

# 2014

## **Apocalypse Now**

I spent the last few nights watching “Apocalypse: World War I” by National Geographic. It is very surreal, to watch what had been originally been in black and white footage, be brought back to life in color. A hundred years ago this month, Europe cheerfully, unknowingly, and unwittingly entered into something they fully didn’t understand, nor appreciated...The Great War.

The Great War began not because of the death of Archduke Ferdinand, but because of the simmering tensions that had been left unchecked for decades. Franz Ferdinand’s death was simply the excuse the Austro-Hungarian Empire needed, to hammer out their unfinished business with Serbia. But Serbia was under the protector-ship of Russia, which made the German’s who already had an uneasy relationship with the Russians, uneasy. The German’s had intentions on taking over France, which drew in the British, Turkish, etc. and so on. When it was all said and done, nearly 20M men, women, and children died in that war, which would generationally speaking, forever change the face of Europe. And that wasn’t even the worst part, because less than twenty years later, Europe would be back at war with the unfinished business from World War I.

But what fascinated me, was that all the experts, the military generals, and political leaders then, could not see what lay ahead. They could not see that they would get dragged into this war-machine which grinded down civilization, and churned out unspeakable misery. In fact, most of the leading military leaders then from each of their own respective countries, thought that their part in the war, would be short-lived and successful.

They took the weapons’ of their day (which was cutting edge then), their fancifully-dressed armies, and marched out to conquer their foes. They expected to be back home in weeks with victory in tow, but how could they have known? The film captured the faces of those men who had for decades, been inspired by wars past. They were smiling and dancing all the way to the frontlines not knowing what lie ahead. This was contrasted to the faces of those same men, who having peered into the horrible darkness of war, were a mere shadow of their former selves.

## **Apocalypse Now?**

Eerily enough, we are at again, at that stage where decades of relative peace and stability across the global stage has numbed the minds of men. Now, the world is not ever really known peace, at least not in the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries, but the wars that have been since World War II, were contained to ‘hotspots’. The world at large has not been at war, like it was back in World Wars’ I and II, but the conditions have become ripe again for the ‘grapes of wrath’ to be trampled once more.

[John Haller](#), who does a weekly Bible Prophecy Update touched on something this past week that really resonated with something I have been thinking about for years now. That the world is again at that point of convergence, where so many things are all really at their tipping points of potentially becoming globally catastrophic:

- The sinking US and global economies
- Political distress
- Global pandemics
- Societal unrest
- Military buildups
- Natural disasters of 'biblical proportions'
- Societal collapse
- Religious Apostasy

### **Assessment**

The United States, for all its faults, has been the one constant in keeping the balance globally in all the above areas. Since WWII, if there was a natural disaster, the US sent aid, expertise, and equipment. If there was a nation in need, the US could come to their rescue, and if not the government, then the deep pockets of the American people through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's). If there was a threat, America faced it. As the 'greatest Christian' nation on the planet, the US sent missionaries, money, Bibles, preachers, and support to churches around the world. The world's economies depended on the 'almighty American dollar', as the constant standard for financial transactions.

But now, the sun is setting on America, and our allies are pretty sure they can't trust us. They aren't sure if they can rely on our dollar because of all the debt we've accumulated. They can't depend on us militarily, because we've gotten in bed with too many people, and we're afraid of upsetting the geo-political apple cart. Our churches are transitioning from the Gospel of Grace, to 'another gospel'...of prosperity, social justice, or the ecumenical. We've become a nation with eroding borders and eroding values.

The world often moves more in unpredictable ways than predictable, so how can we know what is coming? I recently read the **National Intelligence Council's [assessment](#)** on the state of affairs for the US in 2030. I read about a number of geo-political scenarios that they see playing out technologically, militarily, and economically.

Interestingly, the NIC assessment sees the US in an inevitable decline on the world's stage by 2030. What they are hoping for though, is a 'soft-landing' rather than a 'crash and burn' scenario in which the US still survives, but a little more worse for wear than *Old Glory* is used too. But what they are hoping for, and what actually happens are going to be two very different things, given their dismal track record of predictions in their [2010](#) assessment.

And not only where they were wrong in their geo-political assessments for 2010, they were wildly inaccurate. How could they have known box cutters and airplanes would be used

to bring down four different flights and plunge the world's greatest superpower, into 13 years of war? Something like a 9/11 is known as a "Black Swan Event", in which a wildcard scenario actually plays out. But the truth is, we don't know what we don't know. But that also is not true, because former President Clinton, [could have](#) ended the man who really was the mastermind (or face) of this new form of terror, but chose not to for other reasons.

I don't know if 9/11 was supposed to be our '[fourth turning point](#)', or if that event is still on the horizon, but life certainly has changed for the worse since 9/11. But here we stand for the better part of seventy years, watching the world unravel, one disaster at a time, and now are watching a crescendo of crisis threatening to tsunami us into oblivion, if something, anything, isn't done to stop 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." And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. **Rev. 6:1-2**

Rahm Emmanuel once stated, that you should 'never let a good crisis go to waste'. And the world today, is in full crisis mode. Now the crisis we have, whether it be 'global warming', or ISIS in the Middle East. Whether it's the 'race-baiting' politics of the left, or the declining US dollar. We can't even be 100% sure that our weather is not being manipulated, because of groups like [HAARP](#) who use weather as a gigantic science experiment. For as much as I have come to not trust in this life, there are only two axioms that I do trust are:

- We are always getting ready to fight the last war...and the only constant, is change.

But if these crisis's are by design (and they are), then who or what is behind these dastardly deeds? You can call them the Rockefellers, or the Rothschild's, or Bilderberger's, or Council on Foreign Relations...but regardless of the title, these all work for the same person...or [being](#) rather. The Bible states that Satan, goes about like a 'roaring lion', seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

He is enraged at the victory wrought by the [cross](#), and is doing everything in his power, to attempt to thwart God's plan, which is to bring in the full number of Gentiles (Romans 11:25) and then turn His attention back to the nation of Israel. (Rom. 11:26-32) And so Satan, the deceiver and father of lies, seeks to whip the world up into such a state of frenzy, chaos, misery, and lunacy that the people **demand** a man come rule over them to fix all those problem. But not just any man. This man, will be Satan's man, and he will have the solutions to the problems that plague this current world. And because Satan is the 'god of this age', and can manipulate all these issues at will, this man will conquer the world without firing a single shot...at least not at first. (What follows the Rider on the White Horse?)

But this man can't claim his short-lived throne just yet, because there sits in his way, the Church. The Church is to the Antichrist, as the US Constitution is to the New World Order. Think about it this way...the US is currently the most dominant and powerful singular nation on earth. Even in our declining status, the US commands attention simply due to her power and authority in both economic matters, and military prowess. What has kept the global elites from signing the world up under a new world order, has been the [US Constitution](#), which forbids the US from entering into treaty with any nation that a) takes away the authority to coin and print money from the US Congress, and b) causes us to become subservient to any other nation or group. This is in part, why the Constitution has been chipped away for the last 200 years.

Likewise, Satan is kept at bay, or on a leash rather, as to the extent that he can spread this *spirit of antichrist* across the planet, because of the unique role the Church plays in God's overarching plan. We aren't just a bunch of Sunday school going, nimbly-bimbly bible thumpers. The Christian has the God of the universe dwelling inside each of us in the form of the Person of the Holy Spirit. ([Eph. 1:13-14](#)) And last time I checked, Satan is no match for God. But according to the Scriptures, (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-56) the Lord Himself will return for His Church one day, to take us to be where He is. And once we are removed, we in essence, removing the restraint that has been keeping Satan in check for these last two thousand years. The ultimate crisis (the removal of millions of people immediately from earth at the Rapture) will be followed by a man who will not let this crisis go to waste. Satan will empower him to unite the world under his rule, by [peace](#) (economic, diplomatic, and political means) so much so, that people will wonder...who is like the beast? But then God unleashes His judgments upon the world, and in these catastrophic events (of biblical proportions), even he will not be able to manage the fallout, and the nations will rebel. Then his velvet glove reveals ([apocalypse](#)) the iron fist. But...

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. **2 Thess. 2:3-8**

**Even So, Maranatha!**

## Back to Babylon

There has been much debate and discussion over the years as to whether a literal Babylon would be rebuilt in the last days. This topic was revived in the days leading up to the 2003 Iraq invasion, and much hype and speculation circulated the church and prophecy circles. Ten years later, that discussion has for the most part, waned, simply because of the events that have transpired during the increasingly unpopularity of Bush's "war". And with Obama's prompt and hasty withdrawal of US forces in 2011, it seemed that Iraq wouldn't factor in after all. A literal Babylon would have to wait.

Now my own understanding of the prophetic stage being set, is that there is a gap in time between the Rapture of the Church and the start of the last seven years known as Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week. This is because the Rapture is in no way tied to any prophetic event, but solely within the eternal purpose of God the Father. In my view, there would be time for a literal Babylon to be rebuilt in Iraq, once known as the plains of Shinar and where the cities of [Nimrod's](#) cities once stood.

What is interesting to me, having served there back in 2005-2006, was our involvement in the first place. Then Pres. Bush warned the world that Saddam Hussein had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Saddam had already used it on the Iranians in the 1980's, and then the Iraqi Kurds in the early 1990's. Saddam also invested a lot of time, energy, and resources in attempting to rebuild the greatness that once was Babylon.

After the invasion, Democrats began publicly mocking then Pres. Bush 24/7, about our inability to find any. But you can read their own hypocrisy since one can read [their own words](#) that they too once believed WMD existed in Iraq, but I digress. Ironically, the same liberal media that lambasted Bush for supposedly lying us into an unnecessary war, has now come out and admitted in an in-depth, tell-all [article](#) of the WMD that are still lying dangerously unaccounted for in Iraq...this done to presumably give the current administration cover and justification for going after ISIS and reintroducing 'boots back on Iraqi ground'.

I wrote back in 2011, ([Snapshot of a Moving Picture](#)) that we would...

Expect the US to move quickly from Afghanistan. We will however maintain a presence militarily in Iraq for the foreseeable future. The difference in the two is that one is sustainable logistically; the other (Afghanistan) is not.

I was simply looking at it from a tactical and logistical standpoint. Writing that back then seemed very counter intuitive since we were in the process of removing our footprint from the Iraqi theater. The Obama Administration had all but washed its hands of his predecessor's war. It seemed Pres. Obama then, couldn't get our Soldiers out of their soon enough to suit him, despite the warnings that in so doing, we would

leave a vacuum that other groups would seek to fill. Now it seems that we now have no choice but to go back into the very land that we tried to leave so hurriedly.

Now we must go back now because when we vacated, we left it armed with our weaponry, equipment, hundreds of millions of dollars for rebuilding infrastructure and providing economic stability, and because they really do have WMD, which apparently is in the process of falling into the wrong hands.

Shortly after September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, we knew that Osama Bin Laden was the mastermind behind the events 9/11. We also knew that OBL was being given safe harbor in the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. So, when President Bush began pushing for the invasion of Iraq, many were scratching their heads as to why. [Victor Davis Hanson](#) at National Review gives six legitimate reasons for why we went, but I believe he fell short by one...and that is God is also in the business of prophetic stage setting. (Romans 13:1)

I believed then, as I still do today, that we will see a resurrected Roman Empire which will come about through a confederation between the European Union (which has the wealth and technology) and the Union for the Mediterranean, or Mediterranean Union for short (MU); whose nations have the warm water ports, oil, natural gas, and cheap labor/military forces available to them. The land eerily encompasses what used to be almost the exact boundaries of the [Roman Empire](#) at its height.

Granted, the MU has been virtually silent these last few years since the MU's main supporter (France's ex-President Nicolas Sarkozy) has been removed from the limelight. The EU is also currently struggling financially, and the members may shift around about which is nothing more than prophetic stage setting as Russia exerts its influence over old satellite states. Ultimately, we know that at some future point, the Antichrist is able to consolidate his authority after a global crisis occurs and marries the two unions up for what seems to be, an unstoppable economic and political force.

## **Assessment**

I know many prophecy teachers out there do not believe that a literal Babylon will be rebuilt in the Iraqi desert. For one, they say it would take too many years for it to become the economic hub Revelation 18 speaks of...thus putting the Rapture of the Church way off into the future. Secondly, even though Iraq has had a semi-functional government since roughly 2007, they do not have the capability to provide for their own protection, as is currently being demonstrated by ISIS's major gains over much of Iraqi territory, much less draw in global political and economic investment.

There are two Babylon's mentioned in Scripture; although not an exhaustive list of passages, we can see the layering of applications.

1. Literal, physical, historical Babylon, which was undeniably on the plains of Shinar, but now understood as modern day Iraq. (2 Chronicles 36:6-7; Daniel 1:1; Ezra 2:1)

2. Babylon the Great, (which has not yet been revealed-hence a mystery) which speaks to a future city, in which acts as a harlot who rides the Beast in the kingdom of the Antichrist. (Revelation 13:1; 17:15-18; 18)

It is possible that either US accidentally, or ISIS intentionally blows the Mosul dam, which would flood central Iraq to the point that Iraq is [fundamentally transformed](#) into much larger waterfront than they currently have. It is possible to build a large fortress, (Baghdad's massive [Green-Zone](#) complex) in under four years at a tune of around \$750M. The Green Zone just so happens to be the largest US diplomatic compound in the world and is almost the same size as Vatican City. It houses 1,500 civilian and military employees, and with ISIS currently [surrounding Baghdad](#), makes for a lucrative target for terrorist organizations and Islamic militants alike to siege and control.

Historic Babylon lies 60 kilometers to the south of Baghdad, and it provides something that Baghdad currently can't, which is relative peace and quiet. Even without ISIS, Baghdad has too much violent baggage with the various religious sects fighting over which brand of Islam is the most correct. Both Shiite (Sadr City-suburb of Baghdad) and Sunni held area of Fallujah and Ramadi remain contentious pieces of real-estate that aren't likely to be areas you'd want to move too.

Just as I will stick to my original assessments that the MU will become this modern day, revived Roman Empire, so too do I believe that the United Nations will seek to relocate from New York City to this new Babylonian compound at some future point after the Rapture. Most prophecy teacher's agree that the US plays no major roles in the end times events, it only makes sense (logistically and strategically from Satan's perspective) that the world's focus repositions its main Global Headquarters (the UN) back to the Middle East and squarely centered in the motherland of anti-Israel activity.

Currently, the biggest impediment to the United Nations solidifying its grip over the world, is its biggest benefactor, the United States. Our Constitution was written (maybe divinely influenced to such extent) that it prohibits our submission to foreign entities. Once the Rapture of the Church transpires, even if that removes only 10% of American Christian population (est. 30 million people), it will effectively topple what is left of the fragile US economy and force what remains into this final governmental system.

In [Jeremiah 51](#), the prophet speaks to the utter desolation and destruction that would one day come to Babylon. Yet, we know from Jeremiah 25 that the Babylonian leaders would be punished for their role then in the destruction of Jerusalem (circa 606-586BC) and ultimately, the city would become desolate. We know from the book of Daniel, that the Medo-Persian's took the city without a fight. From the Persian's onward, the city over the next few centuries fell into [disrepair](#) and eventually abandoned altogether during the reign of the Seleucids. So we have two endings for one city; one that ends up desolation and disrepair, and the other in a cataclysmic judgment. As Jack often said, 'things that are different are not the same'. We know the desolation and disrepair has already transpired, and it fits with the futurist narrative of Revelation 17-18 that a future Babylon must rise, in order for it to meet its final judgment.

So that ancient city lies under the desert sands and was abandoned to time. The city wouldn't be rediscovered until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For Isaiah's prophecy in 13-14 and Jeremiah's prophecy in 50-51 to be fulfilled in totality, a literal Babylon would need to be rebuilt at some future point to be destroyed like it describes. How and when this all happens, is anyone's guess, but the prophetic winds are blowing again, and the US is headed back to Iraq for its final tour, presumably to set the stage, for a rising Babylon's grand demise.

So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, then you shall say, 'O Lord, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.' Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.' **Jeremiah 51:60-64**

## **BIBLE PROPHECY 101**

*A member of our Fellowship emailed me last week and asked me to look over a study on prophecy he was putting together for a men's Bible study. When I looked it over, not only could I think of nothing additional to offer, I asked Ron if he would allow me to share it with a wider audience. I encourage you to download or print Ron Maurno's "Bible Prophecy 101" and keep it handy as a Bible prophecy quick reference resource. ~Jack Kinsella*

### **BIBLICAL NUMBERS:**

#1: Signifies completion, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God" (Deut. 6:4)

#2: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor, for if they fall, one will lift up his fellow." (Eccl. 4:9-10)

#3: The simplest compound unit of mathematical science. God is one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is the number of the Godhead.

#4: The number of the created world. There are 4 seasons, and 4 points on the compass north, south, east and west. There are 4 power blocs of the world in the latter day wars: Kings of the North, South, East, and the Western alliance.

#5 and #10: Scriptural significance. Man has 5 fingers on each hand and 5 toes on each foot. Man has 5 senses. The decimal system is based on tenths.

#6: The number of man; it falls short of perfection (7). Man was created on the sixth day, the divinely appointed work week is 6 days, with the 7th set aside for God. Goliath had 6 fingers and 6 toes. His spear weighed 600 shekels of iron. His height is recorded as 6 cubits and a span. Jesus was crucified on the 6th hour of the 6th day of the week. The numbers 666 represent the antichrist, the spiritually incomplete man multiplied 100 times over.

#7: Sacred number of spiritual perfection, e.g., 4 is representative of the world and 3 of the Trinity, together equals 7. Seven days make up one of the four quarters of the moon. There are but 7 notes in music. On the seventh day, God rested. The Book of Revelation is addressed to the 7 churches of Asia Minor. There are 7 stars representing the 7 angels, who represent the 7 churches. In Rev. 3:1, Jesus is identified as having the 7 spirits of God (the whole/complete Spirit of God). In Rev. 5:6, the Lamb is pictured as having 7 eyes (representing omniscience), and 7 horns (representing power), symbolizing the Lamb as all-powerful omnipotence. There are 7 seals, 7 thunders, 7 vials and 7 trumpets. (Rev. 16:6-8).

(Excerpts from Omega Letter June 27, 2008)

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Prophecy: History written in advance. Bible prophecy is God's description of future events. (25% of the Bible is prophetic)

Prophet: A man, chosen by God, inspired to speak God's message to reveal the future to man.

Eschatology: Derived from 2 Greek words meaning last and study. It is the study of end time events.

Amillennialism: Teaching that states that there is no millennium reign (1000 years) of Christ on earth.

Premillennialism: Teaching that Christ will literally and physically be on earth for a thousand year reign

Postmillennialism: Teaches Reconstructionism, a belief that God's kingdom began at the first coming of Jesus, and will advance throughout history until it fills the whole earth through conversion to the Christian faith and world view.

DISPENSATIONALISM: A system of theology that recognizes three basic tenets: (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10, 3:2; Col. 1:25)

1. There is a theological difference between Israel and the Church
2. Scripture is to be interpreted by the literal method unless the text itself mentions a figurative or symbolic interpretation.
3. The underlying purpose of God in this world is His glory.

There are 7 dispensations, representing God's interaction with man at different periods of time:

1. Innocence: Creation to the fall. (Gen. 1:27-28)
2. Conscience: Fall to the flood. (Gen. 3:1-6)
3. Human Government: Exit from the Ark to Abraham (Jews). (Gen. 9:6)
4. Promise: Abraham to the Law. (Gen. 12:1)
5. Law: Ten Commandments to Calvary (Ex. 5:6, 19:3; Acts 1)
6. Grace: Pentecost to the Rapture (Acts 2, Rev. 19:21)
7. Millennium Kingdom: Imprisonment of Satan to the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:1, 22:7).

### **COVENANT:**

A divinely initiated contract which God makes with man in which God obligates Himself to the parties named in the contract.

There are two types of covenants, conditional and unconditional. The following are the four unconditional covenants that God made with Israel. The first three covenants are under attack today.

1. **ABRAHAMIC COVENANT**: Unconditional or Patriarchal. This is the foundation of all future covenants. (Gen. 12:1-3, 13:14-18, 15:1-21, 17:1-22)

-To make Abraham a great nation, multiply his seed, and make him the father of many nations.

- To bless Abraham and make him great.

- To make Abraham a blessing to all the families of the earth.
- To bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him.
- To give Abraham and his seed all the land he could see, with specified definite boundaries.
- To give a sign of covenant (circumcision)

*NOTE:* This covenant is under attack from anti-Semitism.

**2. LAND (PALESTINIAN) COVENANT:** Unconditional, promising the seed of Abraham eternal possession of the land (Deut. 30:1-10)

- Israel will be dispersed among the nations.
- Israel will repent and return to the land
- Israel will be re-gathered from the dispersion to the land that their fathers possessed.
- To prosper them above their fathers.
- To restore them spiritually to love the Lord
- To put all their curses upon their enemies

*NOTE:* This covenant is under attack today in the Middle East.

**3. DAVIDIC COVENANT:** Unconditional, God reaffirms the Abrahamic covenant with David and adding that the blessings (Messiah) would be attached to his lineage (2 Sam. 7:1-16, 23:1-5; Ps. 89:34-37)

- To make David's name great
- To provide a permanent, undisturbed home for Israel
- To establish an eternal kingdom for David and his lineage.

*NOTE:* Luke 1: 30-34 gives the promise to Mary that "The Lord will give Him the throne of His father David forever." In Psalm 132:11, God made a promise to David that, "Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne". "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, ON EARTH as it is in Heaven" (Matt. 6: 9-13). This covenant will be fulfilled by the Millennial reign of Christ on earth. It is under attack by Amillennial and Postmillennial Christian teaching. (Emphasis mine).

**4. NEW (EVERLASTING) COVENANT:** Unconditional, it replaced the conditional MOSAIC Covenant which promised that God would make Israel His special possession and make them a holy people. The people failed to obey God and the New Covenant provided spiritual restoration. In the New Covenant God promised:

- To put the law in their hearts and minds.
- To be their God and make them His people
- To establish an eternal Kingdom with God and His people

*NOTE:* This is the covenant from which the name, New Testament, is derived.

### **THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL**

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

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to

restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Dan. 9:24-27)

**The 70 weeks are divided into 3 sections:**

**The 1st section** (7 weeks or 49 years) is the time from the edict of Xerxes of Persia (444 BC) to the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

**The 2nd section** (62 weeks or 434 years) is from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the death of Christ.

**The 3rd section** (1 week or 7 years) is suspended from the death (cut off) of the Messiah until the antichrist confirms a 7 year peace treaty in the Middle East. The treaty marks the start of the tribulation period.

<b>Jewish Calendar</b> (360 days/ year)	<b>Gregorian Calendar</b> (365 days/ year)
$(7 \times 7) + (62 \times 7) = 483$ years	444 BC to 33 AD = 476 years
483 years	476 years
X 360 days =	X 365 days =
173,880 days	173,740 days
	+ 116 days in leap years
	+ 24 days = (March 5 – March 30)
	173,880 days

## **BIBLE TIMELINE**

<u>2000 years</u> Times of the Gentiles	<u>2000 years</u> Times of the Jews Artaxerxes 444 BC/Jesus death 33AD Daniel's 69 weeks-----483 years	<u>2000 years</u> Church Age	Damascus destroyed War of Ps.83
70 <sup>th</sup> week of Daniel	<u>1000 years</u>	= <u>7000 years</u>	
Rapture/Tribulation-----	2 <sup>nd</sup> coming		Satan loosed
7yrs/Antichrist/Wars Ezek 38/Armageddon <u>Bema Seat Judgment</u>	Satan bound	<u>Millennial Reign</u>	White Throne <u>Judgment</u>

Church Age/Age of Grace: The 2000 year period that begins at Pentecost and ends at the Rapture of the church.

Rapture: Also called the Day of Christ. Rapture is an English word meaning snatched up or caught up. It is the catching away of the true believers of Jesus Christ. The Rapture is the literal, visible and bodily return of Jesus Christ in the heavenlies. (1Thess. 4:13-18, 5:9)

Tribulation/ Day of the Lord/Daniel's 70th week: A 7 year period of the current age, with Israel as the main focal point. It begins with an enforced peace treaty with Israel. It becomes the "Great Tribulation" at the mid-way point (42 months), when Satan enters a man's body. Also called the "The Time of Jacob's Trouble".

Antichrist: Before Christ comes to set up His Kingdom of peace, Satan will enter a man's body and present his counterfeit, the antichrist, as the Messiah. Other names include: Little Horn (Dan. 7:8), King of fierce countenance (Dan. 8:23), The Prince that shall come (Dan. 9:26), the man of sin, the son of perdition and the wicked one (2 Thess. 2:8), the Beast of the sea (Rev. 13:1). The antichrist enforces a seven year peace treaty that amazes the world.

Abomination of Desolation: Antichrist will take control of Jewish worship midway through the tribulation, declaring himself to be God (2Thess. 2:4). He demands worship from the Jews, in their own temple.

False Prophet: Religious leader who ascends to world popularity via his close alignment with the antichrist. He is the leader of the one world church in Rev. 13:11. He will work amazing miracles and lead people into idolatry by worshiping the image of the beast.

Second Coming/Millennium: Literal and bodily reign of Christ on earth.

(Excerpts from Jack Van Impe Prophecy Bible, KJV)

### **FOUR BIBLICAL POWER BLOCS IN THE LATTER DAYS**

KING OF THE NORTH (GOG-MAGOG ALLIANCE): Russia, Iran and the Arab-Islamic alliance. (Ezek. 38-39)

KINGS OF THE SOUTH: Egypt, Africa and Islamic North Africa (Dan. 11:40)

KINGS OF THE EAST: China and Southeast Asia (Rev. 16:12)

REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE/ WESTERN ALLIANCE/ BEAST ARMY OF ANTICHRIST: (Dan. 7:7). If the European Union becomes combined with the Mediterranean union, the two together will have the same exact land boundaries as the ancient Holy Roman Empire. The Benelux Treaty, signed in 1948 (the same year as the re-birth of Israel) began the unification of Europe. The Bible says that the revived Roman Empire will be led by the antichrist. (Rev. 17:12)

### **TWO EVENTS LEADING TO THE TRIBULATION**

**PROPHECY, THE BURDEN OF DAMASCUS** (Is. 17:1, 14)

1: “A message concerning Damascus. Observe! Damascus is about to be undone as a city.”

14: “At evening tide, lo, terror! Before morning they are gone. Such is the fate of those who pillage us and the lot of those who plunder us.”

**FACT:** Damascus, the capital of Syria, is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, population approximately 1.6 million. Syria is the state sponsor of the terror group Hezbollah.

**PROPHECY,** Psalm 83 (1000 BC)

“God, do not be silent, be not quiet, be not still. See how Your enemies are astir, how Your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against Your people; they plot against those You cherish. Come they say “LET US DESTROY THEM AS A NATION”, that the name of Israel be remembered no more. With one mind they plot together, they form an alliance against You, the tents of Edom (modern day Palestinians, descendants of Esau) and the Ishmaelite ( descendants of Ishmael, Yemen) of Moab (modern day Jordan), Ammon (nomadic tribesman, northwest Arabia, east of the Dead Sea) and Amalek (Son of Esau, area of Iran), Philistia (Gaza) with the inhabitants of Tyre (Lebanon). Even Assyria (Syria) has joined them to lend strength to the descendants of Lot (northern Jordan).” (Emphasis mine)

### **THE WAR OF GOG AND MAGOG, THREE YEARS INTO THE TRIBULATION**

**PROPHECY** Ezek 38:1-4 (575 BC)

“The word of the Lord came to me: Son of Man set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: Prophecy against him and say: This is what the sovereign Lord says, I am against you, oh Gog, chief prince of Mesech and Tubal. I will turn you around and put hooks in your jaw, and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horseman fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields and all of them brandishing their swords.”

**FACT:** Gog is thought by most Christian scholars to be a title of a strong leader. Magog, is the son of Japheth who was a son of Noah. Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, identified the offspring of Magog as the Scythians who were known as brutal horse-riding nomads that resided in the area of modern day southern Russia. Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. There is unanimity among dispensational scholars that these countries are also found in Russia and the former Soviet republics.

**PROPHECY** Ezek. 38:5-6

“Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, also Gomer with all his troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all his troops-the many nations with you.”

**FACT:** Persia is modern day Iran.

Cush is the area of Sudan, Ethiopia and possibly Eritrea.

Put is the area of Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia.

Gomer, the eldest son of Japheth (Noah), is modern day Turkey.

Beth Togarmah is Turkey, Armenia, and the Turkish-speaking people of Asia Minor and central Asia.

“Many nations with you’, possibly additional Islamic allies.

## **THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON**

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over”. (Dan. 11:40)

This is the closing battle of the second three and one-half years of the tribulation. It begins with Russia/Iran’s invasion of Israel (Gog-Magog/ King of the North), after the peace contract with Israel is broken (Ezek. 38:15-16). As the war escalates, new participants include: antichrist (Western Alliance), Kings of the South and Kings of the East.

Antichrist will move all his military might with the other Kings to do battle with Christ at His return to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4, Rev. 16:14)

Christ will come. The battle of Armageddon climaxes the campaign as the Lord and His armies appear from Heaven. The enemy armies will be destroyed (Joel 3: 2, 9-14, Ps. 2: 2-3). Christ returns, riding a white horse. His eyes are as a flame of fire and His robe dipped in blood. Written on the robe is ‘King of Kings’ and ‘Lord of Lords’. He will smite the nations, and the antichrist and the False Prophet will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

It will be the bloodiest battle in history (Ps. 2:2, Zech. 14:3). The destruction resulting will be that the blood of the armies will reach to the horses’ bridles for two hundred miles and it will require mankind 7 months to bury the dead ( Rev. 14:20, Ezek. 39:12). (Excerpts from J Dwight Pentecost: Campaign of Armageddon)

## **MAJOR EVENTS OF UNFULFILLED PROPHECY**

- Damascus is destroyed in one night (Is. 17:1, 14)
- A coalition of nations marches on Israel (Ps. 83)
- Israel is attacked (Isaiah 17:4) the war ends and Israel becomes an exceedingly great army (Ezek. 37:10, 35:14; Obad. 1:18)
- Israel dwells securely; the wall of separation comes down (Ezek. 38:11)
- Rapture of the church (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 5: 51-58), Marriage Supper Of the Lamb and the Bema Seat Judgment of the raptured church. (Rev. 19:6-10; 1 Thess 2:19 -20)
- Revival of the Roman Empire, 10 nation confederacy formed. (Dan. 7:7, 24; Rev. 13:1, 17:3)
- Rise of Antichrist: (Dan. 7:8; Rev. 13:1-8)
- 7 year peace treaty with Israel: consummated 7 years before the second coming of Christ (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 11-16) the third Jewish Temple is built (Dan. 9:27)
- Russia/Iran (King of the north) launches a surprise attack on Israel, four years before the second coming of Christ (Ezek. 38-39). This campaign will continue through the last three and one half years of the tribulation and concludes in the battle of Armageddon.
- Peace treaty with Israel is broken. Antichrist enters the Holy of Holies and declares himself to be God (Abomination of desolation (Dan 7: 23; 2 Thess. 2: 4)
- Antichrist sets up world government, world economic system and world church (Dan 7:23; Rev 13: 5-8, 15-17, 17:16-17)
- Many Christians and Jews are martyred who refuse the mark of the beast, (no one may buy or sell without the mark (Rev. 7: 9-17, 13-15,))
- Catastrophic divine judgments represented by 7 seals, 7 bowls and 7 judgments poured out on the earth (Rev. 6-18)
- Babylon is destroyed: Former headquarters of antichrist prior to moving his headquarters to Israel during the battle of Armageddon. (Rev. 18; Dan. 11:20-21)
- Battle of Armageddon begins: A continuation of Ezekiel 38-39 that began before the mid-way point of the Tribulation (3 ½ years) and concludes with Christ and His armies at the hill of Megiddo. (Dan. 11:40-45; Rev. 9:13-21, 16:12-16)
- Second coming of Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 19:11-21)
- Satan bound for 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-3)
- Resurrection of Tribulation saints and Old Testament saints (Dan. 12: 2)
- Millennium Kingdom begins (Rev. 20:5-6)

- Final rebellion at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20: 5-6)
- Great White Throne judgment: judgment of sinners (Rev. 20: 11-15)
- Eternity begins, new heaven, new earth, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-2)

## Divergent Doctrines; Part I

I asked Jack a couple of years ago in the Members Forum, about something that had been really bothering me. How can a person, who claims to be a Christian, filled with the Holy Spirit (who is supposed to guide you into all truth), be a Preterist? How could a person who has the same Holy Spirit as I do, be so utterly wrong and yet still be a Christian?

