1984. (Who by the way agrees with my assessment) No, my formula is much simpler. Do you remember how no matter how much mud and slime got thrown at President Obama (and rightfully so) in 2008...and yet, nothing stuck? I mean, the guy, despite having no experience, no history, and who seemingly rose up in a protective shroud of ambiguity, swept his way into office? Granted, he had the lapdog media virtually doing major redactions on just about everything around him, for him, but he could do no wrong in their eyes.

I see the same thing now with Trump, minus the media prep. The media hate him, but they can't stop talking about him. He is, as *Rush Limbaugh* would say, living rent-free in their heads 24/7. However, the same rubbery criteria applies: no matter how much or how often he's put his foot in his mouth, or anything in his past, nothing is sticking to Donald Trump (to date), despite the media's best efforts.

On the other hand, Hillary can't seem to get traction on anything, despite the media's best efforts at propping her up. Not only that, but her health problems are almost becoming surreal. Uncontrollable coughing fits...at her own rallies? Uncontrollable eye movements? Fainting. Pneumonia. Dementia. I mean, who knows what's going on with her physical problem? -let alone all the other political problems she's accumulated for herself over the last few years.

But on a more macro-level, for the past eight years, we've lived under a political regime bent on transforming the best and most fundamentally fair political system this world has ever known. Why? The same system Pres. Obama is so bent on changing, is the same system that allowed him to rise to the highest political office in the nation. It is much, much more than that though. Public angst has been simmering to levels unseen since Pearl Harbor. Except it isn't the Japanese saying, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve" ...but the Democrats.

The onslaught of political correctness over the last eight years, is akin to waterboarding us with liberal lunacy, to the point, that the Democrats (in large measure), no longer live in reality. I don't mean how a conservative already views a leftist, but how other liberals are having a hard time swallowing the bilge that Democrats are spewing these days. Perhaps it's like this group, a mental break from reality, where they prefer to live in *la la land* because they can't accept the reality that their policies are resounding failures. Prime examples of leftist lunacy;

- Screening immigrants (illegal or otherwise) for criminal backgrounds is unconstitutional.
- Stricter gun laws against law-abiding citizens makes us safer.
- Children should be raised genderless.
- The government should run all healthcare in the US.
- Iran has the right to be nuclear.
- Just because there is a seemingly endless train of 'lone wolf' attacks committed by Islamic people, doesn't mean Islamic terrorism exists.
- Ladies room really means mens room.
- Leave no man behind, except...well, at this point, what difference does it make?
- The laws about handling classified material only apply to the 'little people.'

There are only about a thousand more things I could add to the list, but you get my point. The center-right public has had to endure this never-ending stream of leftist ideology for the past eight years and the worst part is that a Republican-controlled House and Senate couldn't/didn't make any serious efforts to stop this. That is why in large part, a traditional Republican candidate couldn't make it out of the primaries and why Trump won. Trump, whether you like him or hate him, is not a traditional candidate.

Conclusion

For most of human history, and for that matter, most of the world outside of the West today, life is cold, brutal, and short. It seems unfair to most, that their time here has been spent in abject misery, starvation, illness, or suffering, while others have it so good. The fact of the matter is that human suffering is the norm, not the exception. It's only been in the last forty years or so that living conditions have vastly improved to such a degree, that creature comforts like ice cubes, fast food, and central air and heating have become common place.

But as believers in Jesus Christ, and to an even greater degree, fellow students of Bible prophecy, we know we are at the end. We don't know how quickly that end will be with any real specificity, but we know it is close. Evangelicals might not agree with Trump on a how he's made his money or the shallowness of his faith, but let me ask you this: if you, as a Christian,

had to live here, or in North Korea, where would you choose? You'd almost overwhelmingly choose here. Why? Well, because you like having freedom. It may not be as pure as it used to be (constitutionally speaking), and the world is in its final stages of falling apart, but that's still a far cry better than absolute, abject tyranny. Even if I weren't a Christian, I still wouldn't want to live in North Korea, given the option. I bring this up because we all have to live somewhere, and we all have to deal with the world in which we exist. For the time being, and given the two options between tolerable and unbearable, I choose the former.

The truth is, there are no perfect human candidates. One day, the world will finally hail one as such, and he will turn out to be the *man of sin*, the *Antichrist*, the *son of perdition*, the *rider on the white horse*. He will plunge this world into the darkest period ever known. But until that point in which Christ returns, life would be like the days of Noah, and the days of Lot. (Luke 17:26-30) Life would be normal, or at least have a sense of normalcy to it. And yes, this is speaking to the moment of the Rapture, and not the Second Coming, because life inside the seven-year tribulation, is going to be anything but normal. The *Seventieth Week of Daniel*, will consist of a series of 21 judgements, each more horrifying and terrible than the one before. It will cripple mankind, and upend creation, cataclysmically stripping away over half of the world's population.

So given what we know about what is coming, I believe that tolerating Trump is small potatoes in comparison. He isn't running for the office of "America's Pastor," but for the office of the President of the United States. *Although he'd be an improvement over the current self-nominee Rick Warren...* but I digress. Look, it's only a little while longer, and the Lord Himself will return, and He will right all the wrongs, beginning with us, the Church. He will take us up, and purify us unto Himself, and we will enjoy the blessings of His presence for seven years, while the world agonizingly endures what it has always wanted, a Christless world. The Lord sets up kings, and He knocks them down. The Lord appoints the governing authorities, and He uses them to His own ends.

But fear not fellow believers, if Hillary does win perchance, then that means, America is under judgement and the He is coming sooner rather than later. If Trump wins, that means America is still under judgement and He is coming sooner rather than later. Either way, we win. The road just gets a little bumpier with her at the wheel.

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." **Revelation 3:10-13**

Collapse

A few weeks ago, I watched a documentary titled *Collapse* in which the entirety of it was an interview with a man named Michael Ruppert. It was filmed in 2009, right as the U.S. was in the throes of the worst economic recession since the Great One back in the late 20's and early 30's. In it, Mr. Ruppert argued with much conviction, that the woes of our then-current predicament was due to our dependence on fossil fuels and also because of corruption at the highest levels. He struck me as the archetypal citizen-journalist, a modern-day Don Quixote who traded in his windmill for the US Government. To him, everything was a conspiracy, and everyone was against him.

Having watched it for the first time some seven years later, it appears that perhaps it wasn't as dire as he'd made it out to be after all. He had made what seemed like then some valid points. But trying to reconcile the future apart from a Biblical understanding made his predictions askew. What disturbed me the most about the film, was the credits. It showed him some time after the film was made, living alone in a home he rented with only his dog for company. He was in serious debt and appeared to be trying to distance himself from some of his more sensational predictions he'd made earlier on. A few years after that (2014), the news reported that he had been found dead in his home with a single gunshot wound to the head. Both friend and police alike, upon discovering his note and complete lack of foul play, understood this to be self-inflicted. In the absence of hope, suicide seemed like the only logical solution.

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. **2 Corinthians 4:3-5**

Assessment

It would seem that with each passing election cycle, true born-again evangelical Christian's are forced to make further and broader conciliations about who we will accept as the next president, as if continually forcing us to choose between the lesser of two evils. Will this continual acquiescence of having to choose between two, less than stellar candidates, finally lower our threshold of what we understand as righteousness?

Given the fallen nature of our society, there aren't any true, born-again believers who stand a chance in the political arena these days. That is, not if they really stand on their convictions. The best we can hope for, is that whoever is elected, will include in his circle, men and women of faith who can help guide their decisions to rule rightly. One party seems open to this, while the other, not so much.

Meanwhile, there is a small, but growing counterargument to this in that our convictions, political or otherwise, should not be watered-down, and by either not voting, or voting third-party, we might lose the election, but we will still have our principles. Thus, evangelicals should vote (or not) per their convictions, not on what's best for the nation as a whole. Their view is that the climate in America over the last 100 years, minus tribulation and persecution, has weakened

our testimony making it virtually worthless. For them, even though persecution and tribulation aren't good, it ultimately will refine the remnant here and now, further separating the wheat from the tare.

This sounds good in theory, but I would add that this political boycott has already been tried in the 2012 election. A great many evangelicals sat it out because they refused to vote for a Mormon, ultimately costing Romney the ticket. What did that gain us evangelicals? Four more years of Barak Obama, along with all the progressive-liberal agendas he could manage to cram down our throats. It also expedited the rise in apostasy across 'American Christendom' by forcing churches to either conform or be attacked.

It is easy to despair, given our current choices, but we must remember that we aren't electing the next 'pastor-in-chief', but a politician. A politician who ultimately will steer this nation in one direction or the other, for better or worse. And since none of us knows when Jesus Christ will return (as no man knows the day or hour), we must live in this world, in whatever state it finds itself in, until that time comes.

Furthermore, we aren't saved as American's. We are saved as individuals, and individually, God moves in mighty ways in our lives. It is true that for the better part of 200 years, Christian's have not had to suffer for their faith in the United States. But for all our faults as a nation, the United States still has had the greatest number of evangelists and missionaries of any nation in the world. We were the world's largest exporter of Christianity. We also exited WWII as victors who became the first to recognize Israel as a nation again after almost 2,000 years in diaspora. On a national level, we served a purpose, but America isn't Christian, because nations can't be. What America can be, is a conduit for Christian's, to either do good, or not, in a world that is in its final stages of entropy.

Besides, enduring persecution doesn't confirm our testimony any more than not having any, condemns it.

Where was the tribulation in the 18th-20th centuries, when the great evangelists like Moody, Sunday, Spurgeon, and Graham were going from coast to coast, nation to nation, and across the oceans, winning countless millions of souls for Christ? They weren't doing it under threat of torture and death, but because liberty prevailed, and the opportunity existed, and because God was doing it through them. They were simply tools in the hand of an almighty God, and He didn't need massive, wide-scale persecution to accomplish this did He?

But that point aside, if tribulation comes for the church, it's only because God has already allowed it, and in truth, it could happen under any political party; but it's virtually guaranteed under one. Jesus stated in the Upper Room discourse, 'in this life you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer because I have overcome the world' (John 16:33). That is an acceptance of the reality of life in this world, not a calling for us to go and seek it.

For Christians, the vast majority of the last two millennia has already been spent in persecution and misery, and the fact that we here in the west now aren't, is also by God's design. There is a

persecuted Church, and has been in every age, and there has arisen in the west, those who aren't persecuted. The fact that this has already been foretold, is fulfilling what God's word has said.

We know that the Bible is largely prophetic in nature. God declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10) and has deemed that these final days of human history, mimic another period of time long before Christianity ever came into existence; the days of Noah and Lot. (Luke 17:26-30) The Bible says that: the world would be wicked and violent (check), hearts would wax cold (check), people, lovers of money and themselves (check), many false prophets would arise and lead many astray (check), churches would fall into apostasy (check), the church would become lukewarm (check), and yet there is in fallen state, a sense of normalcy as people come to accept whatever state they're in, as the normal state of affairs (check).

If Trump wins, it too is because God allows it so as to fulfill some plan not yet understood by us. There is one unique thing about Donald Trump that gets overshadowed by most of the other political noise in that should he win, and should he keep his word, he would be the first president in the modern history of Israel, to finally accept Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the state of Israel. We know [according](#) to Scripture, that the world will unify and come against Israel in the last days, so maybe his willingness to finally recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, is the final straw that triggers the final day events.

Conclusion

No doubt we are living in trying and perilous times. Trying to live this life without salvation from Jesus Christ, especially with the way the world is today, is not just an act of rebellion, it's an act of lunacy. For the non-believer, this might seem like religious hyperbole given our current fact that there are billions of people in the world going about their everyday life without a thought or care of Christianity. To that degree, an *ignorance of truth* is not a protective shield guarding one from destruction, but a dark pathway one must feel their way down without the benefit of light and whose end drops into eternal damnation. The reality is that the world is in a mess and people across all ethnic, religious, economic, and political boundaries are all wondering the same thing; who can fix this?

We might consider Trump as one last act of desperation in fighting for the soul of a nation, but we already know where this all ends...we just don't know when. But if you are counted as among one of those who do not believe in the God of the Bible, you are like this man Ruppert who is both frustrated and hopeless in the face of a fallen world that you can't even begin to understand. A non-Christian can't even begin to name the evil which faces all mankind. A non-Christian has this inability to call the true nature of evil for what it is, chiefly that sin has infected this world, causing it to exist in a fallen state, governed by dark spiritual powers and principalities, who themselves answer to the 'god of this age'. In the same regards, it is not all that dissimilar to the liberal democrat's inability to call recent global terrorist attacks for what it is, radical Islamic terror.

Donald Trump isn't going to save this world any more than Hillary can destroy it. The United States and subsequently any nation tied to her well-being, will either thrive or collapse not because of peak oil or fiat currency, but whether God allows it or not. This is the fine line that

the Christian must walk, in both accepting the sovereignty of The Almighty, and trying to exist in a world that is its final moments before it actually does collapse. But there is also nothing wrong with exercising your God-given right to not vote in tyranny and oppression.

The Lord isn't guaranteed to come back tomorrow. It might be ten years from now, but that doesn't mean I want to leverage my principles by allowing evil to have more of a foothold than it already does. Many now feel that should welcome persecution, because in that we will somehow find purification in the process. They welcome this by doing nothing. Perhaps the Christian citizens of Germany in 1932 felt the same way. They didn't want to mix church with state, and in that vacuum, got the Nazi's.

As Governor Mike Pence stated, 'the choice isn't between two persons, it's between to futures' and what form of government are you willing to subjugate yourself under...until I might add, *that Day* comes. We can't stop the rise in evil that is coming, but I don't have to help it along either. So do I choose between the lesser of two evils, well, that is a question you have to ask yourself?

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. **2 Peter 3:10-13**

The Lesser of Two Evils

It would seem that with each passing election cycle, true born-again evangelical Christians are being forced to make further and broader conciliations about who we will accept as the next president. This has popularly been framed as having to choose between the lesser of two evils. Will this continual acquiescence to having to choose between two, less-than-stellar candidates finally lower our threshold of what we understand as righteousness? In keeping with the doctrine of demons and the duplicitous nature of our enemy, Satan, I believe that the question itself has been high-jacked, and purposely so.

Given the fallen nature of our world, there aren't many true, born-again believers who stand a chance in the political arena of these final days. That is of course, should they really stand on their Christian convictions. The best we can hope for then and given our knowledge of where the Bible says the world is heading in these last days, is that whoever is elected, will include in his or her circle of influence, men and women of faith who can help guide their decisions to rule rightly. One party seems open to this, while the other, not so much.

Meanwhile, there is a counterargument that our activity, political or otherwise, should not be watered-down, or compromised in any fashion. So by either voting, not voting, or voting third party, we might lose the election, but we will still have our principles. The American Thinker has a well-written [article](#) even citing Charles Spurgeon as a source of hopefully prompting evangelical Christians to never compromise principles by voting for anyone who doesn't perfectly align themselves with their beliefs. The article writer cited Spurgeon, who then cited Moses, as the catalyst for not compromising, and showed how he aligned himself with the enslaved and impoverished Hebrews rather than with the supreme power of their day, the Pharaoh. Thus, evangelicals should vote (or not) per their convictions, and not on what's best for the nation as a whole.

