

It's **NOT** the

End of the

World

**Using the Bible to Disprove Man-Made,
End-of-the-World, Second-Coming
Hype**

Shawn McCraney

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**This book is for those who sincerely believe in
the finished work of Jesus and in God's
supreme longsuffering rather than those who
hope for a firey, wrathful judgment to fall upon
their enemies.**

**Some say a comet will fall from the sky
Followed by meteor showers and tidal waves
Followed by fault lines that cannot sit still
Followed by millions of dumbfounded dips - -.
Aenema - Tool**

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Chapter One - A Revelation about Revelation	7
Chapter Two - Matthew Matters	20
Chapter Three - More of Matthew Matters	30
Chapter Four - Miracles, Lightning, Carcasses and Eagles	41
Chapter Five - Signs, the Son of Man in the Clouds, and this Generation	47
Chapter Six - Last Days before a New Heaven and a New Earth	55
Chapter Seven - Wrapping up the Matthew Matters	62
Chapter Eight - The End of the World?.....	70
Chapter Nine - A World of Hype.....	77
Chapter Ten - Judgement is at Hand.....	116
Chapter Eleven - Nero, the Millennium, and the 144,000	124
Chapter Twelve - James, Hebrews, John, Peter and Satan being bound.....	131
Chapter Thirteen - Paul	138
CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT	148

Introduction

I was a Mormon for the first forty years of my life. Mormonism was founded in 1830 on the idea that Jesus was coming back soon and the LDS people were especially called to come together and prepare the world for His eminent arrival. While the fervor for His Millennial Reign has all but disappeared in twenty first century Mormonism, vestiges of its millennial origins continue to appear in some form or another keeping the idea alive.

I left Mormonism in 2001 and dove head first into what people might call Evangelical Christianity. My first corporate experience with this form of Christianity came in and through my attending a Calvary Chapel School of Ministry. Calvary Chapels, unbeknownst to me at the time I enrolled, are steeped in futurist or dispensational eschatology. In layman's terms this means that Calvary Chapels spend a lot of time in their services focused on and warning people about (you guessed it) "Jesus eminent return."

In all honesty, when I read the Bible (which I have ardently done since 2001 and casually have done since 1982) all I saw was a futurist eschatology. I had no idea the effect the pre-conditioning I received from both Mormonism and Calvary Chapel would have on my inability to read or see what the Bible clearly says.

In 2013 someone sent me a book from a gentle believer by the name of Glenn Hill. The book is called, *Christianity's Greatest Dilemma*. The main thrust of the book was to ask and answer the question, "When does the Bible say that Jesus would return?"

Because of the ministry I am involved in (media) I was constantly receiving books from well-meaning believers insisting that if I took the time to read them I would benefit thereby. I rarely did. Didn't have the time or inclination. But for some reason I was intrigued by Brother Hill's book and started in on it - only to have my entire world rocked.

Much of what I discuss here in this book is taken from Brother Hill's work on the same subject. I borrowed heavily from his themes and then fleshed them out as a means to make them a little more understandable. I am deeply indebted to two people - the first, a Canadian whose name I don't recall, who forwarded brother Hills book to me and then to Brother Glenn Hill himself. I've had the chance to speak with him over the phone on a few occasions and have ordered his book for our small congregation here in Utah. As a result we've lost a number of members who cannot (or will not) allow themselves to see what I believe is now more than clear - that Jesus Second Coming was in 70AD with the destruction of Jerusalem and that the dispensational and/or a-millennial views have been weighed and found wanting.

But I do not want you to trust me or the insights of Glenn Hill. All I am asking is that you will consider what the Bible actually has to say. This is the focus of this book - "When does the Bible say Jesus would return?"

May God bless you with His spirit in abundance as you consider the contents of this little work. If and when you come to the same conclusions as I have you will begin to see this most wonderful faith open up in ways you never thought possible.

Chapter One - A Revelation about Revelation

"Tis evident that when Christ speaks of His coming; His being revealed; His coming in His kingdom or His kingdom coming, He has respect to His appearing in those great works of His power, Justice, and Grace, which should be in the DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM and other extraordinary Provinces which should attend it."