I suppose you could take that same question, and apply it to any number of different doctrinal positions that has divided Christianity over the millennia. Jack's response really cemented in stone for me the why, of why we are so divided on so many topics...yet remain part of the same body of Christ that has existed these last 2,000 years since Pentecost. He says...

About the only Christian doctrine upon which there is more or less universal agreement is that we are saved by grace through faith in the shed Blood and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. BUT, that is the only doctrine, in the final analysis, which really and truly bears eternal consequences. Preterists that trust Jesus for their salvation will meet up in heaven with futurists who trusted Jesus, who will fellowship with pre-tribbers, mid-tribbers and post-tribbers, who will fellowship with Calvinists and Arminians together. Because if you trust Jesus Christ for your salvation, then you will go to heaven. That is the central message of the Gospel. The rest is the product of our longing to know God, and know the things of God, while blinded by the limitations imposed on us by our earthly perspective. As the Apostle Paul put it, seeing the things of God 'through a glass, darkly'. Paul says we know only 'in part' but the part that we all agree on is the only part that really counts. Salvation by faith. In the story of the Tower of Babel, God explains how the various ethnic nations came to be.

"And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." ([Genesis 11:6-7](#))

By scattering man 'among the nations' and removing the common bond of language and ethnicity, God ensured that no one man could ever again rule all men, as Nimrod did until the construction of the Tower of Babel. It prevented any one culture or worldview to dominate all mankind. That diversity is what allowed Christianity to flourish at the point when it was introduced into history. The reason is because Christianity is a personal relationship with Christ, rather than a commonly accepted cultural duty. God built that same diversity into the Church, which accounts for how and why sincere Christians can read the same Scriptures and come up with such widely **divergent doctrines** as preterist historicism and pretribulation futurism. It prevents any one teacher from becoming the only accepted source of information of the things of God.

If everybody agreed on every point of doctrine, then the guy who articulates it the best becomes the Great Oracle of God. (And what if he was wrong?) So we have diversity of understanding, but the same Scripture. And we have diversity of teachings, but share the same salvation by grace through faith. And we are equally sincere, because we share the same awesome responsibility of accountability before the Lord. In the end, we will be judged by how we used the doctrine God delivered to us to lead others to salvation in Christ. The necessity of diversity of understanding in the Church Age is adequately demonstrated by a peek across the divide into the coming 'Time of Jacob's Trouble' after the Church Age is concluded. During the Tribulation, that diversity of understanding is replaced by a universal religion imposed by the false prophet and directed toward the worship of antichrist. (Jack Kinsella, *Letting God Sort it Out*)

I didn't intend to quote the whole section on it, but he made so many good points and so worded it perfectly, that it was hard to decide where to end. But I, like Jack did before me, came to the realization, that no matter how hard you try, you will never (or probably never) convince anyone about doctrinal truths, until they are ready for the Holy Spirit to really guide them into said truth. So, it is not my job to convince people, but the Holy Spirit's. All I can do is lay out some facts about what the Holy Spirit has shown me, and let you pray on it and decide whether what I say, is true.

I decided to address three areas that seem to be the most hotly contested in our common faith, and share why I understand them the way I do. The first is the Rapture of the Church, the second is the Triune nature of God (i.e....the Trinity), and the last is our Ordinances that Christ instructed us to keep until He returns. Although they seem unrelated, they very much are.

We see in the Ordinances that are instructed to maintain and keep until He returns for us.

1. We are to make disciples of all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even until the end of the age. (Matt. 28:18-20)
2. We are to keep the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of His sacrifice, proclaiming His death until He returns. (1 Cor. 11:26)

We see in the Rapture, the threefold role that the Godhead play in that event.

1. Only God the Father knows the time of it (Matt. 24:36)
2. Only God the Son can come and retrieve us, because we are His Bride. (1 Thess. 4:16)
3. Only those who are filled with God the Holy Spirit, will be removed, thus removing His restraining influence over the world by removing the vessels He indwells. (2 Thess. 2:7)

## **The Rapture**

The Rapture of the Church is one that has spurred much debate since the Apostle Paul's day. In fact 2 Thessalonians was written primarily to address the false view that the 'Day of the Lord' had already begun. Paul explains to them that two things had to happen first; 1) the 'falling away' must occur, and 2) the Restrainer must be removed, so that the Man of Sin can be revealed to the world. The order that Paul lays out here, fits perfectly into what the Apostle John would record some 45 years later, in the ***Revelation of Jesus Christ***, and the loosening of the first judgment, 'the rider on the white horse'.

It was to Paul who was given the mystery of the Rapture, and according to his own testimony as found in Galatians 1-2, was taught by none other than Christ Himself, in the three years he spent in the Arabian Desert. Paul was also shown the third heaven, which if you back up the 14 years he mentions in [2 Corinthians 12:1-6](#), puts him in Lystra, where he was stoned by an angry mob and left for dead. But Paul chooses to use the Greek word 'Harpazo' in several places in his epistles that speak to the very act itself: 1 Thess. 4:17; 2 Cor. 12:2 but is also used in other sections of the New Testament that conveys the same affect: Acts 8:39, 4; Rev. 12:5. The Harpazo is the Greek rendering in which we get the English phrase 'caught up' from. 'catching up' or 'snatching up' is the actual process of how the Lord removes us. In other words, we (and those Scriptural examples) are supernaturally moved from one place (earth) to another by God.

The word rapture itself comes from the Latin translation of 'Harpazo', which gets transliterated from raptus, [rapio](#), or rapiemur, to rapture in the English. So, any argument that tries to stand on the premise that the Rapture isn't valid, because the word 'Rapture' itself isn't in the Bible, is bogus. Furthermore, it shouldn't be the principle of the event itself (being caught up), as much as the timing of this event when disagreements should occur.

### **Assessment**

Although it's not **necessary** to one's salvation to have a correct eschatological viewpoint, it is however indicative of other errors which most certainly will accompany it. If you deny the Rapture will ever take place, you are literally denying numerous passages that speak directly about it; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-56 being the two clearest passages on it. But to deny a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, means you are confused on who and what exactly the "Church" is. Therefore, your problem is more ecclesiological (the theological study of the Church), rather than eschatological (the theological study of the end times). Errant views bring on issues with Supersessionism, Replacement Theology, Dominionism, and Anti-Semitism...which seem to be a growing trend amongst the Reformed and mainline denominations.

The Church is not Israel, nor Israel the Church. Israel traces its roots back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...while the Church only to Abraham by faith. The Rapture is a biblical concept, and it will happen at some future point unknown to us. It has to happen prior to the Tribulation, because the Church is not Israel, and has no biblical basis for going through that specified period of time known as 'Jacob's trouble'. Those seven years are

mapped out for two groups; the Christ rejecting world, and Israel. (Jer. 30:7-11; Dan 9:24-27; Matt. 24:15-22; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess 1:10, 5:9; Rev. 3:10).

Part II next week.

## **Divergent Doctrines; Part II**

Last week we started with theological issues that have in large part, divided the church over the millennia. I began with the Rapture of the Church, and continue on this week to the Trinity and the Ordinances.

### **Continued:**

So those who argue that the 'Rapture' isn't biblical because the word is not found in Scripture, must then by that same standard, deny the 'Trinity' ....because that word is also not found in the Scriptures. (See how illogical that argument is?) The sad truth is, is that there are so-called "Christian" congregations out there who are now denying the divine triune nature of the God-head. Oneness Pentecostals and Hebrew Roots being the two most predominant. Pseudo-Christian Cults like the Christian Science, Unitarian Church, Mormon's and Jehovah Witnesses have long denied the Trinity.

### **The Trinity**

They will argue that the concept of the Trinity is not biblical, because 'God is one'. (See [Deut. 6:4](#)) Furthermore, they'll say that the 'Trinity' was something that Emperor Constantine concocted (as well as adding Sunday worship, Christmas and Easter holidays, etc.) to corrupt the early Christian church. Actually, Tertullian (160-225AD) was the first to coin the phrase 'Trinitas', which was over a 100 years before Constantine was even born. But the concept of the Trinity is found in both the Old and New Testament's.

Our God is One, but He is One Being expressed in three distinct Persons. Because in our Scripture, you have several occasions in which all three are represented all at the same time, yet they are all distinct. (Example; Christ's [baptism](#)) You have in the first chapter of the first book, God referring to Himself in the plural as 'Us' or 'Our' in Genesis 1. You also have all three speaking, and have distinctly different roles to play in this great human drama we know as life. [Carm.org](#) has an **excellent chart** comparing the differences that distinguish the Three.

So clearly, God is able to exist in a way, that we finite humans have a hard time comprehending. In this regards, we see that from the beginning, God is beginning to reveal Himself to mankind (particularly the nation of Israel) and is progressively showing His nature and characteristics to us which finds it's culmination (albeit limited because of our finiteness) in the New Testament as being expressed in the Father, the

Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are not three separate Gods (1+1+1=3), but rather One God in three separate Persons (1x1x1=1). The Father is the central figure, from which we come to by the sacrificial payment made by the Son, by way of the Holy Spirit's drawing, and sealing.

We (being created in God's image) reflect that Triune nature of God in our own beings, in that we are tri-partite; 'body, soul, and spirit'. In the Greek, the body is 'soma', the soul is 'psyche', and the spirit is 'pneuma'...all three existing within us.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [1 Thess.](#)

[5:23](#)

## **The Ordinances**

The last area I wanted to spend most of my time with you on is the ordinances of Christ. The first is the Lord's Supper, and the second is water baptism. Whereas the Rapture and the Trinity (the concepts thereof) I take literally. The Ordinances I take symbolically. The reason is we are instructed by Christ to do these two things until He returns, and they both are representative of something only Christ Himself could do.

### The Lord's Supper

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." **Matt. 26:26-29**

Now, when Jesus did this with His disciples, was He literally giving them His flesh and His blood? No. He used unleavened bread and wine. He instituted this symbolically from the very beginning, because it would represent His upcoming sacrifice on the Cross.

Some argue that when you partake of the Lord's Supper, you end up consuming the actual flesh and blood of Christ Himself. This is the 'sacrament' in the Roman Catholic Mass known as [Transubstantiation](#). You can see the immense power this would give the Roman Catholic Clergy over the laity, in that if the RCC ever excommunicated you, you could not partake of the Lord's Supper at Mass, thus you would be literally and eternally be cut off from salvation (since they also deny eternal security of the believer). This concept in a sense, re-crucifies Christ over and over, denying that *for by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*. (Hebrews 10:14)

Most Protestant organizations on the other hand, have a proper understanding of this in that it is a symbolic reference to the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. His body broken for us, and His blood-shed on our behalf;

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

### Water Baptism

Now seeing that the Lord's Supper is meant to be taken symbolically, and to take it literally puts you in the same camp as the Roman Catholic understanding of a continual sacrifice, why then do certain Protestant churches take and make water baptism a requirement of salvation?

There are two types of baptism listed in the Bible, the first is water baptism, and the second is baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. The first as demonstrated by John the Baptist;

Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. **Matthew 3:4-6**

But even he understood that his baptism (water), could not compare to the baptism which was to come, that being baptism by the Holy Spirit.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." **Matt. 3:11-12**

The first baptism, (water) was a baptism of repentance. In Judaism, this was called the 'mikvah' and was a purification rite that one underwent at various points in one's life; before feasts, temple events, prior to marriage, etc. For the Jews, the mikvah was not a onetime event, but something you did it numerous times. Jesus underwent baptism by John, not because He needed to repent, but because it was required by Scripture before His ministry began. (Isaiah 40:3) And since John was the 'voice of one crying in the wilderness to make straight the way', Jesus was baptized by him to identify and confirm John's message and fulfill prophecy.

So the argument goes, that water baptism in and of itself cannot save you, but it is the final step a believer takes [hear, believe, confess, repent, and be baptized] in order for salvation to take effect. I've also heard that you 'put on Christ' in baptism. Or that baptism is necessary to 'wash' away your sins. Now seeing that there are two types of baptism, which do you, think is more apropos? Baptism in the water or baptism by the

Holy Spirit into the body of Christ? The Bible does not contradict itself, so let's compare scripture with scripture and see which is clearer:

**The water;** Acts 2:38 (See also [Acts 3:19](#)); 1 Peter 3:21 (See also [Romans 5:1](#)); Acts 22:16 (See also [Acts 22:12-15](#)--for a little context)

**Or the Spirit;** John 3:16, 18, 36; 1 Cor. 12:13 (Corresponds with [Eph. 4:4-5](#)); Eph. 1:13-14 (See also [Acts 10:44-48](#)); Titus 3:4-6

Considering that every passage that deals with salvation, concerns itself first with belief in Jesus Christ, and belief is where the Holy Spirit first comes in and seals you, how could the Holy Spirit then only be tied to the act of being placed in water? The truth is, if our salvation depended on anything or anyone other than God, than it's not God who is ultimately saving you. One cannot be a 'little bit' pregnant; either you are or you aren't. Likewise, you can't be a 'little bit' saved...either you are saved at the moment of belief, or you aren't. Don't take my word for it, let's go to the scriptures and see what they have to say:

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**

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **John 3:18**

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” **John 3:36**

In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. **Eph. 1:13-14**

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **Romans 5:1**

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**

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. **Gal**

**2:16**

So the Scriptures can be taken out of context in various places to make baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or some other work, deed, or act to **seem** necessary, but when you place those passages against the **clear** teaching of Scripture, it will fall apart, because Scripture can't contradict itself.

Again, from [CARM](#).

If we are saved by faith, then we are saved by faith when we believe and not when we get baptized, otherwise, we are not saved by faith. Furthermore, if baptism is necessary for salvation, then anyone who receives Christ on his deathbed in a hospital and who also believes Jesus is [God](#) in the flesh, who died and rose from the dead for his sins, etc., would go to hell if he doesn't get baptized before he died. This would mean that we were not justified by faith because if we were, then the person would be saved. Also, if baptism is necessary for salvation, then all babies who die go to hell since they weren't baptized. Remember, when someone says that baptism is necessary, there can be no exceptions--otherwise it isn't necessary.

Part III next week!

## **Divergent Doctrines; Part III**

Having looked at some of the major sticking points Christian denominations have had over the years, I wanted to tie this up by looking at how these differences will be used against the church in the days, months, and years ahead.

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." **Matt. 13:31-32**

So here in the Mustard Seed Parable, you have a tree that is much [larger](#) than what it should be (Mustard trees don't get very big), and those evil birds that have taken nest inside the safety of that tree. So how do we know that the birds are meant to represent something bad or evil? In the previous parables, the bad are represented by a variety of images: tares, leaven, and birds of the air, of which either acted in a negative manner toward the seed (the tares and the birds) or were considered as sin...such as [leaven](#).

They (the birds) represented a bad thing, (Matt. 13:4, 19) because they came along and ate the seed that was meant to grow in the soil and produce fruit. So Christ is describing in parable form, that Christianity would spread from its humble beginnings to a global movement, in which would come to house both the bad and the good within the confines of Christendom. So is our differences necessarily a bad thing?

Yes and no. **Yes** in the sense that as the body of believers, we were to be united in Christ and not squabbling over various issues that could easily be resolved by removing biases that have developed over the millennia. But **no**, in the sense that I believe these differences were expected, and serve a purpose of sorts. The Bible was constructed in such a manner, as the Holy Spirit moved men to write what they wrote, in such a way that clear doctrines such as: the omniscience of God, salvation by grace through faith, the deity of Christ, inerrancy of Scripture, and other core redemptive doctrines could be clearly understood. In other words, if you deny these clearly taught core doctrines, you ain't a Christian.

But other doctrines, such as the Rapture, baptism, and the Triune nature of God, are not as clear. Don't get me wrong, they are clear when you approach the Scriptures without liberal bias or corrupted hermeneutics that pervert your interpretation. But these are not requirements for salvation. As Jack had previously alluded to in the reference to the Tower of Babel, God never intended man to be united, because He knew what kind of devastation man was capable of.

Think about it this way: God COULD have had the Bible written in such a way, that no doctrine it put forth, could be disputed. He could have had all the differing doctrines written in such a way, that no reasonable argument could be made to say otherwise. But we don't, we have the Bible that we have, and I think that is the way God intended us to have it. Some of it is very clear, some could easily be misconstrued once removed from its proper context.

Just like Jesus speaking in Parables, His disciples asked why He didn't just come out and say what He meant. He responded...

“Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. **(Matt. 13:11-13)**”

I think in a way, God was and is protecting us from ourselves. If every doctrine were absolutely black and white in its interpretation, mankind would have united long ago under a singular, universal type of system.

We see how that was almost the case in the 'Dark Ages', when the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) dominated what was then, Christendom. This was a time when it was forbidden to even own your own bible. All the bibles that the RCC had, were still kept in Latin, which required that a Catholic priest interpret and dictate to the people what it said. And when you consolidate that much power and authority into the hands of such few people, bad things happen...as it did with the selling of indulgences, the Inquisition, Crusades, abuse of power, and papal dogma's that directly contradicted Scripture. As a result, millions of people died, and many tens of millions, followed a false religious system that sent them into an eternal hell.

## Assessment

Although the plan was to keep man separated to a certain degree, this does not by any means give man leeway to continue on teaching and promoting heretical doctrines. Doctrines which deny the Trinity or the Pre-Tribulation Rapture, or that promotes transubstantiation or baptismal regeneration are still unbiblical, and still lead people away from the truth in Scripture. We all will all answer for our stewardship of God's word, and how we managed with the information that God gave us.

Christendom in the 11<sup>th</sup> century were still battling it out over being able to own their own copies of a Bible. Christendom in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was battling over trying to reform the corruption in the Roman Catholic Church. Christendom in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was battling over Infant Baptism. Each generation has had their own struggles, and the fact that we are now arguing over which whether Christianity in and of itself can even be considered theologically acceptable, points to the lateness of the hour in which mankind finds itself in.

Today we know more now about how the end is going to come, than those who came before us. The reason is because we are seeing it unfold before our very eyes. We are the generation alive to see Israel back in her land. We have seen the Jews retake Jerusalem. We have seen the Roman Empire reviving itself. And we now have the technology that no other generation before us had, which is driving religion, politics, and the economies of the world to converge into a single, unified system.

As we move closer to the end of this age, we see 'Christendom' moving with great speed toward that global, ecumenical reckoning which I believe is the 'falling away'. We are so far along at this point, that Catholics, Charismatics, Mormon's, and Protestants are willing to set aside their hugely, fundamental differences, just to try and remain culturally relevant. The push now is to unite, in order to stand against abortion, or Obamacare, or whatever...and play down doctrine in order to build a coalition of moral community.

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

This to me, is the fulfillment of **2 Thessalonians 2:3**, in which the great falling away isn't just becoming apostate over one hot-button cultural issue or another, but in a general turning away from what makes Christianity, Christian. And the only way you can sweep Christianity into the bin with all the other world faith systems and lifestyles, is not by denying Christ ever existed, but by denying the standard which Christ Himself demanded of us...in that we must come through Him to get to the Father. (John 14:6). It's not by denying the Lord who bought us, but by having a form of godliness, and denying the power thereof. (2 Tim 3:5; 2 Peter 2:1) We've seen this over the last two centuries with the attacks first on the inerrancy of the Scriptures, then it was over translations, then over the validity of the Pauline Epistles, over interpretation of the Prophetic texts, etc. and so on.

There is a transition for individuals and for denominations...like a lifecycle from believer to apostate, which goes something like this:

1. Quit believing the Bible is the Inerrant 'Word of God'
2. Quit believing in a literal understanding of Biblical events as real events, of which they become symbolic or metaphorical. This of course then is subject merely to one's own interpretation...and everyone has their own opinions.
3. Inserting doubt over the translations, or by elevating corrupted translations which significantly change the Bible.
4. Denying the prophetic nature of God's word. This is also a direct denial of God's omniscient nature, knowing the end from the beginning. (Isaiah 46:9-10)
5. Either denying core doctrinal positions, or inserting doubt into them, first causing uncertainty, then distrust, and finally skepticism.
6. Lastly, a complete rejection of God's Word.

The danger in this is significant, because once you reach that last stage, it is practically impossible, aside from God's divine action, to bring a person back to that point where they believe. Peter tells us...

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire." **2**

**Peter 2:18-22**

Since Pope Francis has come to take the reins of the Roman Catholic Church, he has been working overtime in attempting to bring the Protestant breakaways back under the papal umbrella. He has linked arms with Muslims, with Protestants, with Atheists, with anyone who will work with him towards this end. He uses humbleness to win over those who are skeptical, but we should not be misled or fooled by his intentions. His goal, is not to unite the world back under the shade of the true Gospel, but under the shade of the Roman Catholic Church.

We have seen the rapid rise of the [Emerging Church](#) movement, which is targeting the youth and young adults in the Evangelical churches. Cross denominational organizations such as Promise Keepers, World Council of Churches, Red Letter Christians, Interfaith movements, Chrislam, and ecumenical movements. Popular

books that promote “we all worship the same God” along with New Age mysticism that tries to hang Eastern mysticism back onto Christian rituals, or in place of them...is also saddling this message onto the Protestant and Evangelical Churches.

From Satan’s perspective, this is the Hegelian Dialectic all the way. First, you;

1. **Thesis:** Have a goal with a prescribed solution and end state—a one world religion
2. **Antithesis:** Create the problem--confuse and corrupt churches and religions so they are bitterly divided
3. **Synthesis:** People demand change (unity) and (moral cohesiveness)--present ecumenism as the only solution.

## Conclusion

Christ promised us that the Gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church He builds ([Matt. 16:13-20](#)), but once that true Church is removed at the Rapture, there will be a rapid and colossal return to a singular, utterly blasphemous, Christ hating church who professes anything and everything, except for the Lord who could save them. It shouldn’t be any surprise to any of you watchers out there, that if Satan controls the current world system we inhabit, he also controls all the false belief systems out there. (Luke 4:5-7; Eph 2:2) Once the true church is removed, Satan will be given the power to woo those left behind with signs and wonders (2 Thess. 2:9), and these will be given over to believe the lie, unto their own destruction.

But we are also told in Revelation 7, that there will be those who come to faith after the Rapture. These will be outcasts who are quickly and violently [martyred](#) by a religious system who has wholeheartedly rejected Christ and the Bible. Hatred towards those who follow Christ will be at an all-time high. These will feel as justified in their killing of Christians, as the Nazis were in killing Jews during World War II. But this hatred doesn’t happen overnight. It takes conditioning, and it takes the spreading of the ‘spirit of antichrist’ which is currently getting stronger. They will label all those who claim Christ as: ‘haters’, ‘bigots’, ‘ignorant’, ‘racists’, ‘sexists’, ‘homophobes’, and ‘intolerant’ to name just a few.

Any of these starting to sound familiar?

*Maranatha!*

## Dust in the Wind

I've long considered my own feeble estate. I realize I am mortal, and that my days, who's numbered moments, are known only but to God. What will I leave behind if the Lord tarries another decade, or another century? What knowledge shall I pass on to my children? What will remain of the memory of my life? Was it only of a man, marred by sin? Or of a man redeemed by the One marred on my behalf?

I don't pretend to be one of the 'greats' like Spurgeon or Tozer, who when gathered up into heaven, leaves behind a triumphant life dedicated to the Lord. I spent most of my life living for myself. I wish I had run a good race as a younger man, impacting thousands, or perhaps tens of thousands. Have I made a difference to the Kingdom Come? I don't know....and I won't know this side of heaven what affect I had in this life. I just pray that I too can be faithful in the planting and watering, and that I may encourage or correct and be useful in the eternal purpose of God. But in the time I have left, I allowed God to use me and that I was a good husband, and good father. But at the very least, let me leave a life where the evidence overwhelmingly declares if nothing else, 'that this man loved God'.

And although I am just a man made of dust, I know that I have been 'born again', into that spiritual and eternal family of our Lord and brother Jesus Christ, who, took my sinfulness in exchange for His perfect righteousness. Now, I (like many of you) will wear this coat of dust only until the day of our redemption, in which our perishable shall put on imperishable, and our mortal put on immortal. Even so, Maranatha.

The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. **1 Cor 15:48-49**

## The Stranger

I sometimes watch the television late at night, and witness the men and women on there, prancing around onstage, preaching a gospel that is foreign to the Bible. They carry around Bibles, and boast only about the generosity of God, as if He were some benevolent genie who could be commanded at will. To them, true wisdom isn't measured in the study of God's word but comes by way of selected prophets who frequently have 'a word from the Lord'. They alone can parse His messages to us, so no Bible needed. Their messages laden with 'hidden wisdom' that God only cares about blessing men and women financially, and usually only when we give to their ministries liberally.

The televangelists, the ministers of health, wealth, and prosperity prove in their gospel, that God heals...but only on brightly lit stages in front of a televised audience. In their gospel, God only blesses those who have the faith to 'sow their financial seeds'. In their gospel, faith is not measured in living in obedience to Christ, but in how frequently one can open their wallets.

Don't they know that God also [cripples](#), and [allows](#) crippling? Don't they know that the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away? (Job 1:21) Don't they know that God tells us to not store up for ourselves treasures on earth?

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.'" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." **Luke 12:16-21**

As offended I am of them, they invoke in me my own guilt, that I am like them to a lesser degree. How many of us, spend our days, slavishly working for things we know we can't take with us? How we long to live just a little bit more comfortably, a little more at ease, a little more distracted from a world quickly spiraling out of control. I point these accursed 'ministers of profit' out to show the absolute futility and foolishness of living for this life. God has allowed them, as a warning to the rest of us that their sin, as egregious as it is, still separates them as much as ours does us, from the righteousness of God. Were it not for the [finished](#) work of Christ on the cross, and His blood shed on our behalf, we would all be damned.

But I wonder when it was, that these 'ministers of merchandise' first lost their fear of the Lord. Was it a gradual process? Was it never there to begin with? They are so eager and so invested in storing up goods in this life, that they trade their eternal souls, for a few fleeting moments of fame and luxury. Instead of storing up goods, they store up wrath upon their heads, and no more dreaded words could be heard by any person, than to hear our Lord speak these...

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' **Matt. 7:21-23**

## **The Light**

Hal Lindsay soberly noted last week that we American's are become increasingly distressed and depressed, not because of Ebola or Isis, but because our nation's moral base is crumbling. Right is wrong, up is down, and evil is increasingly only getting a wink and a nod these days. Americans are increasingly living in fear, and whether that fear is based on a weakening economy, or because of the burgeoning lawlessness, or both...no one can say for sure. America used to be a 'shining city on a hill', and now that light has all but been distinguished and darkness is enveloping the land.

Like a [weeping](#) Jeremiah, or a [demoralized](#) Elijah, we see evil prevailing and we wonder ‘where is God in all this madness?’ People search for tranquility in a bottle, in a pill, in a drug, and in religion. And yet, nothing can quiet the disturbance we feel...because all is not right. Creation is groaning louder, and it knows, that the time is drawing nigh. But remember brother, remember sister, that God knows our toils and our troubles. God knows the days we are living in, and He told us ahead of time, that we would live through them. He chose us to be His ambassadors in this dark day. Before the foundation of the world, He chose us in Him, to be the light bearers, in an increasingly dark world. May our lights burn brighter because of the darkness, that we may lead more to the safety in Christ.

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

**Phil. 2:14-16**

### **The Charge**

My tone today is somber, even sobering, I hope. That I may serve as a reminder to you that our life here is fleeting. It is a wisp of air and has the longevity of a flower. We are here today and gone tomorrow. Our flesh is as a blade of grass that grows one day in the sun, and is hewn down the next and cast away. Our life, were we to live out to the ripe old age of 99, is a speck on the timeline of man. It is even smaller in comparison to eternity. What do we hope to achieve in this life? We brought nothing into this world, and we certainly can't take anything out of it. The times change, cultures change, world powers change, and the only constant we have, is change. Even the greatest, most powerful men and women in history, all meet the same fate, in that death always found them.

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.

**Psalms 103:14-16**

So let us live with holy abandon, and not care what the world thinks. We are charged with sharing the Gospel (the Light) to a lost, and dying world. Let us take with us, the only thing we can carry into eternity, and that is the souls of those around us. We are to be obedient to the will of God, and God is long-suffering, that none should perish. Someone shared the Good News of Jesus Christ with us, now let us likewise, share it with someone else. We may not see the fruits of our labor this side of heaven, but if we are faithful in our calling, God is faithful in delivering. If you want to ‘sow seeds’, don't open your wallet for some televangelist, sow the seeds that bear lasting, eternal rewards. Sow in other people's lives and we will do the will of God.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. **1 John 2:16-17**

We live in a fallen Babylonian system, that enslaves men and women in this cycle of debt and desire, that we should work, work, work, and buy things that only serve to distract us from our true purpose in life, which is to share the Good News with those around us. And this is as much a message for me, as it is you. We need to remain focused on what really matters. ([2 Cor. 4:16-18](#)) We need to remind ourselves daily, that heaven and hell are reality, and this place we are in now is the façade. We may be the only Bible some people ever read. May we take this mantle as Elisha once did, and kill the oxen and walk away from the plow to serve the Lord. I don't mean that we quit our jobs and leave our families to join a ministry, but that we prioritize what truly matters in this life. We realize that wherever God has placed us, we are a ministry. We have a congregation, and that congregation is anyone and everyone God puts in your path.

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to [my gospel](#) and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. **Romans 16:25-27**

## Easy Come, Easy Go

In recent years, there has been a seemingly unending slew of compiled data from various Barna Group Studies that show interesting religious trends in the United States. There is a levelling off, or even a slight decrease in the number of those who have a profession in the Christian faith in the overall population. On the surface, that sounds ok. But juxtaposed with that, is an increased number of professing Christianity, who are increasingly skeptical of the claims contained within the Christian faith, particularly in the areas of the exclusivity of Christ, marriage, and the inerrancy of Scripture. It's not shocking for me to say this anymore, but America (and the west at large) has become increasingly Post-Christian in nature...and even hostile in many places to the name of Jesus Christ.

Yet, what interests me, is that while professing faith in Christ alone for salvation is seemingly out of vogue, professing faith in a generic Jesus who accepts all and requires nothing from the believer seems to be in style. People want to say they're Christian, but when you try and get into the specifics of what that actually means to them, the 'Jesus' they profess is very different from the Jesus we know in the Bible. The 'Jesus' they profess, demands no change, no repentance, no condemnation, and no exclusivity. Their 'Jesus' accepts the Muslim, the Buddhist, the Wiccan, the New Ager, the Hindu with equal enthusiasm, because to them, all paths lead to 'God'.

So it shouldn't be a shock to see a rise in spirituality in a post-Christian nation, but a decline in a true, Orthodox faith at the same time.

We live in a day and age, when taking a stand for true biblical standards, will actually start to cost you something...and that is not sitting well with many. Now, for many places around the world, taking a stand for Christ will cost you your life. But here in the west, this concept of persecution is a new and uncomfortable place to be in.

Increasingly, politicians don't want to go on the record to take a stand now, because they don't want to offend any segment of their constituency. The military has to be apolitical, so they're just going to follow the dictates of whichever party is in power. The Hollywood elites want to keep working in Hollywood, so for the most part, they keep opinions to themselves, and publicly echo whatever perverse trend is making its rounds as culturally fashionable. This year, homosexuality is in. Next year it could be bestiality, or incest. And that might sound absurd, but so was the concept of gay marriage fifteen years ago.