Assessment

The real decision isn't between which candidates to vote for, but rather are we, as citizens of a nation that is supposed to be built on laws and a constitution, going to uphold our end of our duties, that is, to vote. The real lesser of two evils, is deciding whether we vote, or not vote. It is easy to despair, given our current choices, but we must remember that we aren't electing the next 'pastor-in-chief,' but a politician — a politician who ultimately, will steer this nation in one direction or the other, for better or worse.

Furthermore, citing Moses as an example of uncompromising piety is in my mind, a misnomer. The Pharaoh was worshipped as a godman, thus if Moses aligned himself with Pharaoh in any way, he would lend credence to just such a false claim of divinity. The President of the United States on the other hand, is not divine. He is simply supposed to be a public steward of the common wealth of our nation and its resources. Our voluntary silence by not solidifying our vote behind the candidate who 'best' represents our values, must be seen not as a means to an end, but in its end-state itself. To not do so, is an acquiescence to the greater evil.

A small but growing number of Christians feel that increased persecution and trials are a good thing. Their view is that the climate in America over the last 100 years, minus tribulation and persecution, has weakened and made soft our testimony making it virtually worthless. For them, even though persecution and tribulation aren't good, it ultimately will refine the remnant here and now, further separating the wheat from the tares.

Political boycotts centered on moral principles sound good in theory, but I would add that this repeated call for political inactivity has already been tried in the 2012 election. A great many evangelicals sat it out because they refused to vote for a Mormon, ultimately costing Romney the White House. What did that gain evangelicals? Four more years of Barak Obama, along with all the progressive-liberal agendas he could manage to cram down our throats. It also expedited the rise of the transgender and homosexual agenda, along with many other issues that directly assault our Judeo-Christian values.

Furthermore, we aren't saved as "Americans." We are saved as individuals, and individually, God moves in mighty ways in our lives. It is true that for the better part of 200 years, Christians have not had to suffer for their faith in the United States. But for all our faults as a nation, the United States still has had the greatest number of evangelists and missionaries of any nation in the world. We were the world's largest exporter of Christianity. We also exited WWII as victors who were the first to recognize Israel as a nation again after surviving almost 2,000 years in diaspora. On a national level, we served a purpose, but America isn't Christian, because nations can't be. What America can be, is a conduit for Christians, to either do good, or not, in a world that is in its final stages of entropy.

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Where was the tribulation in the 18th-20th centuries, when the great evangelists like Moody, Sunday, Spurgeon, and Graham were going from coast to coast, nation to nation, and across the oceans, winning countless millions of souls for Christ? They weren't doing it under threat of torture and death, but because liberty prevailed and afforded them the opportunity to do so, and because God was doing it through them. They were simply tools in the hand of an almighty God, and He didn't need massive, wide-scale persecution to accomplish this did He?

But that point aside, if tribulation comes for the church, it's only because God has already allowed it, and in truth, it could happen under any political party; but it's virtually guaranteed under one. Jesus stated in the Upper Room discourse, "in this life you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer because I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). That is an acceptance of the reality of life in this world, not a calling for us to go and seek tribulation.

For Christians, the vast majority of time in the last two millennia has already been spent in persecution and misery, and the fact that we here in the west are not now suffering terribly is also by God's design. There is a persecuted Church, and has been in every age, and there has arisen in the west, those who aren't persecuted. The fact that this has already been foretold, is fulfilling what God's Word has said.

We know that the Bible is largely prophetic in nature. God declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10), and has deemed that these final days of human history mimic another period of time long before Christianity ever came into existence- the days of Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-30). The Bible says the world would be—

Wicked and violent-*check*

Hearts would wax cold-*check*

People, lovers of money and themselves-*check*

Many false prophets would arise and lead many astray-*check*

Churches would fall into apostasy-*check*

The church would become lukewarm-*check*

And yet there is in this fallen state, a sense of normalcy as people come to accept whatever state they're in as the normal state of affairs-*check*.

If Trump wins, it too, is because God allows it so as to fulfill some plan not yet understood by us. There is one unique thing about Donald Trump that gets overshadowed by most of the other political noise, and it is, that should he win, and should he keep his word, he would be the first president in the modern history of Israel, to finally accept Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the state of Israel. We know according to Scripture, that the world will unify and come against Israel in the last days, so maybe his willingness to finally recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, is the last straw that triggers the final day events.

Conclusion

No doubt we are living in trying and perilous times. Trying to live this life without salvation from Jesus Christ, especially with the way the world is today, is not just an act of rebellion, it's an act of lunacy. For the non-believer, this might seem like religious hyperbole given the current fact that there are billions of people in the world going about their everyday life without a thought or care as to Christianity. To that degree, an ignorance of truth is not a protective shield guarding one from destruction, but a darkened pathway one must feel their way down without the benefit of light and whose end drops into eternal damnation. The reality is that the world is in a mess and people across all ethnic, religious, economic, and political boundaries are all wondering the same thing: who can fix this?

We might consider Trump as one last act of desperation in fighting for the soul of a nation, but we already know where this all ends...we just don't know when. And since none of us knows when Jesus Christ will return (as no man knows the day or hour), we must live in this world, in whatever state it is in, until that time comes. But if we are going to wait for THE perfect candidate to come along before we finally cast our vote, that ain't gonna happen until Jesus Christ returns at the Second Coming to finally usher in His perfect, and eternal kingdom.

A non-Christian can't even begin to name the evil which faces all mankind. A non-Christian has this inability to call the true nature of evil what it is, chiefly that sin has infected this world,

causing it to exist in a fallen state, governed by dark spiritual powers and principalities, who themselves answer to the “god of this age.” In these regards, it is not all that dissimilar to the liberal democrats’ inability to call recent global terrorist attacks for what it is, radical Islamic terror.

Donald Trump isn’t going to ultimately save this world any more than Hillary can destroy it. The United States and subsequently any nation tied to her well-being, will either thrive or collapse not because of peak oil or fiat currency, but whether or not God allows it to. This is the fine-line that the Christian must walk, in both accepting the sovereignty of The Almighty, and trying to coexist in a world that is in its final moments before it actually does collapse.

But there is also nothing wrong with exercising your God-given right to not vote for voluntary tyranny and oppression. The Lord isn’t guaranteed to come back tomorrow. It might be ten years from now, but that doesn’t mean I want to leverage my principles by allowing evil to have more of a foothold than it already does. Many now feel that Christians should welcome persecution, because in that we will somehow find purification in the process. They invite this by doing nothing. Perhaps the Christian citizens of Germany in 1932 would think differently now with hindsight, given the chance to go back and change things. They didn’t get involved, and in that vacuum, they got a little man with a funny mustache. Like the old saying says, the first country Hitler invaded was Germany.

If nothing else, set aside the man, and look at the agenda. Which party stands a better chance of reducing, restricting, or abolishing abortion on demand? Which party stands to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s undivided capital? Which party has the potential to roll-back the aggressive homosexual agenda being forced upon us and our children? Which party will support freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, etc.? As Governor Mike Pence stated, “the choice isn’t between two persons, but between two futures”. What form of government are you willing to subjugate yourself under...until I might add, that Day comes? We can’t stop the rise in evil that is foretold to come, but I don’t have to help it along either. So do you choose between the lesser of two evils, well, that is a question you have to ask yourself?

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.” **Romans 13:1-3**

This Was Your Life

While the world was fixated on the national elections, the Democratic scandals, the World Series, earthquakes, wars and rumors of war around the world, evangelical Christianity lost another one of the greats this last week with the passing of Jack Chick. There was no national outpouring of grief. No press coverage that I could discern. No tributes aside from what few believers shared on Facebook and Twitter. Yet, I bet heaven's reception party was such that it dwarfed anything we simple mortals could have put together.

If we were to try and quantify the impact of Jacks' tract ministry, I would easily put him ahead of Augustine, Charles Spurgeon and Billy Graham. Truth be told, we won't know this side of heaven how many lives his ministry has touched, but if I were a betting man, it would probably be in the hundreds of millions of lives saved, lives touched, and with outreach in every nation on the planet. I even used this same title in the second article I'd ever written for the Omega Letter back in July of 2011 as a tribute of sorts to Jack Chick and his 'Chick Tracts', which have had a profound influence in my own life.

Fearless in their messaging, Chick Tracts were unafraid to tackle even the toughest of topics like the occult, homosexuality, abortion, hell, Roman Catholicism, and prophecy. Yet, despite their boldness in proclaiming truth, they were also uncompromisingly sincere in their presentation of the Gospel at the end of each story. The artwork was compelling, oftentimes capturing the tiniest of details and nuances people make when confronted with both truth and error. Also notable was their citing of sources, whether a statistic or Scripture, in order to validate the message they were presenting.

The earliest Chick tract that I can remember was called [Back from the Dead](#), and it told the story of a man who had clinically died and went to hell. In the hospital, the doctors and the medical team had given him up for dead, but he came back, with quite the story to tell. Being a young boy, I was fascinated by monsters, and I remembered the pictures from the scene where the man is in hell. I carried those frightening images with me locked in my mental filing cabinet for decades to come. That picture, probably more than any sermon or teaching, motivated me to never want to go there, or let anyone else go there.

Chick tracts was one of the few ministries I recognized and respected early on for its reach and imagination in terms of trying to reach everyone they possibly could. Furthermore, every born-again believer who has ever been called into some type of ministry, should only ever have as one driving goal, that their work continues on even after they are gone. Jack Chick, having now passed on to glory at the age of 92, spent the last fifty years working in a ministry, and leaves behind a legacy which will continue to impact this world until the Lord returns (and perhaps even beyond the Rapture).

If there were any detractors that I could think of regarding Chick Ministries, it was in their overzealousness in promoting the 'KJV-only' view. Personally, I do not begrudge anyone who holds that view, but I also don't champion that position myself. I believe there are far too many other pressing issues currently trying to undermine the Gospel to be hung up on which translation I use, or don't use. Still, it was a position they were unwavering on, and should be

commended at least for their consistency and doing so in an age of compromise and capitulation. The bottom-line though, is that they tempered their truth with love, and they always presented a clear message of both the Gospel and that Jesus Christ is, was, and will only ever be the only means of salvation.

Assessment

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. **2 Corinthians 5:9-11**

Part of the reason I began writing, was that I too wanted to leave something behind should sudden-death beat old-age to the punch. Granted, my own ministerial scope and reach are microscopic compared to Jack's, but I believe in my heart that thus far, I am doing what the Lord has called me to do. When we are doing what He has called us to do, that is all we can do until He has calls us to do something different. We each have our place in this world to accomplish something that was tailor-made for us. We grow, we learn, we share, we love, we teach, and we write...all in the hopes that we can make an eternal impact on someone whom the Lord has placed in our path.

But not to be discouraged, God has not called us all to be Charles Spurgeons, Jack Chicks, or Billy Grahams. If you think about all the potentialities, all the possible scenarios, with all the theological heavyweights out there;

Is it better to be a Billy Graham...or the person who led Billy Graham to Christ?

Is it better to be a Charles Spurgeon, or the person who led Charles to Christ?

The beauty of our salvation is that we never know who or what our own impact will have this side of eternity, or what impact that it will have later on down the line. But there are some common misconceptions about our eternal future, and that is that we are all going to be the same. Another misconception is that all of our sins are going to be laid bare at the Bema Judgement, in which we will have to answer for every little thing we've ever done which detracts from our reward. Both of these views are incorrect.

As believers, our sins were paid for at the Cross. All of our sins. In fact, every sin you and I have ever committed, was thousands of years into the future from the 1st century when Jesus of Nazareth hung on that old cruel cross to bear the wrath of God for you and I. He just didn't die for some of your sins...He died for ALL of them. He knew about the sins you and I would commit millennia before you and I were even conceived. So to be clear, *salvation is by grace, through faith, NOT of works, lest any man should boast.* (Paraphrase of Eph. 2:8-9) So either Christ paid for all your sins, or He didn't, and if He didn't, then you and I would be doomed forever because we are incapable of ever earning our own salvation through our own efforts. Let's just be glad that He did and move on to the work laid before us. So then notice what is being tested below...is it works for salvation, or because of salvation?

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. **1 Corinthians 3:11-15**

So we understand that only Jesus Christ can lay the foundation, which is our salvation. ANYTHING we do beyond that, is added on top of that foundation which is already laid...these are works because of salvation. When believers stand before Christ at the Bema Seat Judgment, we are judged for what we did or didn't do for Christ in the time we had available. If we were doing what God had called us to do, our intentions (not our results) are what is put to the flame. That will either be the gold, silver, precious stones, or it could be the wood, hay, stubble...depending on what we were trying to get out of it.

Were we doing it for our own glory? Were we more concerned with growing our congregations or classes by size, or by maturity? Were we more concerned with the budget, or with the giving? Were we envious because someone else got the book deal, or the radio spot, or the television interview? Were we jealous because the neighbor has a nicer house, car, husband, wife, etc.?

Intent, not results, is what is what's brought out at the Bema Seat Judgment. (Rom. 8:27, Rev. 2:23) I believe many on That Day will expect a lot, but receive little. I also believe that many who do not expect much, will receive great reward for the faithfulness in the calling in which God has called them. In other words, it isn't the size of our church, our budgets, or our ministries that God rewards, it is the intent of our hearts, and whether we were good stewards of the talents and opportunities He has placed before us in our appointed times.

Although it might seem paradoxical that I mentioned the enormous influence of Jack Chick's ministry in terms of global reach and impact as being a good thing, while also saying that it isn't about the size or budget of our ministries, reach, and scope as being what is important to God, it is not. If we are faithful to God's calling, whatever that is, He can do the miraculous through us. In Jack's case, it was monumental. In yours or mine, it may not even be noticeable. Either way, God judges the intent of the heart, not the results...those belong to God and He can do with them whatever He chooses.

Perhaps your calling was to be a godly mother. How many of the Christian greats look back to their mothers as the inspiration to become a Christian in the first place? And because they did, these men and women go on to impact the world?

Perhaps your calling is to be a mechanic, store clerk, truck driver, fry cook, missionary, preacher, or teacher? Whatever it is, be faithful and God will bless your efforts. He may not bless your results in any way that is discernible in your life now, but your efforts may be the reason that someone else turns to Christ because they saw the love of God in you. Or perhaps it was because you were bold enough to share with them the plan of salvation. They may not turn now, but somewhere down the line that seed that was planted and will spring forth by the convicting of the

Holy Spirit, and the Lord will bring to their remembrance that time when you laid out the plan of salvation without fear and without hesitation.

Conclusion

While it's not a popular message these days to remind people that we may not see results instantaneously, we keep it in mind because you and I are prone to discouragement because what we are doing seems to be bearing no fruit.

Remember, God is in charge of the results, not you or I. Also keep in mind that you are a sinner. I am a sinner. Born-again as we might be, we are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners. (1 John 1:8-10) It is as inherent and instinctive to our fallen nature to want to sin, as it is for dogs to chase cats, or for birds to fly. It is the fleshly nature that currently encapsulates our souls in a cocoon of corruption. It very much desires us to be in synch with this fallen world, and not with God.