Jonathan Edwards 1776

"And all this prophecy of what would result from their insolence against Christ has been clearly proved to have taken place."

Eusebius 314

AD

I have learned over the years in dealing with people who are deluded that there is a period in every discussion or presentation when nothing being delivered is being heard. It's usually at the beginning of a discussion or when too much time and information has been presented and a break is needed. It's understandable. We all have so much swimming around in our heads that when we are confronted with information that challenges our traditions and preconceived notions we automatically put up walls and defenses. It's just our nature.

I've also discovered that most people do not really hear what a challenger is saying but are instead trying to think of exceptions and responses to the things that sneak through and upset them. With all of this in mind I am going to approach our topic of "When does the Bible say Jesus should return" in a rather unusual way. Are you ready?

I am going to start by offering you another way to consider viewing the book of Revelation. So ask yourselves, who was the Book of Revelation written to? Why was it written and then delivered to them? And when the intended recipients received it, did they read it and say to each other:

"We'll these writings don't have anything to do with us – they are for the future!" Or did they gather around and dissect every word, and take them seriously? Let's put all this together and examine the book of Revelation from a genuine historical perspective.

First of all, let's touch on the date that it was written. Today many believers teach and are taught that the book was written by John in 95 AD. For arguments sake let's just agree to this for now and take a few minutes and examine what the revelation actually says.

It opens up chapter one, verse one, and says:

Revelation 1:1-2 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

That word translated shortly comes from the Greek word "tachos," and it means in a brief period of time. It does NOT allow for a hundred or a thousand or two thousand years but a short span. Tachos is only used fifteen times in the New Testament and always means "in a quick period of time." So in the introduction of the Book of Revelation the Lord delivers the Revelation that God gave Him which was to show His servants (who were alive at that time) things which must *shortly* come to pass. Now, I don't know about you, but this passage causes me to think two things:

Either when the scripture says "shortly" it doesn't mean shortly, and the readers of this revelation were fooled, and therefore the book has need of constant revision since it was written to fit the changing times OR it meant exactly what it said and those who read it (at that time and to whom it was written) believed and trusted in what it said, that it was true and reliable and trustworthy from God's mouth, to Jesus ear, to John's pen.

Let's move on.

Third verse first chapter - ready?

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Revelation 1:3

The Greek word for "the time is at hand" is engoos and it means nearby. Three verses into the Revelation and we've already had two warnings to the reader that the time (for the things written in Revelation) to occur. So, again, who was reading this Revelation? Who was is written to and who was Jesus warning that the time was at hand? In the first line of verse 4 we read

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia."

Those churches had people in them. And those people were trusting in the words John was delivering to them on Jesus errand, right? Or no? At this point in this presentation a great majority of believers today are ready to offer up resistances.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," they will say, "but there is so much in Revelation that hasn't happened yet so we know that . . ."

Know that what? That Jesus was wrong? That the time (for the things in the book to be accomplished) was not at hand? So far that is all we can conclude - that Jesus was wrong, and John was wrong, and all the believers in the Seven churches were misled. Let's move on. Jump to verse seven:

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.” Revelation 1:7

From this passage we know that what verses two and three are talking about “happening soon” is Jesus coming. Would you agree so far or am I wrong?

Verse seven also says that he will come in the clouds (just as when He left and the angel said that He would return in the same manner) and that every eye shall see Him.

Now this line, taken by itself, is used by futurists (those who believe Jesus return still looms out ahead of us) who say, *“Obviously not every eye on earth has ever seen Him return so this hasn’t happened yet.”* Not so fast. We have to take all of scripture into account before we make a decision on what a single verse says and with that being the case we have to consider what Hebrews 9:28 means when the writer says:

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them ‘that look for him shall he appear the second time’ without sin unto salvation.”

By including this passage in our understanding of verse 7 I think we have to say that when Jesus says “every eye shall see Him” He means every eye that is looking for Him will see Him, right? Notice also that Revelation 1:7 says:

*“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, **“and they also which pierced him:”***

Now we know that some of those who participated in His would also see Him coming in the clouds – and from this we know the time-frame being spoken about, right? As a means to justify the line *“and they also which pierced Him (shall see Him),”* futurists will often say, *“well that’s all of us – we all pierced Him.”* Not so. The Bible never says we all pierced Him. It only speaks of those who pierced Him and that line always relates to the actual people involved in His crucifixion – some of whom were still alive when Revelation was written. Finally verse seven says:

“and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.”