And the churches, presumably the last bastions of Christian thought and teachings in a post-Christian America...are also following suit. Not all of them, but it is a growing trend. It began in the twice dead protestant denominations...who in a last-ditch effort remain relevant, began redefining "Christianity" to become less exclusive and a lot more inclusive towards all lifestyles. Their message seems to only be centered on the fact that

Jesus frequently mixed with all walks of life and that God is only love. Then it was the Mormon's (who are not Christian to begin with but have recently began to appear more mainstream) who made a bold stand in California with Proposition 8. But after the backlash they received, they seem to be back-tracking and doing a 180 on the issue.

Then it was the Roman Catholic Church who although, wrought with a plethora of doctrinal and theological difficulties, AT LEAST were on the moral high ground in regards to issues like abortion and the sanctity of marriage. They too are now following the lead of Pope Francis and making heaven accessible by papal decree to atheists, homosexuals, and Muslims. And last but not least, are the so-called "evangelical's" who are starting to see their denominations split and peel away to become more 'accepting' of alternative lifestyles.

### **Assessment**

And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." **Mark 2:16-17**

There are those who frequently who love to point out that Jesus hung out with the degenerates of His day as if that justifies their position to redefine what sin is. But they tend to disregard is the words which always accompany Jesus's message, which is 'to repentance'. Jesus didn't hang out with the drunkards and prostitutes so that they could remain drunkards and prostitutes, but so that they could repent and be changed and given new life. To the Pharisees and the adulteress they brought before Jesus in order to corner Him and condemn her, He said to her...

"Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

She said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." **John 8:7-11**

Jesus never gave sin a pass with anyone. He didn't tell her, 'go forth and do whatever you want'. He told her to change her ways. But today, the message that sin is sin, and sin separates you from God is considered highly offensive. And the growing trend and leading goal in Christianity today is to **not offend** anyone. And with so many groups out there claiming to be offended by seemingly only the Christian message, one would have to water down the gospel to the point of luke-warm irrelevancy in order to not make someone angry. And a gospel that is luke-warm is of no effect, which is Satan's intent all along.

But the gigantic, neon news flash for anyone reading this is, THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST WILL OFFEND YOU. Jesus Himself stated that His message would divide families ([Luke 12:51-53](#)), because we are unable to earn our own salvation ([Eph. 2:8-9](#)), and that He alone was the pathway to God the Father ([John 14:6](#)). If the Gospel of Jesus

Christ doesn't offend you, then you're not reading the right Gospel. You might be being reading [another gospel](#):

- the gospel of Joel Osteen (just do good things and God will bless you financially/emotionally/physically)
- the gospel of John Lennon (all you need is love)
- the gospel according to Joseph Smith (you must earn your salvation)
- the gospel according to Oprah Winfrey (all paths lead to god)
- the social gospel (salvation comes by helping the less fortunate)
- the gospel of Rob Bell (everyone makes it to heaven eventually)
- the emergent gospel (the gospel is whatever you want it to be, it just can't be what the bible says it is)

The Apostle Paul has a stern warning against those who would pervert the Gospel that Christ gave him. (1 Cor. 15:1-5; [Gal. 1:9-10](#)). But if anyone has ever had a truly personal interaction with the Jesus Christ of the Bible, who is God in the flesh, simply cannot walk away unchanged. And if they remain unchanged, either one of two things just happened:

1. They didn't meet the Jesus of the Bible (they were presented with a false Christ)
2. Or, they didn't want to meet the Jesus of the Bible (they were unwilling to repent)

But these days, it is far too easy to profess Christ, and then live like the world. Now, there is a reason for this too. Because all true Christian's (including myself) are sinners. ([1 John 1:8](#)) We were born with a sin nature because we are all descendants of Adam. But since Christian's are 'born again', we have a new nature and are now sons and daughters of the second Adam, who is Christ Jesus ([1 Cor. 15:42-49](#)), and that new nature has the 'righteousness of God' applied to it through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. ([2 Cor. 5:21](#))

And I know that if the Apostle Paul struggled with sin ([Romans 7](#)), so will I. Before I was saved, I was lost, and the lost only have one nature to contend with, which is unregenerate...and they do not know any better. But the believer now has two natures, and he or she must choose which side they feed more and we are hated by the world because of it.

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. **John 15:19**

So whether you struggle with your sin and lead a carnal, defeated Christian life, or you are running the race valiantly, increasingly un-phased by that sin-nature which is dying away, the world will hate you, simply because you are a new creation in Christ.

I liken the born again sinner, and that of the salvation experience, to a caterpillar who is transformed into a butterfly. After the metamorphosis, there is no turning back into a caterpillar. ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)) Salvation cannot be re-done or undone. ([Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:10, 14](#)) Either the transition from death into life was real, or it never was. And the carnal Christian, who still tries to live like the world, is like that beautiful, colorful butterfly

who is still creeping along the branch with the other earth-bound caterpillars because he or she is too scared to let go and just fly. And the reason he or she is miserable, is because they are no longer designed to live like that anymore. But there is good news....

But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness. **1 John 1:9**

Don't worry about trying to be perfect, because you never will be...at least not on this side of the Rapture. Don't worry about losing your salvation when you do sin, because **a.)** You will sin again, and **b.)** Your salvation doesn't depend on your own righteousness. All Christian's go through four phases in their walk with the Lord:

1. **Predestination:** God predestined us to be conformed to the image and likeness of His Son, because He knew we would choose Him, therefore His Son's death on the Cross becomes a substitutionary atonement for our fallen natures. (Romans 8:28-30)
2. **Salvation**-is the culmination of justification by grace through faith at a single point in time, when we pass from death into life. It is a **one-time event**, which cannot be repeated or undone. (John 3:36; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 2:13-14)
3. **Sanctification**-this is our walk with the Lord and is a **life-long event**. If we continue in unconfessed sin, our relationship suffers and we remain immature in the faith, along with the increasingly painful chastening from God to get us back on course. (Job 5:17; 1 Cor. 6:11; Hebrews 10:10-14, 12:5-11)
4. **Glorification**-when our lives here are done, we go to be with the Lord either by death or by Rapture, and we will at that Day, receive our new, perfect, sinless, eternal, glorified bodies like Christ. (1 Cor. 15:53-55; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:1-3)

Don't worry if the world starts to hate you more visibly now than it used too...that's only because Satan still runs this planet for the moment, and he hates the crushing blow you and I represent through Christ's victory at Calvary. The west will become increasingly hostile to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and those who hold to it. And we will increasingly see many so-called Christian's turn away from the faith when our message become increasingly unpopular to a society in decline. These are they who wanted faith without repentance, love without discipline, and salvation without sanctification.

So don't lose heart in these waning moments of humanity as our nation drifts further and further away from God's word and His Son. Our nation and is in decline and will continue to force people to make a choice between Christ and the world. But the world is passing away, and the lusts thereof...1 John 2:17 states, so choosing the world is like one abandoning their life boats to get back on the Titanic. Their faith came easy, because it cost them nothing. It will leave them just as easy, because when it comes to living out that faith, the cross was too much to bear.

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us, because if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But they went out from us to demonstrate that all of them do not belong to us. **1 John 2:19**

## The Extinction Level Event (ELE)

In my recent conversations with atheists and bible skeptics, one phrase keeps coming back up over and over. The conversation/argument/debate over whatever the hot button issue of the day is, has recently been ending in the other person stating matter-of-factly, “well, I’m glad your kind is dying out!” Bible believers certainly do not constitute the majority these days in any given crowd, but I didn’t realize we were on the endangered species list either.

We know that the last days will be like it was in the days of Noah because Jesus said it would. [Matt 24:36-39; Luke 17:26-30] But Jesus honed in on the *normalcy bias* that will exist in that day, and it will prevent people from recognizing the lateness of the hour. But in Genesis 6, the description of Noah’s day was one marked with great violence and wickedness...so much so that God decided to wipe out all of mankind save Noah and his family. But were Noah and family the only ones who truly believed?

We know that there was a Godly line of going back from Adam to Seth, from Enoch to Methuselah, and lastly to Noah. We also know that the details about exactly how wicked and violent the earth was back then not fully spelled out in those chapters of Genesis. If our day mirrors theirs, then they too also had plenty of antediluvian ‘martyrs’ who were killed for their faith before Noah finished the ark. We know because our day is as wicked, and we have many around the world today who are currently being killed for their faith, particularly in the [10/40 window](#), while the modern world lives oblivious to what is about to come upon the earth.

Satan has been trying since the Garden of Eden to prevent Genesis 3:15 from ever happening. He had Cain kill Abel. He attempted to taint man’s humanity up to the time of the flood, and except for Noah, (and potentially those who didn’t conform and were killed) mankind had all but been corrupted. Satan again tried to wipe Israel out through the [Pharaoh](#), through [Haman](#) in Persia, and through [King Herod](#). But the closest mankind came to the complete extinction of the Messianic lineage in whom Christ would have come through, hinged at one point, in the life of one infant boy, [Josiah](#) who had been hidden for six years so he wouldn’t be killed.

So, we aren’t threatened today at all with extinction, although here in the United States and in Europe, we might feel a little lonely. The days are growing darker, and our adversary is seemingly growing stronger. We might feel like Elijah at times, and feel as though we are the only ones, but we aren’t. God always has His remnant, which is what makes the Rapture so unique in man’s history. What we are feeling today in the United States, is Christianity in a post-Christian nation. What we are seeing, is a nation hardening its collective heart against God, and we are seeing the divine ramifications for that. He is ratcheting up the pain through judgment, but we see the process explained in **Romans 1:18-19, 24-32** in how God allows this to transpire.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them....

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.  
Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

You and I are seeing a nation that is being given over to a debased mind. Just turn on the news and you can see all the attributes listed above in spades, daily, and it is only getting worse. To the Christian, the times are harder because it feels as if we are alone. It feels as if we are the only ones. It is disheartening to see church after church, leader after leader (inside and outside of the church) fall to the politically correct lie, so as not to be labeled as a bigot or a fool. It is sad to lose our solid Bible teachers due to illness or age, and all the while, the name it claims preachers continue on into their 90's selling their prosperity gospel.

It is sad to see 'leaders' within the church, compromise on Biblical principles for political expediency, or social acceptance. It is sad to see families and individuals, give up and simply go back to the lives they had before Christ, as if nothing ever happened. Whether they were ever saved at all is known only to them and God, but the heart begins to harden when it rejects the Holy Spirit's drawing. It is sad and wearisome to continue to watch and wait for the Lord to return, because our days grow long, and the nights grow darker.

### Assessment

On a day known only to God, both the dead and alive in Christ, will be physically removed from earth in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Those who have died in Christ over the last two thousand years will be resurrected into their glorified bodies. They will return with Christ in spirit, to meet their physically reconstituted bodies in the

air. The [curse](#) of Adam will have finally been lifted, and not one molecule of their flesh will remain on the earth.

For those who are still living when Christ returns, we will instantaneously be transformed from our mortal flesh to our immortal and glorified bodies. We too will meet Christ in the air, and return with Him to His [Father's house](#). This is known as the Rapture of the Church. At that moment in time, there will not be one true Christian left on the planet. Now, there will be plenty of religious people who thought they were Christian left behind, but no one who has been [baptized](#) by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, will still remain.

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. **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**

There could only be one exception to this understanding and that is if the Two Witnesses who appear in [Revelation 11](#) are sent just prior to the Rapture, so as to begin their 1,260 day ministry of judgment on those who remain on the earth. If these Two aren't on the earth, it would be the first time in all of history, that God didn't have His own representatives on the planet because the Church will no longer be on the earth ever again, until we return WITH Christ at His Second Coming. Then, all the peoples on the earth who have survived the Tribulation's 21 judgments, will mourn at the sight of Christ at His Coming. (Revelation 1:7)

If these Two Witnesses do arrive just before the Rapture, they will be the only two on earth...but it is through their testimony I believe, that causes the [144,000](#) male virgins of the twelve tribes of Israel, to turn to Jesus Christ as to be saved, and then they are sealed by God.

But I have a sneaking suspicion that the moment after the Rapture happens, that the same people who wished that all Christian's would just go and die off en masse, will immediately regret having wished that.

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. **1 Thess. 5:3**

There is coming a day though, that the godless heathens of this world, who loathe Christ and hate the Bible, will get their wish. They may not understand or believe what just happened, but they will certainly regret what is coming upon all the earth.

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. **2**

**Thess. 2:9-12**

## **In Memoriam**

The world is changing and there isn't anything anyone can do about it. It's known by some, as a 'turning point', or by others as the dawn of the 'new world order'. Whatever the label, the reality on the ground is that the once strong, leading lady on the stage, is 'no longer packing them in like she used too'. The roles are changing on this global stage and would be akin to a theater dropping its lead actress at the anticlimactic finale, for a cast of unknowns and changing the theme to a who-done tragic satire. But this is nothing new, because we've already seen it happen thrice within the last 100 years.

### Great Britain

It used to be said of Great Britain, that the 'sun never set on the British Empire'. But two World Wars later, and the 'great' in Great Britain seems like a self-aggrandizing exaggeration. Great Britain once dominated all seven seas and made the world march to its economic beat...yet today, is only a fraction of what it used to be. So, the once commonly held axiom proved untrue, and the sun did set on the Union Jack.

### The Soviet Union

The 1918 Bolshevik Revolution promised the Russian people that the working class would rise up and remove the aristocratic boot off the neck of the proletariat neck. Seventy-years and tens of millions of dead later, the Russian people were financially, morally, and spiritually bankrupt. Although vodka and atheism were still on the shelves of the local market, smiles and bread were in rare commodity.

### Germany/Europe

In 1933, Adolph Hitler promised the German people a 'thousand-year Reich' in which Germany and the Aryan people would dominate the planet. Yet less than 12 years later, the Blitzkrieg tide would turn, and they would be drowning in the shame of what they had become.

### In Memoriam-Pax Americana

No nation in the history of mankind has lived at the level of luxury that the US has for as long as we have. Our shrinking middle class generally lives at a higher level than did the royalty of yesteryears. Air conditioning, ice cubes, satellite television, shag carpet, and memory foam pillows withstanding, American's will fight to the death to keep their level of comfort their own. Yet, in our contentment, we have slept the sleep of apathy and lethargy. We allowed our leaders to sell us pipe dreams of endless social welfare and limitless credit card accounts.

We could say that the only constant in America today is change. Just look at how our culture has changed since the end of World War II. From sock hop to bell bottoms, from disco to 'gangsta rap'...our culture has been one of ever increasing descent into

decadence and depravity. Never content to be outdone by the previous generation's rebellions, ours has snowballed into an avalanche of vanishing moral boundaries. What was considered taboo 40 years ago, is now commonplace today. What was considered bad taste 20 years ago, is now the standard today. What one generation tolerated, the next embraced.

It is fascinating to me for instance, to watch commercials promoting various financial investment firms who are selling the viewer a scenario involving white picket fences, well behaved grandkids, and a life of ease in retirement, but only if you start building your financial portfolio today. And to 'hedge your bet', better add a little gold and silver in there just in case the economy isn't doing so well.

That may have been true in decades past but given our gargantuan national debt and our incredibly shrinking dollar, they never mention what happens to your portfolio when the whole system collapses under its own weight. Quantitative Easing policies, costly overseas military campaigns, bloated bureaucratic agencies, pork-laden programs, and the general mismanagement of taxpayer money has fast tracked the real possibility that the American economy (held up by the might of the US Dollar) might not last the next ten years, let alone long enough for one's 'golden' years.

One would have to be absolutely delusional to think that the way things are today will just continue on for decades to come. I've read the National Intelligence Council's 2015-2030 plans they have drawn up for possible futuristic scenarios for the United States. Everything beyond 2020 has the United States in decline. Granted, they're more optimistic than I am, (or most realists), but they see the decline and think it's still possible for the US to make a soft landing, instead of crashing headfirst. Just let the internet shut down, and you could bet your bottom dollar that every major city in the US would erupt in chaos.

No nation, not even ones who can print their own currency, can sustain the level of debt that we currently have and expect our money to keep its monetary value. We bought ourselves some time with our deal with [OPEC and Petrodollars](#), but that well is about to run dry. A lot of our debt is predicated on other nations or groups buying our debt through government security bonds. What happens when they stop buying them? What happens when other sovereign nations began to abandon the US dollar for something else? What happens when other nations see our debt as a liability, and begin unloading their US currency in favor of ones that are more stable and have less baggage?

We have the world's most powerful military, and that has helped bring a level of stability to the world over the past decades. But our military's strength lies squarely in our economic strength to be able to fund and project that power abroad. What happens when our government can't afford to deploy our forces overseas? What message will that send to the enemies of the United States? Does that cause them pause, or does it embolden them to do what they want? (Syria and Crimea anyone?)

Any student of history would understand that kingdoms come and go. What made the United States unique, was that our government recognized that our rights are granted by our Creator, and not from government. But when our government divorces itself from the very thing that makes it unique, it divorces itself also from the protection and blessings that come with those God given rights.

We are no longer in the decline phase of the United States...because we've been in that phase for the last twenty years. We are in the final death throes where the only action left that can be taken, is dramatic. And when the United States goes, the world's economy will be turned on its head, and only those who had cut their financial umbilical cords early enough would remain the most unaffected. It will cause a massive shuffle in which nations rise to the top, and which suffer the greatest. Even the US in decline is causing nations around the world to reconsider their alliances with us in light of our decline.

### Assessment

While this may seem overwhelmingly gloomy and downtrodden, it shouldn't be for the Christian. The Bible never said that this world would get better, only that things would continue to deteriorate and spin more out of control. You'd think it would, but the Bible never mentions any nation that resembles the United States even one that was once considered the greatest Christian nation in the world. While arguing out of silence isn't the preferred method, the silence is rather glaring.

The Bible does say that a revived Roman Empire would emerge. I can only think that as the US declines, the EU/UfM rises to fill the void we left. Currently sitting at a population of 500 million, and with the number 1 or 2 largest GDP in the world (depending on the source), the European Union has been sitting back and allowing the US to do the heavy lifting over the last 70 years. But there are three things that the EU currently lacks.

1. **A unified governing body or leader:** We see that there are now in motion, discussion within the EU to create a [super president](#) that would preside over both the EU Council and Commissions. This leader would wield incredible power, and although it has been on the back-burner since 2012, the idea has not gone away.
2. **A strong military:** Since the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, NATO has been the stalwart defense posture for Western Europe. It was meant to be a deterrence for war from anyone, either inside or out of Europe. With a burgeoning and expansionist Russia on the prowl, Europeans are having to reconsidering the possibility that defense cuts may not be in their best interests. NATO member had since 2001, supported US mission in Iraq and Afghanistan on the War on Terror. Granted, it was not as robust as we may have wished, but it did give their leaders the experience to fight using American tactics, deploy forces around the world, and allowed them to refine their skills. NATO is the perfect model for a

European army to fall into or take over once the US is no longer able to lead from the front.

- 3. Financial Superiority:** What we've seen in the PIIGS (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Spain) countries in the last 5-8 years, is a series of financial calamities spreading faster than the Ebola virus in Guinea. The northern half of Europe seems fiscally solvent, but their southern brothers and sisters, had for many decades, cooked the books so to speak. Now unified under the Euro, and accountable to the European Central Bank for maintaining a balanced check book, the PIIGS are struggling to make ends meet. There didn't seem, for a long time, any light at the end of the tunnel for any of them. But in the same tune of constant change, a declining US may force them to either realign regionally or ditch the Euro in favor of a digital currency that may be manipulatively more manageable. Either way, the [Bible](#) states they will arise as the final world empire on God's prophetic stage...and you can take that to the bank.

### Conclusion

While unpopular and anti-patriotic as it all seems, the truth is, as born-again believers, we should not mourn the passing of this once great nation. It served a grand purpose in God's economy of time. Because of the United States, many millions lived under a nation with religious freedom to serve God and to share that love of God to a lost and dying world. Missions and missionaries, bibles and biblical literature, teachers and preachers went forth from American shores to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with more people around the world, than any nation before it (or after it). The US might be a cesspool now of heresy and debauchery today, but it was what God allowed it to be, for a time.

Furthermore, the US was the first to recognize Israel as a sovereign nation. We supported her financially, militarily, and politically for many decades. That support seems to be on the ropes now, clinging for its very life, but God used the United States to allow an Israel to come back to the table of nations after 1900+ years of Diaspora.

We are in decline, no doubt about it. No amount of revival will revive us nationally. Considering how fractured we are denominationally, it is hard to fathom that any attempt to come together at a national level would be anything less than a watered down, social justice-ecumenical ritualistic, toss pot of Luke-warm piety.

Revival needs to be with the individual. Repentance at the grass roots level starts first with ourselves, then our families, and then our local churches. This alone will not stem either time nor tide, but it will be for us, where God wants us to be. A Church that is hungry for God, hungry for the truth, and loving enough to set our own pride aside, and share that hunger with a lost and dying world. We shouldn't be dismayed that we are in decline, or that our economy is in the toilet.

We shouldn't worry about what tomorrow will bring, because if we belong to the King, the King takes care of His own. I'm not saying that we won't have trials and tribulations

in this life, because Jesus [promised](#) us we would. I am saying that when you step back and compare today with eternity, your problems (and mine), will melt away in the glory of God's greatness. Put your faith in God, and not in man. Put your faith in the Bible, instead of political rhetoric. We are Ambassadors for Christ, and one day soon, we will be called to our true, eternal homes to serve a King and Kingdom with no end.

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**

## Peace of Mind in Perilous Times

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;  
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;  
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! **Isaiah 5:20**

It used to be that people didn't need to lock their doors at night or worry about someone stealing a bike from their front yard. You didn't use to need to worry about your kids walking to the store by themselves, or just being out all day playing until dinnertime. You didn't need to worry about whether your government was spying on you. You trusted the banks to do with your money, what they said they would. If bad guys did bad things, they were caught and went to jail (and for a long time). You had a national border that actually stopped, or at least, limited the amount of unknowns coming into your country. At one point in your life, you had faith in the system.

But what we've seen in the last 25 years in the United States, is a rapid and aggressive acceleration into a national decline in almost every sector. We have effectively transitioned from a producer-nation to a service-based nation. We have rapidly transitioned from a creditor nation to a debtor nation. We have justified to ourselves (vis-à-vis an ever-rising debt ceiling), the current level of sky rocketing debt we currently find ourselves in. Time honored cultural and religious institutions are being turned on their head. Marriage is no longer just between a man and a woman. Children don't necessarily need to come from only two parents. Science is quickly outpacing the ethical boundaries that prevent the abuse of those technologies.

Globally...Ebola, Bird Flu, Swine Flu, and a half dozen other diseases are but hairbreadth away from becoming pandemic. Strange animal die-offs are occurring at alarming rates. The radioactive fallout from Fukushima pollution of the Pacific has begun to change the face of life in the world's largest ocean. ISIS, Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Boko Haram, and many other Islamic terror groups are rampaging across the 10/40 window, leaving a trail of carnage in their wake. Crime and murder have all but seized our city centers, which in turn has driven the law-abiding citizen, further and further out of it.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good **2 Timothy 3:1-3**

The norms and basic civil decencies are being turned on their head. Ethnic tensions are on the rise globally, but none so alarmingly as they are right here in the US, where black inner-city mobs 'knocking-out' or beating up non-black persons, is seemingly becoming common place. The media are reluctant or outright afraid to call things what they are, and 'hate crime' is seemingly only reserved for those 'dangerous' Tea Party types. Right is wrong, up is down, black is white, and evil is good...and it's only getting worse. Notice how the Apostle Paul's words are ringing truer and truer by the day. Things are not

getting better but are getting progressively worse. And now that we find ourselves in these very times he spoke of, are we surprised that they are anything less than what the Bible said [they](#) would be?

## **Assessment**

Not many years ago, it was really hard to find things to dig up to prove that we are in fact, in the last moments of the last days. Such is not the case in 2014, where so much is happening, on so many fronts, that it makes your head hurt just thinking about it. It would be really easy to get discouraged with all that's transpired since 9/11/01 and conclude we must already be in the Tribulation in some form or fashion. Maybe that is why positions like Pre-Wrath and Post-Tribulation positions seem to be growing at more rapid rates within Eschatological circles. It is natural to assume that when things take a turn for the worse, we must be in one or more of the judgments. For instance...

The other day I was scanning the news when I came across an article talking about the pros and cons of the new [RFID technology](#). It had a long laundry list of potential benefits that it could have constructive impacts to many of the aforementioned problems we are currently experiencing in this nation. For instance, it could help prevent crime, track predators, protect property, and prevent identity theft. But at the end of the article, it asks the question of whether or not it's ethical, and whether it has the potential for abuse. I thought that was a rather silly question, considering all we know now about the abuses of government thus far, over privacy and what not. But I liken it to the pre, and post mindset people had before and after 9/11.

Before 9/11, Americans would have never allowed the Patriot Acts to pass through the halls of Congress. But afterwards, because of fear, it seemed like a very logical thing to do, and it was pushed through at break-neck speed. Now that it is in force, its tentacles of intrusion have only ever grown in its scope and depth as it reaches into the lives of average Americans. All it took for the American people to hand over personal liberty, was the right threat. Each new potential threat is used to justify a continued and ever more pervasive reach into the lives of the public...and again, that too is by design.

Fear drives our daily lives now. Fear feeds into our belief systems, and into what we are willing to accept as normal. Fear is ingratiating itself into our eschatology, which is why positions like Pre-Wrath and Post-Trib are on the rise in Evangelical churches. Fear is an insatiable monster in and of itself, and it feeds on hope, and devours peace, crushes action, and delivers you into a cradle of bondage.

## **Conclusion**

Being grounded in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture as THE Blessed Hope, is more than just lip service. It is more than just head knowledge. It's more than just having the correct, chronological understanding of end time's events. It was designed by God, to give us, a light of hope, in an increasingly darkened world. Whether we want to accept it or not, we are that generation that will see the Lord return. We are the generation with Israel

back in her land. We are the generation with Israel in control of Jerusalem. We are the generation that has the technological and economic means to control all buying and selling in the world. We are that generation that have all the signs converging at breakneck speed. And yes, doom and gloom is big business...just turn on your local or national news. Fear sells, but we are not called to live in a spirit of fear. Peter says...

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; **2**

**Peter 1:19**

We are not only to have the proper understanding of Scripture, too include how things end (eschatology), but we are also supposed to apply that knowledge to our daily lives. If you notice in the New Testament, almost every passage referencing the Lord's coming at the Rapture, is preceded or surrounded by passages that promote holy living. We are to live out our beliefs, by being grounded in the reality, that Christ will return, and that His return, will be before the world enters into that final seven years. We are not called 'overcomers' for nothing...

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." **John 16:33**

It's knowing, believing, and sharing that belief through our word and deed that will draw people to Christ, because we have this hope, in an increasingly hopeless world. We belong to Christ, Christ is in us, and we make up the body of Christ...and Christ is God. If Christ existed before all things, and by all things were created through Him, and Christ conquered death and hell at the Cross...what have we to fear? What is in this life that poses a greater threat than that? Nothing. We are not called to have a spirit of fear. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture (or catching up) is just **hope realized** and **codified in Scripture** for our benefit. It was God's plan, hidden before the foundation of the world, revealed through Paul and John to us, that we should live boldly and confidently, in a world that is passing away. (Eph. 3:1-7; [1 Thess 4:13-5:9](#); 1 John 2:17)

A world passing away, is juxtaposed with the peace that passes understanding. Yes, these are dark times, and they are growing darker by the day. But the worse it gets, the closer it is to Christ's return. We simply need to keep all that in perspective.

So beloved, don't get sucked into false beliefs that promote fear, and rob you of hope. Don't be drawn to teachers that feed doom and gloom, and promote their own ministries or eschatological beliefs, over what Scripture actually teaches. Don't let their confusion over the Rapture, with the Second Coming, lead you down a path which has you prepping for Armageddon, when we are called to live boldly and confidently in this time so soon near our Lord's coming. (See [Matt. 6:25-33](#))

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

**2 Cor. 4:16-17**

## Programmed To Receive

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. **Colossians 3:1-3**

How often do we think of God? How often do we yearn to study the bible? How often do we share Christ with our friends and family? I'm sure a lot of people think of me as a 'one-trick' pony who only likes to talk about Scripture. And it is true to an extent, that I'm not really 'well-learned' on many topics. But of Scripture, I have developed a deep passion for discussing, a deep passion for sharing and pouring over and talking about; not just the broad sweeps of history, but the tiny, minute details that often get lost in translation.

I'm no expert in how the brain functions, but in doing just a little research, you can see that the brain operates on several different levels:

- Alpha state: which is associated with relaxation
- Beta state: which is associated with an alert state, or full consciousness
- Theta state: which is associated with light, or REM sleep
- Delta state: which is associated with deep sleep
- Gamma state: which is associated with periods of high ingenuity, or insights (that aha! moment we often have)

How your television operates and has been used a successful medium over these past six or seven decades, is that it both stimulates and lulls the mind simultaneously. It does this by incorporating at least two different processes; first, by the 'orienting response' which keeps your attention glued to the screen, and secondly, with screen flicker, which lulls the brain into the alpha state. The 'orienting response' is that natural response we humans have that breaks our concentration on whatever we are focusing on, and directs our attention to something that is either a potential danger or is out of the norm with your current surroundings. For instance, if you're in a quiet park, and you hear a bizarre sound. You would immediately quit reading your book or daydreaming and take notice. It is your natural response to potential dangers which quickly triggers an alert in the mind to take notice of whatever that threat may be.

Television achieves this by continually refocusing you back to the screen, by using quick changes in light, sound, and/or movement. This is particularly common in commercials, action movies, the news, and children's shows. Screen flickering on the other hand, produces gamma waves, which operate in a way that moves you from an alert beta state of mind to that of a semi-conscious alpha state, which is tantamount to being in a mild state of hypnosis. So, your brain is being pulsated with gamma waves that lull the mind into an almost hypnotic state (not asleep but not full alert), but also keeps your attention solely fixated on whatever is on the screen. Now, consider the cable or nightly news. You're being bombarded by loud sounds, alerts, video within video clips of often high-paced action. The newscaster is often times animated,

speaking excitedly about whatever is happening, and you are sitting there in this semi-hypnotic state, glued to the television. Now you know why Fox News (in particular) has an **Alert** every five minutes, even if it is to announce something mundane.

So that got me to thinking of the lyrics of the song *Hotel California* the other day, and I'm not insinuating that the Eagles are prophetic, or that I can trace *Hotel California* to a particular passage in the Bible. But what I do think though, is that non-Christian's are very much under the sway and influence of dark spiritual forces, whether knowingly or unknowingly, and can pen songs or stories, often times that have deeper significance than even they understand.

Last thing I remember, I was  
Running for the door  
I had to find the passage back  
To the place I was before  
"Relax," said the night man,  
"We are programmed to receive.  
You can check-out any time you like,  
But you can never leave! "

What struck me about the song was the phrase "we are programmed to receive" which reminded me of how our television works. What struck me, is that God created us, and did so with the intent of making mankind to be receptors of sorts, to not only their environments, but to Him. We were created to fellowship with God, and in Adam's fall, that direct linkage was severed between God and man, but not between man and his environment. We know according to Scripture, several truths about man's condition:

1. Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27)
2. Man's fall prevents him from continuing to fellowship with God in his natural state (Gen. 1:8-10, 22-24; 6:6)
3. Man is inherently wicked (Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9)
4. Man can harden his wicked heart towards God (Ex. 8:15; Dan. 5:20; Acts 19:9)
5. Hardening is a process that both man and God allow (Ex. 8:32, 9:12; Romans 1:18-32)
6. It doesn't matter what goes into a man that makes him unclean, but what comes out of him (Matt. 15:11)
7. We are surrounded in spiritual warfare that seeks to influence us either to follow God, or to follow Satan (Eph. 6:10-19)
8. Satan never presents evil for what it really is, nor its consequences accurately (Gen. 3:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:14)

But Satan is not omnipresent, nor is he omniscient. Satan is however, a highly intelligent observer of both history, and the human being. He knows what makes us tick and how to manipulate us into achieving his goals for us. He knows how the human brain works, probably better than the best brain surgeon in the world does. He knows, because he was there at creation. He was there with Adam and Eve. He was there when

Cain slew his brother Abel because he was the one whispering in Cain's ear to do it. And so on for the rest of human history, Satan has been involved in the goings on of mankind. One could ask why God would create us with our brains the way they are? Why are humans seemingly so gullible and easily duped? We see what we want to see, hear what we want to hear, and oftentimes can be hypnotized rather easily. After all, we were programmed to receive were we not? It almost doesn't seem at all fair, does it?