The sin nature works double time, all the time, to keep us silent and distracted from doing the things of God. But one day soon, the Lord will come to redeem His bride, and give us our new, immortal, sin-free bodies that we can worship and rejoice in the glory of the Lord in. But until that day, remember...

... since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Election 2016 and the Coming Rapture of the Church

November 8th, 2016 is a day that many in the US and around the world have longed for since 2009. The US Presidential election has proven this year to be unprecedented in its twists, turns, and revelations in regard to the final two candidates. As with the previous elections, this one has divided the American public, but interestingly, has somewhat galvanized the Christian evangelical vote like never before. A civil war is brewing and the battlefield this time is not on the fields of Antietam or Gettysburg, but in the ballot boxes across the nation.

One candidate has been in the political arena in a number of roles over the last thirty years. At present, she faces charges of extreme corruption, and her power base is made up of globalists, banking cartels, Islamic nations, socialists, communists, and radicals of every type and flavor. Her worldview is blatantly secular humanist, but as has been recently revealed, it is bordering in and around the satanic.

The other candidate has been a successful businessman and media personality, who until recently, had not engaged much in the way of politics, but has crossed the lines to join both parties over the last three decades. His crude mannerisms, rough language, rash temperament, and economic proclivities have made him a tough candidate for Christian evangelicals to rally around...at first.

At stake are two visions of America to come. One seeks a continuation of the last eight years. The other, more nationalist and populist, seeks to regain the former glory years of American economic and military might. Which one will emerge victorious? At this point, only God knows, but rest assured, either way, His will and His agenda will remain perfectly on track. Let us for a moment, look at the candidates and see how the political ramifications bear out in the prophetic.

Assessment

We know according to Scripture passages like Revelation 6 and 13 that the world one day ends up under the control of just one man we know as The Antichrist. He is the 'man of lawlessness' that Paul speaks of in 2nd Thessalonians 2, and whom John sees as the 'Rider on the white horse' in Revelation 6. He is able to wrest control of all the nations of the world, and subjugate everyone into one economic system of buying and selling. Until this generation, that would have been impossible simply because the world lacked the technology to tie every nation, and every person into one economic system.

We also know that Jesus stated the world would be like the days of Noah, and the days of Lot, just prior to His return. (Luke 17) We only have cursory information on both of those time periods, but what we do know is that those periods of time were wrought with violence, sexual perversion, supernatural and satanic activity, and the thoughts of man were only evil continually.

At the same time, Jesus stated that the world would not know when He would return. This cannot be spoken of the Second Coming, because that is preceded by 21 specific and global judgments that will reduce the world's population by more than half. Furthermore, once the Tribulation

begins (Daniel's 70th Week), it is marked at the halfway point by a very specific event...the abomination of desolation.

Rather, Jesus spoke of the time leading up to His return for His bride, the Church. He stated that the world, although reminiscent of the days of Noah and Lot, would be carrying on business as usual. Paul added that people would be talking about 'peace and safety' and that this event, the Rapture, would catch the world by surprise and it would be followed by sudden destruction. Thus, the Rapture will be both surprising and catastrophic in its aftermath with the immediate removal of perhaps up to 1 billion humans from around the world.

Jesus, Paul, Peter, Jude, and John were all in agreement that global conditions would progressively go from bad to worse in every aspect of life here on earth. The closer it draws to the end, the more evil people would become, and the more ineffectual the church would become. (Matt. 24:3-14; 2 Tim. 3; 2 Peter 3; Jude; Rev. 3)

Two other very significant indicators also had to be in play for the world to be at the very doorsteps of Christ's return; Israel had to become a nation again, and that the world would increasingly become united in their hatred of Israel. The reason they hate Israel, is because Israel is proof positive that God exists, that Bible prophecy is true, and that Christ will one day return.

So with the aforementioned signs and indicators, let us look at the scenarios each candidate brings to bear should they be the next presidential candidate on November the 9th.

A President Clinton victory

A Hillary Clinton victory on Nov. the 8th would be a resounding kick in the guts to Christians and patriotic people across the nation. It would be disheartening, and I would venture to say, a bit frightening given some of her previous statements she's made regarding reining in freedom of religion, particularly that of Christianity. The strongest case for her victory in terms of Scriptural reasoning would be that it is a resounding confirmation of the Biblical descriptions of the global conditions increasingly becoming increasingly vile and wicked.

Moreover, there is a great propensity that the first year of her term in office would largely be overshadowed by the investigations and potential indictment for illegal activity during her tenure as Secretary of State. Not to fear though, she will resort to the tactic that every other despot on the planet does when the scandal at home becomes too great-plunge us into another war. This isn't a war in which she intends to win, she just needs the American public in a prolonged and fruitless distraction. Furthermore, an economic reckoning is coming, and it will very likely fall in her lap during her first term.

In terms of Israel, she will keep the status quo with our greatest ally in the Middle East, which means she will continue the current policies of blaming and ostracizing Israel. In terms of the Church in America, she will continue pressing and crushing the civil liberties we currently enjoy: freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of worship...specifically targeting only one group-Christians.

If she were to win, she'd only do so by squeaking a victory out, which would enrage a large portion of our society. Civil war is a greater potential under her than ever before, simply due to the amount of corruption and scandal she carries into the office. Furthermore, this wouldn't be civil unrest by simply the tea party 'mom and pop' types...this would extend across law enforcement, military, and intelligence agencies which have become galvanized like never before to stop her.

Prognosis: A highly divided America, embroiled in internal turmoil and scandal, wrought with massive economic problems, half-handedly attempting to engage enemy forces across the Middle East, and potentially being on the receiving end of both Russian and Chinese attacks, succumbs to military isolationism, but double downs on international economic interdependency through ramping up of NAFTA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). America rapidly in decline in terms of global standing, fits nicely with a non-participant situation in terms of coming to Israel's aid in an Ezekiel 38 scenario.

A President Trump victory

Should Donald Trump be declared the victor on November the 8th, his victory would bring a huge sigh of relief to millions of Americans and former allies of the United States around the world. The greatest moment of turmoil in beginning his transition with President Obama, would be in fact, the handing of 'the baton' from Obama to Trump. A Trump victory would signal a flurry of last-minute edicts and executive orders from Obama to-- exonerate Hillary Clinton, further divide Israel, and force a selection of a Supreme Court justice.

In terms of social evils and the rapid cultural decline, I believe that Trump will attempt to emplace competent leaders at every level who will hold wide-scale lawlessness at bay. There is no stopping the overall direction the world is going, but a Trump presidency would start tapping on the brakes, instead of flooring the gas pedal as a Clinton presidency would.

This economic reckoning is still coming, and this will be one of the most significant things President Trump will have to contend with. Under Clinton, it would come, not because the powers that be wanted it to, but that the system itself is due for a course correction. They (power brokers, the Federal Reserve, central banks and international monetary agencies, OPEC, etc.) have largely held it at bay while Obama was busy selling off American sovereignty in exchange for an artificial economic uptick.

But with Trump, there will be no brakes, no stoppage, and no mercy in terms of how deep and far this economic downturn will be. The intent then would be to lay this all at the feet of the Republicans once and for all. Fortunately, Trump has made his fortune understanding economics, and the human condition. It is possible that he could turn this around and make the necessary changes that renegotiate our dealings in regard to currency strength, export/import balances, and the national debt.

In terms of our military standing, he would greatly revamp the ailing and strained US military forces. I would expect that anywhere the US has placed troops, he would seek also to renegotiate the terms of the arrangements so that the US is not wasting resources and potential in

unnecessary commitments. I would expect that Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China would be more reluctant to test American resolve under his presidency than under Clinton's.

Trump has made it clear that he would finally recognize Jerusalem as the sole, undivided capital of Israel, something no president has done since they recaptured the eastern half of it in 1967. Prophetically speaking, this is significant because Jesus said....and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)

I am becoming less and less convinced that this means there will be a complete absence of Gentiles in Jerusalem milling about, as this has never been the case even when they were their own kingdom. But were President Trump, the leader of the world's greatest nation, to acknowledge Jerusalem as the capital of Israel after 49 years of Israeli ownership, this could signal the beginning of the end of Gentile dominion as the world begins to enter into Daniel's 70th Week. I believe that this is the only reason why it hasn't happened yet.

*Put in another way, if recognizing Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel were to work in Satan's favor, it would have already happened 49 years ago. But it doesn't and this is why Satan has been working so hard to prevent this now through eight different US administrations.

Prognosis: This could also mark the time when Christians let their guard down in the United States. This supports the Biblically based understanding that the church becomes largely lethargic and lukewarm. Hypothetically speaking, if Trump surrounds himself with as much Christian leadership (advisors and cabinet members) as has we have been led to believe, a Rapture would decimate much of our Executive Branch forcing a national realignment, in conjunction with an economic downturn.

Conclusion

First and foremost, the Rapture of the Church is a sign-less event. It doesn't need anything to precede or accompany it for it to occur. That said, Jesus, Peter, and Paul allude to events surrounding it that do not give the day or hour but point to the season for when it would occur. Secondly remember that an economic course-correction is coming regardless of who gets elected. Lastly, remember that Bible prophecy almost exclusively deals with only Israel in regard to God's schedule, so Israel should always figure significantly in terms of knowing where and when we are on God's calendar of scheduled events.

Clinton would never acknowledge Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. First, it would infuriate her base, and secondly, it would infuriate a great many of her Islamic donors. Trump, however, has made very clear that he intends to do from day one once he assumes the mantle. How does the recognition of Jerusalem figure into Bible prophecy? Well, if my understanding of Luke 21:24 is correct, it would trigger the end of Gentile dominion, and open the gate so to speak, for the end time events setting the stage for the Tribulation.

A recognition of Jerusalem could be the trigger for several prophetic events such as Psalm 83, Isaiah 17, Ezekiel 38, and Daniel 9:27. Where does the Rapture figure into all these events?

Well, it could be before or after a Psalm 83 and Isaiah 17 scenario, but it looks like it precedes both an Ezekiel 38 and Daniel 9:27 scenario...so somewhere in the middle...right about the time when people are crying out for 'peace and safety'

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape... 1st Thess. 5:2-3

The Rapture, the Revelation, the Bell, and the Egg

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1 Corinthians 2:6-8

From the very beginning, mankind has been in a continuing series of resets. Think of these resets as ‘revolutions’ in that they transform the way man operates and functions here on earth. We Dispensationalists liken these ‘revolutions’ to dispensations as far as naming-conventions go, but what will be addressed here, goes with, and within what we would classify in biblical terms, as a dispensation. There is not the room for it in this brief, but for an in-depth explanation of what constitutes Dispensationalism and its *sine qua non*, see [here](#). But in summarized form, the late Dr. Charles Ryrie describes it as--

Dispensationalism views the world as a household run by God. In His household world God is dispensing or administering its affairs according to His own will and in various stages of revelation in the passage of time. These various stages mark off the distinguishably different economies in the outworking of His total purpose, and these different economies constitute the dispensations. The understanding of God's differing economies is essential to a proper interpretation of His revelation within those various economies.

Traditionally speaking, Dispensationalists recognize between four to seven distinct periods of time in which God has ordained change for mankind. The seven eras and primary audiences, in keeping with a literal, grammatical, and historical interpretation are; Innocence (mankind), Conscience (mankind), Human Government (mankind), Promise (Israel), Law (Israel), Grace (the Church), and the Kingdom (Israel). These would be the major events that really transform and govern how we function on earth. However, the revolutions (both macro and micro) only really align with four of the Dispensations-the first three and the last two.

The first Dispensation/revolution came at the fall of man when Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden into a world in which they (and by extension-we) would by the sweat of the brow, and in pain and toil try to survive (Gen. 3:16-19). This was a reset.

1. Sin followed by death entered the human domain
2. Man goes from immortal to mortal
3. The physical, geographical, (natural) world begins to work against man

The next Dispensation/revolution occurred some 1,600 years later, when God destroyed the antediluvian-world with a global flood (Gen. 6-9). This was a reset.

1. Man's life span is greatly reduced
2. The veil between the natural and supernatural is closed
3. God allows mankind to govern themselves

4. The escalation of the natural world's revolt against man intensifies as spilled blood accumulates (see Gen. 4:10-12; 9:5, Romans 8:20-22)

The next reset happened in place called Babel, (Gen. 11:1-9) where God scattered the post-flood descendants of the survivors (Noah and family) across the face of the earth. He did this because they (Noah's descendants) rebelled against God's wishes that they spread out across the earth (Gen. 9:1), but chose rather to congregate themselves in single location to make a great city. This was a reset.

1. Man is forcefully evicted from the plains of Shinar at Babel to all corners of the earth
2. Man is separated by both genetics and language
3. Man is no longer united in purpose

So these three are all the macro (large scale) events that had global impact on all of humanity.

Then we come to the *revolutions within the form* in which we can liken them (an analogy) unto Ezekiel's awesome, heavenly vision of 'wheels within wheels' (Ezekiel 1:15-21). These 'wheels within wheels' don't change the nature of the wheel (it is still a wheel), but very much changes its mobility and direction. So we have the mandate in Genesis 9 for man to govern himself (the exception being the nation of Israel pre-Saul) by which governments, kingdoms, dynasties, empires, etc. operate here within the human domain in any number of types and directions.

Keeping in mind that since the days just after the flood, we've had many *forms* of human government. God reveals the final forms of human government to the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar by way of a troubling dream of a multi-metallic statue. God then used His Jewish prophet Daniel to explain exactly what the statue represented, and it represented actual, physical, kingdoms of varying weight, density, and strength. (See [Daniel 2](#)) God later reveals this again to Daniel, but instead of the statue, the kingdoms are represented by chimeras (different animals blended together) (See Daniel 7-8).

Assessment

Some things that are done can't be undone. You can't un-ring a rung *bell*. You can't unscramble a scrambled *egg*. It is physically, theoretically, and mathematically impossible. Likewise, there are events occurring, and that have yet to occur, that when they happen, will transform the human domain forever. God makes the permanent resets, but man, as turbulent and restless as the sea, is in a constant state of fluctuation. (Luke 21:25-26; Revelation 13:1-2)

Speaking only to the institution of human government, the aforementioned three events fundamentally changed how man would live and function here on earth. Likewise, there are two more events that will fundamentally change how man lives and functions here on earth...the Rapture, and the Revelation.

We humans are finite beings. We are mortal and are limited in both time and space. We can only be in one spot at any given moment, and we can also only exist in the present. That is not to say we didn't exist in the past, or won't in the future, but we can't travel back in time nor can we travel (or even see) into the future. This promotes a strong tendency within us to become

‘creatures of habit’ and rest comfortably within the boundaries of our ‘normalcy bias.’ Since we only exist in the present, we tend to think that the way things are now are the way they will always be. The Apostle Peter, in speaking on the subject of the end of the world says this:

Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.”

He goes on to conclude that man is ‘willingly ignorant’, choosing to believe in a revisionist-history model where they discount/neglect/ignore historical facts for what they wish had happened.

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men. **2 Peter 3:3-7**

We now live in a world in which most people are grossly deluded about the world’s true history.