All the “foolay” (which could mean “tribes” as in the twelve tribes of Israel or kinfolk) of the “ge” in the Greek (not the kosmos (which is the better term for world) but the “ge” which could mean something as simple as the country. Taking this into account we would read the last line of verse seven as *“And all the twelve tribes of the country will wail because if Him.”* Because of His very presence or could it mean because of the judgment He has brought upon Jerusalem? We are seven verses into one disputable book and already I am sure that the average reader has had their eyes opened to things they have never before considered.

Then, just to reiterate context, verse 11 has Jesus saying to John:

*"I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and **send it** unto the seven churches which are in Asia (which compromises our modern Turkey); unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."*

Again, why would Jesus have John write what he sees and then tell him to send what he wrote specifically to those real house churches at that time? Why doesn't Jesus add, *"And to all Christians forevermore out into the future."* And again, what would the recipients of this letter in the house churches think upon hearing these words from Jesus to John? That they weren't going to happen or that they were?

Let's leave the 1st Chapter of Revelation and all we have just laid out and go to the last chapter of the book. Now, remember, everything in between has been taken and assigned a future date by most Christians today. If this is so why did He have John send it to actual churches in actual places at that actual time if none of it to had application? Was it for them to pour over the content and then say to each other - *"We'll this isn't going to happen for a couple thousands of years?"*

In chapter one Jesus emphatically repeats that He is coming quickly, He tells John who this Revelation was for, and He even goes on to say that those who pierced Him would see Him. In the last chapter of Revelation, the other bookend as it were, John continues to write the things he saw. At this point we would have to agree that the Revelation is choked full of imagery. The Christian's living in the time post Christ's resurrection were involved in spiritual warfare and so the language (though extremely apocalyptic in nature) is speaking to images, responses and advice that is discovered in realms of the spirit for the believers of that day by people who would understand the imagery and was never supposed to be a map of future generations. We cannot possibly think we can sufficiently comprehend the book outside of its most obvious messages founded upon that day, that time and among those people.

So, to chapter 22. At verse 6 John writes:

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."

The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Because this is at the end of the Revelation I take this to mean that all the things between Chapters one and twenty two must shortly be done. There's that Tachos word again which means *"speedily, near at hand."* The next verse? Seven, which is a repeat of what was said in the first chapter:

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he (who are in the seven churches) that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Revelation 22:7

Again from the Greek, "I come without delay." Go to verse 10 as John writes again:

“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.”

The word for at hand means “nigh,” “before you.” Again, verse twelve! Again - to the seven Churches:

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12

And then after warning the readers there in the Seven Churches about messing with the contents of the Revelation, we read from John (in the second to the last verse):

“He (meaning Jesus) which testifieth these things saith, “Surely I come quickly. Amen.” And then the apostle John adds to all of these warnings, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Four reminders in the opening chapter of the Revelation that promised He was coming quickly and four reminders in the last chapter that do the exact same thing. Why haven't the majority of believers read these simple Bible verses and accepted them as true but have instead been waiting for Jesus to return to them . . . shortly? It's because they have accepted a man-made interpretation of these scriptures which have taken books like Revelation, Daniel and Ezekiel and concocted an unbiblical view rather than choosing to look at what the Bible actually has to say. And as a result for nearly two thousand years people have been running about getting ready for His imminent second coming (a term we don't even find in the Bible). And yet millions of devout believers anxiously await for it to occur. Is Jesus is going to come back and rapture believers or did that already happen? While not a hill to die on (after all, we are not saved by doctrine but by grace through faith) if the Bible clearly shows when Jesus was supposed to return wouldn't this information go a long, long way in helping believers today focus on living as Christians in a way that has never been attempted in the past.