### **Assessment**

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. **Titus 3:4-7**

When a man, woman, or child becomes born again, it is the repentance of the heart towards Christ's redemptive work on the cross, that makes a person able to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which baptizes us into the eternal body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:13) We are washed and made clean, receiving and having applied toward us, the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21) We become new creations (2 Cor. 5:17), no longer the seed of fallen Adam, but now the seed of the last Adam, who is Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:45) This is why man must be born again. (John 3:3) He has to be regenerated, and washed clean, not by water (1 Peter 3:21), but by repentance (clear or good conscience; Greek: [\*syneidēsis\*](#)) which brings about the conditions for man to receive salvation through Christ, and Christ alone. (John 14:6)

You see, we are all programmed to receive. If one does not take in Christ, he or she will take in the world...and the wrath of God abides upon them. (John 3:36) Either we allow the world to influence us, or we allow God too. There is no middle ground, nor is their non-compliance in this existence that allows us to sit it out as neutral noncombatants. And although as Christian's, we still have to wear this coat of flesh, which has the world stained all over it, the real 'us' (who we really are) is made righteous by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 7:17)

So how do we Christian's, who are now bi-natured with a fallen fleshly nature, and a new spiritual nature, continue on in this fallen world? A world who is at constant enmity against God and His Word? How do we continue to strive in the Spirit, and not in the flesh?

Prayer and study.

Our minds are made clean by reading and studying His word, because His word contains life and truth.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery

darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

**Eph. 6:14-19**

Our relationship restored with God when we confess our sins and course correct back onto the path God has put us on.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **1 John 1:8-9**

We stay in the word, because in doing so, we renew our minds with the truth God has already given us. It shores up our new nature, and encourages us, and we are receiving the programming from our Creator that we were intended to receive. It is not the garbled, mixed and confusing message an ever-changing society puts out, but the one, steady constant, which is God's word.

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 12:2**

And thus, we have the race laid out before us. We each have our own crosses to bear, and our thorns in the flesh. We each have particular hardships and struggles. But we labor on in the Lord, going to the Father in prayer as Jesus did, asking for strength and understanding to continue on the path set out before us. Finally, remember that this life is fleeting. Our time spent here is not where we will spend the majority of our existence. You and I will spend 99.999% of our existence in the eternal state, in the real, new creations we became at our salvation, with God on into eternity future bearing that 'eternal weight of glory' that God has bestowed for us, and on us, in His great love and kindness towards us. (2 Cor. 4:16-17)

**Note:**

Having just attended the recent 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Pre-Trib Conference, "Things to Come" in the DFW area, I left renewed and rewarded with hearing not only great teachers but meeting some really great people in the process. Many of the speakers whose presentations I sat through, were familiar territory as I had listened to them in podcasts and other mediums, so it wasn't that I really learned anything new, but it was sitting there with likeminded believers which really boosted my spirit. Some of those I met were Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Dr. Andy Woods, Dr. Mark Hitchcock, Carl Teichrib, Dr. Mark Musser, Nathan Jones from LambLion.com, Jim Fletcher, and Dr. Gary Frazier. Other notables that I sat next to and didn't get to meet, were Dr. David Reagan, Dr. Toussaint, Pastor Jack Hibbs, and Dr. Robert Dean. But really, the highlight of the trip was meeting people like Ruth and Gordon, Tony, Jim, Vic and Maureen from Calvary Chapel Miami, and our own Scott. Overall, a great experience and blessing by attending, and hope that next year, Lord willing, many more will continue to go.

## The Age of Miracles

He complained in no way of the evil reputation under which he lived, indeed, all over the world, and he assured me that he himself was of all living beings the most interested in the destruction of Superstition, and he avowed to me that he had been afraid, relatively as to his proper power, once only, and that was on the day when he had heard a preacher, more subtle than the rest of the human herd, cry in his pulpit: "My dear brethren, do not ever forget, when you hear the progress of lights praised, that the loveliest trick of the Devil is to persuade you that he does not exist!" The Devil in The Generous Gambler

A little over two years ago, I wrote an article entitled "The Death of Atheism", in which I concluded that the further along we went into the last days, the less palatable atheism and skepticism would appeal to the masses. In fact, once the Rapture of the Church occurs, Satan will no longer have any use for that kind of thinking.

At that point, the gloves come off and he is going to ~~want~~ need everyone to get on board the globalist agenda and support his man, Mr. Antichrist. Mr. Antichrist and Mr. False Prophet will start pulling out all the bells and whistles, wooing a Christ-rejecting world with false signs and lying wonders. Nature abhors a vacuum, and when you remove Christianity, something has to fill that void.

### The Age of Reason

The Twentieth Century was the testbed for much of the godless humanistic philosophy and evolutionary science, and the end-results aren't pretty: Hundreds of millions killed in wars, hundreds of millions killed by abortions and euthanasia, prisons are full, societies are in decline, false religions, paganism, and mysticism are flooding our culture through music, television, and movies. Again, nature abhors a vacuum. You remove Christ, and something will fill that void.

So, for the last 120 years or so, Christianity has in part, been playing catch up with the godless agenda contained within naturalistic worldviews of science and philosophy. I'd say we had been doing a rather poor job for the first half of the century with science, because we lacked the depth within our own ranks of people who can articulate and credential the Bible's scientific background properly. Now that we do, and the more science tries and disproves Biblical Creation, the more it is confronted with the harsh reality that creation's complexity rules out random chance quite convincingly.

### The Age of Miracles

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders...**2 Thessalonians 2:9-12**

Christianity today can enthusiastically answer the challenge to Darwinian evolution. We can answer the challenge of atheistic and humanistic philosophies. We can prove through logic, reason, and through history, why Christianity is by far, the best belief system on the planet. And since the late Dr. Walter Martin, Christian apologetics has

done an amazing job of pointing out the false religions who are trying to move inside of Christendom and pagan movements who are trying to slip inside of Evangelicalism.

That is not to say Christian apologetics are 100% effective in stopping false teachings and teachers, but they are effective in helping steer people away from these [wandering stars](#). And wouldn't you know it, right about the time that Christianity is starting to dominate the argument (hence why it's trying to be silenced), Satan pulls the rug out from underneath us.

[Cris Putnam](#), noted author and teacher, has written a new book entitled "The Supernatural Worldview", which points out very clearly, that mainstream Christianity is way behind the power curve when it comes to dealing with the supernatural. We have been so focused on answering the atheists and skeptics that we have all but thrown up the white flag when it comes to dealing with the supernatural. He rightly noted that the supposed resurgence of atheistic thought from 2005-2009, was not a resurgence at all, but rather atheisms last, dying gasp.

When Sam Harrison, Richard Dawkins (agnostic now?), and the late Christopher Hitchens rode that short wave of atheistic popularity, little did they know that their wave would crash against the rocks of the supernatural worldview. Cris alluded to the idea that Christians really don't have an issue believing in God, which is what we would consider the high view, and Christians don't have an issue dealing with the natural, which is considered the low view. What Christians are guilty of, is disregarding the 'excluded middle', which for all intents and purposes, could be labeled the 'Twilight Zone'.

There is simply too much evidence out there to dismiss outright the following: UFO's, ESP (extra-sensory perception), NDE (near death experiences), paranormal phenomena, hauntings, etc. These things are becoming so prevalent, that the atheist is very hard pressed to dispute the onslaught of evidence. Most people outside of Christianity will state that they are either agnostic, or spiritual, but most definitely do not completely discount the supernatural. On the flip side of that coin, is the Evangelical Christian, who for the better part of a century...spent so much time focusing defending itself against the naturalistic worldview, that it stands ill-prepared to answer the challenge of the supernatural.

Supernatural are those things which defy all known laws of science and physics, yet we are getting more and more verifiable proof. One such [case](#) is the Ammon's story in Ohio. Too many credible witnesses saw too many things for this to be simply written off. If this happened to a family in your church, how would they deal with it?

And there are many, many great preachers whom I highly respect and have learned from, that in a sense, throws the baby out with the bathwater when it comes to things that aren't as black and white as we Christians like them to be. If you have a child who can see the 'otherworldly', how is a Christian to deal with that? If you are witness to a demonic possession, do you call a priest? Have a house that is haunted? Seen a UFO or

something you can't explain? Seen a person do something that a normal person couldn't do, or know? Had a near death experience? These things are out there and becoming more common.

It's amazing to me that the one group of people who absolutely should not discount the supernatural, tend to be the ones who come to discount it the most. We, who profess the Christian faith, have a supernatural faith. We believe in a supernatural God, who is a supernatural Tri-une God. We believe that those Three are One, and that alone defies our comprehension for understanding. We believe in an Inspired Holy Scriptures, who by the Holy Spirit moved certain men to write what they wrote over a period of 1,600 years...and yet, it all flows together seamlessly.

In our supernatural book, we have: A six-day Creation, angels, fallen angels, giants, a worldwide flood, scattering by language, more giants, ten plagues, parting of the Red Sea, a pillar of fire and smoke, visions, dreams, raptures, and so many more things that defy what modern science and society deem as possible, that we of all people, should discount things like: demonic possessions, sleep paralysis, extra-sensory perceptions, conjuring the dead, necromancy, and many more unexplainable phenomena.

Do we embrace these things? No. I'm not saying that we need to give credence to them, but we do need to be the ones who have the answers for why and how they happen. I like [Doug Overmeyer's](#) ministry, because he is not afraid to deal with people who have supra or supernatural abilities that go beyond the normal person. His response is that Christians already have a supernatural worldview. We should be the ones leading the charge on dealing with these things, not deferring them to Catholic priests, psychiatrists, or others who do not have a Biblical worldview.

### Doctrines of Demons

But a growing majority of Christendom, primarily in the Mainstream Denominations, even refuse to acknowledge the supernatural aspect of our faith. They take a liberal and non-literal view of the Scriptures, and turn what the verses say into allegorical and metaphorical generalities of what they think it should say. But we are starting to see the fruit of that being borne out in mainstream Christianity today. Like the Church of Pergamum, many churches didn't go out into the world, but the world came into the church.

We need to realize that as we draw closer to that day, we are going to see this spiritual battle moving more and more into evangelical circles, attempting to pass itself off as legitimate. The problem then becomes, because these denominations have begun to stray from what the text says, they no longer have the spiritual discernment to see this corruption creeping into their churches. We need only look at the Emergent Church, Ecumenical movements, and Latter Rain/Dominion theology, to see how far we have strayed from what we tolerate as "Orthodox Christianity".

And now we have 'harmless' new worship techniques and discussions going in many Christian churches and universities today with things like; mystical and contemplative

prayer, “Christian” yoga, circle-maker, and centering-prayers. They don’t recognize the demonic baggage that comes along with all this repackaged eastern mysticism, because they’ve long since denied that a literal Satan and demons exists. Now, like a tape worm, and these heretical teachings have firmly attached themselves within the bowels of their churches.

### Warning

A good friend of mine who is a senior member of a local church, asked me what I thought of this book he was reading. And having just heard Glenn Beck glowingly throw praises onto how great this book was, it immediately sent a red flag shooting up my discern-o-meter. Glenn Beck is a Mormon, therefore, isn’t a Christian. He is seduced by a demonic doctrine and does not have the Holy Spirit indwelling in him to be able to make sound judgment on what is Scriptural and what is not. If he did, he wouldn’t be a Mormon. I told my friend honestly, that I didn’t know much about it, but it sounded suspect. I advise you to read with caution.

Tens of thousands of well-meaning Christians are going to read books like the ‘Circle Maker’ and ‘The Shack’ and ‘The Secret’, etc., thinking that it is going to bring them to some new level of spirituality...but they are only fooling themselves. We have, from Genesis to Revelation, all the wisdom, guidance, revelation, and deliverance we will ever need. What we need to be wary of, is books that point us away from the Bible and towards other sources as ‘truth’. And really, this shouldn’t surprise any of us, because we were warned that these days would come and be full of deception.

Jesus warns us: [Matthew 24:3-5](#); Paul warns us: [1 Tim 4:1-3](#); Peter warns us: [2 Peter 2:1](#); Jude warns us: [Jude 1:4](#). I literally, could fill page after page of warnings from Jesus and the Apostles, that in the last days, deception will be ripe and false prophets and teachers will be in abundance. The reason that so many professing Christians see no issue with mysticism and Gnosticism, is because they quit believing that there is a real, spiritual battle going on.

What are Christian’s going to do if they see a false preacher get up and really perform a miracle. Or what would Christian’s do if they really see ‘extra-terrestrials’ like what the Vatican is gearing up for? We need to realize, that Satan is a master of lying signs and wonders, and as we draw closer to the end, his leash is getting longer and longer. And while we don’t embrace the strange goings on in this present age of miracles, we would be wise not to disregard the ‘excluded middle’ either, but to have an answer and understanding, for those things that are coming on the earth.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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 6:10-13**

## The American Rapture

The further we move into the last days, the more rank deception and the blurring of truth mixed with error will become. To the unsaved, Biblical, fundamentalist, Christianity is as popular as the Plague was in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. To the Catholic, the goal ever was to bring the two lines of the church back into the fold of the Roman Catholic Papacy. To the Protestant, Christians need to engage the public by allowing the world into the Church. And to the Evangelical, the embracing of ancient mysticism and seeker friendly visions will both validate faith by experience and allows justification for them to build their kingdom in the here and now.

To them, we need to let go of this idea that Christ could return at any moment, and realize that the only way the world is going to get better, is if we stop looking up, and start looking around.

And if I didn't know any better, I might be inclined to agree with them. They act as if China and Africa were the last places to ever receive the Gospel. But historically speaking, if you think about it, the America's were the last section of earth to have received the Gospel. We have two great oceans (the Pacific and Atlantic) that represent an immense barrier to the rest of the world from traversing across. It wouldn't be until man had the technological capability to cross that great distance, and be able to sustain themselves, these continents would be introduced to Christianity.

### Historically Speaking

Church tradition holds that Mark the Evangelist (author of the Gospel of Mark) went to Africa and founded a church there in Alexandria, Egypt. The rest of the [70 disciples](#) are listed as having gone out in every direction after Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. But much to the Mormon's chagrin, not one of them came to the America's. Most of the Middle East and North Africa were Christianized by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and remained so up until the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when Islam came swinging through, violently converting the multitudes by the sword. Christianity had been found in ancient China as early as the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and flourished there until the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when Emperor Wuzong banned Christianity, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism altogether. A monk in AD986 [wrote...](#)

"Christianity is extinct in China; the native Christians have perished in one way or another; the church has been destroyed and there is only one Christian left in the land."

But Christianity remained there in varying stages and sizes from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards thanks in part to the Mongols. Christianity remained not only in Africa, but also in other places as well from the 1<sup>st</sup> century onwards. The church divided itself between those who came out of the Alexandrian church (Philo, Origen, Augustine, Catholics), and those who came out of the [Antioch](#) Church line (Donatists, Montanists, Novatians, Anabaptists, etc.), and so has it ever really been. And as we well know, that

from the 1<sup>st</sup> century onward, Christianity has had an ever-present manifestation in Europe from then until now.

Remember what [Acts 2:1-12](#) state...

And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. (vs.5)

And so the Gospel went out to the world after that Pentecost; to Africa, to Asia, and to Europe. Many non-Catholics today would say that the reason the Middle Ages were called the Dark Ages, was because the Gospel had been suppressed by Roman Catholic Church for a thousand years and only had been rediscovered when Martin Luther's posted his '95 Theses' did the world "rediscover" the Gospel message. This seems to counter what Christ said in Matthew 16 in that 'He would build His church, and the gates of hell would not prevail against it'. I think there has always been a remnant, and gospel has been over and around this world many times over despite Catholic and Protestant oppression.

### America

Despite the goings on in Europe and the rest of the world, the Gospel had not reached American shores until Christopher Columbus's discovery in 1492. It was his intent to spread the Gospel to the Indies, not realizing a great land mass lay in between Europe and Asia. Was [Columbus](#) perfect? No. Was he a flawed man who made mistakes? Yes, but nonetheless, God uses flawed people all the time to accomplish His will. And when Christianity did come over, it flourished. Then America became in a sense, a repository of Christians, Christian thoughts and ideals, and ultimately, a safe harbor for the [Jews](#).

First thing we must realize, is that Israel was designed to be a kingdom of priests and a special treasure to God. (Ex. 19:1-6) They were to be a light unto a lost and dying world, and testify, that the God they served, is the only true God. And while they stumbled, and ultimately fell, there were times when God's majesty shone through His servants to the Gentile powers, marvelously. (Dan. 2:47; 6:24-28).

Israel is the sign for God's prophetic timetable, because God gave Israel the prophecies, signs, markers, and dates for His dealing with the world. (Isa. 2, 11; Jer. 25:11-12; Dan. 9:24-27; Ez. 36-39; Zech. 12, 14; Luke 21:24; Matt. 24:15-21, 32-35, etc.) Israel, is also the only nation in the history of the world, to have a one on one [covenant](#) with the Creator of the Universe.

The United States, like Israel, is also uniquely designed for a specific purpose as it pertains to Israel and the world at large. We were the only Constitutional Republic founded as Christian nation in the history of the world. Our constitution guarantees our liberties, upon the sole principle that our rights are granted by our Creator, and not from other men or other organizations. And when our nation was founded, it was founded largely on the Judeo-Christian principle of [Individual Soul Liberty](#).

We have been perceived as a Christian nation for most of our existence. That is not to say that everyone in America is a Christian, or that the perception of our Christianity matches the reality of it, but it is what the world going back to our founding has largely thought of us. Just read Alex de Tocqueville's [accounts](#) as he travelled through the United States in the mid-1800s.

And while our uniqueness certainly had the Hand of the divine in it, I'm not equating America with Israel as it pertains to the Holy Scriptures. What I am saying, is that just like the Church was the great unknown [mystery](#) to the OT prophets, America was the great unknown mystery to the table of nations in God's dealings with this world. Why is this you ask? Because God orchestrated our design as a nation which would a) be a safe haven for Jews b) be in a position of power to defeat the Axis powers and end the Holocaust c) be the world's first true superpower, who was first to recognize Israel as a nation again after 1900 years in Diaspora. Globally speaking, what was the last thing America did right to tilt the balance of evil in the world? WWII.

I'm not saying that America hasn't done right either before or after, because we have for the most part, been a force for good in the world. But WWII was that defining moment in our history, which really set in motion, a series of events; from the use of the Atomic bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the Marshall Plan, to the forming of the United Nations, the Cold War, and by recognizing Israel as a nation. We became a superpower from that point onward.

### Assessment

Although Christians can be found in every corner of the world, America is the last bastion of Christian liberty left in the world. When we are gone, so goes the world. In a divine sense of irony, we also happen to be the one nation that all other nations depend on for an economically stable, global economy.

I realize that other nations have Christian's in them, and I'm not saying American Christian's are better than Christian's in Europe, Asia, Australia, or anywhere else. Our political system has been one that has sheltered Christians for the better part of 400 years. Think about that for a moment when you realize who has been running this world since the Garden of Eden. [[Luke 4:5-7](#)]

And while we had no government from 1492-1776, we had an overwhelming presence of Christian men and women which needed no protection, for there was no danger of it being erased back then. From 1776 onwards, we had a [Declaration of Independence](#) by which our nation protected the right for people to practice their faith without interference from the government or from anyone else. Was it always perfect? No. But the [safeguards were well established](#) to protect us, as America began its long slow march towards decadence and ruin in which we find ourselves today. We are at this point in history, a godless nation. Even Vladimir Putin called us '[godless](#)', and that is really saying something.

We are Godless, because we have all but turned our back on Him in our government, schools, media, and public marketplace of ideas. And now, in these times when Christian persecution is beginning to rear its ugly head, we are seeing the convergence of two biblically significant time spans that were unique to Israel in regard to judgment and testing....one is 70 years, and the other 400 years.

As we approach the year 2015, we should take heed. We need only look at our former archrival, the Soviet Union, and see that God only allowed them to be that Godless, atheistic, Communist regime for **70 years** (1921-1991). For our 70 years began at 1945, and will end at 2015, and I believe that it means we are about to see a fundamental realignment in the global, political, economic atmospheres. God allowed Israel to be in Babylonian bondage for 70 years. God also gave Tyre, 70 years before destroying her. (Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10; Dan. 9:2; Isaiah 23)

Why is **400 years** significant? Well, the Israelites were in Egypt for 400 years. And while at first, the memory of Joseph preserved them and allowed them to flourish as strangers in a strange land...a pharaoh rose up who did not remember [Joseph](#). And this leader turned and began to brutally oppress the Israelites until they were completely in bondage. We all know the story, but Moses was chosen by God to lead them out of Egypt in the Exodus, and they then spent 40 years in the desert for their unbelief before being allowed to go into the Promised Land.

Traditional history records that the American nation, began in earnest in 1620 with the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock, Mass. From 1620-2020 is also 400 years, and I believe that the Church (not American's) will soon be experiencing our own Exodus into our [Promised Land](#). [Phil.3:20-21]

**Note:** These things I am pointing out don't specifically state a Rapture will take place right at the year 2020. I'm not saying that. I think it will be before personally. But what I am saying is that nothing I'm pointing out conflicts with what Scriptures state about our Lord's soon coming.

If we were to tie that 2020 date to Israel's rebirth (1948), it would be right at 72 years, which would fit in the middle of the [Psalm 90:10](#) criteria for the length of a person's life. Which would support Jesus's [Parable of the Fig Tree](#), being that generation will not pass away, who sees the budding of the Fig Tree. One last thing to consider is that their only takes two trumpets to be a first and a last. The first was the '[trumpet of God](#)' at Mt. Sinai when the nation of Israel was gathered for the first time. The last time the '[trumpet of God](#)' blasts, will be at the gathering of the Church (of all ages) at the Rapture of the Church.

**And while the Rapture is not predicated upon anything other than our personal relationship with Jesus Christ**, what is unique amongst American Christian's (as opposed to anywhere else), is that we have Christian's sprinkled throughout every layer of business, government, medicine, military, etc. in our society.

Those left behind here in the US will feel our absence harder than anyone else, anywhere else in the world. The collapse of the US will force the world to realign.

Jesus said that His Coming would be as it was in the days of Noah, and the Days of Lot. We know that according to the Scriptures, those days were marked with: great violence, wickedness, the acceptance of sodomy as normal, 'strange flesh', and the abnormal, supernatural, corruption of the flesh (mankind).

But what Jesus alluded to in Matthew 24, and Luke 17, was that the world would be seriously blinded by the 'normalcy bias', as if life were just going along swimmingly; marriage, given in marriage, buying, selling, etc. And His Coming, would rock this world in such a way, that they would never see it coming. Nobody outside of the truly born again, watching Church will see it coming. Paul stated in 1 Thess. 5, that it was in that time, they were calling for 'peace and security', and then sudden destruction comes upon them as 'labor pains' on a woman. So, although we don't know the 'day or hour', we should recognize the season.

I don't know the day or the hour, and I'm not setting dates...just writing out what makes sense to me, so take that for what it's worth. I certainly don't know everything, but I know that our God is faithful, and the Scriptures are true. I know as Christians, we don't have a holy city we make pilgrimage too, no Wailing Wall we can cast our prayers into, nor do we have a land that we can even call our own. We are ambassadors, pilgrims, sojourners, and travelers through this world. (1Peter 2:11-12) We are in the world, but not of the world. (John 17:14-15; Rom. 12:1-2) And we aren't instructed to pray towards a holy city, but...

...when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Maranatha!

## The Anti-Rapture

With the upcoming re-release of the Left Behind movie due out next month, you can rest assured that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture haters will come out in droves. The secular world, Hollywood in particular, seems fixated on this idea with the return of Christ, but not in a good way. It has in recent years released a number of films mocking it or turning it into some kind of bizarre horror spectacle. Granted, what follows after the Rapture will be a horror show on a 'biblical' scale, but the Rapture in and of itself is not anything to fear for the believer in Jesus Christ.

But as Left Behind gets released into theaters, there will be a growing chorus of bible teachers and expositors who will become more vocal in refuting it. They are seemingly convinced that the Church is destined to go through either part, or all of the Tribulation. I suppose that is a relatively normal reaction, given the perilous times we are increasingly finding ourselves in. After all, the signs are all there for an impending economic and societal collapse, as well as an increase in wars and rumors of wars, pestilences, earthquakes, and strange natural phenomenon. And since the Rapture didn't pan out in 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far into 2014, a natural tendency occurs in our minds to think that if the Rapture doesn't occur by 2018 (70 years from 1948), then all bets are off.

The supposed 'delay' in our Lord's coming has given rise to a number of biblically incompatible eschatological theories. I confidently call them 'biblically incompatible', because they are. They are in a sense, Anti-rapture, and attempt to pervert or change what God's word says on the subject. On the surface, some of these views might appear to have theological legs to stand on, but if you drill down just a little bit into what actually "supports" their arguments, it falls apart very quickly.

Most recently, there is the *Pre-Wrath* position, which posits that we go through at least the first five Seal judgments, but not the Trumpet or Bowl judgments. (They attempt to distinguish between Man/Satan's wrath, from God's wrath) Then there is a *Mid-Tribulation* position that has us being raptured at the 3.5-year mark of the seven year tribulation. There is the *post-Tribulation* position that states the Church must endure through all of the Tribulation. And finally, there is the *Pan-Tribulation* position (which is the predominant position in Protestant churches here in the west) in which it will all work itself out in the end, so why bother teaching it.

The one thing that all these positions have in common, is that they neglect the Word of the Lord, in that the Church (i.e....the Body of Christ) has no place, position, or purpose for entering any part of this highly [specified time period](#). There is also a fundamental misunderstanding of who and what the Church is.

The truth of the matter is that while we are still here and the Lord has yet to return, we will be on earth either until either death takes us, or the Lord catches us up. But that reality does not in anyway, diminish what God's word promises. If the Church were

destined to go through the Tribulation (i.e. the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel), I think that the teachings in the New Testament Epistles (both General and Pauline) would be abundantly clear. There are mentions in the Gospels, but the Gospel's weren't written to the Church specifically. They are a recording of Christ's birth, life, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection...and Christ lived and died, under the age of the Law.

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**

### **Assessment**

Aside from Christ's discussion on building the Church in Matthew 16:13-20, the Church was all but a mystery. Even in Acts 1, the disciples were still under the impression that the Kingdom promised to Israel was about to be ushered in.

But instructions for the Church to endure and maneuver through a period of time specifically set aside for Israel in the last days, is seemingly absent from the pages of Scripture...and that would be because they do not teach that the Church goes through any part of the Tribulation. Follow my logic here:

- Christ is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18)
- The Church is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23)
- Corporately, we make up one new Man, who is Christ. (Ephesians 2:14-16)
- The only One found worthy to even open the first seal, is Christ (Rev. 5:3-5)

The seventh Seal Judgment triggers the blowing of the seven Trumpet Judgments, in which the seventh trumpet triggers the pouring out of the seven Bowl Judgments. So, Christ opening the seven Seal Judgments, triggers all the rest.

ALL the Judgments are divinely appointed wrath. The only difference between the first four Seal Judgments, and the last three, is that the first four are not "Supernatural" in nature, but rather, are God's removal of any kind of restraint from the world...and the effects are devastating.

But the Judgments (all 21) cannot begin, until Christ has removed His Body from the earth, back to Heaven, to be where He is. (John 14:1-3)

Since the Holy Spirit permanently seals and indwells those believers who are baptized into the Body of Christ via the Holy Spirit, it stands to reason, that if the Holy Spirit's role of restrainer is removed, so too will those bodies in whom He seals and indwells. (Eph. 1:11-14, 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:21-22)

The Restrainer (2 Thess. 2:7), is definitively a 'He'. That leaves you with three options:

- Satan

- Michael the Archangel
- Holy Spirit

The Restrainer 'restrains' lawlessness, and has been, so that pretty much rules out the 'father of lawlessness'...Satan. (John 8:44)

The Restrainer 'restrains' lawlessness, which is not another individual, but a condition. Michael is a finite being and is NOT omnipresent, therefore, cannot be everywhere at once. Thus, he does not qualify as one who can restrain lawlessness. Besides, he has a job already. (Daniel 12:1; Jude 1:9; Rev. 12:7)

This leaves the only One capable of restraining the condition of lawlessness, and that is God the Holy Spirit, who existing before Creation (Gen 1:2), was given in a particular role at Pentecost to the Church. (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7) until that time is complete.

The Church Age had a beginning, Pentecost (Acts 2), and will have an ending. (Rev. 3:10)

This is why the Apostle Paul even wrote 2 Thessalonians in the first place...because someone had come along, pretending to be an apostle, telling them they were now in the Day of the Lord (the time of the Tribulation). The Thessalonian church were deeply shaken by this, (2 Thess. 2:1-2) and Paul had to reassure them, that THAT day could not happen, until three things occurred first:

- The [falling away](#) happened
- The Restrainer is [taken out](#) of the way (God the Holy Spirit is not removed, just His role as the restrainer is done away with (Gen. 6:3)
- **And then** the *lawless one* will be revealed (2 Thess. 2:7-9)

If the Church is to endure, ANY portion of the Tribulation, is Christ now going to unleash the judgments (Rev. 6:1) upon Himself, if the Church is His body?

## Conclusion

The clear, Biblical answer, is a definitive no. Not only does the Bible NOT teach the Church will endure God's wrath, (1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Rev. 3:10), and that we are NOT looking for signs inside the Tribulation, but that we are too be looking eagerly, for the [Blessed Hope](#), which is the appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

The rhetoric is heating up, along with the scoffing and turning away, even from those who profess Christ, mocking the promise Christ made to us (2 Peter 3:3-7), that He will come again, and receive us unto Himself (John 14:1-3). Don't let anyone steal your joy, or your hope, in that promise, because one day soon, Christ will break back into human history, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, transform both the living, and the dead, into our glorified bodies, so that we can dwell with Him forever. (1 Cor. 15:51-56; Romans 8:28-30)

As with Adam, all men die. But Christ is the 'last Adam', and through Him, all men live, forever. And as Eve was taken out of the side of Adam, as a helpmate, so too was the Church, born out of Christ's side to be His helpmate. (1 Cor. 15:45; John 19:34) Paul explains this 'mystery' in Ephesians 5, echoing the spiritual reality of Genesis 2:23-24, that the two shall become one. We are brought into Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) at the moment of belief (Eph. 1:11-14).

The Church is unique in its role and nature in God's administrating over Creation. The Church was in God's mind, before the foundation of the world, (Eph. 1:4) and we are not Plan B or an afterthought with Israel's rejection of Christ. We serve the purpose of bringing about God's purpose for making a people for Himself into one, new Man. (Eph. 2:15) When you come to understand who and what exactly the Church is, then you will see the ludicrousness of the idea, that the Church must then be 'purified' by the Tribulation, in order to become 'acceptable' to God in any form or fashion. Christ, who perfectly fulfilled the law (Gal. 4:4-5) perfectly in His life and death, paid it all on the Cross...and then said, 'It is finished' (John 19:28-30). If we are truly the Body of Christ, then what more can WE add to what Christ has already done?

Nothing.

Furthermore, it's not even tribulation that purifies us...