What caused this?

The passage of time, language changes, competing ideologies, and events that happened far from where most of us live have caused most people to be mentally disconnected from what happened a few thousand years ago. The world resets itself after a worldwide flood or the dispersion at Babel. Eyewitnesses grow old and die, generations pass on, and soon events that happened only yesterday (relatively speaking) become events of myth and legend.

The world has come to “willfully forget” that God in fact not only created the earth, but also purged it once before. The Bible says ‘willfully’ because man refuses to accept the bountiful evidence that proves it true, and rather accepts their own version of events like Darwinian Evolution and the Big Bang Theory. Furthermore, *revolutions within form* (constant regime changes) seem to constantly reset the driving narratives of the day. Add to that, the ‘bells’ and ‘eggs’ that transform humanity in a way that keeps propelling us forward. Things like geographic discoveries (the Americas, landing on the Moon and Mars, etc.), technological advancements (harnessing electricity, airplanes, steel, atomic and nuclear power, the Internet, etc.) make things impossible to go back to the way they were before.

Conclusion

With regard to the prophetic word, many within Christendom argue incessantly over a picture that is not fully drawn yet, because we currently see thru a glass darkly (1 Cor. 13:12). What Satan has attempted to do, since he also doesn’t know the specifics, is to get Christianity divided over how this all ends. In other words, he seeks to exploit the unknowable, and divide us up into camps all busy being pitted against each other. But when we look at Scripture, look at the big picture and you will see that there are two distinct take-a ways.

1. The passages discussing the [Rapture](#) are directed to the believer only. (John 14:1-3, 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1st Corinthians 15:51-55, Revelation 3:10)

2. The ***Second Coming*** passages are directed to the world at large. Approximately twenty major references are found in the New Testament alone (Matt 19:28; 23:39 ; 24:3—25:46; Mark 13:24-37; Luke 12:35-48; 17:22-37 ; 18:8 ; 21:25-28 ; Acts 1:10-11; 15:16-18 ; Rom 11:25-27; 1 Cor 11:26; 2 Thess 1:7-10; 2:8 ; 2 Pet 3:3-4; Jude 1:14-15 ; Rev 1:7-8; 2:25-28 ; 16:15 ; 19:11-21 ; 22:20). ([Source](#))

There are numerous distinctions between the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Jesus and are easily seen if one simply compares the two events. If you think back to Christ's First Coming, the OT prophets foretold when, how, where, and through whom the Messiah would come from...yet, the people largely either didn't know, or didn't care. Throughout Christ's ministry here on earth, He repeatedly spoke about things which would come to pass, particularly surrounding His coming crucifixion, but even those closest to Him didn't understand. Even after His resurrection, there was confusion about the coming of His Kingdom, as some expected it to come right then. But as it is, God has the absolute perfect way to both get the message out there, while also selectively choosing who, when, where, how, and why the message impacts to accomplish His goals. (Galatians 4:4-5)

The Rapture will occur prior to the seven-year period of *hell on earth* known either as Daniel's 70th Week, or simply "the Tribulation." Once the Rapture happens, it will change everything and be the perfect crisis the world has been waiting on to create the *new world order* it needs for this man Antichrist to rise to power. At the conclusion of the Tribulation, Christ returns with His saints and His angelic forces to overturn Satan (bound and cast into the abyss), Antichrist and the False Prophet (cast alive into the Lake of Fire), and commences the judgment of the nations. At the conclusion of the judgment, Christ ushers in His 1,000-year reign known as the Millennium, or the Kingdom age. (Rev. 19-20)

But both the Rapture and the Revelation (2nd Coming) will be the final processes that upends man's tragic and bloody history on the earth. One will begin to liberate the earth from bondage, and the second will be purged by fire, and remade to usher in the eternal order of the ages. Paul was witness to (2 Cor. 12), and says about these things...*But as it is written*: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9) And remember, the end of this world, only marks the beginning of glory given by Christ (John 17:22) to those who are in Christ. So, remember...

...but God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **Ephesians 2:4-7**

Even so, ***Maranatha!***

Civil War and the Coming New World Order

This is quite a difficult and sensitive topic being discussed here today. But I feel that it is warranted, given what we are seeing plays out before us. I don't have any scriptural basis for it, other than it being more of an observation of the times. If anything, I would liken it to the condition Jesus laid out for His disciples when asked what the *signs of the end* would be when He said...

Nation (ethnos) would rise against nation (ethnos), kingdom (political power) against kingdom (political power) ...and the love of many will wax cold... (Matt. 24:7, 12)

There is a storm brewing in our land and has been for some time. Those dark, foreboding clouds have always been on the horizon, but now they are overhead and our grumbling like a Kansas thunderstorm laden with the potential for torrential rains, lightning, and tornados. While history is not everyone's favorite subject, it should be something we reconcile frequently. Studying history helps illuminate the challenges and similarities that our ancestors faced and may help us recognize the challenges we face in our own day, and of days yet to come. The reason for this is because although the times change, and technology changes--the human condition never does. We tend to make the same mistakes over and over because we are a fallen race riddled with sin...and given enough time, history tends to repeat itself without fail.

On November the 9th, 2016, quite possibly the largest political earthquake ever felt in the United States occurred in the wee hours of the morning with Republican Donald Trump's victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton. So stunning was the loss for Clinton and the Democrats that the media, the glitterati, the newspapers, print journals, pundits, and comedians all had assumed that her victory was so certain, that the election itself was just a formality. But since that day, the stammering and speechlessness has turned increasingly vitriolic and toxic, as the reality that Donald Trump really will be the next President of the United States.

Since then, we've been witness to an increasing number of "spontaneous" anti-Trump demonstrations along with a rash of growing anti-police violence. These protests are "spontaneous" in the same sense that Benghazi was a result of an 'anti-Islamic' video on YouTube. In all actuality, these protests are part of a greater concerted effort by uber-leftist/globalist groups like George Soros Incorporated and MoveOn.org, who are attempting to upend the system in the wake of their stunning political defeat. So if they can't win politically despite the rampant fraud and voter machine rigging, they will attempt it by funding and fomenting violence.

The attempt now by the media to link the 'rise in white power groups' to Trump's victory, is another attempt to get him to backpedal. Their rise (neo-Nazi's and the like) are not a result of Trump's election, but a reaction to the *Black Lives Matter* movement that have sprung up across the nation and have hijacked the narrative on race.

Along those same sentiments is a growing call for secession from the Union from more traditionally liberal states like [California](#) and [Oregon](#) as a more formal protest against a Trump presidency. In the past, conservative states like Texas have threatened secession due to President

Obama's federal overreach, but it seemed more bark than bite. At the very least, things could get to the point where California itself divides between the liberal south and central, and the more conservative north. But one thing to watch here is the momentum of the movement at the state level and to what degree Governor Jerry 'Moonbeam' Brown supports it as an act of defiance over the 'sanctuary city' status they will maintain despite federal threats of financial penalties.

But in watching the 'useful-idiot' movement (and media) attempting to justify their actions of blocking traffic, destroying private property, killing cops, threatening to kill cops, and provoking random violence, it reminded me of the events leading up to the American Civil War. Let us recap:

1820: *The Missouri Compromise*-Allowed Missouri to be a slave state, but added Maine as a free state to balance out Congress. Also divided the slave territories along the 36 by 30 parallel.

1831: *Nat Turner's Rebellion*-slave uprising killing 60 whites. Quelled after two days, 55 slaves, including Nat Turner, were executed, along with 200 more who were lynched.

1846-1850: *Wilmot Proviso* would have (it failed) outlawed slavery from expanding into the newly acquired territories at the end of the Mexican-American war, which gained the US much of the southwest including California.

1850: *The Compromise of 1850*-New western territories in the would be slave states, but compelled the northerners to abide by the Fugitive Slave Act, which required them to return fugitive slaves back to the South.

1852: Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" popular book on slavery conditions in the south, considered by the north shocking and horrifying, but disparaging to Southerner's who viewed this as gross mischaracterization.

1854-1861: 'Bleeding Kansas' *The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854* overturned parts of the Missouri Compromise, by allowing these states to determine whether or not to be free or slave. The both went free after a bloody, five year struggle.

1857: *The Dred Scott Case*-The Supreme Court ruled that slaves were property, further complicating the North's opposition to slavery.

1859: *John Brown's Raid*-White Southerners and freed black slaves raided ammunition arsenal and began arming other groups to rise up. Was captured and executed becoming a martyr to the Abolitionist movement.

1860: *Election of Abraham Lincoln*-The election of the Republican A. Lincoln was overwhelming, considering he was not even on the ballot in many southern states. His election was followed by the secession of South Carolina some 30 days after. Six more states would secede by the spring of 1861.

1861: *Battle of Ft. Sumter*-Following S. Carolina's secession, Ft. Sumter suddenly found itself on foreign land. Lincoln decided to send supplies and was met with a Southern blockade. This sparked the start of the actual Civil War.

(Reference: <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/civil-war-overview/triggerevents.html>)

Assessment

As you can see, the Civil War didn't start because Republican Abraham Lincoln was elected as President. Lincoln's election was simply the straw that broke the camel's back. There were decades of unchecked grievances and emotions leading up to the election of 1860. Former President Thomas Jefferson made this forewarning upon hearing of the *Missouri Compromise of 1820* on slavery. In it he...

“Considered it at once as the (death) knell of the Union. It is hushed indeed for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, oral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper.”

Thomas Jefferson saw slavery as an issue that would not simply go away by appeasement and compromise. It would continue to fester in the hearts and minds of Americans (both for and against), until it resolved itself in the bloodiest war ever waged by Americans. In regards to this concept of unchecked grievances, I would like to draw a parallel to the issues of our day. The battle over the hearts and minds of Americans has been over a century in the making, and is so ingrained into our culture, that we no more think about our eroding liberties than a frog thinks about the water he is in warming up.

There would be no need to work for liberty were liberties not being lost. Most Americans are unaware of a decline in individual liberty, and the reason is obvious: the decline rarely takes the form of sudden personal deprivations but, instead, takes the form of unnoticed erosion, and thus we come, as do the Russians, to regard whatever state we are in as a normal condition.”

Leonard E. Reed, (1965)

The outrage by normal Americans over the past eight years, has resulted in the loss of some 900 Democrat seats of power, the rise of the Tea Party movement, and culminated with the election of Donald Trump primarily because of Obama's overreach. He didn't do anything different than any other president before him, which was to create more bureaucracy, more overreach, and add to our burgeoning national deficit. Obama simply got too greedy, too fast. His federal abuse was too obvious, and it awoken the silent majority much in the same way that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor awoke a largely isolationist-minded American public in the 1940s.

Understand that there has already been a soft coup in this nation going back a hundred years or more. This coup began with the varying ideological theories from people like: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Margaret Sanger, John Dewey, and many others who at their foundation, espouse a rabid anti-Christian, anti-American, and anti-Constitutionalist ideas. Although the aforementioned specialize in different areas (economics, science, eugenics, psychology, and education), they all feed off of each other and use each other as stepping stones to validate their own agendas.

Their goal, largely accomplished today, was to spread this infectious ideology first through European seminaries, universities, and then on to the rest of the world via public education and

governance. This then would be reinforced through the relentless “consensus-mantra” beatings by media and pop culture on the average citizenry. Now those most indoctrinated by socialism (in its varying forms) are firmly embedded in most of the western governments. Their goal is a one-world system. But first they need to ‘divide and conquer’ which is why we see the parties (even within themselves) so divided over fiscal, social, and political issues we face today.

Although the swing left was greatly exacerbated during the Clinton and Obama administrations, Hillary’s third term was meant to be the icing on the cake. It was meant to usher in an avalanche of demographic change via massive, unchecked immigration that would change the electoral make up of this country forever, so that no Republican could ever win again. This is why this Trump win is such a stinging defeat. They (media, politicians, “experts”) were so sure it would happen that Clinton never even thought to write her concession speech. Such was the power of the media to distort the facts on the ground. Even now, you can see now how the media is already trying to shape what President Trump’s agenda should be. This is the same media that completely got the election wrong. They keep trying to shape the argument that what real American’s are angry about, is their talking points.

To set the record straight about the average American:

We aren’t angry over “climate change.”

We aren’t angry because men can’t use women’s restrooms.

We aren’t angry because we hate immigrants.

We are angry because the progressive-left has hijacked the Constitution and is trying to redefine it into something it was never intended to be-- a license for lawlessness leading to a global government.

We are angry about unchecked immigration, sanctuary cities, overwhelming national debt, global trade deals that would crush the US economy, and an overburdened, and under resourced military.

We are angry at the lawlessness and corruption permeating every facet of our society.

We are angry that the America we got the privilege to grow up in, will not exist for our children at the current rate.

Conclusion

Slavery is a system of both commerce and thought, and has been around as long as man has. It always seeks to put one class above the other. One works while the other reaps the benefit of that work. In the past centuries, the workers and reapers were determined by race and ethnicity. But as the west came to abandon the actual practice of slave holding, the concept remained. In the 20th-21st centuries, the class division wasn’t so much about race, as it was political and religious ideology.

While slavery was the issue of the day back in the 1850’s, and was rightly rejected by the Republican Party, the issue of slavery still holds sway over the world today. This new form of

oppression in the west is more akin to the proletariat versus bourgeoisie of the communist revolutions that swept through places like Russia, China, Cuba, and Vietnam in the 20th century. This new form of oppression is between the haves and have nots, the elite and the 'unwashed' masses, between the enlightened and the 'deplorables', and between the media and the alternative watchdogs. The Democrat party never abandoned the idea of slavery, they just redefined it.

Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" wasn't based on truly helping poor, minority communities, but enslaving them into systemic poverty, and guaranteeing party loyalty for decades to come. Even the leftist [Snopes](#) 'fact checking website' has a very difficult time walking back his vehemently racist comments. But here is the greater proof, if the Democrat party truly had the best interest of minorities in mind, democratic strongholds like Detroit, Chicago, and Washington D.C. would be beacons of peace and prosperity. But those cities, like so many others, are markedly divided between the 'go and no go' zones of the rich and affluent, and the poor and desperate.

But to the left, even racism and slavery are only means to an end, not the end itself. It is even somewhat disingenuous to claim on the left want globalism, because there are many so called Republicans who are also in the tank for a one-world system. Racism, sexism, 'homophobia', 'islamophobia', etc., are tools they use via [Cultural Marxism](#) to create 'identity politics' as a means to divide and conquer a nation. To this end, the left will never concede of their own volition to constitutional governance, because they've already spent the last 100 years corrupting the system and have come too far. For them, the Constitution is only useful in how they can use it to destroy the entire system by. Put in another way, they (globalist-left and right) want us to commit constitutional suicide. Since they will never yield, we are really only left with one option if we are to preserve our way of life (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness), and that is by making them bend to our will, not the other way around.

We should also accept the reality that mainstream media has become irrelevant. Their agenda, is not the American agenda. The Democrat party is in massive decline and implosion and in the process, have lost around 900 seats (governorships, congress, senate, etc.) since 2010. We can make a rather sobering assessment that the Democrat party itself will die, and out of the ashes will rise something between a mix of outright communism and Sharia Law.