Many people refute the whole preterist idea by claiming the Book of Revelation was written after the Book of Revelation therefore proving its contents were NOT talking about the Destruction of Jerusalem but of another time (like ours) in the future. For starters, the dating of all the New Testament books is a debatable issue at best. And it is doubtful believers will ever agree on the subject. Because of this I would suggest the “dating debates” have very little to do with my views on the dating of the Book of Revelation. I would instead suggest that the content of the New Testament books (what is said in them) and the context of who and where things were said, along with the secular history surrounding what was said is far more supportive of my stance than debatable “datings” of the books themselves. That being said, however, the dating of the single book of Revelation is very important to the Preterist view - and here's why:

A Preterist believes that the events of Revelation have occurred and a futurist believes that the events described in Revelation are still headed our way. If Revelation was written before 70AD it goes a long way to support the Preterist position because we

could at least say that the destruction of Jerusalem occurred after it was written therefore supporting the idea that the books contents were therefore fulfilled.

If Revelation was written even one day after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD then its contents obviously had no bearing on Jerusalem's destruction and therefore must have application to a day in the future - as the futurists claim. In other words, if Revelations was written pre-70AD we could easily agree that its fulfillment was God's judgment on Israel. If we date it after the Destruction of Jerusalem then there is ample evidence that its contents have not occurred and Christians had better maintain a pure physical church for Jesus to come back and get. Here's the key to knowing when the book was written - it's not through scholarly debates over historical evidences that prove the dating of Revelation but the contents of Revelation itself.

Those who hold to the late dating of Revelation typically assign it's authorship to be around 95-96 AD. This was a year when a man called Domitian Caesar reigned. And this dating was determined by the following statement by Irenaeus (AD 130 to AD 202), as quoted by Eusebius, the church historian, in AD 325. Now note two things about this quote - it came from two men - Eusebius (in 325 AD) quoting Irenaeus, who lived 123 years earlier and who was writing about an event that supposedly took place nearly two generations before that! This is Eusibius' quote taken apparently from Irenaeus:

"We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign."

To add fuel to the already questionable nature of this quote we also have to note that Irenaeus did not witness this. He was actually referring to Polycarp (who, according to tradition knew the apostle John). Then, we are not sure if the "it" Polycarp was referring to was John, the visions he saw, the name of anti-christ, or the book itself! This is debated!

Finally, we do not know if he meant that the book was written at that time or not. In the end, this single statement, which comes to us by three separate people separated by three centuries, is at best hearsay and is certainly unclear as to its meaning. And it is this statement alone, amidst all of this uncertainty, that serves as the evidence to support the "late date" theory of the dating of the Book of Revelation.

I call this tradition - something I refuse to build my faith upon. How about letting the Bible itself tell us when the Book was written.

POINT #1 *"John must prophesy again."*

In Revelation 10:11 we read that John *"must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."* If Revelation was written in AD 95-96, John would have been over ninety years old. In that day and age ninety was ancient and traveling was brutal. Not that God couldn't have supported him but it typically would have been

very difficult for him to travel to the various "*nations and...many kings*" and preach. However, with Revelation written earlier, John would have been in his mid-sixties and at that age, his traveling would have been more reasonable.

POINT #2 *The Seven Churches in Asia*

Chapter one verse four proves that John wrote Revelation to a specific group of churches in Asia. The importance of this statement cannot be overlooked (even though it has been by many scholars). There is only one small window of time in which there were only seven churches in Asia. The early AD Sixties. The apostle Paul established nine churches in that area, but only seven were addressed in Revelation. The reason for this is that the cities of Colosse, Hierapolis, and Laodicea, were all destroyed by an earthquake around AD 61. Laodicea was rebuilt soon afterwards, but the other two cities were not. This left only seven churches in Asia during the five years just prior to the beginning of the Roman/Jewish war. Of particular importance is the message to the church of Philadelphia found in Revelation 3:7-13. In verse's 10 and 11, Christ told John to inform them that an "*hour of temptation*" was "*about to come upon all the world,*" (i.e., the Roman Empire GE, not the KOSMOS or entire world). Christ then said that He was coming quickly and that they should "*hold fast.*" The reason that this is important (besides the fact that this was directed to an actual church in the first century) is that the first persecution of Christians took place under Nero Caesar in AD 64. Another reason Revelation could not have been written after 70 AD.