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. **1 John**

**3:2-3**

## **The Beast(s)**

In reading Revelation 13, there speaks of two beasts that wrap up the final seven years of mankind on the earth. The first beast comes from the sea and is a political leader we know as the Antichrist. The sea is representative of the 'sea of humanity' and is largely seen as being the Gentile nations. (Dan. 7:2-3; Rev. 17:15) The sea is always tossing to and fro, just as the Gentile nations rise and fall, and have traded power many times over, during the last 6,000 years. The Antichrist is the 'rider on the white horse' as mentioned in Revelation 6:1-2. He comes in at a time of unprecedented peril and uses that emergency as a means to consolidate his power over a ten-nation confederacy at first, and then the world. Foreshadows and types of the Antichrist include Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, and Antiochus Epiphanes. (Gen. 11:8-11; Daniel 7:7-8, 11, 23-25, 8:23-25, 9:26, 11:36-39; John 5:43; Rev. 6:1-2, 13:1-8)

The second beast comes from the "earth", which is the opposite of the sea. Only Israel has remained in covenant relationship status with God and has not changed in roughly 4,000 years. This is not to say they didn't always keep their end of the covenant, but in God's purpose, they have been. (Gen. 15; Jer. 31:31-40) The 'land' is linked to stability and relates back to the nation of Israel. The second beast is the False Prophet, and he directs all people to worship the first beast through lying signs and wonders. (Rev. 13:11-17; 2 Thess 2:9-11) The Jews would never accept a Gentile as their messiah, but Jesus states that in the future, they would, which means that there first has to be a Jew who would deceive his own into believing it. (John 5:43) Although not clearly delineated in Scripture, he should figure largely in the rebuilding of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple, in which the Anti-Christ comes in halfway through the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel (ie...the Tribulation) and commits the 'abomination of desolation'. (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:14; 2 Thess. 2:4)

### **Assessment**

God's plan made a hopeful beginning.  
But man spoiled his chances by sinning.  
We trust that the story will end in God's glory.  
But, at present, the other sides winning.  
*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Throughout man's short history here on planet earth, Satan has served both as a hindrance, and an enabler of man's fallen nature. Where God has raised men and women up to do His will, Satan has reacted in opposition. But Satan's main sphere of influence is not in immorality or crime (because man can do that all too well on his own), but in regards thwarting the truth of God's word. Satan didn't go to Eve with an out and out lie, but in a question. He came at Jesus during the temptation with misquoted Scripture. He comes at people with half-truths, and takes the truth there is, and twists it but a little...just enough to get you going down the wrong path. And as

noted in Genesis 3, Isaiah 14, and Ezekiel 28...Satan is a powerful, beautiful, intelligent, and a master of deception.

But Satan is not omnipotent, and he is always limited to the technology of man's current state. So, when we look back in the Garden of Eden, Satan could only approach Eve in a manner that was fitting for that time. Satan could only inflict on Job, first, by what was allowed by God, and secondly, what was available to him in that day. As noted by the Apostle Paul, he used Jannes and Jambres in [2 Timothy 3:8](#) to counterfeit some of the signs Moses did in his attempt to persuade Pharaoh. In Daniel chapter three, where the people are forced to worship the image of Nebuchadnezzar (which foreshadows Rev. 13) on the plains of Shinar, again, Satan was limited to the technology of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

But there was a time in the ancient world, when the restraints were loosed, and for around roughly 1,500 years, man was limited only by the rule of his conscience. The angelic hosts interacted in a much more visible and physical way with humanity in this time leading up to Noah's flood, which ultimately proved to be a disaster. (Gen. 6:1-7) Not much detail is known about this Antediluvian time from the pages of Holy Scripture, but what conjecture there is, comes from Apocryphal books such as [Enoch](#) (chapters 6-8). [Note: take this only as a potential historical reference, not as inspired scripture] The fallen angelic hosts, possibly in an attempt to fast-track man's technological progress, introduced alchemy, metallurgy, and weaponry to mankind. And from what we do know according to Scripture, is that things got so bad, both on account of man's depraved nature, and the supernatural intervention by the fallen angels, that God destroyed the human race (save 8) by water. Fast forward 4,500 years, and we are again at a point in time, when the restraints of technology have been loosed, and man is increasingly achieving almost all the things he sets his mind towards. (See Gen. 11:6)

From 1900 onward, the pace at which technology has been increasing is doing so at a frightening pace, and man's goal now is set on [redefining](#) what it is to be human, and defeating death itself, apart from God. We have entered a time again when the restraints of advanced technological knowledge are being removed. Add that knowledge to man's depraved nature, and Satan's plan to corrupt all of mankind again are all coming together. If Satan is limited to the technology of our day, and we can make weapons of mass destruction, space flight, mapping the human genome, and create artificial life...then we are truly entering dark days. But all of this should come together in the form of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) system becoming self-aware known as '[the Singularity](#)' (think Skynet) and with the merging of technology [into](#) the human body. It's not hard to imagine that Satan could [manipulate](#) an artificial system for his own purposes. Whereas the idols of the past were mute and deaf, (Hab. 2:18-19) there is coming an idol who can think and talk and is the zenith of the idolization of Satan himself.

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the

beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to **give breath** to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. **Rev. 13:14-15**

Just like Jannes and Jambres going against Moses before the Pharaoh, Satan is limited in his ability to mimic God's supernatural power. Satan can't create life, but he can manipulate what is already in existence. And he is **granted** power to 'give breath' to the 'image of the beast', which means that whatever this image is, it will come to life. (Rev. 13:15) This idea may be what Paul via the Holy Spirit was alluding to in 2 Thessalonians 2:11, in which God causes those who reject Christ to fall for the strong delusion. And we live in a day and age when the masses have been well-conditioned by Hollywood and a godless entertainment industry for the better part of 70 years, to fall hook, line, and sinker for. This delusion, which causes one to take the 'mark of the beast' and subsequently dooms the bearer of the mark to the Lake of Fire forever, will be so powerful that even the elect would fall for it, if possible. (Matt. 24:24)

The Antichrist, who is called by numerous titles in Scripture [man of lawlessness, worthless shepherd, son of perdition] rises to power in the aftermath of the Rapture of the Church. Once the Restrainer's (the Holy Spirit: John 15:26, 16:7-10) ministry of restraint is removed from the earth, both the violence of nature and the basest passions of mankind will be unleashed. We see this described by Jesus in the escalating birth pangs of Matthew 24, which mirror what John saw in the Revelation 6 Seal Judgments (1-4), by which are let loose when Jesus opens them. The Antichrist will not appear to be evil at first but will appear as a great deliverer in a time of crisis. But even great Gentile leaders who inspire the masses, have never appeared to the Jews as THE messiah. This is where the second beast (the Jewish False Prophet) comes in and convinces by signs and wonders (1 Cor. 1:22) that this Gentile is the one whom they were seeking all along. I contend, although I admit this is speculation on my part, that he is able to do this by two things: by twisting scripture to a largely secular, and biblically illiterate Israel, and secondly by appeasing the Orthodox crowds (after the wars of Isaiah 17; Psalm 83; Ezekiel 38) and is able to get the temple rebuilt on a largely destroyed temple mount.

At the mid-way point of the Tribulation, a fierce spiritual battle ensues, and Satan is forever cast out of Heaven. In his fury, he enters his man Antichrist, and proceeds to kill the Two Witnesses and then enters the Temple declaring himself to be god. (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 11:7, 12:7-12; 2 Thess. 2:4). The Antichrist is only the second in person in Scripture, to actually have Satan himself possess him. He is only the second of two men having borne the title of 'son of perdition'; with Judas Iscariot being the other. (Luke 22:3; John 13:27) (John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3)

## **Conclusion**

As Adam was once given dominion over the earth in the Garden of Eden, Satan now manages the earth as a squatter-steward since Adam's fall into sin. (Luke 4:5-6) But

Satan has been limited in what he could do. (Job 1:7-12) The Antichrist will be brutally efficient in how he manages this new system, because he will have Satan's full approval and will be so effective and so powerful in its abilities to manage everything on the planet that his rule will seem impossible to challenge. This brings to mind Christ's teaching that we cannot be both friends with the world, and friends with God. (John 15:19) We see that surveillance and economic technology rapidly advancing today. But this satanic control will be short lived. Satan will only have seven years in which to try and finally thwart God's plan, but since the Church was previously removed to heaven, that leaves only Israel for Satan to focus his fury on. (Matt. 24:15-22)

He will attempt to first have all Jews take the mark of the beast, but 144,000 are already sealed by God, (Rev. 7:1-8) and these presumably go forth and share the Gospel to the rest of Israel and the world. Following this, there is a slaughter of the saints by which Satan is again, granted authority to overcome them. (Rev. 7:9-17, 13:7) Two-thirds of the Jews will be purged, and only one-third will make it through and preserved to the end. (Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2-3) Although that seems bleak for the Jews, God's punishment is meant as chastening to bring them back to Him, but He will utterly destroy all the nations from where they have been scattered. (Jer. 30:7-11; Rev. 19:11-21)

And so Satan's unrestrained reign will last for only these seven short years, and Christ will return with His Saints, to judge the world and cast the two beasts into the Lake of Fire for a thousand years. Satan is cast into the abyss for the same time and is then loosed at the end for a short season at the end of that thousand years (Rev. 20:7-10) to gather the unrepentant peoples for one last battle before being destroyed by fire, and cast into the Lake of Fire for all of eternity. And while it appears that the enemy is currently winning and the days are dark, we know ultimately the kingdoms of this world, the enemies of Christ, and our great adversary Satan, will be overthrown by the Lamb of God, who will reign in power and glory forever and ever, Amen.

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**

## The Covenant with Many

Many theologians have often speculated as to what the covenant in Daniel's 70 Weeks prophecy means. Does it mean that it is an existing covenant, like the *1993 Oslo I Peace Accord* from which all future 'land for peace' deals are based on? Is it referring to Jesus Christ, as one who makes the New Covenant with the many? Perhaps it is a completely new one that is yet still future to us. I tend to lean towards the option three simply because the other two are not tenable. Here is the two verses in question:

“And after the sixty-two weeks  
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;  
And the people of the prince who is to come  
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.  
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,  
And till the end of the war desolations are determined. (vs. 26)

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;  
But in the middle of the week  
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.  
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,  
Even until the consummation, which is determined,  
Is poured out on the desolate.” **Daniel 9:27**

The reason I do not believe that the 'he' in verse 27 is Jesus Christ, is simply due to the basic rules of grammar. The object 'he' is and can only be applied to its closest antecedent of matching gender and number, 'the prince who is to come'...or else the entire passage is out of synch.

Robert Culver [explains](#) the correct meaning of this text as follows:

The ordinary rules of grammar establish that the leading actor of this verse is the Antichrist, the great evil man of the end time. . . . If the pronoun "he" were present in the Hebrew, a case might possibly be made for the introduction of an entirely new personality into the story at this point. However, there is no pronoun; only the third masculine singular form of the verb indicates that an antecedent is to be sought, and that of necessity in the preceding context. Usually, the last preceding noun that agrees in gender and number and agrees with the sense is the antecedent. This is unquestionably . . . "the coming prince" of verse 26. He is a "coming" prince, that is, one whom the reader would already know as a prince to come, because he is the same as the "little horn" on the fourth beast of chapter 7.

As to the idea that the covenant with the many is an already existing covenant, I also do not think it fits. Although it's tempting to try and squeeze the Oslo Accords (or some variation of it) into this passage as 'the covenant', I feel it does not work simply because,

the only successful part of the whole 'land for peace' façade, is that it has repeatedly failed without fail for the last 21 years. There simply will be no peace with the Muslim world, until they are rid of their hatred for the Jewish people and for Israel. Doesn't matter who signs what paper, or what is said, there is no peace without Islam fundamentally changing its views on Israel forever.

So, seeing as I believe it is something completely new, and something that will simply be too inviting for even the Jewish people to turn down, I decided to look at this from a macro-level view. I then asked myself, what potential events and scenarios could/would actually need to happen, for a covenant to even be needed.

### What Four Things HAVE to Change

What is the one thing that has eluded the Jewish state now for the last 65 years? **Peace and Security.** They want peace more than they want anything else at this point, and I believe that this one intangible thing they so crave, is ultimately, how Satan intends to destroy them.

And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. Daniel 8:25 (KJV)

So in order for the Jews to ever feel that secure as to let their guard down, some things would absolutely have to change.

First, the [European Union](#) would need to rise. Events in the US have stagnated diplomatically and politically, so that with the US leading the charge, nothing will change. The US under the last 47 years of both Republican and Democratic leadership, have still failed to recognize Jerusalem as the true capital of Israel. So new leadership is needed, and I believe that comes in the form of a resurrected, Roman Empire. But nature hates a vacuum, and the only reason that the EU would need to rise, is if they could no longer depend on the United States for either economic stability or military security.

Given our current economic state, something will absolutely have to give. A nation in as much [debt](#) as we are, simply cannot continue on its current economic trajectory indefinitely. In fact, by the time you finish reading this article, our national debt will have already jumped by millions of dollars. [If you're a slow reader, tens of millions] We are accumulating debt faster than we can ever hope to pay off, and even if we taxed every American, 100% of their income, there isn't enough Americans to pay this off in a thousand years.

The EU will need to be looked at by the world as THE voice of the west. That won't happen until it has the military strength to match its political rhetoric. The problem the EU has today is that they haven't needed a military since the end of WWII. But with the US on the ropes, and Russia and China rising, US allies are increasingly leery of solely relying on the US for their protection. They are actively beginning to refund their

defense programs, recruiting US military personnel, and actively pursuing and acquiring contracts with defense industries and weapons manufacturers.

But the EU has been struggling financially when it switched over to a single currency. In order for them to fix their present situation with the [PIIGS](#), they might need to break down their financial structuring into regions rather than keeping it as a whole. Here are some potential options they might use to do an economic and defense course-correction:

- a. Divide the EU up into regions with similar economies, and tailor the currency to fit the region, rather than the other way around.
- b. Transform NATO into the European Defense Force.
- c. Find alternatives to Russian energy.

Secondly, the [Union for the Mediterranean](#) would need to be given more precedence, authority, and reach. The three primary issues that the UfM is focusing on are: energy/alternative energy, water (pollution and desalinization), and immigration. But the UfM will need the ability to reach into North Africa for cheap labor and access to oil rich regions.

And lastly, the Israeli/Palestinian/Muslim relation would have to fundamentally change. The EU is currently walking a fine line between appeasing the Muslim world, and not completely alienating Israel. The EU has also not had to make any of the hard choices as of yet, leaving the Americans to make a fine mess of the Middle East (ME), which has kept the heat off of them for the time being.

### Current Geo-Political Climate

The Muslim world will not cooperate or is unlikely to cooperate with the West so long as Israel remains in her land. Shuttle diplomacy has had forty-plus years to try and resolve the differences in the ME and has failed every time. Currently, Israel has zero room for political maneuvering with the Islamic world. Israel will remain on guard and unwilling to let her defenses down until there has been a radical transformation in the current state of affairs in the ME.

Given the current hostile environment towards Israel in the ME, what could change the current political-cultural climate there? The event(s) would have to be of such a global nature, that Islam will be forced to change or be removed altogether. These events could include:

- The Rapture of the Church
- The threat of an Extinction Level Event (ELE) such as a comet, asteroid, solar storm, etc.

- The definitive and directed contact at the national level with extraterrestrial entities.
- Regional war that decimates Islamic nations

There are two regional wars in which both near and far threats to Israel's existence are done away with. These events could effectively either make Islam a non-factor or defeat those nations in such a manner that Islam no longer has any appetite for war.

a. *Possible*: Psalm 83

b. **Certain**: Isaiah 17 and Ezekiel 38-39

These might all seem fantastical at the moment, but we should try and remove the normalcy bias from our thinking that says that just because it's never happened, doesn't mean it won't or can't happen. Remember that Satan is just as much behind secular humanism, as he is Islam...so he can at will, manipulate these doctrines of demons at will to accomplish his agenda.

#### Potential Options for a Covenant

Summarizing, we know that things are not going to change until these things transpire:

1. The EU must rise (which means the US declines)
2. The UfM must be solidified and emboldened.
3. Israel and the Islamic world must resolve their differences either through war or through some global event that fundamentally changes life on earth.

For the sake of argument, if the above criteria is met and things do radically change, what could the EU (as the rising power) do to lure Israel into a 'covenant with the many'? They could:

- Offer the Rotating-Presidency of the UFM to Israel for a set number of years.  
[Israel is already a member]
- Offer Israel a chief seat as a member of NATO/European Defense.
- Offer membership into the EU.
- Offer to allow the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

What could seal the deal? Any or all of the above could be offered to Israel as an enticement to make Jerusalem an international city. If Israel joins the EU, they could

also make Jerusalem its headquarters without Israel having to 'cede' sovereignty of it. But Israel will not do this first until the Islamic threat is removed.

Two things we do know, is that Satan [controls](#) the world at this present time, and Satan can manipulate these current schemes however he wishes, because he controls them. Think about it this way...Satan is the author of and manipulator of Islam. Islam has been the single biggest driving force behind ALL of Israel's problems since she became a nation again. It has caused Israel to be the single biggest pariah on the planet, because other non-Jewish nations don't want to have to deal with the Islamic fallout.

When Islam is in a position of weakness or in decline or not able to exert its force, it can get along with Jews. We know that Israel will not divide Jerusalem, but they might be open to headquartering an international or regional government there, such as: UfM, EU, UN, or NATO (or whatever NATO becomes). This would probably necessitate a deal that allows them to rebuild their temple either in place of, or next to the Dome of the Rock. I believe that is why Jerusalem is regarded as both '[Sodom and Egypt](#)'.

Whatever that powerful entity is, I believe the Antichrist becomes the head of it. The biggest roadblock to their temple being rebuilt, is Islam...and once that is effectively dealt with, I don't think it will be an issue anymore. This may be why the world is focused on Jerusalem while the Two Witnesses are preaching there, because this powerful entities' headquarters is there. After 1,260 days, the Antichrist is finally allowed to kill them, and why the world will have access to see their bodies in the streets for 3 1/2 days before they are '[raptured up](#)'. It is right after killing the Two Witnesses, that the Antichrist 'proves' that he has the credentials to enter into the Temple and declare himself to be god.

At least, that's how I see it all going down.

Maranatha!

## The End of All Things

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. **1 Corinthians 15:22-25**

It's amazing to me (but not surprising), that there are so many views out there on the study of Eschatology (study of last things). I tend to harp on this a lot, but only because the confusion is rampant amongst Christianity, and in growing number, amongst Evangelicals. While most of the world could care less, here we are, squabbling over which view is right or which view is wrong. Now, I'm not saying that the squabbling is unwarranted, because there are very legitimate reasons why having the proper understanding is important, but the fact that there is squabbling and division amongst Christians over this, is telling in and of itself. And if this one topic is so 'divisive' that congregations abandon the study altogether, then Satan's strategy of *putting to bed* the discussion altogether, has in large measure, succeeded.

Let me just state in brief summary, why there are different points of view on this topic, and why it matters in the long run.

The early Church started out almost exclusively Jewish. I mean, Jesus and the Apostles were all Jews, and Jesus instructed his disciples prior to His death, burial, and resurrection, to 'only go to the lost sheep of Israel'. (Matt. 10:5-6) Even after the resurrection and the ascension of Christ, we have in Acts 1-2, Peter preaching to the crowd of Jews gathered at the Temple for Pentecost, and about 3,000 Jews came to faith that day. (Acts. 2:41) In reading, we don't necessarily see the amount of time that transpires over the book of Acts, but it's around forty years. So, in a nutshell, the Church went from being exclusively Jewish, to increasingly not Jewish. Compare Matt. 13:8 (written to a Jewish audience), to Mark 4:8 (written with a Gentile audience in mind), and you can see that Christ foresaw this transition.

From then (the cross plus forty years) to about the third century, we have a transformation taking place within the body of Christ. Jerusalem is sacked by the Romans in AD70, and the temple is destroyed in the process. Both in AD70, and AD135, Jews are being displaced from their ancient homeland and spread out over the face of the earth. But simultaneously, the Church is spreading throughout the Roman Empire, albeit, undergoing periods of intense persecution. The Church is becoming less and less Jewish, and more and more Gentile. From a contemporary standpoint of a third century Christian theologian, the Jews were finished. After all, they crucified their Messiah, they rejected the Gospel, and because they had been hostile to the Gospel (Romans 11:28), two things were happening: they were hardening their hearts, and the Gentiles were increasingly assuming the promises and blessings that had belonged to the Jewish (Hebrew/Israel) peoples.

So one's Ecclesiology (the study of the Church) overwhelmingly drives your understanding of Eschatology. If one thinks the Church is Israel, well then that really and fundamentally changes how you view the prophetic passages concerning the end times. And hindsight is usually a perfect 20/20, and it's easy for us today (20 centuries removed) to sit back and point fingers at the early church fathers for allowing this to happen. They had a lot going on back, and were at that present time, dealing with varying levels of persecution, as well as attacks over core doctrines by the Judaizers and later the Gnostics who were trying to hijack the new Christian faith.

So, there was a lot of confusion over not just eschatology, but over a lot of subjects and doctrines within the Scriptures. The Church would not even begin to recover some of the basic understandings of our faith until the time leading up to the Reformation. I will caveat that previous statement by saying, there has always been remnants who were saved, and had a good working knowledge of Biblical doctrines, but I'm speaking more for the majority of the body of Christ. We just have to remember a couple of things about back then: not everyone had a bible (complete or otherwise), and nobody had 20 centuries of teachings to glean over and learn from.

While the Reformation era certainly had its positive highlights, it still carried over with it, a lot of baggage from the predominantly Roman Catholic Middle Ages. Like a man awakened from a long slumber, the Church was 'getting its wits' from the 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries. There was the good (Five Sola's) and the bad (growing Protestant anti-Semitism) that came from that era, and they certainly didn't have it all figured out...especially in the area of Bible prophecy. The reason for that is, Israel had not yet been brought back as a nation. People had no concept of when they were, on God's calendar of time. People still travelled at the speed of horse, and general knowledge (while growing), was still being hashed out at the philosophic, economic, and theological levels.

It wasn't until the Dispensational movements in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries that believers would begin to grasp where we were on God's calendar. There is no secret formula or creating anew of doctrines or teachings, it is simply to treat the entire Bible equally when it comes to interpretation. When you do this, the grandeur and beauty of the Bible becomes even more relevant and understandable when placed in its proper context. When you do this, you are understanding one, fundamental truth that puts into perspective ALL doctrines that are contained within our Bible, and that is, the Bible was not written by men, for people of a specific era, but was written by inspiration of God, who exists outside of time, for all mankind, in all era's. John Nelson Darby didn't invent some kooky new doctrine in his mother's basement, he simply rediscovered (just as the Reformers had done a few centuries before), the fundamental truths that had existed in the Bible all along. People don't accuse Martin Luther of creating justification by grace through faith...neither should they accuse John N. Darby of creating Dispensationalism. John N. Darby, C.I. Scofield, and Clarence Larkin didn't get their ideas from reading the "Late Great Planet Earth". All they had was their Bibles, and all they did, was interpret

all of it, with the same measure of interpretative integrity, that those before them had done when systematizing salvific doctrines.

So it is, that God works through a system known as “progressive revelation”. God didn’t give Adam the entire Bible to write, but spread it out over 1,600 years, and by over 40 different men on three different continents. There was a reason for this. God the Holy Spirit, moved upon men to write what He wanted them to say. He didn’t want the Bible to be exclusively a Jewish book, or otherwise Gentiles wouldn’t have contributed (Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4, and Luke who wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts), but He also didn’t want there to be any doubt about, from whom our common faith came out of (ie...the Jewish people). And I say all this to end by saying that we as a body of Christ, have been in a maturing process over the last 2,000 years. We know more now about the 1<sup>st</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries collectively, than many of them living in that time knew of themselves. A dispensational understanding of Scriptures, which in its essence, seeks to apply the literal style of biblical interpretation equally (but not woodenly), to all Scriptures, is the mature way to handle the passages contained therein.

That is not to say that someone who doesn’t have a dispensational understanding of Scriptures is not saved. It just means, that they (those who hold to other interpretational styles) will NEVER fully mature in a spiritual understanding of Scripture. This is not an attempt to belittle or put them down but is a theological truth. And why is that? Because ONLY the Dispensational view, treats the ENTIRE bible equally in its interpretation. We don’t categorize certain portions of Scripture, and then give precedence over which section has more weight or is more worthy of taking literally, than others.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

Do Dispensational teachers have it ALL figured out? Absolutely not. None of us will, this side of eternity. But I believe (and I’m not alone in this belief) that Dispensationalism is the best system we have for understanding our entire Bible, and gives the best understanding to Eschatology, (along with all the other doctrines) that can be understood this side of the Rapture. And I’ve heard those who say they’ve come out of Dispensationalism for one reason or another, either because of a bad experience in a dispensational church or from a certain dispensational teacher, and/or they couldn’t mentally or theologically overcome certain passages of Scripture from a Dispensational perspective.

This shouldn’t come as a news flash to anyone, but Dispensationalists are humans too, and are like everyone else, flawed sinners. I’m sure you could point to any given view (religious or otherwise), and find a few nuts tucked away somewhere. But that doesn’t mean the system of interpretation is flawed, it just means people are. And even if there are passages, we don’t fully understand just yet, doesn’t mean it won’t happen. For example, look at how the disciples reacted when they saw the resurrected Christ, even

after Christ told them on numerous occasions (Matt. 16:21) that He was going to Jerusalem to be accused, abused, crucified, and then rise again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day:

Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." But they were terrified and frightened and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took *it* and ate in their presence. **Luke 24:36-43**

How many times had Christ told them of what was going to happen ahead of time, and they still didn't understand? The truth is, there are things in Scriptures that we don't fully understand, but they will happen, not because John Nelson Darby or Hal Lindsey says so, but because the Bible says it's going to happen. Will there be a future Jewish temple in Jerusalem, one in which animals are sacrificed at certain feast dates? Yes. First, because Ezekiel's temple has never been built, and secondly, because the temple, as described in an exorbitant amount of detail in chapters 40-48, states it will. So by faith, I take that for what it says (even though I don't fully understand it) and I move on. I don't have to get hung about the axle just because I don't fully comprehend the eternal nature of the Godhead, to believe in the Triune nature of God, why would I let some other lesser issue, plunge my faith into skepticism?

### **Assessment**

Our adversary, Satan, has used a number of different tactics to try and thwart the spread of the Gospel as his primary modus operandi. First, he influenced the Jews and the Romans to kill the Christ, not knowing that he was doing exactly what God knew he would do, and planned for, for the redemption of not just the Jews, but all mankind. Secondly, Satan attempted to crush the fledgling church through intense periods of persecution, but that only caused it to grow even faster. Then, because persecution failed, he attempted to (and has been most successful in) the corrupting of the Church through false teachings. But now, at the end of our age, he again, is running out of time, so the corruption is being married up with the persecution because he knows his time is short. The two things he hates most, is our salvation by grace through faith (because of Christ's victory at the cross over death and hell), and the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the church, because that means (and he knows this) he has only around seven years left. I say around, because I don't know when exactly the Tribulation (or the Day of the Lord) will start, as the Rapture does not trigger the 70<sup>th</sup> week, but the peace treaty does. (See Daniel 9:27)

How do I know Satan hates the Pre-Tribulation Rapture and the prophetic nature of the Bible in general? Just look at what is attacked the most. Just look at what is ridiculed and mocked and belittled the most (both by the world and professing Christendom), and you'll see what Satan hates. This world is still under management by Satan (Luke 4:5-6;

Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19), and he will do whatever he can, to distract, divide, and destroy the faith of the Church today. In military terms (JP 3-13.4), Satan is using both the 'feint' and the 'ruse' as tactics to deceive the church:

**Ruses.** A ruse is a cunning trick designed to deceive the adversary to obtain friendly advantage. It is characterized by deliberately exposing false or confusing information for collection and interpretation by the **adversary** ←(this would be the Church)

**Feints.** A feint is an offensive action involving contact with the adversary conducted for the purpose of deceiving the adversary as to the **location and/or time** of the actual main offensive action ←(this would be the rapture of the Church)

The Church will be raptured into the air, which happens to be Satan's domain (Eph. 2:2) and will undergo the Bema Judgment (1 Cor. 3:9-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-11) along with those who had gone before us into death. When we are raptured, we step out of time and into the eternal state, at which judgment comes to the house of God first (1 Peter 4:17). We were judged for our sins at the cross with Christ, (Col. 2:13-15) and then ourselves undergo the Bema judgment for rewards at the Rapture, after which, depending on our own faithfulness and positions in God's administration, will administrate through Christ's judgment, the world and demonic hosts at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. (Daniel 7:9-27; Matt. 19:28, 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 6:3)

## Conclusion

Just like at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., God will again, break into human history when the time is right, and collect up those who make up the body of Christ, by our baptism and sealing into the body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Not only will He transform our lowly estates from mortal, to immortal, but He will bring with Him those who have already died so that we may all receive our glorification, because as Christ (who is the first fruits) came into His resurrection body, so too will we. (Phil. 3:21-22; 1 John 3:1-3) Some refuse to accept this truth, because they can only understand it in a matter of 'what's fair'. They argue, "why should only we get to escape what is coming?" "Why not any other generation?" "What makes us better that we should not have to suffer for our faith?"

It's not a matter of fairness, it's a matter of God's eternal purpose. I could ask, why did Christ have to come back in the year 4BC? Why did only that generation get to walk and talk with Jesus from Nazareth? God chose that time for a specific reason, and whether it's because there was the Pax Romana, by which would facilitate the quick spread of the Gospel, or because the Roman's themselves (as the ruling empire) would also have some future role to play, I don't know. I only know that's the way it happened. Likewise, God will again break into human history in an equally grand fashion, to retrieve those who have been added into the 'first fruits' (i.e....we make up the body of Christ), because of the order, in which God has deemed the stages of redemption. (See 1 Corinthians 15)

We are at the end of the ages. I say 'ages', as opposed to 'the age', because there have been a lot of '[ages](#)'. We (in the Church age) have existed from Pentecost until today, and

like all the other ages before us, had a beginning and at an unspecified time, will also have an end. Think of Pentecost as the beginning of that sliding scale, and we now (21<sup>st</sup> century believers) are at the other end of that sliding scale. Take a step back and take in the mental picture and you can see the world around us ramping up exponentially. You can see how it's only been within the last 100 years that we've had the technological breakthroughs, and the escalations of: war, disease, natural disasters, global governance, economic disparity, and a thousand other signs which point to a climactic conclusion, just over the horizon. On that sliding scale, we are a mere micron from reaching the end of all things.

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. **Eph. 2:4-7**

## The Fourth Apostasy

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. **1 Timothy 4:1-4**

After having been released by the Medo-Persian King Cyrus, the Jews under Joshua and Zerrubabel, began returning to Jerusalem around 538-37 BC. By the time Jesus was born in Bethlehem, some 500 years later, the rebuilt Jewish temple and the whole city had been fully operational for centuries. And aside from a three-year period in which Antiochus Epiphanes terrorized Jerusalem, each successive Gentile Empire (Persian, Greek, Roman) allowed the Jews to keep their temple and their worship intact. Fair to say, their religion was firmly entrenched by the time Christ came.

So why weren't their crowds thronging the manger where Christ was born? Why didn't Herod's priests break out into joyous exaltation at the news by the wise men when seeking the One 'born king of the Jews'? Why wasn't Jesus followed by the leading Rabbi's from his early childhood onward? Why was Jesus' unknown outside of Galilee and Nazareth? John the Baptist seemingly recognized Him as He approached him to be baptized, even calling Him the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." So why did he later ask when imprisoned, "are you really the Christ, or should we wait for another?"

Jesus performed miracles, but then told those not to call Him the Messiah. When He had huge crowds, He gave some of His harshest messages, often laden with parables which could not be understood by the masses. When He was around His disciples, He allowed them to recognize Him as the "Son of the living God", but He shunned all the Messiah worship from the crowds. The only day in which He publicly allowed them to openly worship Him as the Messiah, was on Palm Sunday, which should have been the one day they recognized Him for who He really was. It was exactly [173,880](#) days (or 483 years) from the day King Artaxerxes gave the commandment to Nehemiah to go and rebuild the [city and the walls](#) of Jerusalem. This meant that only Jesus could be the One who could fulfill the role of a [Promised King](#). And knowing what lie ahead, instead of rejoicing over Jerusalem, He wept.