They want an international system of socialism, because in their heart of hearts, they truly believe that this is the only way in which man can solve all of his problems. That is why they are intent on destroying the very system that affords them the ability to even have thoughts of destroying it. And just as the Civil War didn't start in 1820 with the Missouri Compromise, nor did it begin with Lincoln's election, rather, it was a long series of steps that led straight to the battlefields of Antietam and Gettysburg, in which brother killed brother, and neighbor killed neighbor. We would be smart to remember the old axiom that Mark Twain once said...*although history doesn't repeat itself, it sure does rhyme.*

Not to fear though, there is a one-world system coming, and the Bible guarantees it. **Revelation 19:11-16...**

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

Even So, Maranatha!

Undertow

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast *rising up out of the sea*, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name... So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” **Revelation 13:1, 4**

Given the context of Revelation 13 we understand that the *beast rising up out of the sea* is that final world empire. We know this is an empire because of the consistency in the symbolism between Revelation 13 and Daniel 7-8, which portrays these beast (chimeras) as representing actual kingdoms. At this particular point in time, the people worship the beast (whatever system this ends up being), but in actuality are worshipping the power behind the throne. But how many people do you know today who actually worship government? Aside from North Korea who mandate the worship of the ruling Kim, governmental worship doesn't really exist anywhere else in the world at the moment.

We know they are really worshipping Satan, because Revelation 12 confirms the identity of the dragon as Satan. My assumption is that they worship this final world system because there is some type of technological breakthrough that completely revolutionizes the way we live here on planet earth. It could be something supernatural, or technological, or both. It could be what the transhumanists refer to as *the Singularity*. For those who don't know what the Singularity is, here it is described by one of its biggest proponents, Google Director of Engineering and futurist Ray Kurzweil as:

The Singularity is an era in which our intelligence will become increasingly nonbiological and trillions of times more powerful than it is today—the dawning of a new civilization that will enable us to transcend our biological limitations and amplify our creativity.

Whatever it is, we can't be 100% sure, but we do know that this final system comes up out of the sea of humanity...meaning, it's a transnational system. This could represent a coalescing of regional autonomy within a global organization like the United Nations. It has seven heads (regions of authority) and ten horns (seats of power), and ten crowns (people who sit in these seats of authority). It is a regional system that is governed by a small body of ten leaders. The Antichrist, who then comes from out of this group, and is able to subdue three, and secures a majority rule which he ends up taking over completely. (Rev. 17:9-14)

So given that introduction, we know according to Scripture, that it is not until the mid-way point that Satan actually comes down to inhabit this man we know as Antichrist. But why does he (Satan) wait until the midpoint? Clearly, the Antichrist is Satan's 'go-to' man from the outset, but I believe (along with many others) that it is only at the midway point that a number of different events transpire simultaneously forcing Satan's agenda in a direction he doesn't want to go: the angelic war in heaven, the Two Witnesses assassinated, the Antichrist's “miraculous” recovery after an assassination attempt, and now the earth-bound Satan, personally inhabits this man Antichrist.

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time. **Revelation 12:12**

Assessment

Undertow: *noun* un·der·tow \-, tō\

1. the current beneath the surface that sets seaward or along the beach when waves are breaking upon the shore
2. an underlying current, force, or tendency that is in opposition to what is apparent

It appears to me that there is a bit of foot-dragging by Satan in wanting this all to play out. Yes, he wants to thwart God's plan by destroying and corrupting humanity, but he also has read the Book (see Luke 4:9-11) and at least peripherally knows where this is all headed. I'm not saying that he agrees with the Bible, or understands it, or even believes it...but at the very least, he's aware of what it says. Revelation 12:12 confirms that he knows he has very little time left to fight this.

Given that premise, we should know that the frustration amongst many prophecy teachers, particularly over the past 16 years, is the frustrating mixture between the seeming immediacy of clear prophetic events such as a one-world currency/ religion/government, the Psalm 83-Ezekiel 38 wars, etc., and the lack of fulfillment of these same prophetic events. At the same time, there is still that unstoppable march forward making these events more of a matter of when, and not if. There is a war to both move the satanic agenda forward, but also a satanic attempt to frustrate the fulfillment by trying to circumvent it through schemes and plottings.

For instance, we know that Satan doesn't know the future, so he always has to have a man in the wings ready to play the role of *The Antichrist*. During the 1920's-1940's, the man seemingly being groomed for that position was Adolph Hitler. It seemed initially, that the tide of time and events were on his side until God raised up the United States to thwart his (Satan's) plans to exterminate the Jewish race via the 'Final Solution'.

But despite Hitler's best efforts with the Holocaust and 6M dead, what his actions really brought about was the prophetic fulfillment of the Jewish state of Israel. Had he not attempted to exterminate an entire race, the world would not have supported the political rebirth of a once-dead ancient nation. In fact, the newly formed United Nations still only supported this initiative by a very slim margin...but it was just enough for God's purposes to work out...as predicted! (Isaiah 11:11; Amos 9:15)

Even the disciples had a difficult time understanding the Messiah's divinely appointed task and purpose. They didn't know because the Old Testament (OT) for the most part (one exception being Daniel 9:24-27) does not present the prophetic events linearly and/or chronologically. Prophecy in the OT is sort of all over the place, and it really does take God's help for us to understand how the OT prophecies fit into and complete the events in the NT. This is why when Peter stated that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, *Jesus answered and said to*

him, *“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 16:17)*

The main distinction from the OT prophetically speaking, is how the NT presents the information. For instance, Matthew 1:21-23 points back to Isaiah 7:14 as the clear fulfillment of the arrival of the Messiah. Jesus outlines the order of end-times events systematically in the *Olivet Discourse*. In his letters to the church at Thessalonica, the Apostle Paul clearly outlines the order of events between the Rapture and the Tribulation (chapters 4-5) and again in his second epistle to them (chapter 2). The Apostle John was given *the Revelation* in a highly symbolized, but also decidedly chronological and structured order of events beginning with the first Seal Judgment all the way until the last Bowl Judgment.

So compared to the OT’s Major and Minor Prophets, the New Testament is very clear, both chronologically, and contextually. True, there are still some concepts and doctrines in the NT that are not completely understandable by us finite beings such as the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the timing of things, but there is definitely an order and a chronological method to the makeup of the prophetic NT Scripture.

Conclusion

Given what the Bible has to say about Satan, we know that he was the highest order of creation before the man Adam was formed out of the dust of the earth. We also know that he is exceedingly intelligent, deceitful, and crafty (Gen. 3:1-2, Ezekiel 28:12, Rev. 12:9). Remember that at the beginning (tower of Babel), this one-world concept was initially his. It was his evil plan then, because he didn’t understand what God’s plan was yet.

But now, Satan knows. You want to know why the world is as divided, violent, hateful, and broken as it is, it’s because the last thing Satan wants, is a one-world system. Don’t get me wrong on this, the world has been given over to Satan (Luke 4:5-6; 1 John 5:19), and he hates God, hates Christians, and really hates the Jewish people. This is why one of the most prevalent and undisputed prophetic markers we see today is not some major war or supernatural phenomenon, but apostasy. Satan realized early on that persecution causes Christianity to spread like a wildfire...but spiritual and theological corruption...oh that was much more effective.

A one-world system is what man wants, and man is still a free-agent in this game. Satan knows where this will all lead, and he will continue to attempt to frustrate this march towards a final, one-world system. He is being dragged kicking and screaming out to sea. The sea, which represents this final, global system and the closer we get to it, the more it validates what the Bible says about his impending doom.

There have been three key technological inventions/discoveries that have made this march towards globalism not only possible, but inevitable: the harnessing of electricity, the mapping of human DNA, and the Internet. Each of these have been monumental paradigm shifts in human history and have unlocked so much potential change, that it can’t be undone. Obviously, harnessing electricity has allowed the world to advance its technological processes. Mapping the human DNA has unlocked the potential for man to alter himself through some misguided ideals

on evolution. The internet has leapfrogged man's ability to gather, assess, and use information in ways never possible before.

There is also one geo-political issue that is a clear reaction against globalism, and that is regionalism. I know that might sound odd given the recent rise in populism and nationalism, as well as the Brexit and Donald Trump victories. But the world is way too interconnected these days to ever go back to that type of pre- World War I global model. We (the United States and western powers) want to partner with like-minded nations. The same goes for Islamic, socialist and communist nations as they help prop up like-minded countries.

With that said, leftist globalism has for the moment, swung back hard right to pockets of populism, which will lead right back to where the Bible said we would be...regionalism. This regionalism is represented by the seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns, but will ultimately fall under one system led by a single man, Antichrist. How does this happen if Satan is actively working to postpone it? Well, like most everything else, there is a process.

1. The Rapture will force a massive paradigm shift on to the world. Global and regional powers will have to realign in order to adjust to the reality that millions, perhaps even a billion persons suddenly disappear from the planet. The nation most affected by this will be the current world's superpower, the United States.
2. In the post-Rapture world, a supernatural delusion will be *divinely enforced* on those unrepentant left behind. God does this...not Satan. **2 Thess. 2:9-11**
3. The new geo-political paradigm shift will recognize that global organizations like the United Nations are too cumbersome and bureaucratic to ever be truly effective, so the next best thing would be to go to regional alliances.
4. We know that at some point between the start and the half-way point of the Tribulation, there is an assassination of one of the leaders, who is then miraculously "resurrected" because Satan is permanently kicked out of heaven and needs a body to possess (again, not his choice) and three of ten regional leaders end up submitting/ceding their authority to him thus ushering in the era of an absolute, one-world system.

So take comfort in the knowledge that despite the chaos, despite the seemingly endless tide of evil that is flooding the world we live in...that God has us exactly where He intended us to be at this final juncture in history. My intent was not to give the devil any credit, but to show that what we see on the surface, is not always what is really going on beneath. Therefore, let not your heart be troubled. Only God knows the future, and for those of us who are born-again, are hidden in Christ...

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **1 Cor. 2:7-8**

“Come and See”

Clearly, the idea of the Rapture can be considered the most preposterous belief in Biblical Christianity. The situation regarding the doctrine of the Rapture is painfully similar to the famous quote by Dr. Richard Feynman, speaking of quantum physics:

I think it is safe to say that no one understands quantum mechanics... in fact, it is often stated of all the theories proposed in this century, the silliest is quantum theory. Some say that the only thing that quantum theory has going for it, in fact, is that it is unquestionably correct.

Dr. Chuck Missler

Although Facebook and the internet have been useful tools in the spreading of the Gospel, they have become as of late, an increasingly hostile place for the Pre-Tribulation Christian. I wonder why so many who claim to be Christian (presumably loving Christ), have such hostility towards the idea that Christ will one day return for His Bride before the coming seven-year period known as ‘The Day of the Lord’.

Some of the most visceral comments you will find, come not from the atheist or the Christian skeptic crowd, but come from other Christians. Most unbelievers equate God to the ‘Flying Spaghetti Monster’ and reserve sarcasm for all eschatological views equally. But it’s the ‘Christian’, particularly those of the Reformed/Covenantal/Hebrew Roots/Amillennial/Preterist/Pre-Wrath/Post-Trib crowd who really, really hate the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Even more hated still, is the Dispensationalist...Gasp!

As one who has often been at the receiving end of the blistering criticism, I am very cognizant of the fact, that most other eschatological views are at least tolerant of each other yet remain united in their resolute intolerance towards the Pre-Trib view...which is telling. God does not give us complex, unknowable doctrine. (Eph. 3:3-5; Col. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:7) God does not ‘muddy the waters’, but rather makes them clear. God does not give us confusing doctrine. (1 Cor. 14:33) He even gave us the Holy Spirit to make these things understandable for those who are in Christ. (John 16:12-15)

But Satan is still running this blue rock, (Luke 4:5; 1 John 5:19) and it means that the one view that has the most animosity towards it, receives the most derision, from the most diverse group of “believers” out there, can only mean that it is the one most under attack by our enemy for a reason.

So in order to prove why I know the Pre-Trib view, is the correct view...I drafted up a list of questions that other eschatological persuasions should attempt to answer to prove their side true. Now, I’m not offering a thousand dollars, this is simply for those who want to see if their view can withstand some simple reasoning.

Post-Tribulation Believers

1. If the Rapture is at the same time as the Second Coming, why would the Thessalonians mourn those who had already died, seeing as Jesus Himself warned, that the coming Tribulation, would be the worst time in mankind's history? ([Matt. 24:21-22](#)) Wouldn't those Thessalonians be happy for those who had already missed it by passing on beforehand? Didn't Paul also teach that to die is gain, and to be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord? (Phil. 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:8)
2. If [Revelation 3:10](#), does not mean that Church is kept from the Tribulation, but rather is kept through it, then why does Jesus allow the Antichrist to overcome the Saints? ([Rev. 13:7](#)) And why then does Christ allow all those Tribulation believers to become Tribulation martyrs whose numbers can't be counted from all the nations and tribes of the earth? ([Rev. 7:9-17](#)) What then does it mean to be 'kept through' ([tereo ek](#)) if that is the form of the definition the Post-Tribulation community want it to mean?
3. If Christian's go into the Tribulation, why then do only the 144K of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, ([Rev. 7:1-8](#)) receive the Seal on the forehead? This can't simply be symbolic, due to the exactness of the descriptions.
4. [Revelation 9:4](#) also states that **only** those who have this Seal on their forehead are protected from the demonic locust...so where then is the protection for the "Christian" who is **not** sealed on their forehead?
5. Why mention the church/churches (ekklesia) 19 times in Rev. 1-3, but not again until chapter [22:19](#)? Clearly, both Jesus (who gives John the message), and John himself (who sees all this) know how to use and write the word ekklesia...why then the lack of use...seeing that this is going to be the most trying time in man's history?
6. Why are the **wicked** gathered in [Matthew 13:47-50](#) and taken off earth, but the **righteous** are gathered in 1 Thess 4:13-18 and 1 Cor. 15:51-56 and taken off the earth if the Rapture and Second Coming are the same event?
7. Why do angels do the gathering in [Matthew 24:31](#), but Christ Himself does the gathering in 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15?
8. Why does Jesus mention mansions ([dwelling places](#)) in His Fathers' house, (in heaven) and that we would go live there, because we would go to live where He is, if we are only returning **with** Christ to the earth at His Second Coming?