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, [especially in this your day](#), the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." **Luke**

**19:41-44**

In less than a week, Jesus would be betrayed, arrested, falsely accused, beaten, spat upon, whipped bloody, mocked, tortured, and crucified between two thieves. The Jews demanded it, the Romans accommodated it, the guards relished in it, and the sky darkened and the ground shook upon the greatest travesty the world had ever known. The all-powerful God who created man out of dust and spoke the universe into existence by His sheer will, humbled Himself and allowed His creation to brutalize Him to an agonizing death on a cross made of wood, from the very trees He created out of nothing. His disciples were scattered, His family and friends demoralized, and His enemies rejoiced.

Yet, on the third day, He rose again, conquering death and hell in the process, and forever freeing sinful man from the perfect demands, of a perfect Law, he could never possibly keep. He died for the sins of mankind, and traded His own perfect righteousness, for our shameful sinfulness. Some call it the most lopsided, and unfair deal in all of human history. Yet, He did it [willingly](#), so that any man or woman who wanted, could also obtain the righteousness of God by heeding the drawing of the Holy Spirit and placing their faith and trust into Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection. That same Holy Spirit who drew, then also [eternally sealed](#) said believer until the Day of Redemption...guaranteeing that Salvation despite our continual unfaithfulness.

In the Old Testament, God had entered into a covenant with the Israelites, at Mt. Sinai, (1500-1400BC) in which they would be His people, and He would be their God; so long as they kept their end of the bargain up. [[Exodus 19:1-7](#)] But our Scripture records, three distinct periods, in which Israel's apostate behavior reached a culmination point;

- By Hosea's day (755-710BC), the Northern Kingdom (Israel) had fallen into deep [apostasy](#), and God allowed their enemy (the Assyrians) to conquer and carry them off into a lost history. See also [2 Kings 17:21-23](#)
- By Jeremiah's day (627-570BC), the Southern Kingdom (Judah) had also fallen into [apostasy](#), and God allowed their enemy, the Babylonian's, to carry them off into 70 years of enslavement.
- By AD33, the Jews had committed the greatest [apostasy](#), by murdering their own Messiah, and God allowed the Roman's to be His instrument of their destruction. In 70AD, they killed more than a million Jews, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and sending the Jews into 2,000 years of diaspora.

### **The Fourth Apostasy**

Hinting by way of question as to the length of time between the first coming and the second, Jesus asked the question '...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18:8) He already knew the answer to the question, but was conveying that Christianity's ebb and flow would have to happen, until a point was reached, in which this body too, seemed to be at a culminating point. It would seem as if Christ would never return...and many would turn away from the true faith and follow after whatever the world was selling.

The slide into apostasy was a gradual, yet consistent one. An element of the apostate has always been present since the beginning, but in the latter times, it would pick up momentum. Where true, Biblical Christianity once stood, is now being increasingly replaced by catchy slogans and marketing campaigns designed to increase attendance and generate an obscene cash flow. Where doctrinal truths are set aside to accommodate the masses. Instead of portraying the Gospel that saves, they present a highly commercialized, highly filtered, and utterly lukewarm (as not to offend) 'gospel' that teaches: all love and no judgment, all blessing and no repentance and turns the focus to self, instead of being on Christ, ignores or perverts the prophetic Scripture, and teaches the "kingdom is now". The Apostle Paul speaks to this in various places (2 Tim 3:1-9; Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Tim 4:1) as does Peter (2 Peter 2:1-22, 3:17), Jude (1-25), the writer of Hebrews (6:4-6), and also Jesus Himself (Rev. 3:14-22).

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 **2 Thess 2:3**

The last and final falling away, ([apostasia](#)) is a de-Christianizing of Christianity. It removes the exclusivity of salvation through Christ alone, and injects salvation by works and/or promotes a [Universalist](#) salvation, in which all paths lead to God. Although a complete falling away cannot occur this side of the Rapture (see [Matthew 16:18-19](#)), we can see modern Christendom trending heavily that way now. The push is to unite all of Christianity together under the banner of ecumenicalism...led by the "original" universal church in Rome under the Pope. The Charismatics, Prosperity preachers, and Emergent church devotee's seem already onboard with this. Their goal is to stifle dissent as being divisive. And although it's not an overwhelming problem at the moment, it is growing.

The Bible records that Christendom in the world does not progressively get better but gets worse. The last church age is not one of global conquest for Christ, but an abhorrent Laodicean church who is lukewarm and repulsive to Christ so much so, that He vomits them from His mouth. And although true Christianity cannot be completely overcome this side of the Rapture, we see that once the Rapture does occur, what remains of Christendom will quickly slide into that final, global religion headed by the [False Prophet and the Antichrist](#).

### **Assessment**

So, despite all the craziness going on in the world, why should this matter to us today? Because I believe in the coming months and possibly years, the true Church, or what remains of it, will be put under immense political, economic, religious, and societal pressure to conform, to embrace religious multiculturalism and ecumenicalism. Many pastors and denominations are even now laying down as to avoid the intense criticism and pressure the media, social networks, and activist have already brought to bear on them. Major denominations are already refusing to come out and take a strong stance against homosexual clergy and marriages within their own ranks. True, there will be pockets of 'spiritual' resistance who refuse to conform to this new, evolved Christianity-

'lite', but these are considered well outside of the mainstream conversation, and are ignored, and relegated as *Westboro Baptist*-types.

What remains of the true Church, should the Lord tarry, will have to consist of an underground network of home churches as currently exists in places like China and the Middle East. Currently, religious freedom in the United States, is largely becoming a façade, which only applies to everyone...except for the born-again Christian. And the whole world will line up behind the famous, the subject matter experts, the media mouthpieces, the polls, and the academic types who say that Christianity needs to evolve in order to stay relevant. (Apparently, this standard does not apply to Islam) But these famous people, these enlightened leaders will continue to point the blame at the true Christian, and state were it not for these hateful bigots who still cling to their 'guns and their bibles', the world would be a better place.

But what does Christ have to say?

“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...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 3:8-10**

## The Ghost of a Good Thing

Recently, I was thinking of the woman [Emily Letts](#), who gained her five, brief minutes of fame, by filming her own abortion. Through the murderous process, she smiles tentatively and tries to put a positive spin on the act of infanticide. Though admittedly, I could not watch it all, I kept thinking, what broken people we are. How it must truly grieve God to see all the horrible things we do to ourselves and to each other. I realize that she is just one of many examples I could have pointed out, but Emily to me highlights the level of total depravity we humans go through just to get a little attention these days.

Having recently just watched *Captain America: the Winter Soldier* (and liked), the theme was surprisingly relatable and apropos for life in America today. In the film, the American government's willingness to trade freedom for security, resonated eerily with all the issues we see going on in the news these days, over the NSA bugging, Internet monitoring and censorship, and mass data collection on everyone in the planet. Of course, in the movie, the superhero prevails. But it's failing, and all superhero movies failings, is the erroneous idea that evil comes in the form of giant monsters or villainous villains. The reality is that evil primarily comes wrapped in the name of tolerance, and often times moves at the speed of rust.

It's a slow rot, an infecting agent that spreads from one organism to another. Just as it was with Adam, who in defiance did eat, did not die the day he sinned, but began the [process](#) of dying from the moment the forbidden fruit entered his mouth, so it is with the death of this sin-stained world. We understand this process in the [Second Law of Thermodynamics](#), in which;

The entropy of an isolated system never decreases because isolated systems always evolve toward thermodynamic equilibrium, a state with maximum entropy.

Over time, everything breaks down.

In the movies, if some alien force came down and threatened to kill 50 million people, the *X-Men* would be lining up, or the *Avengers'* would be assembling to battle said foe. But when we allow 50 million babies to get murdered in the womb, well, that's just the way things are. Whelp can't do anything about that because some judges back in 1973 made it legal. Even though it is the acceptance of this supposed 'eventuality' that bothers us at our core, we just accept it as a fact of life. In make believe, the good guys win and the bad guys lose, but in reality, good is compromised and evil is ever pervasive.

This is why so many people go to movies these days; just to escape the routinely wicked life our existence here on earth has come to be. The constant grinding down of this world's system on Christian's, is particularly taxing. You know why it doesn't bother the unregenerate? Because their unregenerate. Their spiritually dead and aside from the clearly wrong things (to them that is), like murder (of the born), violence, corruption,

and theft, their discern-o-meter doesn't send up any red flags when a Planned Parenthood abortion mill sets up in a neighborhood. It has to be something really, overtly, unfathomable for them to wake up and see the wrong in what's going on.

Take the news coverage of Kermit Gosnell trial for example. I think if it were not for just a handful of journalists reporting on it, the world at large would have never known. But because the discovery of it was so ghastly and so revolting to the senses, was the only reason that anyone noticed at all. I guarantee you, there are plenty more 'Kermit Gosnell's' out there in the world.

But people today have become so deadened to the oppressive Babylonian nature of this world. It's as if they know deep down that things aren't right, but they can't put their finger on what that is exactly...so they escape. The term is called 'escapism', in which sentient beings, escape into a world of fantasy either through drug, drink, book or show. We do this because in our wishful thinking, we hope to escape the reality of everyday life; bills, taxes, problems, defeats, inevitability, and all the other things we dread dealing with even only if it is a temporary escape.

Do you really think that is how God designed it all to be? I don't.

Satan has sold everyone on this lie that life will just continue on as it always has, routinely and unexpectedly. The 'normalcy bias' lie is that the way life is today, is the way it should be. There is no heaven, no hell, and that is why you must take life by the horns and get what you can get out of today. And many people fall for that, and they pursue all their worldly lusts, only to find them vapid and unfulfilling, they get disappointed and restless. Satan keeps man constantly chasing after the ghost of a good thing, in hopes that they will finally reach their pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. But it is rarely comes...and even if it did, the pot of gold is a let-down.

Man is unique in that we are the only creatures created, that have a "God-Shaped" hole in our beings. The only person who can fill that is God and nothing else will satisfy that deep desire we have. Drugs and power can't fill it, religion can't persuade it, sex and money can satiate it, and things (clothes, jewelry, cars, houses) could never be big enough or fulfilling enough to fill that empty space in our hearts. Nothing can capture the longing and satisfaction that only a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ can bring...because nothing else fits. Like inserting the proverbial square peg into a round hole, it just doesn't work.

What makes Christianity so unique? It is night and day different from every other belief structure out there because Christ says, "I will take you as you are no matter how broken you think you might be, and I will fix you and make you new". Other religions, particularly cults, draw people in who are lonely or seeking, not through truth, but through friendship and in the form of identity...identifying with a group and feeling like you finally belong. And when they finally get their hooks in these lonely people, and then they bring out their crazy, ritualistic, works based method of whatever they deem

salvation is. Do this, don't do that, wear this, don't wear that, give up your money, time, friends, family, etc., etc.

People are so desperate to find meaning to their lives in the here and now, they are willing to do just about anything to either fit in or escape from the burden they currently carry around. That burden is loneliness, which is brought on by loss of identity and sense of purpose, which comes from being separated from the One who created them. It is indeed a heavy cross to bear. Christ said, 'come to Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, take my yoke for it is light'. In identifying with Christ, we have finally, for the first time in our life, the ability to identify with Someone who will never leave us nor forsake us. We aren't just followers, or disciples, or even servants, but we become family.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. **Romans**

**8:14-17**

### **Assessment**

I think part of the reason that so many out there in Christendom struggle with the concept of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, is that it seems too fantastical to fit into today's mundane existence. It seems too good to be true, and we as human beings have been let down so many times over the course of our lives, that it's easier to believe it's not real, than to believe that it is. We don't think we are good enough, or that we deserve that level of deliverance, but rather, we should suffer first and 'purge' our sins. But there it is in [scripture](#), and many go out of their way to do the mental gymnastics of making it more complex and more unattainable than it really is.

That is the "blessed hope" to me. It's not about escaping this world, although that's an added bonus, but it is about finally being in a reality where things are made right. And that reality can only exist for us when we are finally freed from sin. And our freedom from sin can only be by one Person, the man Christ Jesus. When He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me" ...He meant it. Not simply because He wanted to be exclusive and shut people out, but because His blood was the only thing in the entire universe, that could forever wash man's sinfulness away. And although as Christians we are forgiven and we have our sin-debt paid, we still struggle in the flesh...even the Apostle Paul (Rom 7 anyone?). But when He comes, we will finally become the people, who from the foundation of the world, were finally destined to become.

So, friend, if you're struggling today to find peace in your life, and joy in this fallen, and increasingly decaying world we live in, take note...

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**

**Maranatha**

## The Locust King

*The locusts have no king, Yet they all advance in ranks...Proverbs 30:27*

The book of Revelation has suffered more ridicule at the hands of liberal theologians and skeptics than any other book of the Bible except for maybe Genesis. Yet, even the hardest passages to take in light of this variable age of reason & information we live in, are not as far-fetched as some might think.

In dealing with all the re-visioning the Bible has suffered under the increasingly apostate “Christian” theological circles, I am reminded of the Sadducees in Jesus’s day. It would seem that they put the Pentateuch by Moses above all other OT books. They also [rejected](#) the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels. Most theologians today would like to simply explain away Revelation as symbolic apocalyptic literature and reduce it down to just a sentence that states: In the end, God wins.

But that’s not God gave us. He gave us specific details about a period of time that is scheduled to happen here on planet Earth. And even in these details, there are some things that are still a mystery to us. For those of us who hold take the Bible seriously, and hold to a literal, grammatical, and historical hermeneutical view of God’s word, we still wrestle with passages such as Revelation 9:11. Many scholars have come to these passages and tried to interpret them in light of our modern weaponry, such as helicopters or robotic drones. While it is tempting to try and superimpose our understanding onto these passages, it simply doesn’t do God’s word the justice it deserves. But that doesn’t mean we can’t know anything about it. So here is what we know and can reasonably determine (or speculate) thus far.

### Revelation 9:1-2

*Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit...*

The book of Revelation is symbolic in many areas, but the symbolism itself isn’t abstract or nonsensical, but whose meanings can be found in other parts of the scripture itself. So when we come to part of the scriptures that couldn’t be taken either literally and/or physically, as a star could not physically land on the earth, we look at the Bible to interpret the Bible and then the improbable comes into clear focus. These passages refer to angels and Satan in figurative terms, but clearly represent a real meaning behind the symbolism ([Job 38:7](#); [Isaiah 14:12](#); [Luke 10:18](#); [Jude 1:13](#); [Revelation 1:20](#); [Revelation 12:4](#)). In referring to a ‘star falling to earth’, it is referring to an angelic being coming to the earth as he was referred to as a ‘him’ and he was in possession of the ‘key to the bottomless pit’.

I believe it was Chuck Missler that first noted that a bottomless pit could easily reside within the center of the earth. As the earth is a sphere, and if at the center, every

direction from there would be up it would, by that very nature, have no bottom to it.

And as we have seen a dramatic increase in the [number](#) and [intensity](#) of volcanic eruptions in the last 20 years, it's not hard to imagine that smoke and ash from a large one (or multiple ones) could darken the skies and blot out the sun and moon for weeks on end all around the globe.

### **Revelation 9:2-6**

*Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth and to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.*

So right off the bat, we realize that these are not normal locusts, as they do not originate from smoke-filled pits that resemble great furnaces. Locust eat vegetation ([Joel 1:4](#)), but these locust were instructed not to eat the grass or any vegetation, but to inflict torment on those who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. When Moses was instructed by God to stretch out his rod and summon forth the [plague of locusts](#) against the Pharaoh, note the scripture's precise description of the event...

*They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt. **Exodus 10:14-15***

So not only are these not regular insects, but they're not mechanical or modern weaponry either. They are intelligent, sentient beings who as we will see later, act under the authority of their leader, [Abaddon](#).

What else is of interest is, that John notes that men will aggressively seek death, but can't find it. Does this mean that they won't be able to die? I imagine that if there were any truth to a *Zombie Apocalypse*, as it's been commonly called, it would be during this period. If someone puts a gun in their mouth and pulls the trigger, will they continue on grotesquely disfigured? I don't know, but perhaps part of the selling point of taking the 'mark of the beast' in the first place, is on the premise that it does something to the body that prevents death. So, then the specific purpose of the torment of these 'locusts' is in direct correlation to that.

### **Revelation 9:7-10**

*The shape of the locusts was **like** horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something **like** gold, and their faces were **like** the faces of men. They had hair **like** women's hair, and their teeth were **like** lions' teeth. And they had*

*breastplates **like** breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was **like** the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. They had tails **like** scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.*

If you want to see what is symbolic in Revelation, and what isn't, just look for the word "like". A 1<sup>st</sup> Century John is attempting to put to words what he is seeing, and to him, this is how they appeared. Because they appear so bizarre and well... bizarre, modern theological scholars have struggled with what exactly these might be representative of. They had human faces, breastplates of iron, and wings that sound like chariots when they move, have caused many to try and put a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective to a 1<sup>st</sup> century description. The only problem is, these aren't human. The closest we can come to these is found in mythology.

And I've been around modern military aircraft for the last 14 years, and I've never seen or even heard of anything even remotely resembling this type of supposed equipment. If it does exist, it is buried deep within the bowels of a [DARPA](#) complex somewhere. But that still doesn't explain how robotic or mechanical equipment followed and were led by a fallen angel and came out of a bottomless pit. I believe for the time being, we will just have to take John's word for it as he saw them.

### **Revelation 9:11**

*And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.*

There was a time in man's history, when fallen angels intermingled with man in an attempt to corrupt man's bloodline so much so, that a [Messiah](#) could not come from the line of man. These fallen angels were punished severely for crossing God's divine boundaries:

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; **Jude**

**1:6**

[Doom of False Teachers] For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

**2 Pete 2:4**

We know according to biblical and extra-biblical texts, that there were supposedly 200 "[watchers](#)" that intermingled with the seed of man. It would appear at least according to the strict reading of the text that those angels are still confined and will be, until the Day of Judgment. What we don't know, is how many **other** fallen angels prior to the Flood, or afterwards, crossed some other Divine barrier-line, and were confined by God to the abyss for such a day as this. We know according to Scriptures, that there were angels confined to the abyss, because the [Gospel of Luke](#) records as such.

Abaddon, or Apollyon (the Destroyer)...who along with the fallen angels will be released from the abyss during the fifth Trumpet Judgment. Remember that in a single night, one [angel](#) wiped out 185,000 Assyrians. But now (during the 5<sup>th</sup> Trumpet Judgment), they no longer have their might as angels, but are released as locust-like beings. These damned beings no longer have the power or authority to kill, but only to torment for five months. Why five months as opposed to six or seven? It would appear that their limited time is in preparation for the Sixth Trumpet Judgment because the text tells us 'one woe is past', and that the Sixth Trumpet is prepared for an army and supernatural beings *who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. (Rev. 9:13-21)*

## **Conclusion**

While we live in this modern age full of rational ideas and scientific analysis, it's hard for us to wrap our minds around certain things that we find in our Bible's...particularly, the supernatural. I don't pretend to understand all the book of Revelation 100%, but I do know that this is my understanding of Revelation 9. But I don't find myself alone in this category, because no one else can know with 100% certainty of it either this side of the Rapture. There are just things that aren't going to be known until they play out. In other words, my grip on this interpretation is a loose one...but it makes sense to me.

## The Past is Prologue

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." **Genesis 11:5-7**

I've often wondered if any high-ranking members of the intelligentsia ever read Pre-Tribulation prophecy forums? Chances are, they don't. But if they did, they might understand why the world is moving in the direction that it is. They might understand that all that we see has already been foretold by the prophets of old. Like the Pharaoh of old, they have hardened their hearts, and their minds have been blinded by the god of this age. [2 Cor. 4:3-4] Since they don't, we as a society, are doomed to repeat the same mistakes because the powers that be, think they can outsmart God.

That which has been is what will be,  
That which is done is what will be done,  
And there is nothing new under the sun.

**Ecclesiastes 1:9**

So, in the off chance that there are high ranking members of the elite reading the Omega Letter, let me put my own personal assessment of where I see the world in 2020 out there. I won't put 2030 out there, simply because I don't think we'll be here by then, but here is where I see things going in the meantime, simply off the way the Bible states they are going to go.

1. Europe will rise to fill the void of a declining US. This seems counterintuitive to almost all the 'experts' out there, but only because they're looking at the current problems the Euro (currency) and Euro-skepticism (rising nationalism) are currently having within the EU. But at some future point, a technology will be developed (or is currently in the process of), which will provide the currency solution to the EU, and they will become the economic juggernaut of the global economy. The decline of the US will force the EU to fill that role. [Daniel 2:31-43, 7, 9:24-27; Rev. 13:1-9]
2. The decline of the US, will by necessity, result in the UN relocating outside the US and hand over the American seat on the Security Council to that of a combined EU one, which would also knock off the two individual seats France and the UK currently hold. So, of the five seats (US, Russia, China, France, and UK), three will go to the EU, and Russia will abdicate their seat (give up or will be forced too over Ukraine) and China (over current South Pacific belligerencies). In other words, the EU will hold control over the Security Council, but will in fact, represent what was the United States, Australia, Canada, and all of Europe. A

combined population of over 1 billion. If the structure remains the same, the other two seats could be given to Brazil and India to offset China, or to an oil rich nation like Saudi Arabia. A unique and potential scenario could be that Israel is given a seat at the big boy's table, which may be after a Psalm 83/Ezekiel 38 scenario. But there isn't anyone currently on the Non-Permanent Member Council list that would bring her on as a Permanent Member individually.

3. The rise and morphing of NATO into an EU Defence force. "Peace and Security" is literally written into the founding documents of the Charter for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO has two aspects to it, a political one, and then a military one (for when diplomacy fails). The infrastructure for NATO is very developed and has in its charter 28 member nations. With over a decade of participating in all levels in the War on Terror, NATO has refined and honed their military capabilities. We can already see the merging of military leadership both here, and [abroad](#). If the US collapses economically, it wouldn't be a stretch to see US military power being bought out or brought over to augment and fill the ranks of NATO.
4. The 'Kings of the East' will continue to rise in power but will not move against the west until an appointed time, inside of the Tribulation. The [Asian Pivot](#), was meant as a ruse to preemptively warn China from getting too aggressive, but seeing as they hold our purse strings, not much more than stern language will come from this side of the Pacific. If the US collapses, former US allies like Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines will have to rethink their strategies and realign either behind China or India. [Rev. 9:14-17, 16:12]
5. Despite Israel's enemies' best efforts to destroy her, their attempts to wipe Israel off the map will cause them to be involved in three future wars: Psalm 83/Isaiah 17, Ezekiel 38-39, and Revelation 19. The first two remove Israel's near and far threats and enlarges her current borders beyond her current environs. The last is a global coalition that seeks to come against the Antichrist's headquarters (in Jerusalem) and end up trying to fight against Jesus Christ as He returns. [Zech. 14:1-15; Rev. 16:14, 16; Matt. 24:22]
6. The world will continue to move in a regionalist, globalist direction. By this, individual states will decline, and regions will align to become power demographics. See the rise in transnational groups taking dominance over individual ones: UN, EU, ASEAN, UfM, SCO, NAFTA, OPEC, etc.)
7. The single most important piece of power anyone on the planet has been information. Since technology was used to vastly increase that one resource, it is also the one thing that those who are in control seek to control 100%. That same technology that has enabled so much freedom of information, will also be used to turn that off, manipulate, or control it. Technology is being steered to become

compatible with all other systems, and once these systems are integrated; data collection, monitoring, and censorship will be in place to shut down freedom of speech everywhere.

8. Fiat currency will go the way of the public pay phone. Currency will go digital, with bio-metrics systems built into them that make identity theft and fraud a thing of the past. At some point, this will have to move 'the mark' into the user, to ensure that only those loyal to the system have access to the system. And whoever ends up controlling this system will be able to absolutely control who buys and sells anything. The removal of cash also reduces the black markets from operating outside of the boundaries of the aforementioned controlling agencies.  
[Rev. 13:16-17]

### **Two Points to Consider:**

#### Military Industrial Complex

The United States spent much of its first 200 years, really on par with the rest of the world in regard to weapons development and capabilities...even up through World War I. In fact, we would even be really slightly behind the European Central powers when it came to weapons development by WWI.

The American's didn't surpass the European's by means of technology; they did it by means of mass production. And it wouldn't be until we created the Atomic Bomb, and used it against the Japanese, that we achieved weapons superiority. The Military Industrial Complex and the Space Program then launched into massive research and production development in all areas so that the US would continue to dominate in: Land, Sea, Air, Space, and now Cyberspace.

But who did we end up fighting for the better part of 70 years?

Second and third world countries, with either antiquated weapons and/or untrained armies.

My question then is why?

With all the money we spent on technological advances, with enhanced intelligence capabilities, and 100% increase in global engagement: Humanitarian, Economic, Technological, Diplomatic, etc.... why did we get sucked into Korea? Vietnam? Beirut? Gulf War? Iraq War? Afghanistan? Etc. Apart from the Gulf war, the rest were drawn out, no-win scenarios. I mean, we won the battles wholeheartedly, but we lost the wars; or they were considered draws by nations that spent a fraction of what we spent on our build up since World War II?

Which leads to a subsequent question of why? Why did we spend so much money and energy building these gigantic weapon systems, only to get involved in rinky-dink countries where tens of thousands of our best and brightest, died? Did we not anticipate

that our enemies would resort to guerilla warfare since they couldn't compete with our vastly superior weapon systems?

### The Pattern

If you look past all the geo-political chaos, all the diplomatic hub bub and media clips, what is the one common theme that keeps reoccurring all over the Islamic nations? Actually, there are two common themes, but only one of which I'll focus on today. The first you know, is that a coalition is building against the nation of Israel. That's pretty obvious.

But what is happening in places like Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Iraq? What is being reported by the alternative press, but all but ignored by the mainstream press? It is nothing short of the final stages for the eradication and extinction of Christianity in the Middle East, or at least, that's Satan's end state. The truth is that Holy Spirit is still moving many hundreds to thousands to Christ through modern technology, dreams, and visions in a very real, powerful, way.

But as bad as Saddam Hussein and Moammar Gaddafi were, they are at least tolerant of Christians. As bad as Bashar Al Assad is, he still at least tolerated Christians. As bad as Mubarak was, he still tolerated Christians. But things are speeding up, and Satan is overturning his regional commands in order to bring in more radical, more violent leaders to officially purge an already spiritually oppressed people.

Now, pretend your Satan for a moment, and you know that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is true...but you have no idea when it will be. So what would you do? If I were him (and I'm glad I'm not), my first goal would be to establish my own Satanic caliphate. In order to do that, I would first remove any vestiges of my sworn enemy, Christians and Christianity, from my kingdom.

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." **Luke 4:5-7**

But we also know that God the Holy Spirit restrains Satan from completely enveloping the world. This means that Satan (as a finite being) is limited to when and where he can control. But we know he has [spiritual strongholds](#) over regional areas, and these areas are the ones he seeks to eradicate even the tiniest vestige of Christianity. This is also how I know the [Babylon](#) mentioned in Revelation, is speaking to the original Babylon...or a new, high, tech, and revamped version of the old one in the same location. Satan is seeking to establish a 'Christian-Free' zone that will be least impacted when the Rapture of the Church happens, so as to be least impacted by the sudden removal of millions of citizens.

Now marry together an advanced, world monitoring technology with a financial system that ties the whole world in together economically, along with the world's most powerful

military...which happens to belong to a nation that is suffering from an aggressive and rapid case of moral, ethical, financial, and spiritual deprivation, and you have a polygamous marriage made in hell. It will be a world superpower, energized by Satan himself, who can control all buying and selling, who can listen in on every conversation, every message sent online, and who has spent the better part of 70 years perfecting the art of crushing citizen uprisings, guerilla warfare, and asymmetric battles ...and you see what the saints in the Tribulation will be up against.

It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. **Rev. 13:7**

**Our time here is short, and it's best to get right with the Lord now, before the great, and terrible Day of the Lord.**

## **The Pre-Post Tribulation Rapture**

I think I stirred the pot with last week's article. It probably didn't help things that I dropped it into several non-pre-trib forums on Facebook. Talk about vitriolic rhetoric on a grandiose scale. At least confirmed my beliefs that all the other views, regardless of how much they differ from each other...will all line up against the Pre-Trib view lock-step. So what I'm about to write then might seem a bit controversial but...the Bible teaches both a Pre and Post-Tribulation coming of Christ.

## **Pre-Tribulation Rapture**

Chronologically speaking, Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is one of the first, if not the first letter written to first century believers. In it, Paul explains a revelation that had been directly given to him from Christ. (1 Thess. 4:15; Gal. 1:11-12) Paul shares that at a future point in time, Christ would return in mid-air, and the dead in Christ would rise first, then those who are alive, are translated from mortal, to immortal and go to be with Christ forever. On at least three separate occasions in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul reiterates that we are not appointed to wrath, but only those who have rejected Christ, will be. (1 Thess 1:10, 2:15-16, 5:9) In fact, in all Paul's epistles, there is a consistent theme that when boiled down to the bare essentials state;

- a. Deliverance will come before the coming wrath
- b. The dead would rise first in resurrected bodies, and the living would be transformed from mortal to immortal all in less time than a 'blink of an eye'.
- c. That we as believers, should take comfort in seeing the coming 'Day of the Lord'

Dr. David Reagan had this to say about it:

Finally, the day of the Lord occurs at the same time but is not exactly the same as the "day of the Lord Jesus." This exact phrase is found two times in scripture (1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14). This seems to refer to the time that Jesus comes for His own and matches with "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:8) and the "day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6) and the "day of Christ" (Philippians 1:10; 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:2). Six of these seven references point to the time that Jesus will come for the saints at the beginning of the tribulation. As a rule, these references refer to rejoicing and not wrath. The reason is simple. For although the inhabitants of earth will be experiencing the wrath of God, those taken from the earth at the beginning of the day of the Lord will be experiencing heaven. ([Source](#))

## Post-Tribulation

I should probably add in Pre-Wrath and Mid-Tribulation believers as well in this group, because they tend to pull a majority of their end-times source documents from the Gospels, Revelation, and the Old Testament, but tend to downplay what the Apostle Paul had to say in his epistles. These believers focus heavily on the Olivet Discourse chain of events, but in particular to Matthew 24: 29-31, and 36-44. The '[Day of the Lord](#)' is viewed as after the Tribulation, but directly preceding the return of Christ at the Second Coming. Their view, in a nutshell is:

- a. Christian's will enter into the Tribulation because we don't deserve to escape what's coming.
- b. Christian's will have to endure to the end, or at least to the end of the Sixth Seal Judgment (for Pre-Wrath) in order to be Raptured.

Now, when post-Tribulation believers do reference Paul's epistles, it's almost exclusively centered on 2 Thessalonians 2...and they do make a fine mess of it. One would have to do all sorts of mental gymnastics to really grasp what Paul was saying, if in fact he was promoting a Post-Tribulation Rapture from their explanation of it...despite the fact, that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians, in an effort to refute the notion that the Thessalonians were taught by a false teacher pretending to be Paul, that they were in the 'Day of Christ' already.

If you believe the Rapture is post-Trib, then you by default have to pull heavily from the Olivet Discourse, the Old Testament, and anything beyond Revelation 4.

## Assessment

Like I said, the Bible teaches both views. Which one applies, also depends on who you are.

For the **unbeliever**, Paul wasn't speaking to you. Therefore, the Pre-Tribulation Rapture will happen and leave you here on Terra Firma to enter into the worse period of time mankind has ever faced. (Matt. 24:21-22) From your perspective, Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, and Revelation 6-18 then become very applicable to your situation. If you remain until the end, and still have not converted, your rapture is not being caught up, but being caught away, into eternal damnation. (Matt. 13:37-43)

But for the **believer** now, in this waning age of the Church, we who are alive and remain will one day, be surprised and/or relieved to finally hear that Trumpet call, and the Shout and will know, that we are about to go be with our Lord and Savior in glory.