Pre-Wrath

1. If the Church is Raptured in mid-Trib, or Pre-Wrath; then why does Revelation only divide itself up into three parts? ([Rev. 1:19](#)) Why not four, or five, or more places to denote when the Church would actually be departing? The divisions themselves are pretty clearly defined.
 - a. ¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, **and** the things which are, **and** the things which will take place after this.
 - b. Chapter 1: what John saw-the vision of the glorified Christ walking amongst the candle stands
 - c. Chapter 2-3: The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches
 - d. Chapter 4-22: **After these things** I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

2. If the 'Wrath of God' is not being initiated until the Trumpet or Vial Judgments, then who opens the Seals in Revelation 5?
3. If the Seal's aren't included in God's divine judgments on the earth, which kills a fourth of the world's population, (or 1,750,000,000 out of 7 billion), then what constitutes divine wrath?
4. Paul states that what was given to him was a [mystery](#) (1 Cor. 15:51) which is something not previously revealed to man. If it is not something that had been previously revealed, and Jesus revealed His intentions ([Matt. 24:29-31](#)) of the Second Coming, then why do Pre-Wrathers insist on using the Olivet Discourse as proof text for their view?
5. And are Christians now under the sabbatical travel restrictions? (Matt. 24:20)

Full Preterist/Amillennialist

1. If there is no Tribulation, if there is no literal return of Christ or literal Millennial Kingdom where Christ physically defeats Satan, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, judges the wicked nations, and literally rules and reigns from David's throne (this would be in Israel, not heaven), then is Christ's victory at the Cross, only a spiritual victory?
2. If the idea of a Rapture is preposterous, then do you also not believe that Enoch was raptured? (Gen 5:24; Hebrews 11:5) Or Elijah being caught up to heaven alive? (2 Kings 2:11) Or that what the Angels told the disciples is not true, being that Jesus would return in like manner, if Christ was never going to return? (Acts 1:9-11)
3. Why did Jesus Himself say that the WHOLE earth (even the dead) would see Him return in Glory? (Matt. 24:30, 26:62-64; Rev. 1:7)
4. If Revelation was merely meant to be taken symbolically, then who determines what the symbolism actually means? Who has the 'correct' interpretation?
5. If there is no gap between Daniel's 69th and 70th week, (Dan. 9:24-27) then what happened historically in AD36-37? Why was Jerusalem destroyed 40 years later, instead of right after Christ's death, burial, and resurrection?

Partial Preterists

1. If there is no 2,000-year gap between Daniel 9:26 and 9:27, then why do you believe there is a 2,000-year gap between Revelation 1-17 and chapter 18-22?
2. Again, if Revelation 1-18 is merely apocalyptic symbolism, who determines what it means? Who has the correct interpretation?

Reformed/Covenant Theology

1. If the Church is Israel, or either an extension or renovation thereof, why then did Christ say that He will build ([future tense](#)) His Church?
2. If the Church is Israel, then those in the OT must have been sealed by the Holy Spirit as those who are in this age correct? Where is the giving of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? The only ones who are shown to have received the Holy Spirit, usually did so by God's choosing either prior to birth, or through an event...such as [David's anointing](#). Where is the pre-birth, selective anointing by the Holy Spirit found in the

New Testament? If Israel and the Church are the same, there should be some continuity in this regard.

3. Why does Jesus say that the Jews and their Kingdom, was **from** the foundation of the world, but Paul state that God's plan for the Church, was from **before** the foundation of the world? ([Matt. 25:34](#); [Eph. 1:3-4](#))

Although many will attempt to refute the challenge, I put forth here, they can't do so in any intellectually honest effort. They either have to twist the meaning or redefine terms to fit their eschatological viewpoint. The real issue in the varying eschatology's, is not really eschatological in and of itself, but rather of one's understanding of [ecclesiology](#).

For both the student and the scholar, there should be a desire to understand God's word, not simply for the sake of knowledge, but because growing in truth, promotes spiritual maturity. There are plenty of well-meaning, misguided believers out there that believe all kinds of things that probably aren't all that biblical, and that doesn't mean they aren't saved. Salvation is through the belief in and receiving of Jesus's atoning and redemptive work on the Cross. (1 Cor. 15:1-5; Romans 10:9-11)

Although we aren't saved by which Rapture view we hold too, we are either stunted or growing in how we mature as believers by which view we allow to filter our biblical worldview through. And although all the proof in the world will not convince those who obstinately hold to errant, eschatological views (the listed above), they will find out soon enough.

Jesus warns in His Olivet Discourse, that a time is coming, that is worse than ANY that mankind had ever seen before, or ever will. (Matt. 24:21-22) How then can the Christian stand in that day? The truth is, they can't, because they won't be there. That is not to say, that we will not be persecuted leading up to Daniel's 70th week, because we probably will. (Rev. 3:10) But persecution in and of itself, is not indicative of the Church's need to enter into Daniel's 70th week. There has always been some form of [persecution](#) against the Church of God.

But that time was not designed for us; it is for Israel, the Jews, and the Christ rejecting world. (Dan. 9:24; Jer. 30:7-11) Persecution just means that the world hates Christ, and we are Christ's body here on the earth, therefore, we too are hated. (John 15:18-25; Romans 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:30; Col. 1:18). And if we are Christ's body here on earth, don't you think at some point, He'd want it back? (John 14:1-3) Would He (who conquered death and hell) then subject Himself to the same judgment He unleashes upon the earth?

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it... Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." **Rev. 5:1-3, 6:1**

It's the End of the World, Now What?

Hal Lindsey's been saying now for the better part of 50 years, that Christ's return is imminent, but I fear that for many, apocalypse fatigue is setting in. The Left Behind series sparked a huge renewed interest into the idea of the Rapture and for what follows, but even that excitement seems to have faded. With all the geo-political, economic, and technological changes happening every day, modern man's attention span is steadily decreasing.

Increasingly, we express concern over the swelling anti-Christian sentiment that is growing here in the West, and express outright shock over the brutality of that same anti-Christian sentiment in the East. Half of Christianity wants to reclaim the world, this present world, for Christ and build His kingdom for Him, and the rest of Christianity is divided on how the end does happen. In fact, MOST of Christendom today, does not advocate the only doctrinal position that is logical, Biblical -- a Pre-Tribulational Rapture, otherwise known as our "Blessed Hope" (Titus 2:13).

All that aside, the truth is that believers for millennia have long pondered, wondered about, and longed to see what the days we live in would be like. While our days may be increasingly onerous and dangerous, it is also exciting to see the pages of the prophetic scripture come to life right before our very eyes. And so it is both bitter and sweet, that we live to see these days come to pass, just as Christ, the prophets and apostles said they would.

"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober...For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him (1 Thess 5:4-6, 9-10).

So it is that we, the final generation, are called to stand firm in the growing tide of darkness which all the more enshrouds this fallen planet. But in our standing, we are to do four things which will not only bring glory to God, become a witness and a testimony to the lost, but will also encourage and embolden our brothers and sisters in these trying times. We are to worship, wait, work, and watch.

Worship

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:1-2

For the born-again Christian, our worship is not solely limited to what we do in a church building on Sunday mornings, but it also involves how we live our lives. All of the life of every Christian should be an act of worship. The Apostle Paul, via the Holy Spirit, instructs us to present our bodies, our hearts, and our minds, to God as a living sacrifice. Once you become a believer in Jesus Christ, you are no longer your own, because you were bought with a price. (1 Cor 6:19-20) We are to become living sacrifices, crucifying the flesh daily, so that we may live in the Spirit.

This is not easy, because the flesh becomes a powerful obstruction to our walk with God. Our primary goals as believers are to worship God, mature in the faith, and witness to those who do not know the Lord. We demonstrate our worship, by how we live our lives, by being a living sacrifice. We mature in the faith, when we learn how we live by our worship which by glorifying God puts our trust in Him, and not ourselves. Therefore, our worship, becomes a living testimony to those who do not know Christ, and Christ said that if we would glorify Him, HE would draw all men to Himself (John 12:31-33).

Wait

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself”.

Philippians 3:20-21

Anyone who has ever had to wait for anything realizes that waiting is not fun. But waiting adds to faith in a way that immediate gratification cannot. It develops and matures you in your walk (sanctification) with the Lord. Abraham, who exhibited an amazing amount of faith, waited many decades for the promise of a son that the Lord would provide to both him and Sarah. Once that heir (Isaac) came and grew, God then instructed Abraham to take him to Mt. Moriah (modern day Golgotha/Calvary), making Isaac carry his own wood which Abraham would use to sacrifice him. This all seemed contrary to all that God had promised him, but Abraham was prepared to do this up until the point that the Angel of the Lord stayed his hand. Abraham demonstrated his faith that even if God had him kill his own son, God would raise him again or else God would be breaking his own promise (Gen. 15:1-5; 22:3-5).

While the waiting was something that Abraham and Sarah struggled with, it developed and matured them. And our waiting is not in vain because “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Anytime we lose sight of this, let us remember the day we came to Christ: what if God had chosen the day prior, to be the day of the Rapture? While we wait, let God develop us into the people He wants us to become. In our waiting, let us focus on the goal of running for the prize (1 Cor. 9:25; Phil. 3:14).

Even though our ultimate goal is Heaven, our goal here on earth should be that “we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.” **Ephesians 4:13-15**

Work

“...But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands as we commanded you,

that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing”.

1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

Unlike the prosperity propaganda that many successful self-help televangelists love to promote, God has not called us to a life of luxury and riches. I am not saying that a Christian can't be wealthy, or that God can't bless us in those areas, because He can and He does. What I am saying is that that should not be our focus in life. While our fiat currency system may be a necessity to survive in these last days, it should not be what motivates us. That should not be what we strive for or yearn for. Wherever you are, and whatever you do, do it for the Lord. Don't do it so that other men can notice you, or that you do it for the accolades and praise of people, but serve God with a willing heart.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **Matthew 6:19-21**

Watch

“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” **Luke 12:35-40**

What is increasingly perplexing to me, considering all that is transpiring around the world, is the outright rejection and denial of the Rapture and of Christ's Second Coming by those who claim to be Christian. I expect this from mainstream media, government, and pop culture, but how a denomination (take your pick) rejects 30% of their Bible, only to focus on everything BUT Christ's soon return, baffles my mind.

Consider these events that are rapidly advancing in our day:

- the coming together of global governance
- the rapid technological advancements that are enabling and merging together a tracking, monitoring, and digital financial system that ultimately will become the 'mark of the beast'
- growing lukewarmness and apostate nature of “Christianity”
- Geo-political alignments of nations, all seemingly hostile to Israel

- increasingly devastating natural disasters and pestilence
- false/pseudo messiah's -wars and rumors of wars -rise of occultism and paganism
- the rise of all sorts of violence around the earth
- global economy on the verge of collapse

Literally, I could go on and on with what is going wrong in the world, but I think you get the drift. Many in Christendom would say pompously- "ahh that stuff has been going on since the beginning. Everything is cyclical, and we are just in another cycle of endless cycles-- when things get bad, then they get better, and then bad, and so on and so forth." I have spoken personally to many people and clergy who hold to this opinion.

For them, Christ's return is about as important a focus for them and their ministries as the color of icicles are on Saturn's rings. They are far "too busy building up His Kingdom here" to worry about if or when Christ will return. For these people, Christ Himself said this...

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. **Revelation 3:3**

Ah, but the skeptic says, "Hey, that doesn't apply to me, Jesus (if He even wrote that), was speaking to some church in ancient Asia Minor. That has no relevance to me today." Notice what Christ says in the very next verse... "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 3:4).

Conclusion

We are called in these last days to stand firm and to be bulwarks in a growing storm that is increasingly and violently shifting and moving everything about. The only way we can stand firm is if we stand in Christ because in and of ourselves, we do not possess the ability, nor even the desire to go against the dark tide. It is not pleasant, especially considering what is coming upon the earth and in particular, what we have to look forward to so long as the Lord tarries. But we stand nonetheless, and we proclaim the saving power of the blood of Christ through worship, waiting, working, and watching.

Some worship and work, but do not watch or wait for the Lord's return, and they quickly burn out. Some watch and wait, but do not work or worship, and they drift off into the fringe. We need all four to balance out our faith, because work is tiresome, and without the hope of our "Blessed Hope" we lose heart. All watching and no worship causes us to watch for anything, and soon our short attention span hearts, will drift into areas that appear more exciting or conspiratorial. We need all four because God built us to do all four, and when any of the four are missing, we drift from where God intended us to be. God built us with eternity in our hearts, and only the eternal can fully satisfy what we know is lacking in the here and now.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. **2 Cor. 4:16-18**

The Wise Men

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” **Matthew 2:1-2**

A first question that comes to mind is, how did these ‘*Wise Men*’ know about the birth of Jesus? What did they know about it? What does their visit mean for us today in the 21st century? Well for starters, let’s find out how they knew.

If you go back to Daniel chapter 2, we read that the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, set out and conquered the nation of Judah. He did it in three separate times, but he began in 605BC. The first iteration, he took back with him, the best of the young Jewish boys, primarily to serve in his kingdom. Of the young men, the book of Daniel primarily focuses on four; Daniel, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abed-nego). In Daniel chapter 2, we read that King Nebuchadnezzar has a troubling dream, and he asks his wise men to interpret it. But first, he ask them to tell him what the dream is before they interpret it, so he can know they could interpret it. Here we read...

The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.” **Dan. 2:5-6**

So the story goes that Nebuchadnezzar decree went forth, and they (the Babylonians) began slaughtering the wise men (Chaldeans) and their families. Daniel beseeches God, and God grants him the ability to both know what the dream is, and then interpret to interpret the dream. We know the dream was about the multi-metallic statue representing the kingdoms of this age who would rule, sequentially, beginning with Babylon down to Rome. At this point, Daniel was elevated to the number two person in the kingdom, and here we read that he is made ruler over not just Babylon proper, but also to the wise men.

Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king. **Dan. 2:48-49**

Now, imagine you’re a ‘Wise man’ who not only got your life spared by a young Jewish kid, but also all of your family were spared as well. I imagine that would evoke a lot of loyalty towards someone like that. You would listen to this kid, even though he was Jewish and much younger than probably most of you were. Daniel through God’s grace and purpose, just saved a lot of lives.

So, going back to Matthew 2, we know that Babylon is east of Israel by several hundred miles. You probably already knew that at the time Christ was born, the [Parthians](#) were in power over what was then, Babylon. Their kingdom was never conquered by the Romans, and there were a

series of wars between the two empires. Now, imagine you're a half-Jewish, puppet king, installed by Rome in a backwater province of the Roman Empire known as Judah. Imagine you're just minding your business and then one day, an entourage of men, from the enemy kingdom show up at your door and ask for the one 'BORN King of the Jews'...

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. **Matt. 2:3**

A common misconception perpetuated by Christmas cards is that there were three *Wise Men* on camels. Another misconception perpetuated by a lot of churches is that there were 'more' than three, but not a lot more. (6-8 maybe) I don't think Herod nor all of Jerusalem would be startled by three (or 8) guys riding up on camels. I think (my opinion) is that these guys should up en masse, perhaps a caravan of a hundred to two hundred or more. Obviously, all of Jerusalem wouldn't have been in King Herod's castle, hearing the question asked about where the 'King of the Jews' was, so what startled them was to see such a large entourage of enemy Parthians showing up.

Now, Herod, truly shaken by their presence and their question, turns to his religious leadership for guidance...

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

'But you, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'

Notice they are quoting Micah 5:2...or rather, misquoting it. Here is what the Prophet Micah actually stated.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting."

The high priests and scribes were scared of Herod, so they were tailoring their message to fit the audience. So we know from the start, who took the scriptures literally, and who didn't. Thus far, we know why Parthian *Wise Men* would know about a Jewish Messiah in the first place. And we know how they knew where the Messiah was going to hail from.

So how did the *Wise Men* know when?

Well going back to Daniel, we know that he received from the Angel Gabriel, a prophecy concerning the future known commonly as 'Daniel's 70 Weeks'. From here they would have

understood, that from the going forth of the commandment ([Nehemiah 2](#)) given by Persian (now Parthian) King Artaxerxes...when exactly that would have been. The question many would be asking themselves is, 'yeah, but that would point them directly to Palm Sunday of AD33, not when He was born.' I'm glad you asked.

The *Wise Men* would have been exposed to the Jewish Scriptures (the OT) through Daniel, and it's no stretch to imagine that He would have explained these to them and possibly, entrusted to them to continue watching long after he was gone for the coming Messiah. Not only that, but Daniel would have also explained, that Messiah would come in part as a Priest. (In order to fulfill Daniel 9:24). Furthermore, this is the cool part, they would have made a reasonable assumption, that according to the Scriptures ([Numbers 4](#)) a priest could not enter service until he was 30 years of age. So all they had to do, was calculate the 483 years from Daniel's 70 Weeks prophecy, and then back that up thirty years, and they would be very close to the mark. Ok, so that gets them to the year maybe, but how would they know exactly when The One would be born.

Well, again, they went back to the Scriptures of their beloved Daniel, and read them. Not only did they read them, they believed them.

"I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel...
Numbers 24:17

"We have seen His Star in the East, and have come to worship Him" the *Wise Men* told Herod. They knew, what the Scribes and Pharisees should have known. And they came bearing gifts not only fit for a King (Gold), but also for a Priest ([Frankincense](#)) because again, they studied the Old Testament. They also came bearing Myrrh, which was a sweet smelling [spice](#) you could apply to the dead as an act of honor. They knew this because in Daniel's prophecy, that Messiah the Prince would be 'cut off, but not for Himself'.

And isn't it just like God to bring in some Gentiles to be the first people in the New Testament, to come and worship the King of Kings? The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the Lion of Judah, the rightful [heir](#) to the throne, and these Gentile 'kingmakers', came first (Law of First Mention) to demonstrate to the people in whom Jesus would offer His Kingdom too, He had arrived.

Assessment

Just thinking about that gives me goose bumps in how awesome our God is, and how detailed he is in setting about events, exactly as He wants them too. And although it is fascinating, I began to think back to Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. We are now living in the days of a revived Roman empire (toes of iron mixed with miry clay). Although we have not seen it (or may not see it fully) materialize before the Rapture, we are the generation living in the shadow of Nebuchadnezzar's multi-metallic statue. Just as precisely as God used those *Wise Men*

to be the ones to worship Him at His first Coming, so too is the timing and event that would lead to Israel becoming a nation again in 1948. And wouldn't you know it that exactly when Israel becomes a nation again after almost 2,000 years in Diaspora, so too is a [final version](#) of the revived Roman Empire appearing again, to rear its wicked head (1948).

A lot of prophetic events are lining up these days, from turmoil in the Middle East, to technology and global governance. From false messiah's and false religions to a luke-warm apostasy spreading within Christendom. Events are speeding up, and the days are growing wicked. For those of us who are watching and waiting, I fear many tire waiting and have given up, or worse fallen into false teachings that dash a believers hope. [Don't let it [steal](#) your crown!]

Dear friends, don't get discouraged or dismayed that certain days or events have passed us by, where we thought He would return, but failed to appear. Don't let the onslaught of bad news snuff out the light of the '[Blessed Hope](#)' we have guiding us in these dark days. God is in control, and we too, should be looking for our Star to appear. Remember, Christ said...

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Maranatha!

The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown

As we approach the coming Christmas Season, it is fitting for Christian households and churches to focus on the first coming of Jesus Christ. In times past, and perhaps not so much anymore, one could see the manger scenes in town squares and in front of churches of all denominations. Christmas cards bearing the Star or the three Wisemen are passed amongst believers during this season. Preachers preach predominantly from Matthew 1-2, churches hold cantatas and the sounds of “peace on earth, good will toward men” fill the ears of believers round the world. Bethlehem, Israel becomes the focus of world stage once again, as Christian’s flock to the *Church of the Nativity*, which is currently held hostage by the Palestinian movement.

The Cradle

Perhaps people like to focus on Christ as an innocent baby, or focus on the role of parenthood as Mary and Joseph cared for this child who came about supernaturally. The virgin birth of Christ and the role of Mary, figures large in Catholic circles and also in liberal and secular circles where the possibility of a virgin birth is denied. Thus Christmas, as to its true meaning (unto you is born a Savior), is controversial.

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. **Galatians 4:4-5**

When *the fullness of time had come*...is a phrase so packed with meaning that it would not be possible to break it all down in the limited space (or ability) I have at my disposal. But it speaks to the eternal purpose of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind, and of all created order. It speaks to the specific moments on man’s timeline, when God would intervene, in a supernatural and visible way, to put feet to His plan.

Dr. Andy Wood’s makes much use of this phrase in his teachings, and really brought to my mind, the preciseness and purpose for why God chose that particular time frame for Christ’s first coming. Consider these points:

1. Since Alexander the Great, Koine Greek became the predominant common language in the Mediterranean. Koine Greek, is a very precise language which is perfect for capturing the original intent and meaning of the Scriptures...no matter which language they get translated into in the future.
2. The [Roman](#) republic form of government ends under Julius Caesar and he creates a total dynastic dictatorship under what would become the rule of the Caesars. Christ was born and dies under the reign of a Caesar, and will return one day when another Caesar (Antichrist) who has set his empire up over the whole world.
3. The Roman’s perfected the creation of the road networks, which spanned across the boundaries of the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Europe, and even up into Britain.

4. Israel remained under the subjugation of Gentile powers (as described in Daniel 2:31-45, 7, 8, & 11) which had played out from the time of their exile to Babylon (605-539BC)

So looking at it from a holistic point of view, there was a common language (Koine Greek), advanced network for travel (all roads lead to Rome), dominant pagan world power (fertile fields no doubt), and Israel in the final years before her diaspora. Unknown exactly which year Christ was born in, or rather, is much in dispute to the exact year, we know when He was born the nation of Israel wasn't expecting it. We know from the world's perspective, the birth of the Christ in some backwater province of the Roman Empire, didn't even register a blip on their geo-political radar. We know Christ lived up unto the age of 30 virtually as an unknown, before exploding onto the scene to present the world with 3 ½ years of God in the flesh, ministry. At the end of that, He managed to make the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots mad enough to trump up false charges and have Him brought before the Sanhedrin to be tried as a political prisoner.

The Cross

In Genesis 49, Jacob was blessing his sons, who would become the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel. When Jacob came to bless Judah, he gave him an interesting prophecy;

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.

Also, in Numbers 24:17, the prophet Balaam prophesied that this same scepter would be accompanied by a Star, by which the wise men (Matt. 2:2) would know where this One born King of the Jews would be.

“I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,
And batter the brow of Moab,
And destroy all the sons of tumult

Now, modern Jewish scholars today will refute that Christ is the Messiah, because their argument is that the ‘scepter’ departed from Judah back in 605BC when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Furthermore, that from then, until 1948, the Jewish nation had been under some form of Gentile domination. All that is true. But what is also true is that the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans allowed the Jews to have semi-autonomous rule (Zerubbabel, Ezra, Maccabeus) over themselves, up until King Herod Archelaus was removed from power by Julius Caesar in 6AD (Josephus, Antiquities 17:13). That's when the Jews lost any remaining semblance of autonomy and were subject to a series of Roman procurators with Pontius Pilate being one.

Since Jews were either not anticipating the coming of their Messiah, or had largely ignored the literal fulfillment of the prophecies pertaining to Christ's first coming, they thought they had lost

their right to wield capital punishment on Him, which is why they had to turn it over to Pilate for the official sentence. Now, that didn't stop them previously from trying to stone Him to death on a couple prior occasions when they were riled up, but He always managed to allude them. (John 8:58-59, 10:30-33) They (the Sanhedrin) didn't want to crucify Him on Passover because of the negative publicity, but again, the timing was such that God orchestrated everything to coincide with exactly the Passover Feast. (Mark 14:1-2; 1 Cor. 2:6-8)

The victory at the Cross represented something much more significant than a literal kingdom on earth (which is still yet to come), but that Christ conquered death and hell. (Rev. 1:18) Because Christ had to be a man to die for the rest of mankind as our Kinsman Redeemer, Christ willingly endured the joy set before Him, in order to pay the price for OUR salvation. (Lev. 25; Heb. 12:2; Rev. 5:6-10) It would be equivalent to God rigging a game that placed all the burden and rules against Himself, so that by His losing, we win. Christ trading His own perfect holiness, for our sinful and corrupted lives, is oft referred to as the most lopsided trade in all of recorded history...yet, that is exactly what transpired. We don't think about it this way, but God the Son, traded His former estate, to take on forever, that of God in a glorified human body.

The Crown

I've often heard Amillennialists and Preterists state emphatically, that Christ will not return to rule and reign on earth, because they say that we are now in the Kingdom. I couldn't disagree more. The Scriptures tell us, that this world, is under the sway and control of Satan himself. (Luke 4:5-6; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 2:13) As much as these might wish, the Cross didn't usher in some Edenic age where lambs lay down with wolves, children play with cobras, and nations beat their swords into plowshares (Isaiah 2:4, 11:2-8). Any interpretation that detracts from the actuality that God Himself will right the wrongs, and restore nature back to its original order. Anything less than that, is to depart from the plain reading of the text into allegorical folly.

It was to King David that God said, "And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom." (1 Chron. 17:11) God states over and over, that the Kingdom Come is not established by man or by earthly efforts, but by God Himself. (Dan. 2:44-45; Psalm 2; Rev. 19:11-16) There is the idea that the Kingdom is purely spiritual, and is argued that the Kingdom is now in play, only in the heavenly realms, this by taking several texts out of context. (Luke 17:20-22; Romans 14:17) If those who deny the literal coming Millennial Kingdom on earth had their way;

Christ would only come to earth to die, and not to reign; for Christ to be born 'King of the Jews', but to not actually become "King of the Jews"; for Him to ride a donkey, but not a white horse; for Christ to be spat on, beaten, and hang naked upon a cross of shame, but not to return in triumphal glory coming on the clouds with the armies of heaven behind Him. If Christ doesn't return, then He remains defeated on the earth that He spoke into existence, that God's word does not mean what it says, and that God can break, unbreakable promises.

The reason that men and women promote these heterodox teachings, is because man made religion, whether it be Roman Catholic, or Protestant, have become too invested in the things of this world. They want life to continue on, or maybe they just see life continuing on and on, in some endless cycle of man rising and falling. (2 Peter 3) They have to depart from a plain sense reading of the text, and insert their own interpretation, which supplants God's promise to return in victory, and claim what is rightfully His. And not only to claim what is His, but that every knee should bow, whether it is in heaven, on earth, under the earth, throughout all of creation, and confess that Jesus Christ is King. (Philippians 2:9-11) Are these folk saying that Christ is free to rule everywhere, but the earth?

The Christ-rejecting world, as well as those Christians who have fallen into spiritual slumber, will be astonished in that Day, when Christ comes for His Church. Because that Day, opens the window of time, for the Tribulation to begin. It doesn't begin the Tribulation, but the Church has to be removed prior to the start of that final week of years, in which at some point afterwards (days, weeks, months, years), the seven-year Tribulation will begin just as it is noted in Daniel 9:27. The final seven years will be the most horrific, violent, and devastating period of time humanity has ever seen. (Matt. 24:21-22) God will accomplish two things by it; first, He disciplines Israel, and second, He destroys all the Gentile nations round about her, by bringing the whole Babylonian system crashing to the ground. (Jer. 30:7-11)

It is noted in the Prophets, that THAT DAY will begin in unimaginable calamity, perhaps masking the Church's departure. The prophet Joel records... "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before** the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord". Paul writes that "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when **they** say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon **them**, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And **they** shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." **1 Thess. 5:2-4**

Make no mistake that the Lord will return and will come with the clouds and in great power and glory. Christ will come and reclaim that which was lost with Adam. He has the title deed to the earth. He no longer wears the crown of thorns, but now wears 'many crowns', meaning He has ALL authority. When the holy prophet Isaiah saw the throne room, he was undone. When the holy prophet Daniel saw the throne room, he was shaken. When John sees the glorified Christ in all His splendor, he falls over as dead. How much more traumatized will an unrepentant, Christ rejecting world be when it sees the sky splitting open and Christ returning in power and glory? The whole world will mourn. (Rev. 1:7) The world at this moment, doesn't care. The religionists try to minimize or explain-away His soon coming with fanciful wordsmithing. Those actively opposed to Christ, who loathe Him and are filled with vengeance because this age is coming to an end, are ramping up evil in these final moments...

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until

our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. **1 Timothy 6:11-16**

The Great and Terrible God of Love

Over the years I've spoken to many non-Christians about God. For the most part, people believe there is something or someone out there, but aren't entirely sure who or what. Aside from the general understanding of a supernatural-being out there in the yonder, those who do believe in a 'God', seem to have serious mischaracterizations about Him. Some simply attribute God as the "big Man in the sky". Some think He is mean and over controlling tyrant. Still many think He set everything in motion and then just walked away. Some think He is only love and nothing more. Still others deny He exists as a person at all but rather is an impersonal 'force'.

Even within Christendom, the biggest problems many have is by mistaking an attribute of God as the principal *modus operandi* of God. For instance, if you were to talk to 'post-modernist' or a liberal Christian, they seemingly only focus on God's love. If you talk to a strict Five-Point Calvinist, they seemingly only focus on God's sovereignty. Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Hebrew Roots, and many others tend to focus more on the wrath of God, which then promotes a 'works-based' and ritualistic form of worship as a means either of salvation, or to keep their salvation by appeasing an angry God through 'good works'.

Regardless of the audience, there are few--and I mean very few who ever start off by properly characterizing God by His most overarching and distinguishing attribute...which is that above all else, He is Holy. It is through God's holiness, that all the other attributes find their perfect symmetry with every other attribute.

This might seem odd to some, but God's love for mankind is perfected through God's wrath. God's wrath is the natural response to those who reject Him (John 3:18; Col. 2:11-15). Before the universe began (Eph. 1:3-6), God realized that a living, breathing, thinking, free-will being made in His likeness would quickly fall from His perfect standard of righteousness. It was inevitable because if man were to ever truly love and worship God, He had to allow us to operate under design of free will.

He also knew that once we fell, we would be powerless to ever attain His perfect level of righteousness in our own power. Rather than create us for the sole purpose of damnation, He chose rather to demonstrate His perfect love for us, by sacrificing Himself in man's place. We see an archetype of this played out in [Genesis 15](#) where Abram is told to prepare a blood-oath ritual but then is made to sleep as God swears on Himself that He will bind Himself to the oath on Abram's behalf.

This perfect wrath the Father poured out on the Son, demonstrated His perfect balance of grace and mercy for us and in turn validated the extent of His love, or rather the extent to which He would go to prove His love for us. Jesus had to die in our place because it was the only way to redeem a fallen race to a holy and righteous God. And in His death, Jesus conquered man's most frightening enemy, hell. And in His resurrection, Jesus conquered death, thus proving once and for all that neither death nor hell had any claim on those who placed their faith and trust in His finished work at the Cross. All of these attributes of wrath, mercy, love, sovereignty, and eternity are perfected to the utmost by God's holiness.