Now since we are in the Church age and have been since that first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended down as 'cloven tongues of fire', (Acts 2:1-4) what Paul had to say, is of the utmost importance. Paul was given what we would call, *Progressive Revelation*. In that he was given new information that had not yet been revealed to anyone else...even the other apostles (Gal. 1:1-2, 11-12). But this revelation is not Plan B, or some emergency action on God's behalf, but had been in God's mind and purpose from before even the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:3-6) His Gospel message, as found in 1 Cor. 15:1-5, his plans of salvation (Rom 10:9-11), and his revealing of exactly what happens to the believer at the moment of salvation (Eph. 1:11-14) were not only shocking, but different than what even the Apostle Peter new at the time of the Pentecost when he was preaching to the crowd of Jewish men. (Acts 2:38-39) Another way to think about it is like this; progressive revelation is why the Bible was written by 40 different men, spanning over 1,600 years...God didn't reveal everything to Adam...although He could have.

And that is also why both views (Pre and Post) have such strong feelings about why they view their position to be correct. Both views can quote scripture with the best of them, and both can argue passionately about why they think their position is right. But as I've said before, and I'll say it again...only one view is going to actually happen.

So, which one will happen for the believer? Are we destined to go through all, or part of the time known as Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week?

Seeing as the Apostle Paul was given the ministry to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Gal. 2:7), and most of modern Christendom is or came out of the Gentile nations, it would appear he would be speaking to us. And really, in this dispensation, once a person becomes a Christian, he/she is neither Jew nor Gentile anymore IN Christ, (1 Cor. 10:32; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) but have become a 'new creation'. Just as we were born as sons and daughters of the first Adam, in Christ, we become adoptive sons and daughters in the Last Adam. (1 Cor. 15:45) In other words, we become a whole new race in Christ.

Now, it should be noted, that the Gospels were written as record of Christ's birth, life, ministry, and death...all of which occurred under the age of the Law. (Gal. 4:4-5). It wasn't until the moment of His death, that the temple veil was torn in two, signifying that the Holy of Holies was no longer exclusively just to the Jewish Priests, but to everyone. (Matt. 27:50-53) When you read through the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), you will find a version of Jesus's Olivet Discourse. In each of these, there are plenty of clues that should tell you, that what He's saying, doesn't apply to the Church (Matt. 24:15, 20-21) because the Church is not under Sabbath travel restrictions, neither are we exclusively in Judaea, nor do we preach the 'gospel of the kingdom'. We preach Christ crucified, Christ is our Sabbath, and we are from all over the world. Furthermore, the Post-Tribulation nature of Matthew 24, ties directly into the preceding

chapter, in which Jesus issued his final warning shot to those who had rejected His message and offer of the Kingdom;

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ” **Matthew 23:37-39**

We know according to Scripture, that it’s not until the end of the Tribulation that the Jewish people (those who remain) will cry out and finally recognize Jesus as their Messiah.

“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. **Zechariah 12:10**

The Gospel of John on the other hand, has no Olivet Discourse, but rather, has the Upper Room Discourse. This would be where Christ reveals to His disciples (minus Judas Iscariot), some ‘precious promises’ that ONLY applied to the believer.

- “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**
- But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. **John 14:26**
- No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. **John 15:15**
- Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: **John 16:7-8**

The Upper Room Discourse, is very, very, very different in both the nature of the discussion, and the intimacy in which it is entrusted to His disciples with. Even the timing of John’s Gospel (the last written) was well into the early church age, written somewhere around AD85. Then there is the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, which is the last book written. Interestingly, John is told what to write and even how to break up the

book (Rev. 1:19), and in so doing, he records 19 times, the use of the term 'ekklesia' which gets translated as 'church' or 'churches' in our English translation of the Bible. But 18 of the 19 references are all used in Chapters 1-3, and 22. The last use of 'ekklesia' in chapter 22, is only used in which John is instructed to give this message out to all the 'ekklesia'. But the term for church is used nowhere in context with anything that happens between chapters 4-21.

Instead, terms such as 'elect' and 'saints' are used to refer to those believers who are enduring the wrath that is being poured out upon it. These people are not in the Church, because the Church is already gone. That age/time/dispensation is already concluded at the 'catching up' of the Church. The exclusivity of the use of the word 'ekklesia' is now replaced with the use of more generic terms such as 'elect' and 'saints', which can also be found in the Olivet Discourses and the Old Testament. The word 'elect' is used in conjunction with the nation of Israel corporately (Isaiah 42:1, 45:4, 65:9, 65:22) and 'saints' individually (Psalm 37:28; Daniel 7:25; Rev. 13:7).

## **Conclusion**

So, coming to terms with the prophetic juxtaposition of the Bible, which teaches both Pre and Post Tribulation positions, I have become fully convinced, that those who hold to any other view than a Pre-Tribulation view are not any less Christian than those who do, they just remained confused on who they are in Christ, and what the timing and the purpose is of the Tribulation. In short, the Tribulation is the same period of time, which is also known as; Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week, the Time of Jacob's Trouble, and the time of the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl Judgments.

Just as the Jewish believer's in Jesus' day (and before) were expecting only one coming of their Messiah (as another Moses or David), and were caught asleep at the wheel; so too will those fail to distinguish between Christ's coming FOR His church at the Rapture, and His coming WITH His Church at the Second Coming. (Zech. 14:5; Jude 1:14; Rev. 19:7-8, 14).

Seeing as their will not be unity in belief on this subject until the Lord actually returns, there will remain a biased understanding for those who seemingly trade in their 'Blessed Hope' for that 'Woeful Anticipation' of what is to come upon the earth. The great Bible teacher Jack Kelley once said, "I wish people got Raptured according to their view of it" ...and in all fairness, I couldn't agree more.

## The Restrainer

Out of all the varying eschatological views, the Pre-Tribulation view is the strongest and most scripturally consistent advocate of God's dealings with man in the entire Bible. You can see it in typology, symbolism, and in both the OT and NT passages. It is found in the Prophets, the Psalms, the Gospels, the Epistles, and in Revelation. The Pre-Tribulation view remains the most scripturally consistent view within God's purpose and plan for man's redemption.

The Pre-Tribulation view argues that there is a future fulfillment to the prophetic text, the full Preterist view states it all happened in the first century. Every other view has to rely on extra-biblical sources, allegorizing, spiritualization, or other ways to get around the literal understanding of the passages. In regard to the Tribulation, the Futurist's bottom line is, although man will endure trials and tribulation in this life, God does not pour out His wrath upon His own.

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. **2**

**Thessalonians 2:5-8 (NKJV)**

### Restrainer Candidates

Below are the names I've seen used for identifying who people say the Restrainer is. I've also listed the main Eschatological views alongside to show which views hold to them. I also recommend this [article](#) for an even more in-depth view on all these.

1. The restrainer is the apostasy and revelation of the lawless one.
2. The restrainer was the Roman government.
3. The restrainer is the system of human government.
4. The restrainer is Michael the Archangel.
5. The Restrainer is the Holy Spirit working through the Church.
6. The restrainer is Satan.

### Issues

Rome: Amillennial/Preterist

The Apostle Paul was writing to a first century church who at that time, were under the persecution of Caesar Nero. Preterist and Amillennial devotees want very much for Nero to be the 'man of lawlessness' because it fits into their historical narrative that all

(or most) prophecy was finished prior to AD70. Their argument was/is that the Roman system and Nero's suicide prevented Nero from fully wiping out the early church. The major problem with this is that Nero wasn't destroyed in keeping with the passage in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 but committed suicide. Preterist and others have to rely on extra-biblical accounts to try and paint Nero as the Antichrist (Pliny the Elder, Suetonius) to get this. But this view is still perpetuated by the Roman Catholic Church, which allows that blame to be laid at the feet of dead, pagan Caesars and not on them.

#### Human Government: Amillennial/Post-Millennial

All governments are emplaced by God ([Romans 13:1-7](#)), and that it is only under God's sovereignty do they still wield control (albeit limited) over the earth, therefore God only allows them to do so much, and then He restrains them, or uses them to restrain evil. But since the days of Nimrod and Babel, human government has almost always been at odds against God and His plan of redemption for mankind. We know that at the Tribulation is a time unlike any other, as the entire world will fall under the sway of the ultimate, one-world government, which will be under the control of the Antichrist. (Rev. 13:7) Seeing human government as the restrainer of evil, (Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Ottomans, Nazi Germany, Communist Russia, Communist China, etc.) when they are one of the primary instigators of evil, is laughable. In fact, God does laugh at this. ([Psalm 2](#))

#### Revealing of the Lawless One: Post-Tribulation Rapture

I had to scratch my head at this one, but I've seen it repeated in numerous places. To come to this erroneous conclusion, one would have to do some serious reworking of most of the major terms and structures as found in 2 Thessalonians 2. For those who hold this view, the phrase 'taken out of the way' does not mean taken out of the way but means 'to come into being'. The Rapture is in conjunction with or right before the Second Coming. Confused yet? I was. ([Source](#))

#### **Who He's Not**

The only problem with the above three views, is that none of them could be the 'he' used in 2 Thessalonians 2: 7. The 'He' is used as a masculine personal pronoun, and is used in direct relation to the Restraint. Neither the Roman or human government, nor the revelation of the lawless one, could be referred to in that manner. The 'He' denotes a person, or sentient being and not a thing or system.

That leaves us with only three legitimate contenders:

1. Michael the Archangel
2. Satan
3. The Holy Spirit

Both Michael and Satan are angels, and they are neither omnipresent nor omnipotent. In other words, they are confined physically by both space and time.

### Michael the Archangel: Mid-Trib or Pre-Wrath Rapture view

The case for Michael being the Restrainer stems primarily from three sections of Scripture: Daniel 10:3, 20-21, 12:1; Jude 1:9; & Revelation 12:7-9. In each instance, Michael is seen as the one who contends against Satan and his demonic forces at specific times. The problem is, is that these instances are too specific, meaning, that this is not Michael's role in general, but as a special assignment solely to the nation of Israel or as directed by God. There is no Scripture citing Michael the Archangel as the restrainer of lawlessness (keeping in context with 2 Thess. 2). The best case that can be made is in Revelation 12:7-9, as Michael and the angels war with Satan and his and cast them out of heaven. Even then, that is not restraining, but active warfare.

### Satan: Mid: Trib/Pre-Wrath view

One of the more bizarre candidates that are offered for "the" restrainer is Satan himself. My first question would be why would he restrain himself? But still, the text would have to read something like this for Satan to be the 'restrainer':

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 [**Antichrist**] may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **He [Satan]** who now restrains will do so until **He [Satan]** is taken out of the way [**Insert Rev 12:7-8 here**]. And then the lawless one [**Antichrist**] will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. **2**

**Thessalonians 2:5-8 [my notes in brackets]**

Satan would have to restrain himself, until Satan is taken out of the way, only to come back and indwell a person known as the Antichrist. So at the mid-point of the Tribulation, Satan is kicked out of heaven and he indwells the man who is Antichrist. In theory that seems plausible, except that Jesus unleashes this rider on the white horse back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Seal and he was the Antichrist then, long before Satan ever indwells him.

### The Holy Spirit: Pre-Tribulation view

And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." **Genesis 6:3**

It appears at least according to the Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit had an active role here on planet earth prior to the Flood. In the absence of written Scriptures or historical references, the Holy Spirit would have convicted men of sin and guided their conscience unto doing what was right. This certainly makes the case for [Enoch](#) as a type of the Church who is 'caught up' prior to the Flood.

The Apostle John tells us in [1 John 2:18-23](#) that 'many antichrist's have come' and that the spirit of antichrist denies Christ is God in the flesh. The spirit of antichrist is a spiritual battle that requires the Restrainer to also be spiritual. And since many religions, philosophies, and peoples deny Christ all around the world, the only Person who is omnipresent and omnipotent, is God the Holy Spirit.

Born again believers are sealed until the day of Redemption (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Eph 1:11-14), which means when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, those He indwells are as well. Now, the Holy Spirit is God, and is omnipresent by His very nature, so it's not like He is removed physically, because that is not possible. His role of restraint is removed (see Genesis 6:3 again) which is done through removing the body of Christ that has remained on this earth for these last 2,000 years.

## **Conclusion**

The age of the Church had a beginning, and it's only logical to conclude that it will also have an ending. The birth of the Church had a dramatic and powerful beginning as the Holy Spirit descended down as 'cloven tongues like as of fire' upon those believers in Acts 2. Likewise will the removal of the Holy Spirit be a dramatic departure from this earth as believers (dead and alive) are resurrected and translated from mortal, to immortal, from perishable to imperishable. Prior to the Holy Spirit descending down in Acts 2, no orthodox Christian denies that the Holy Spirit existed, because we can see the Holy Spirit's role in Creation as early back as Genesis 1:2. Yet, when it comes to the Rapture and the Holy Spirit role as the Restrainer, many reject that out of hand as unbiblical.

The Church in and of itself cannot restrain evil, because we are but flawed humans. But through the working and power of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27, 16:5-15), we can do all things through Christ. Christ called Him the Helper or Comforter, because for us He is. But to the world, He is the Restrainer who judges the world of sin and keeps Satan's plans from manifesting and completely enveloping the world in evil. It is not until the Church is removed, that the world will be thrown into a literal hell on earth. [See Revelation 6-19] But until [that Day](#), Christ promised...

...I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” **Matthew 16:18-19**

Even so, Amen.

*Maranatha!*

## The Revelations of Christ

If you really want to irk a Pre-Trib Dispensationalist, call the book of Revelation, Revelations. I understand the title, which in the Greek is where we get the word 'Apocalupsis' or Apocalypse, and it means to unveil or reveal. Yet, when reading through the book itself, there are three separate occasions when Christ is presented...each bearing the divinely distinct role and title.

In the Old Testament, Jews who could be king, first had to come from the tribe of Judah. (Isaiah 11; [2 Samuel 7:12-16](#)) We also know, that in order for one to be a priest, one would have to come through the tribe of Levi. ([Numbers 17-18](#)) A prophet could be either a king or a priest, but a king could never be a priest, nor a priest a king simply due to the separation in the tribes. And that is what makes Christ unique, in that He could fulfill all three roles, without violating His own Law.

A [Christophany](#) is what biblical scholars have come to term, an OT appearing of the Pre-Incarnate Christ. In His appearing's before coming down and being born of a virgin and taking the form He would presumably take forever. Christ appears in the OT on numerous occasions as the Angel of the LORD to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua, etc. These highlight the deity of Christ (who rightfully claimed "Before Abraham was, I AM"), but also foreshadowed certain events that would be played out in the life of Christ (the sacrifice of Isaac). But He has [many](#) roles and titles, and for the sake of today's article, we will focus only one three...

### Christ the Prophet

When Christ came to earth, He initially came preaching 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'. (Matt. 4:17). He came as a prophet, not only with signs and wonders, (water into wine, feeding five thousand, walking on water, resurrecting Lazarus) but He came declaring the truth of God, and doing so in perfect submission to the Father, so that Israel might turn back to God and be a people, whose hearts were right for the Kingdom. They didn't repent, and He already knew they wouldn't, but the offer still had to be presented in order that scripture might be fulfilled. But nonetheless, in Deut. 18:15-18, Moses was pointing toward the Christ who would one day come to Israel.

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'

"And the Lord said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

Thus, in the book of Revelation, we see the first unveiling of the glorified Christ to John.

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. **Revelation 1:12-19**

He tells John to write the things that he saw, the things which are (the churches), and the things that come after the churches...and thus we have the single most complete, perfect, and final prophetic message given anywhere in the world, the book of Revelation. Even this fulfills Hebrews 1:1-4

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

### Christ the High Priest

We know that Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, because the Gospels show Christ's lineage from both his stepfather Joseph (Matthew 1) and his mother, Mary (Luke 3) respectively. But Jesus is also a Priest after the Order of Melchizedek, which preceded the Aaronic and Levitical Priesthood by several hundred years. ([Hebrews 7:20-25](#)) We know that upon walking toward John the Baptist to be baptized, John called His cousin 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world'. ([John 1:29-30](#)) The typology represented both then, and later, is that He is the spotless, unblemished, innocent lamb that would be sacrificed to God on our behalf. We see him in Revelation chapter 1, walking amongst the candle-stands which represent the churches. We hear in His message to the churches, "I know your works, I know your works, I know your works, which is repeated for all seven churches. (This is how we know that the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches, is for all the churches of the last two thousand years). And in chapter 5, we see Him revealed again...

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He

came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

**Revelation 5:6-7**

It is Christ who daily goes before the Father on our behalf, and not only defends us from the accusations of Satan (Rev. 12:10), but is our Mediator when we fall and stumble. It is He who not only makes our salvation possible, but also our sanctification by which we grow in Him. (Hebrews 10:10-14)

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time **1 Tim. 2:5-6**

Christ the King

It was no mistake that Jesus came from the Tribe of Judah. From the tribe of Judah would come those who were rightful heirs to the throne of Israel. So because Christ came thru the tribe of Judah, and because Israel was according to God's ultimate plan, be the head of all nations, would of course mean that Christ was at the head of Israel, be the head of all nations. (Gen. 12:3; Deut. 28:13; Isaiah 2, 11, 60:1-3; Zech. 14:1-8)

When Christ was taken before the Sanhedrin to be unjustly tried and executed, He remained silent before His accusers until they adjured Him by the living God, to declare whether He was the Christ, the Son of God...

Jesus said to him, "*It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.*" **Matt. 26:64**

It is fitting that we end with Christ in His rightful role, in that the world was given to Him by the Father for His inheritance. (Psalm 2) Although we see that the first Adam lost dominion of this earth, the last Adam, who is Christ (1 Cor. 15:45-49) redeems it first through the sacrifice of Himself, and then by crushing the enemies of God in battle. The battle is over before it ever began, and Christ, speaks the word and His enemies are obliterated, the Antichrist and False Prophet cast alive into the lake of fire, and He touches down on the Mt. of Olives, splitting it in two. (2 Thess. 2:8; Zech. 14:3-4)

**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!

## The Star

It is coming up on my three-year anniversary as a writer for the Omega Letter. I would like to first say that it has been a privilege to write for the OL. It has been as much a learning experience for myself, as I hope it has been for anyone who's ever read and enjoyed anything I've written. When I got asked by Kari and Jack if I'd be interested in writing, I considered that to be a calling of the highest honor. I wasn't a writer before that time so I had no idea if I could even do it. But the Lord oftentimes calls us into the unexpected and accomplishes His will through our feeble efforts. I have learned much along the way, and I pray that you have as well.

So, in my typical, out of fashion style, let me present an article that is better suited for December than June. Let me lay some groundwork first.

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 few questions that come to mind in regard to this passage is, how did these 'Wise Men' know about the birth of Jesus? What else did they know about it? When did they know, it was going to happen? And what does their visit mean for us today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Well, for starters, let's find out how they knew.

## The How

According to Daniel chapter 1, we read that the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, conquered the nation of Judah in three separate events beginning in 605BC. In the first iteration, he took back with him the best and brightest of the young Jewish boys to serve in his kingdom. Of the young men, the book of Daniel primarily focuses on four; Belteshazzar (Daniel), Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abed-nego). In Daniel chapter 2, we read that King Nebuchadnezzar has a troubling dream and asks his *wise men* to interpret it. But first, he asks them to tell him what the dream was before they interpret it, so he can know they could actually 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's 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 the ability to interpret the dream. We know the dream was about a 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 over all 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 as well. I imagine that would evoke a great deal of loyalty towards someone like that. You would listen to this kid, because even though he was Jewish and much younger than you were, this Daniel had a source to real power and knowledge. Daniel's prophecies and writings would have been studied by the wise men for years and centuries, and not only that, but were probably well versed in all the Jewish text, just as Daniel was. [Daniel 9:1-2, 11, 13]

### **The Where**

Back in 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 used to be Persia, and before that, Babylon. The Parthians were never conquered by the Romans, and there were a series of wars between the two empires. Now, imagine you're a half-Jewish, client king, installed by the Roman Caesar, to a backwater province of the 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 well-meaning 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 showed 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 being 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 brain-trust 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 far, we know why the Parthian *Wise Men* would know about a Jewish Messiah and we know how they knew where the Messiah was going to hail from. And we know the *wise men* took the Bible literally, and the religious brain-trust didn't.

## **The When**

We know that Daniel received the ‘Seventy Weeks’ prophecy from the angel Gabriel. From here they would have understood, that from the going forth of the commandment ([Nehemiah 2](#)) given by Persian King Artaxerxes...483 years would have to transpire. The question many would be asking themselves is, ‘yeah, but wouldn't that 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, 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 Seventy Weeks prophecy, and then back that up thirty years, and they would know when to look for a sign. So what was the sign?

Again, they searched the Scriptures of their beloved Daniel, and read them. Not only did they read them, but they also 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 believed what the Scribes and Pharisees should have believed. 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, their Messiah had arrived.

### **Assessment**

Thinking back to Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, I realize that 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 first ones to worship Him at His first Coming in the first Gospel, 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 the rapid rise in 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 have grown exceedingly 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 or them, [steal](#) your crown!

Don’t get discouraged or dismayed when certain days or events pass 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. And just as God also delivered the *wise men*, by warning them to escape King Herod by returning another way home, so too shall we also escape the ‘man of sin’ who the Bible states is coming and is going to control all of the earth and overcome all the saints. (Rev. 13) We too, should be looking up, waiting for our Star to appear. Remember Christ instruction to us...

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Maranatha!

## The Thousand Dollar Challenge

Recently, a blogger by the name of TK Burk proposed a \$1,000 challenge, attempting to put forth eight 'unprovable' questions pertaining to Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism. The catch to his gimmick was that one had to answer using only one verse. To my understanding, Mr. Burke is either an Amillennialist, or some flavor of Preterist. I didn't dig deep enough into his profile to find out, but needless to say, he purports to have come 'out of Dispensationalism' once he realized it was wrong.

I responded to his challenge, not because I felt some urgent or pressing need to prove him wrong, but because I found his challenge rather simple, yet, completely disingenuous. I mean, even if I could prove it by one verse, would he actually pay up? Hardly. He would simply try to throw off another explanation as to why I'm wrong in my interpretation and cloud the issue with irrelevant minutia until the matter was dropped. So, I write this for you, not for him, in that when you encounter those who have their mind firmly entrenched in a faulty eschatology, that you have the tools to answer as simply, and directly as possible.

Now, in understanding doctrinal positions within Scripture, there are singular verses that prove one position or another. For example, the exclusivity of Christ (John 14:6), or the sealing of the believer by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:14). But other doctrinal positions, particularly in the areas of Ecclesiology and Eschatology, are developed by understanding numerous verses (from both OT and NT scripture) and one comes to such an understanding, such as Pre-Millennialism, by balancing the scriptures against itself, to see which is true.

One other thing that I thought was pretty disingenuous about this whole thing, was that when Scripture was actually being written, there were no chapter or verse delineations. Chapter and Verse didn't come along until the 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The idea is, is that if Paul or Peter or Jesus was speaking, that you take the portion of the passage they were speaking too, and balance that with the rest of the passages, not only for context, but so to prevent 'cherry-picking' passages to prove a point. Example: Mark 16:17-18 seemingly would infer that we are to handle snakes and drink poison as a test of our faith. Rather, I think it is the exception, not the rule that God would have us handling Rattlesnakes as part of our normal, Sunday morning service. But I digress.

So, we compare verses pertaining to Israel for instance, and marry that up against verses that speak to the Church and see if they are the same. Or we see verses about the Lord's Second Coming, and compare that against the verses that speak to the Rapture, and note the similarities and also the differences. And as Jack was often fond of saying, things that are different, are not the same. So below is my response to him, his questions the numbers, and my responses to the letters. In italics, are my additional notes per question. Keep in mind, I am responding with as few verses as possible.

- 1) 1. God delayed His Kingdom because the Jews rejected Jesus.
  - a) Romans 11:25-29 (circa 56-57AD)

*From before the foundation of the world, God foreknew that He would set aside a nation that would be to Him, a 'kingdom of priests'. He also foreknew that they would crucify His only Son, because they would not believe. He also foreknew that because they did this, salvation would be opened to all of mankind. So yes, God delayed the Kingdom (see Deut. 28:58-63; Isaiah 46:9-10; Matt. 8:11-12, 25:14-19, but this was neither a surprise to Him, nor a "Plan B". See Ephesians 3:9-11*

- 2) There is a gap between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel.
  - a) [1 Cor. 11:26](#). Clearly, Jesus' death on the cross is represented in Daniel 9:26, and we are to proclaim His death until He comes...which is why Christianity has continued these two ordinances (communion and baptism) since the time of the Apostles.

*So, think about why this one verse is so key in refuting false eschatology's...if Christ had already returned in 70AD as the Full Preterists would claim, then all of practicing Christianity would have been getting it wrong for the last 2,000 years. Surely, God would not allow His Church to have continued as a whole, in such error, for such a long period of time if that were true.*

- 3) There will be a secret pre-tribulation rapture of the Church.
  - a) a. 1 Thess 5:1-9 (in particular, vs. 2-3 contrasts delineates between you and they, them.

*One must distinguish (compare and contrast) the Rapture from the Second Coming passages to see that the differences between the two are irreconcilable. They simply can't be the same event, because they are so different. Three of the biggest differences are:*

- i. *One involves only believers, while the other (2<sup>nd</sup> Coming) involves the entire world*
    - ii. *One initiates the tribulation period known as Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, the other initiates the millennial kingdom*
    - iii. *In one, Satan is not bound for a thousand years, and the latter Satan is bound for a thousand years.*
- 4) God will require the building of a physical third Jewish Temple.
  - a) a. Matthew 24:15 (33AD) 2 Thess 2:4 (50AD) Rev 11:1-3 (95AD, but points to a future temple)

*Like it or not, there is a third temple built. Why? Because the Bible says there will be. So let's recap about the previous ones:*

- i. *Solomon's Temple---destroyed by the Babylonians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.*

- ii. Zerrubabel and Joshua's Temple (later became known as Herod's Temple) ---destroyed by the Romans in AD70.

*There is blue prints to another temple found in [Ezekiel 40-48](#), which detail another temple, much larger than that of the previous ones. Remember, Ezekiel was in Babylonian captivity at the time he wrote this, and that temple has to date, not been built yet.*

- 5) God will no longer accept grace and Jesus' blood for salvation but will instead return to the Law and animal blood sacrifices.
  - a) I don't think it will be done as a memorial, but if it were, it's no stretch to believe that, since we partake of the Lord's Supper as a Memorial of Christ's death on the Cross, and we do so until He returns. (1 Cor. 11:26)
  - b) Also, the question proposes an incorrect understanding of the animal sacrifices. They were for restoring fellowship between man and God, not for salvation. (Sin offering, Peace offering). Hebrews 10:1-4 makes this clear. So your question is flawed to begin with.

*This seems to be the "silver bullet" with many in the Amillennial, Preterists camps in their attempt to deny a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple as still being future. I think I addressed this pretty head on though...animal sacrifices postponed judgment, but never took away sins. What it did do though, and you can go back to the skins that were provided to Adam and Eve or to Cain and Abel's sacrifice, was restore fellowship between Man and God. Since in the Millennial Reign of Christ will consist of the **offspring** who are **born into** the Millennium from the survivors' of the [Sheep and Goat Judgment](#), these people will not have known what the previous age was like in a Christ-rejecting, sin filled world. These will not be covered by Christ's death on the Cross, since it is by [grace through faith](#), which we are saved, and faith is:*

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. **Hebrews 11:1-2**

*But Christ will be seen during this time...since Christ will be physically dwelling on the earth, ruling from Jerusalem (Ps. 2; Isaiah 2:1-4, 11: 1-9; Daniel 2:44-45; etc)*

- 6) An Antichrist will make a seven-year covenant with the Jews.
  - a) a. Daniel 9:27 (See [Gen 29:27](#) validation of the use of 'week' as equal to seven years)

This man will [confirm a covenant](#) with the many for seven years. And since Daniel 9:27, absolutely follows Daniel 9:26, this means' that after Christ's death on the cross for many (vs. 26), there must be a seven-year period that would have to proceed that. I ask Mr. Burke to show when and where this happened, historically. If he points to any period of time, outside of the immediate decade of

Christ's death, then by what basis does he allow for the **dreaded gap** in time? Whether that time be 10, 40, or 2,000 years.... a gap is still a gap.

- 7) There will be a future seven-year tribulation period.  
a) a. Jeremiah 30:7, 11 (unless you can claim vs. 11 has already happened, it's still future.

I really like [Jeremiah 30:11](#) for this type of response, because it so definitively puts the global nature of God's judgment into context. There really isn't anyway around this.

- 8) A physical Jesus Christ will return to establish a 1000-year reign on earth.  
a) Rev 1:7 (physical coming), Dan. 2:44 (physical kingdom, destroys all other physical kingdoms on the earth)

*So the only way a Preterist can try and get around this Revelation 1:7 verse, is to try and make the book itself written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70. The only problem with this is, it wasn't. Here is why:*

- i. An earthquake decimated Laodicea in AD60. [Historically](#), it took more than a decade to rebuild the city, which means that the church there in no way, could become rich, complacent, lukewarm, etc...in such short years.
- ii. [Col. 2:1; 4:13, 15-16](#) make mention of Laodicea...and none in a negative way. It is believed that Paul wrote Colossians as part of his 'prison letter's' while serving under a Roman sentence...which would have been around AD61-63. If Revelation were to be written prior to the siege of Jerusalem (AD67) or the utter desolation (AD70) of it, than Laodicea would have had to have a complete moral and spiritual breakdown in less than a 4-7 years, so much so, that Christ is physically nauseated by their lukewarmness. (Rev. 3:14-22)
- iii. Thomas Ice puts together even more [compelling reason's](#) than space allows for me here, to adequately squash the notion that Revelation was written prior to AD70.
- iv. Lastly, the 'soon' reference found at the beginning and end of Revelation seem to (at least for the preterist) put the proverbial nail in the coffin for a 1<sup>st</sup> Century fulfillment. How then do they explain Romans 16:20, or James 5:7-8?

## Assessment

I've learned over the years, that despite proof, despite historical facts, despite doctrinal consistency; men and women of particular theological persuasions will not be

persuaded. Why do men who purport to be on the side of biblical truth, attack a position of which its main pillar, is that of taking the biblical text as literal as possible? And I don't mean a 'wooden literalism' as the Partial Preterist Hank "the Bible Answer Man" Hanegraaf often mocks it as. But that which takes the text in the plainest sense possible, keeping differing forms and styles of writing in its proper context.

In another section of this man's blog site, he sportingly cites a secular article that enthusiastically proposes that Dispensationalism must be incorrect, because it's less than 200 years old. If time is determining factor on the accuracy of one's message, Jesus Himself would have been in trouble...seeing that His entire ministry lasted only 3 1/2 years long. Clearly, Mr. Burk wouldn't argue that Jesus's three-and-a-half-year earthly ministry was any less valid as compared to the then, 1,400-year-old Judaism?

*Dispensationalism only 200 years old? It can't possibly be right.*

I wonder if that is the same reasoning that people in Noah's day used when they rejected his warning of impending judgment.

*"Hahaha...that Noah guy can't be right, his message is only 120 years old!"*

We all see how that turned out.

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: 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**

## The War on Prophecy

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. **Luke 12:37**

Ever since Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* debuted in 1970, interest in Bible prophecy moved out into the mainstream American culture with a roar. It spawned a whole new generation of teachers, broadcasters, pastors, and writers who would go on to carry the torch of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism into the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Along with this newfound passion of the American evangelical, came a whole new host of critics citing everything from 'sensationalism' to 'Darbyism' to those who held to a literal, grammatical, historical understanding of Scriptures.

From whom and where do these critics come from, and why would they ostensibly be so opposed to a literal understanding of the Bible? For all intents and purposes, these critics carried on a time-worn tradition of waging war against Christian's who take the Bibles seriously. Well, I can assure you that the war began not just in the 1970, the 1800's, or even when the Bible was being written...it began in the Garden of Eden.

Satan moves:

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" **Genesis 3:1**

God counters:

So the LORD God said to the serpent:

...And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her Seed;  
He shall bruise your head,  
And you shall bruise His heel."

And it has been game-on ever since. Unfortunately for Satan though, God knows the end from the beginning, so the match has really been a mismatch. From the fall, to Cain, to the violent and wicked days leading up to the Great Flood, to the unnecessary tower at Babel, Satan's attempt to corrupt man to the point [beyond redemption](#), has failed at every turn. God always has His elect.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. **Gen. 6:8**

So it has been thus far in the 6,000 years of man's history, that God would raise men up, and Satan would attempt to bring them down. Or bring their message down. Or corrupt their message. Or destroy those who would spread that message. Satan is always in damage control.

Yet roughly 2,000 years from Abraham's calling, victory was wrought that day on Calvary. Had Satan known Christ's intent all along was to come and give Himself as a sacrifice for many, neither he nor the ruler's he influenced would have crucified Him. [[1 Cor. 2:7-8](#)] The Scarlet thread that runs' through the Old Testament, was veiled in such a way, that Satan couldn't have known exactly what The Christ was coming to do even though Satan was well versed in the written text as demonstrated in His [temptation](#) in the desert. Still, God used typology, and the prophetic text to tell His servant's ahead of time, what MUST come to pass.

But since the Jews were the keepers of the Word, how come they weren't thronging the Manger to get a glimpse at their Redeemer? How come the religious leaders of the day, didn't walk the 5 miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem with the Wise Men upon hearing about the birth of the One born "King of the Jews"? Certainly, God gave them the exact time of when they should be expecting their Messiah to arrive. [[Dan. 9:24-27](#)] Why didn't John the Baptist's [message](#) of "Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" have all the Jewish religious leaders on their knees in praise and sober reflection?

There are many reasons I could list leading up to it, but the bottom line is they quit believing. They quit taking their Scriptures literally. They began to place their faith in men's explanations over what the text actually said. Some took it to the other extreme and missed the intent of the law, for the letter of the law. The religious experts (Pharisees, Sadducees, & Scribes) began to explain away prophecies as irrelevant or already fulfilled or twisted it to fit their own pre-supposed agendas of how things "should" be rather than what God said would happen.

After the victory at Calvary, after the Resurrection and the Ascension, after the birth of the Church at Pentecost, what could Satan do now? The only thing he could do, which was halt the spread of the Gospel, and destroy Israel. So while his fate was sealed and his doom was certain, in his rage he used the ones who killed their Messiah to first [persecute](#) the Church. And while imprisoning, beating, stoning, and killing the believer's, Satan in his fury, introduced corruption in the form of half-truths and outright lies to them. He began to mix the law into grace, of which Paul confronts in Galatian's, Hebrews, and other epistles. As the church grew and became more Gentile, Satan used the Jew's [paradoxical hostility](#) toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ against them first through legalism, then through corrupt scriptural interpretations which sought to deny the very hope we have in Christ's Second Coming.

### **Synagogue of Satan**

In the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3), only two of the seven churches receive NO condemnation from our Lord Jesus Christ, and these are Smyrna

and Philadelphia. In understanding of the four-fold application to these letters, they are:

1. **Historical**-these were literal churches in John's day
2. **Congregational**-these letters had a message to that entire church, and to all churches who were instructed to read and hear (He who has an ear, let him hear)
3. **Personal**-these letters also had personal applications to the individuals
4. **Prophetic**-the names of the churches along with the order these letters are given to us are significant. They have borne true to their titles over the last 2,000 years of church history.

Similarities:

1. Both churches exist in a time of great persecution
2. **Both churches have a condemnation within their letters, against those who say they are Jews, but aren't.**
3. Both churches are told to hold fast to receive their reward: the former through death (2:10), and the latter through deliverance (3:10).
4. Neither church receives any negative criticism from our Lord Jesus.

Of interest is number two, for when else in man's short history have people pretended to be Jews? Historically, the real Jews, were those who can trace their lineage from their forefathers back to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But they [seemingly](#) cursed themselves when they crucified their Messiah. Who would want part of that?

1. We know that the first group to persecute the early church (ex. **2 Cor. 11:24**), were the Jewish Judaizers. So in keeping with the context of historical chronology, Christ said to the second church Smyrna:

“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but **are** a synagogue of Satan.  
(**Rev. 2:9**)

Christ had harsh words for these who were trying to draw newly born Christians (Jew and Gentile) back under the burdensome [yoke](#) of the Law. In fact, Christ called them blasphemous. Ethnically, these Judaizers were Jews, but not real Jews according to Paul who would state... *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly...* ([Rom. 2:28-29](#)). These were those who although were ethnically Jewish, had rejected their Messiah and continued to be an enemy toward the Gospel. [**Matthew 23; Rom. 11:28**] Their rejection of the Gospel, and their continued animosity towards it, would give fertile ground for Replacement theology to take root within an increasingly Gentile body of Christ.

2. But here we see another group who have come along and are pretending to be Jews at the latter end of the age. To the sixth church Philadelphia Christ says:

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. **Revelation 3:7-9**

So, who today, thinks they are the ‘true Jews’? Many groups outside of orthodox Christianity make the claim that they are the real or true Jews such as Mormon’s, Jehovah Witnesses, British Israelism, etc. But since these groups fall outside of what is considered orthodox Christianity (they deny one or more of the essentials of our faith), they will not be in heaven because they are not Christian.

But notice that it says that they will come and worship before our feet which to me signifies these would also be in heaven. So these are those who have saving faith, but fall under the sway of one or more heretical doctrines such as; replacement theology or Supersessionism, covenant or reformed theology, Hebrew roots movement, or aberrant eschatology’s such as Amillennialism, Post-Millennialism, and Preterism.

Note: Within each of these belief systems, there is truth and scriptural teachings, but they are mingled with falsehoods and errant theology. A little leaven, leaven’s the whole [lump](#).

But how do we know that this last group is the one Christ called a ‘synagogue of Satan’? Because in understanding the four-fold application to the seven letters, we understand the promise that immediately follows in verse Rev. 3:10, is one we would apply to the generation alive when Christ returns.

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.

**Revelation 3:10**

They deny the distinct programs that God has for Israel and what God has for the Church. These are those which seek today seek to undermine others faith in the “Blessed Hope” today by confusing the Church with Israel. As interest in Bible prophecy has reemerged over the last two centuries, Satan has flooded Christendom with a slew of false and heretical doctrines. Satan reenergized these attempts to diminish and downplay the importance of expectant watchfulness of our Lord’s soon return.

The above-mentioned groups have grown aggressively in the last two decades and have made it one of their main missions to stamp out the Pre-Tribulation, Pre-Millennial, Dispensational view of many Christians. They do this by ridiculing and scoffing at believers who hold this view as well as blacklisting those who hold that belief from teaching and preaching in many churches and seminaries today. If there are those today who still hold to a Pre-Tribulation, Pre-Millennial, Dispensational view of Scriptures today, they are being drowned out by the many more who have come to reject it.

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: 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**

Notice the key word here is that they ‘willfully’ forget. To forget means, they must have at one point known it. To willingly forget something means they knew it, but then rejected it. And just as many within Christendom returned to a return to a literal understanding of Scripture in the 1800’s, many more moved to a liberal, progressive understanding of Scripture which denied a literal Creation, Noahic flood, and prophecy. I think it’s interesting that Peter would link the two most contested issues within Scriptures together, as a marker for the last days.

And as Jesus noted to the church of Philadelphia...*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.* Our open door is the “[Blessed Hope](#)”. Our little strength was foretold. We will never deny His name. So what was His word?

And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” **Mark 13:37**

## Things to Come

Given that the United States, nor any semblance of her thereof, is mentioned in Bible prophecy, one should take into account the *how*, *when*, and *why* of that particular conclusion. If the US is not here, who then fills that vacuum? Who sets the precedence for a global order? What is the reserve currency the whole world leans upon for stability in the global markets? Logic and history tell us that if the US isn't filling that role, someone will. How and when does the world move from the current status quo to the next?

So, it is with the outline of Bible prophecy, I am 100% certain. It's when we get into the subsections of the outline that my certainty drops to between 60-75%. IOW, I'm certain on the order of things, not so certain on exactly how and when those things come to pass. Here is the order:

1. The imminent Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-55)
2. The 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27, particularly vs. 27; Jeremiah 30:7-11)
3. The Second Coming (Matt. 24:29-31; Rev. 19:11-21)
4. The Millennium (Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 20)
5. The Eternal State (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21-22)

Now, there are other events which must take place, to which I am 100% certain on their fulfillment, but not 100% on the when. These are:

1. The utter destruction of the city of Damascus (Isaiah 17)
2. The temporary desolation of Egypt (Isaiah 19)
3. The Gog-Magog War (Ezekiel 38-39)
4. The signing of a peace covenant (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 6:1-2)

So where on God's timeline are we, seems to be the reoccurring question that gets so often asked? So here is what we know as of now (October ~~2014~~ 2019):

1. The United States is in an increasingly rapid state of decline, particularly in three areas: spiritually, culturally, and economically
2. The economic decline appears to be intrinsically linked to the spiritual and cultural decline as the US embraces its national, *post-Christian* status
3. The US economic decline is having a weakening effect on the US military, and our ability to project our force, and a strong image around the world
4. Paganism, secular humanism, and the normalization of aberrant sexual, cultural lifestyles and belief systems, appear to be filling the void of a declining Christian worldview (Days of Noah and Lot; Luke 17:25-30)
5. The revival of cultural paganism (Neopaganism) is in conjunction with the rise of [trans-humanism](#), which is fast becoming a reality due to advancements in technology

6. The US Dollar is currently the world's reserve currency for fiat systems. Factors that are negatively and positively impacting that standing are:
  - a. ~~\$18T~~ \$21T in US debt (negative)
  - b. Rapid changes in currency technology challenging the current fiat system (both)
  - c. Instability in other currencies (positive)
  - d. Busts, booms, and general fickleness of the markets (both)
  - e. Increasing polarity in the US government (negative)
7. Economists and heads of state are currently planning for, and/or prepositioning themselves for the collapse of the US economy. (See [here](#))
8. Global interconnectedness has reached an all-time high and is partly due to the dependency on the US Dollar system, and the rise of the Internet age.
9. The EU is continuing in its growing pains. Economic woes and a rise in nationalism seem to be equally as troubling, as its burgeoning Muslim population. Either way, it's not looking good like a good place to retire if you're a Jew

Here is what I expect to occur due to the aforementioned realities:

10. The collapsing of the US Dollar (due to the global dependence on it for economic stability) presents the 'perfect storm' crisis that globalists **need**, in order to bring about a new order
11. Saudi Arabia will continue its [oil output](#) in order to:
  - a. Weaken its enemies who rely on oil revenues
  - b. Destroy the US fracking industry
12. Events are continuing to drive the world's attention back to the Middle East in respects to Iraq, Iran, and Israel. Despite President Obama's best efforts, events are compelling US forces to return to Iraq.

I think there are two powerful forces currently fighting it out on earth right now. One group wants things to stay the way they are, because they are making money and living fat and happy. This would be groups like the Saudi's, major energy providers, and anyone tied up with and making a healthy living under the current Petro-Dollar/fiat system. They want things to stay the same and they use oil and other energies as an economic weapon.

The other group has grander plans, and see the US Dollar dominance as a hindrance to their globalist agenda. So, they are actively working to debase the Dollar, and by so doing, can get the world onto a new, global, digital currency in which **they** control. I imagine that these are the movers and shakers in new technologies and [multinational corporations](#), politicians of all stripes, those in the central banking industries, and the like. And seeing as we are \$18T in debt, one can guess which side is currently winning.

Then of course, there is God, who has the first and final say in all things. (Isaiah 46:9-10)

## **Assessment**

My best guess, all things considered, is that we are in a five-year window awaiting major, radical, global realignments. If you'd have asked me that five years ago, I would have told you about the same...and yet, here we still are. But I'm no prophet. I'm only a man armed with an informed opinion. But unknown to us five years ago, was that certain things **had to** transpire that I think would make things significantly different in the days, weeks, months ahead. These are the 'black swan' events that will have to play out in the next few years:

1. Israel is no longer interested or invested in playing the 'two-state' solution game. They've been trying this for the past 21 years, and it has utterly failed each time
2. Israel realizes it can no longer depend on the US for its 'Iranian Problem' and realizes that their window for stopping Iran's ambitious, nuclear program is quickly coming to a close and even with the 2016 elections, that may be too late. Events are going to force Israel to act unilaterally
3. If Russia risked military incursions into Georgia, Ukraine and Crimea before their financial woes, imagine what President Putin will do when his country's economy is in a freefall
4. The US is significantly weaker than it was during the last financial crisis of 2008. Echoes of 1928-29 keep being rehashed in the news, and it is possible that another stock market collapse will effectively do, what 2008 could not
5. President Obama has/is continuing to rule through executive legislation that seems intent on dividing and weakening the US
6. The upcoming 2016 elections may prove the most contentious yet, depending on whether President Obama and the Democrats intend to go quietly into the night, or have a few tricks left up their sleeve. They can't be too thrilled at the prospect of a Republican triumvirate

The last 100 years have seen more transition, tragedy, and change than the rest of recorded history. Pagans insist on all things continuing on cyclically, but according to Scripture, there was a beginning, and there will also be an end. Logically speaking, if the United States is the lone economic and military superpower in the world, and we do not warrant a mention either by name or type in the pages of Holy Writ whenever that end may be, then that means that something happens to us that makes us a non-factor in the final outline of things to come. And if the US isn't taking the lead, then someone has to because nature abhors a vacuum. We know according to Scriptures, that someone comes out of a revived Roman Empire who ends up controlling the whole earth. (Daniel 2:40-44, 9:26-27; Revelation 13)

## **The Terminal Generation**

The Holy Spirit moved Moses to contribute one psalm to the collection we have in our Old Testament. Moses, who lived to be 120 years old still vigorous in mind, sight and strength said this in Psalm 90:10;

The days of our lives are seventy years;  
And if by reason of strength they are eighty years,  
Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow;  
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

In context, Moses was speaking to the brevity and frailty of a man's life. When answering the question the disciples put forth to Jesus about the last days, Jesus's caps off the numerous indicators with the Parable of the Fig Tree. Yet, the point of the parable isn't an attempt to define the length of a generation, but to pin that generation who sees the aforementioned signs (Matt. 24:3-28) to the length of the average man's life.

“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. **Matthew 24:32-35**

Is it coincidence that Israel is alluded to in numerous places in the Old Testament as figs, or as a fig tree? [Judges 9:7-15; Song of Solomon 2:13; Jeremiah 24; Hosea 9:10; Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10; Luke 13:6-8; Mark 11:12-14] Is it coincidence that Jesus links the budding of a tree associated with national Israel, as being **the one sign** that some future generation would see and not pass away? Is it coincidence that Jesus states Jerusalem will be trampled on by Gentiles until the 'age of the Gentiles' has come to an end? Is it coincidence that the only Psalm Moses pens, happens to discuss the lifespan of a man being 70 to 80 years, when he himself lived to be 120? Is it coincidence that Jesus, being God, would know that we would come to these same conclusions some 2,000 years later, right about the time of all their fulfillments?

I do not believe in coincidence, and according to Scripture, God doesn't either. God orchestrates kings and kingdoms to accomplish His will and in His time. (Dan. 2:27-45; [Romans 13:1-3](#))

## **Conclusion**

At the current rate, things cannot remain status quo. I don't believe that all the signs and events listed above prove a Rapture. What I do believe is that they point to the signs of the coming seven-year period of time commonly referred to as The Tribulation. I believe that due to the increasing geo-political and economic turmoil we are seeing in the world that we are exactly in the final moments (death throes) of the 'times of the Gentiles'...hence the uptick in global turmoil. ([Luke 21:24](#))

The final moments of the 'times of the Gentiles' has to coincide with Israel already being back in her land, which occurred in May of 1948. May is significant because that is when the early fruit (good fruit) first buds. Because the Jews had to have Israel back as a nation, before they could be attacked in the [Six Day War](#), which resulted in them recapturing Jerusalem. The Jews have to be in control of Jerusalem again, in order to

one day rebuild a future Jewish temple. (Matthew 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4) All of that is colliding with the fact that they have been back as a nation going on 67 years. Coincidence?

The Bible is clear that we will not know the day or the hour of the Lord's return. (Mark 13:32) But the Apostle Paul did say we would recognize the season. And just like one can know by looking at a calendar when roughly winter or summer should begin, we don't know exactly until we start seeing and feeling the changes. I believe that over the last 100 years, we have increasingly seen the signs and we can know with a 100% confidence that we are in the season of our Lord's return.

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, **you** have no need that I should write to you. 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. **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. **1 Thess. 5:1-6**

## Why Prophecy Matters

Why study Bible prophecy? Well, I could start this article off by saying that around 27% percent of your Bible is prophetic. Or I could start off by saying that almost every book in the Bible contains prophecy. Or I could start by saying that out of the 300 or so prophecies concerning Christ's first coming, they all were fulfilled literally and perfectly. But you already know all this. Many of you read the OL simply because you are passionate about God and the Prophetic word. Studying the prophetic word, is to study the deeper things of God. If you want to mature as a Christian, you have to develop this understanding, there simply is no other way around it...because the Bible doesn't give us that option. When I hear well-intentioned Christians, and even worse, church clergy, state that they don't study prophecy because it distracts them from Jesus, I want to ~~slap them~~, err...I mean, extend the right-hand of fellowship to their faces, and scream, *who do you think prophecy is about?*

And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." **Revelation 19:10**

On the Road to Emmaus, Jesus accosted to of his disciples who were still walking around mourning Christ's death. Two points to consider: The first being that Christ used the Scriptures (the Old Testament) to show these two disciples that it all pointed to Him. And I'm pretty sure that the name of *Jesus of Nazareth* isn't anywhere in the OT, so what did Christ use? He used typology and prophecy. The second point is who Christ used this understanding of typology and prophecy on...which of course, was His disciples. They already had the basics presumably down. They knew Christ personally and followed him for a period of time. Christ used their understanding as a baseline, for which to demonstrate God's plan. When He broke the bread (Lord's Supper symbolism for the breaking of His body), it clicked, and they had their 'ah ha' moment, at which the light bulbs in their brains turned on and they understood.

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. Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

There is known in theological circles as the *Law of Limited Words* in coming to understand the Scriptures. All this means, is that the Word of God we have, is all that we have that is inspired. God could have made the Bible enormous, it could have had perhaps in the thousands, many volumes and the like, but He didn't. What we have is what we have. John [concluded](#) at the end of his Gospel...

And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

So in understanding that not one word, verse, passage in Scripture is there redundantly, or wastefully, but it is carefully and perfectly crafted by God Himself to describe to man who exactly He is. Now, considering that 27% (8,352 out of 31,124 passages) of your Bible is prophetic, that is a SIGNIFICANT portion of your Bible that God dedicated to helping you understand His word.

Consider another thing. Around the world, the Holy Spirit is moving in Africa, China, Iran, Pakistan, and other places very mightily. God is bringing in the full number of Gentiles into the Body of Christ through the stirring of men's heart to both go and preach the Gospel, and stirring the hearts of those of the hearers, that are moved by that message. If you have Facebook, you've probably seen the video of those Chinese Christians who are weeping, and literally, overjoyed almost uncontrollably because they are given Bibles for the very first time. It is one of the most moving things I've seen. Oh, that we would have that passion, love, and respect for God's word as they do. But in those places, do you think that they are debating about which eschatological view is the correct one? Are they debating Pre-Trib versus Pre-Wrath? Or debating whether Reformed Theology is really veiled Replacement Theology? No. They are solely focused on Jesus Christ. Now, here is the rub.

Enthusiasm for God's word does have its place. The Church at Ephesus was commended for the passion for God. Yet, passion and enthusiasm are not enough to run a race on. Sure, it will get you to the race, and get you through the opening miles, but we are in a marathon. Marathon runners have to have conditioned their bodies (and in our case, our minds) to run the course laid out before us. Our spiritual and mental conditioning is to study God's word, and to pray on it. And it has to be more than just head knowledge, but wisdom in knowing how to apply that newfound knowledge to our lives, which affects how we live our lives. Even more importantly, is to receive and dispense this knowledge, (of whatever God has stirred you in) in love.

New believers in particular, are very excited about being born again as they should be. But we aren't commanded to remain baby Christians whose diet is solely milk. We are instructed to go after the deeper things of God because that strengthens our roots in why we believe what we believe. It says in Scripture, that the Jews sought after signs, and the Greeks after wisdom. (1 Co. 1:22) The Greeks sought after wisdom, because they had nothing else they could aspire too. The Greeks weren't given the Word of God, all they

had was myths, fables, and a cacophony of false gods made of wood and stone who neither listened nor acted on their behalf's.

The Jews sought signs, because all throughout the OT, signs were mile-markers for God's dealings with them. I think more signs from God are given in Exodus, than any other place in Scripture. Jewish understanding of prophecy was also very different than the Gentiles understanding. The Gentiles read the prophetic scriptures and understood them to be linear or sequential: God speaks X, after which X happens, and thus fulfillment validates the legitimacy of X. And since Y follows X, Y must happen, and then be followed by Z. The Jews on the other hand, saw prophecy as cyclical, patterns or types. This is why Christ could easily point back to the OT Scriptures and show how they pointed to Him.

### Dr. Livingston I Presume?

In reaching back to the earlier mention in this article about areas of the world in which the Gospel was received with much enthusiasm, one cannot help but think to the 19<sup>th</sup> century efforts of British and American missionaries who sent themselves into the heart of the 'dark continent' to share the Gospel. Their efforts there were very successful, and for around a hundred years or more, the Gospel was taught, and people came to Christ by the thousands. Yet today, many of these formerly Christian areas, are under severe persecution by a growing army of Muslims. These Muslims didn't move in to that area and take over, these are the same boys and men who had always lived there. But they were persuaded by 'another gospel', that being the gospel of Mohammed. How were they persuaded when Christian thought had long been established in the areas from Nigeria to Ethiopia? I have argued before, and will again, that this world has a spiritual grid over laid on top of it, that is broken down into sectors in which demonic principalities retain dominion over. And while Christianity may break out here or there, if a firm foundation is not laid, those people over time, will succumb to lying spirits and will not have the depth to discern spiritual error from truth.

Although most bible teachers would agree that one's eschatological view is not a salvific issue in and of itself, it does lend a great deal of credence to one's ability to discern truth from error...and that extends to all issues. All Christians, regardless of sect or denomination, fall under the purview of one eschatological view or another. It governs how and why those churches operate the way they do, and what they devote their collective time focusing on. Eschatology matters in our own lives, because it governs either directly or indirectly how we live our lives, and how we view our future. It is also no coincidence that Bible prophecy is in almost every book of the Bible.

God, being omniscient, uses the prophetic word to accomplish four things:

1. To declare His Sovereignty over time and space. (Isaiah 46:9-10)
2. To tell His people what will come to pass, so they can know that it was of God. (John 14:29)

3. To distinguish His message, and messengers, from the deceivers. (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22; 1 John 4:1)
4. To declare God's plans to the believers ahead of time, so that they may believe. (1 Cor. 14:22-25)

So, we have in God's word, prophecy, which tells us ahead of time plainly, and sometimes veiled, what things must come to pass. And since six thousand years have come and gone, what we have left in the prophetic word, is known as [Eschatology](#) (the study of last things). Rarely does one's eschatology influence your other doctrinal positions, but rather, one's eschatological view comes about from how you interpret the other doctrines.

In other words, one's view on the last days has to fit into what a person already believes about soteriology (study of salvation) and ecclesiology (the study of the Church) in order to complement said eschatology. For instance, I could not be both Amillennial, and believe that the Church is a separate and distinct program apart from Israel. Amillennialism denies a literal future kingdom-come on earth and sees the kingdom as only a spiritual one beginning at Calvary. Therefore, the Church has (according to Amillennialism) assumed those kingdom promises and covenants that had been set aside for Israel in the Old Testament.

Seeing as there are numerous views on how the end-times will play out within the professing church today, which one is the correct one? There are two primary distinctions in the views: the first is over what has already occurred, and what remains, and the second item, is over when and how Christ returns. Those two things are what most of Christianity disagree on. But, we should know that only ONE view will be the correct one, because when it happens, it will only happen ONE way...not in multiple ways. It may very well happen in a way and time we don't expect, but will still chronologically, it will happen only ONE way, because the scriptures state that a number of specific events have to occur.

So I've categorized the major views into a couple of camps: the literal, and the allegorical.

### The Literal

The first group takes a Bible passage at face value, and using the original linguistic meaning of the words, the historical knowledge of what we know happened (or didn't happen), the context of the surrounding passage, and we apply the plain text reading of the passage to what we believe will occur. This group includes Pre-Tribulation-Pre-Millennialists.

The Literal group (and there are variations as to how literal one takes the text) decides first and foremost, to accept what the scripture states, and if it had not already happened in the past, presume that it must have a future application. Now, to presume is not meant to mean we assume blindly, but take into account, the historical, linguistic, and contextual passages surrounding said verse.

## The Figurative

The second group takes the same Bible passage and applies an explanatory lens to explain what they think the passage is trying to say, or what they think it means, through imaginative interpretation. I say imaginative tongue in cheek, because once you depart from what the text actually says, it's anyone's guess in what it can mean. This group includes: Amillennialist, Post-Millennialist, Preterists, Historical Pre-Millennialist, Pre-Wrath, Mid-Tribulationists, and Post-Tribulationists.

The Figurative group (and there are varying degrees of how figurative one applies this view to the text), sees the text, and with a pre-conceived opinion, decides to deviate from what the text says, to what they think it means. I say pre-conceived, because someone other than the writer of the Scripture, has had to influence a former understanding of said passage so as NOT to take it literally. IOW, someone before came along and gave a different interpretation than what the passage says.

So we know that within borders of the Old and New Testament, there are varying types of Scripture given; poetic, prophetic, historical, etc. Within these, are varying types of usage of language, for example, the parables, the symbolic, the literal, euphemisms, figurative, etc. But what they all have in common, is the same Source...the Holy Spirit. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

So if Christians can accept, that although God used specific men to write what He wanted included in Scripture, why then do we think God did not have written, exactly what He meant to say in the first place? IOW, why must His word be reinterpreted to mean something other than what it says?

## Assessment

We know according to the [ante-Nicene church fathers](#), that the early Church was largely Pre-Millennial in its view of a future reign of Christ on the earth. Now, what there wasn't common agreement upon, was whether they believed Christ would return prior too, mid-way through, or after the time known as the Tribulation, otherwise known as: The Day of the Lord, Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week, the Time of Jacob's Trouble, or the Wrath to come. But the Pre-Millennial view did confirm two things; that there would be a literal kingdom, and that Christ would return prior to it, so He could reign visibly and authoritatively in it. This view by and large, didn't change within Christendom until between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century when men like Origen and later Augustine began to interpret the prophetic Scriptures in an allegorical or symbolic manner. They influenced a great many others on how one viewed Bible prophecy. The change in interpretation was largely predicated on external events that transformed what Christians' understood about the Kingdom.

1. The Church would become increasingly Gentile, *so there began a departure from and understanding of OT passages related to the Kingdom.*

2. Both Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in AD70, *which too many, seemed proof positive that God was finished with Israel.*
3. Bible teachers began to take a non-literal view of Scriptures, *OT and NT prophetic passages were spiritualized so that there is no literal fulfillment, but only a Heavenly or Spiritual fulfillment.*
4. The Jews remained hostile to the Gospel, *which continued to fuel anti-Semitism amongst the growing Gentile Church.*
5. Christianity eventually becoming the state religion of Rome, *which infused paganism and bureaucracy into the Church, suffocating out the true gospel for a politically correct one.*

With those historical transitions in mind, Augustine would influence the Roman Catholic Church who dominated Christendom from the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD. When Martin Luther began in earnest with the Reformation movement, he wasn't trying to break away and start a new movement apart from the Catholic Church, but simply wanted to reform it. (Hence the name)

The Protestants, did a lot of great things to move Christianity back to what it originally was, but one thing that they carried over from the RCC, was its Amillennial eschatology. Of course, they differed from the Catholics, because the Catholics believed they WERE the Kingdom (with the Pope as the Vicar of Christ on earth), and the Protestants believed that the Kingdom began at the Cross and Christ was ruling presently from Heaven. Both views, heavily symbolize and allegorize the prophetic passages that spoke of the Kingdom so that it couldn't be a real, tangible, physical Kingdom with Christ at the helm, but one that was only spiritual.

Surely, if you've read any of my previous writings, you know I'm big on the history of things, and how different hermeneutics and theologies have evolved over time. So fast forward to 1948, and now you have a literal rebirth of the nation of Israel back in the world again. What happens when you had previously assumed all those OT and NT passages of Israel's prominence in God's Kingdom? What happens to your eschatological view when passages such as Ezekiel 37, which speaks about a resurrection of a Jewish nation in the latter days, directly contradicts everything you've come to believe about you being the "new Israel" or "Spiritual Israel"?

Two things can happen: Either admit that you were wrong, or you harden your heart to the truth.

Both Catholics and Main-Line Protestant churches in large part today, see Israel as more the problem than the solution when it comes to current political events. They reject the prophetic significance of the rebirth of Israel, and see them more as an oddity than the [Fig Tree](#). All the other views, aside from the Pre-Tribulational view, have to

believe in the below in order for them to remain consistent within the confines of their own eschatology's:

1. A total or partial rejection of the literal teachings of Christ's return for His Church.
2. A total misunderstanding of who the Church is, and what our role is during the Tribulation.
3. A denial that God allows His Church to go through His wrath (wrath must be redefined)

Some or more reject the following also in order to make their eschatology's fit today's world:

1. They largely reject the significance of the rebirth of modern Israel, *which breeds anti-Semitism, and denies prophetic fulfillment.*
2. They reject the Pre-Tribulation Rapture which is our [Blessed Hope](#), *which rejects the true nature and purpose of the Church and warning the world of coming judgment.*
3. They reject a millennial reign of Christ on the earth, *for which they have to reject or redefine large portions of Scriptures to come to this conclusion.*

### Conclusion

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. **2 Timothy 4:8**

The Bible states that the body of Christ will be one body but made up of many different members. We are also gifted with many different kinds of gifts.... some to teach, some to preach, etc. [[1 Corinthians 12](#)] Some ministers have an excellent understand of salvation, but are way out in left field when it comes to eschatology. The only reasoning, I can think of is that time went on, the Church departed from the Scriptures to following man-made ideas about interpretation.

Another thought is, is that true Christianity has some *bonafide* that can't change. You can't mess with truisms that make Christianity, well, Christian. If you depart from any of these, you aren't a Christian...

- The Deity of Christ
- Salvation by grace through faith, not of works
- Inerrancy of Scripture...i.e. The Bible is God's word to man
- Virgin birth of Christ
- Death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

We have a Bible that is black and white not just on salvation and the other core doctrinal positions that make Christianity, Christian, but on every subject. How one interprets what God has given us, is how one understands the non-core issues. Many choose to apply strict literalness to certain areas of Scripture (On the Deity of Christ for example),

but then in other areas, apply liberal doses of allegory and spiritualization (on the Kingdom for example). This is not a consistent way to interpret the Bible. The key is to always take the Bible in a literal fashion, except when taken it literally, is absurd. (Example: Psalm 98:8; Isaiah 55:12)

I would state, that at this late in the game, it's almost pointless to argue with those who firmly entrenched in their views, because Biblical reasoning is an exercise in futility. You point to one verse, and they take that verse and put it on its head so that it means something else. Unless one changes how they interpret the Bible, literally as opposed to allegorically, than reasoning with them using solely the Bible, is bound to frustration.

So why do so many Christians, have such varying views on eschatology? Why does the Bible lend itself to so many interpretations when God could have point blank stated, that X Y Z will happen and in X Y Z order, and make it impossible to construe any other way? Again, there is only ONE correct view, and that view is the Pre-Tribulational view. Why does that matter? Well, for a number of reasons.

- We are commanded to contend for the faith. [Jude 1:3]
- We recognize that the Church and Israel are not the same thing (Matt. 16:13-19)
- We recognize that God is not finished with the Jews (Romans 11:25-27)
- We recognize that we have no role or place inside of the Tribulation (Dan. 9:24; Rev. 3:10)
- We realize we cannot lose our salvation (Eph. 1:11-14, 2 Cor. 1:21-22) because we are not our own, but purchased by God, and changed into a 'new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17)