Assessment

The first time we see the word *holy* used in the Bible is when Moses is confronted by the supernatural anomaly we know as ‘the burning bush’ which out of, God spoke to him...

So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is holy ground.*” Moreover He said, “I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. **Exodus 3:4-6**

In Scripture, every time you see God present Himself as he truly is, which is to show the full might of His presence in His natural state...whether thru a vision or in person, that person immediately recognizes the vast and irreconcilable differences between us and God. We immediately recognize our fallen nature and would shrink ourselves up into a speck of a shadow if we could to escape from that terrifying experience of being in the presence of an all-powerful and almighty Creator God.

- After they fell, Adam and Eve hid from God in shame (Gen. 3:7-8)
- Moses was hid in the cleft of a rock so he wouldn’t die as God passed by him (Ex. 33:21-23)
- The prophet Isaiah upon seeing the throne room of God said “Woe is me” (Isaiah 6:5)
- Daniel physically collapsed (Daniel 10:4-9)
- John collapsed as a dead man (Revelation 1:12-17)

These examples each collapsed under the weight of their own fallen nature. These examples also weren’t heathens. These weren’t evil men and women. For the most part, they were innocent, righteous, and holy people in their own right that would make us look like rampant criminals compared to their own lives. And they couldn’t take the brightness of His being. They couldn’t take the glory of His presence...so much so...that it physically changed them.

Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy *is* the Lord of hosts;
The whole earth *is* full of His glory!”

And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. **Isaiah 6:3-4**

In Isaiah’s case, he is shown the throne room of God. In it he sees that the seraphim who without ceasing, continuously declare NOT His: love, justice, fairness, eternity, sovereignty, wrathfulness, nor peacefulness...but His holiness.

Again we see these magnificent creatures in **Revelation 4:8...**

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

“Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!”

Revelation 4:8

Also interesting to note is the slight change in narrative between Isaiah’s vision of the throne room, and that of John’s in the Apocalypse.

Isaiah: God’s holiness (repeated in series of three) could be pointing to the triune nature of the God-head in that each (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) are equally holy. Secondly, that God’s reign is sovereign over all creation.

Revelation: Again, God’s holiness (repeated in series of three) not only mentions the sovereignty (Lord God Almighty), but also to His eternality... (who was, and is, and is to come) which is highly fitting for the book of Revelation.

Do they chant that for God’s benefit? Does God need to be reminded that He is holy? No! They do this for our benefit so as to remind us that above all else, God is holy. And His holiness, affects all His other attributes so that they are carried out to the most perfect state each could ever be delivered in...which is absolute perfection. His wrath is as perfect as His love, as is His mercy, grace, and peacefulness. Each in perfect symmetry with the other. None lacking even a fraction or a degree of measured perfection.

“First, let’s look at God’s holiness. What does it mean that God is holy? Passages like [1 Samuel 2:2](#) and [Isaiah 6:3](#) are just two of many examples of passages about God’s holiness. Another way to say it is absolute perfection. God is unlike any other (see [Hosea 11:9](#)), and His holiness is the essence of that “otherness.” His very being is completely absent of even a trace of sin ([James 1:13](#); [Hebrews 6:18](#)). He is high above any other, and no one can compare to Him ([Psalm 40:5](#)). God’s holiness pervades His entire being and shapes all His attributes. His love is a holy love, His mercy is holy mercy, and even His anger and wrath are holy anger and holy wrath. These concepts are difficult for humans to grasp, just as God is difficult for us to understand in His entirety.”

An excellent response on God’s holiness from a question posed to [Gotquestions.org](#):

Conclusion

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” **1 Peter 1:13-16**

First and foremost, God is and probably always will be in a holistic sense, an enigma to us. We will never fully know the depths of God’s wisdom, love, mercy, wrath, righteousness, and

sovereignty even throughout eternity. We know what He has allowed us to know—which is considerable, but we are finite creatures trying to comprehend an infinite Being.

Secondly, if we are to be holy, we must separate ourselves from the world. This does not mean becoming ascetics and hiding ourselves away on some mountain to seclude ourselves from the world. Just because we are in the world, does not mean we have to be of the world. We shouldn't be "earth-dwellers" whose sole mind-set is earthbound on the things of this life. We are separate in that we see what is coming, and we live with that expectation daily. This is hard, and I struggle with this as much as anyone else does, but we have to strive daily to do this. We must keep our eyes fixed on the things above and not on this world which is passing away. (1 John 2:17)

Finally is that we are to embody God's holiness in our everyday life. We are to be living proof that God can and does change lives. We are to be loving without compromising. We aren't called to reform the world, because we know this is only possible when Christ Himself returns, but we should stalwarts, trees with deep roots who withstand the winds, and rocks who withstand the shifting tides of change. There will be time for action, because there are things in this life that will and should make us angry...such as the abuse of innocents, corruption, murder, and many other injustices that play out on a daily basis. But that anger should cause us to wage our war on a spiritual enemy through spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18) and leave the vengeance part to God...and He will repay every ounce of it (Romans 12:19).

We are to be salt and light, to be beacons of God's love and mercy in a darkened world that is dying and passing away into eternal destruction. We show God's love, because He loved us first. In so doing, we might help save some who would otherwise head to eternal separation from their Creator. He is as much their Creator, as He is ours.

There will always be those who demand proof of God's existence. They want Him to physically show up and physically prove that He exists. These are they who like brutish beasts, do not know what they ask for. If God did show up this moment, the world would melt down in fear and trepidation. If these people refuse to accept the examples of God's existence either through His word, through historical and archeological examples, through Christians, or even creation itself...then one day the unrepentant will get their wish.

One day He will peel back the sky and descend onto this earth where He will proceed to pour out His wrath in holy anger on a world who is in complete rebellion against Him. In that day, a remnant will be saved, those Jews and Tribulation saints who make it to the end, will enter into the Age of the Kingdom. But everyone, both the saved and unsaved, of all ages...all will stand before God either in judicious-commendation of the Bema Judgment (1 Cor. 3; 2 Cor. 5), or in eternal condemnation at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:10-14). And every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11).

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. **Revelation 1:7**

Even so, *Maranatha!*

Diary of a Dead Man

I died on March 14th, 1999. It was a Sunday, and I was just two months shy of my 39th birthday. I grew up in a small town, with normal people. Nothing ‘fantastical’ ever really happened to me. I was ordinary, unknown, and just part of the anonymous unwashed-masses residing in flyover-country USA. I thought I had lived a good life. I wasn’t a “saint,” but I wasn’t “evil” either, or doing what I thought evil people did; like killing, raping or robbing people. I went to church most weeks. I worked hard at a good job, took care of my family, and paid my taxes on time.

I never really thought much about death, or what came after. I was busy living my life. I certainly didn’t think I would die at the age of 38. I thought I had a long life ahead of me. I thought I’d live to see my grandchildren grow up and get married. All I remember was driving home one night, and the truck coming towards me crossed over into my lane. I was messing with the radio at the time so I didn’t see it until it was too late, and then everything went black.

I remember seeing my body sitting there in the seat all slumped over and unnatural like. I looked like a crumpled up piece of paper. It didn’t make any sense because I was seeing me, but I wasn’t in me. I looked down and saw myself, but no one else could see me doing this. The other driver’s body was lying on the ground a bit away because he hadn’t worn his seat belt. But I didn’t see him outside of himself. I went over and touched myself to see if I could wake myself up, but the closer I got, the more I realized that I was dead. There wasn’t any recovering from the damage my body was in, and even if I could recover, I didn’t think I would like it.

A moment later, everything was gone. I was on a plain of some kind, and everything was pitch black. I could tell that the place I was in was vast, but I couldn’t tell how large. It seemed to stretch on forever, but I couldn’t even see my hands. There was knowledge though. It seemed that I knew where I was, and why I was there. It was like a hallway between life and where I was heading for all eternity, hell. The moment I realized it, there was a certain, absolute-fatalism in this knowledge. I knew there was nothing I could do to change it at this point. That is where I was heading, and as if on some kind of cosmic conveyor belt, I was making my way there whether I wanted to or not.

When I said I understood why I was there, it was because I knew wasn’t saved. I knew being a ‘good’ person, isn’t good enough. I knew being ‘religious’ wasn’t good enough. I knew going to church wasn’t good enough. I knew that knowing who Jesus was, wasn’t good enough. I knew being a ‘good’ American wasn’t good enough. I knew that I had died in my sins, and that I hadn’t asked Jesus to forgive me, and redeem me. I knew. I knew. I knew that I hadn’t made Jesus Christ Lord and Savior, and that was why I was there.

I also knew I wasn’t alone. Someone, or something put its hands on my shoulder, and pain shot through my body so absolutely that even the tips of my hair could feel it. I turned to see who or what it was, and immediately I was in revulsion at the sight of this monstrosity. The silence was broken by what sounded like someone screaming, only to realize, it was me. As if this weren’t bad enough, my own thoughts betrayed me by broadcasting everything aloud. Now we were moving fast, faster than I had ever imagined we could move, towards a light. But the light wasn’t comforting like you see when coming out of a dark tunnel. This light seemed full of menace and

foreboding. It was the light of fire, and the closer we got, the louder the sounds became. I could hear screaming. I could hear crying. I could hear cursing. The horrifying sounds, the speed at which we were moving, the pain shooting through my body, and the knowledge of where I was going for all of eternity, attacked every sense of my being all at once. And the only thing I could hear were my own screams as I was cast into the fiery cavern.

I couldn't breathe the air because of the heat and smoke. I couldn't think because I couldn't stop screaming. The heat and darkness was so thick that I could feel it pressing against me. The ground was full of sharp and jagged edges. People were screaming and running by, but I couldn't see because the fire didn't give off any light. I could hear growls and voices of things that sounded so unnatural, that my body shook with fear. I began moving because I didn't want whatever that was to get me, and I knew, that this was as good as it was ever going to get.

Assessment

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. **Jude 1:21-23**

The above death scene is purely out of my imagination. I have attached no significance to either the date, or the age; I just imagined myself as someone who had passed on before their time. The moments after the death account, as some have recounted, are very similar to this. However, what is very much true according to what Scripture has to say on the subject, is that it is appointed men to die once, then judgment (Hebrews 9:27). I have also based some of this on Shawn Weed's testimonial ([here](#)), as to what he experienced before being brought back by God's divine providence. I know some of you may not subscribe to the idea that a person can be brought back from the brink of death. In general, I think most of the accounts of people traveling to hell and heaven are bogus, but I wouldn't be so foolish as to discount them all. For that point, I consider Shawn's testimony valid and I hope you take a moment to watch it if you haven't yet already.

Although I didn't intend to write this kind of an article, this is what I was led to write on, and perhaps it is necessary to remind ourselves just what we were saved from. I imagined what the [Rich Man](#) would have said to his brothers, had he been granted the opportunity to travel back to the land of the living. At the time, the Jews had Jesus walking amongst them there. They had the testimony of the Law and the Prophets, which pointed to Christ as the fulfillment of God's promise of redemption.

Before time was created, and before the universe was spoken into place, God knew you. He saw your life and the moments of choice that would come to define you. We may look ahead with fear or anxiety at what lies ahead, but God has already foreseen it. We are only given so many days on this earth, and in that time, what we do, determines how we spend eternity. Even if we were to live for a 1,000 years, which, compared to eternity, is a drop in a bucket. Time is so fleeting that we can barely grasp the present before it slides behind us into yesterday.

For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
And its place remembers it no more.

Psalm 103:14-16

The truth is that even the greatest of men, are but for a moment. Our deeds ring hollow in this life, but they ring resoundingly throughout the rest of eternity. What did we do with the time God gave us? Most importantly, is what did we do with His Son, Jesus Christ? Who was He to us? A good man? A prophet? A historical figure? A myth?

Or was He God come in the flesh? Was He your Redeemer? Was He your Savior?

You might think that the punishment of hell is too much for simply rejecting Jesus Christ.

Consider this: As vast, beautiful, and mysterious as the universe is, we are the crowning objects of God's creation. I'm not the first to point out that God devotes a single passage to the creation of the stars and planets, but many to the creation of the first man and woman. Man was created in the image of God ([Gen. 1:26](#)). The heavenly bodies are perhaps the grandest of all of God's creations in terms of size, color, and sheer magnitude, but they pale in comparison to a newborn baby, or to the twinkle of an eye between husband and wife. The stars pale in comparison to a child's laughter, or a mother rocking her child to sleep, or to a man on his knees praying for his family. God may have used the stars to declare His glory, but He uses man to declare the depth of His righteousness, goodness, love, perfectness, and His forgiveness.

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

Psalm 8:3-5

The stars may shine and declare that life is not accidental, but they can never declare how it is not accidental. They are only proof of order and creation, not an explanation. God did not wrap Himself in the flesh of a star, to die for the stars, or for planets, or for animals, or any other created thing. He came to live, die, and resurrect Himself so that man could be redeemed.

God, being infinitely righteous and holy, set His holy laws in place and cannot violate them to make exceptions for man. But man, who is fallen and wholly unrighteous, and being an agent of free will, will almost always act out of his own self-interests. The only way that God could redeem fallen man to Himself, without violating His own laws, was to become a Man Himself, live a holy and perfect life, then make Himself a sacrifice to pay for the penalties that you and I

accrue over the course of our lives, in order to redeem us to Himself. When you place your faith in Jesus Christ to redeem you from your sins, it brings you out of death, into life.

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. **Colossians 2:13-15**

Technically speaking, we are all dead men. If you have not received Christ as your Savior, you are still dead in your sins. If you are still dead in your sins, then you have not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, sealed until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30) and are essentially waiting to die and then spend eternity separated from God forever in hell.

If you are born-again, then your old nature has died, and you now are hidden in Christ. At this point, you are awaiting either death or the Rapture, and you will be changed into your glorified, immortal body in which you will spend eternity with God.

Either way, our time here in this life is fleeting. If you are a born-again Christian, death is merely a stepping off point into a glorious future. If you are not, death transitions into the second-death, and [eternal destruction](#) awaits you.

Remember though, God does not send anyone to hell; that is a choice everyone is given. You are not saved from hell by being good, going to church, being religious, or by being spiritual. You must be born again (John 3:3) by having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship consists of you trusting in His death, burial, and resurrection. You are saved by believing that Jesus Christ can save you from your sins. You are saved by placing that faith in what Christ has already done at the Cross of Calvary.

That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved**. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation **Romans 10:9-10** (emphasis added)

The world we live in is full of paradox and irony. The paradox is that we live as if we'll never die, and we die when we least expect it. Ironic, isn't it? That this world and life we put so much stock and effort into, is so easily taken from us. This life that we cling so tightly to is so effortlessly slipping through our fingers one second at a time. We are all dead men walking, but who we are dead too will make all the difference throughout eternity; are we dead to self, or are we dead to Christ?

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. **Colossians 3:1-4**