POINT #3 *The Temple was still standing*

As mentioned last week one of the most compelling proofs that Revelation was written before Jerusalem was destroyed is the fact that the Jewish temple was still standing!

Revelation 11:1-2 says:

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

How do we know that this was the temple of the first century and not some future one? First, there is not one verse in the entire Bible that speaks of a "rebuilt" Jewish Temple. Not one. That alone should be proof enough. Nevertheless this passage is very similar to Luke 21:20-24. Notice that Jesus told the disciples that they would see this event. They had asked Him about their temple (verse 5), and Jesus told them it would be destroyed before their generation passed away (verse 32). Notice again what Jesus said in verse 24, "*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.*" This is the same thing Christ told John in Revelation 11:2! Therefore, since the disciples' generation has long since passed away, Revelation must have been written before the nations trampled Jerusalem under foot in AD 70.

POINT #4 *The Tribes of the Earth*

Most writers consider the theme of the Book to be Revelation to be chapter 1 verse 7. It reads:

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

This verse is very similar in context to Matthew 24:30.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes (same Greek word as Revelation 1:7) of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Standing alone this is not conclusive by any means but from it we can see that just based on the language use alone that a case can be made because Matthew 24:30 is a verse that speaks of "the fall of Jerusalem" and the Revelation verse, we might suggest, is speaking of the exact same thing - and therefore had to be written prior to the date of its fall. Also, take notice again of the language of Revelation 1:7. It refers to those who "pierced him."

Although we know that the Romans crucified Jesus and pierced Him, the apostles accused the Jews of the act in Acts 2:23 and 36. Later, Acts 3:15, 4:10, and 5:30 says the same thing. Stephen, in Acts 7:51-52, calls the Jews murderers. Paul, in 1st Corinthians 2:8, speaks of the "Jews killing the Lord." And again Paul, in I Thessalonians 2:14-15, speaks of the Jews that killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets.

From this we might suggest that the book itself concerns itself with the Jews who were utterly dispersed or killed in 70 AD. When Revelation 1:7 refers to all the "kindreds of the earth" ("kindreds" is from the Greek word *phule*, which means "tribe") this is a direct allusion to the Jewish tribal system. Now, we must identify, from Scripture, who those "tribes" were. To do that, we must keep in mind this simple rule of interpreting the Bible: let Scripture interpret Scripture. This we can easily do by looking at Zechariah 12:10-14. There we read:

"And I will pour upon the...inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son...In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem...And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart."

Obviously, this is the foundation for John's statement in Revelation 1:7 that

"every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth (or land) shall wail because of him."

Zechariah was saying that the "*tribes of the land*" would mourn for "*Him whom they had pierced.*" Who were those tribes? "*The inhabitants of Jerusalem*" – not the world at some future date. From these things (and more) we can see that one of the main purposes of the Revelation to the seven churches was to reveal Jesus to the Nation of Israel. The place of this final revealing would be Jerusalem and it would be to those "*who pierced Him.*"

This is not a general reference to the Jewish nation, who today are not one bit different in the eyes of God than every Gentile but was a reference to Christ's contemporary generation - a generation was destroyed in AD 70, by the Roman Legions.

POINT #5 *The Woman*

The next thing that we need to look at is "*the woman*" spoken of in chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation. John wrote that he saw a "*woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*" (17:6). The "*woman*" had this name written on her forehead: "*MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*" (17:5). The angel said that "*the woman*" was a poetic symbol of "*that great city*" (17:18); in whom "*was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*" (18:24).

Then in chapter 18:20-21 John wrote, "*Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her... Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.*"

So who was this "*woman*?" This "*great city*?"

John gives us a clue in Revelation 11:8, where he wrote,

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

This shows us, as we saw above, that John was referring to the Jerusalem of his day. To prove this assertion we need to look at the term "*Sodom*," John used to describe it. This was a figurative name describing her spiritual condition rather than an actual location. Letting the Bible interpret itself, we find this is a reference to Jerusalem. In Isaiah, chapter 1, after declaring that he had a "*vision...concerning Judah and Jerusalem*" (verse 1), Isaiah wrote, "*Hear the words of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom.*" In Jeremiah 23:14, because of the adulterous prophets, God said that Jerusalem and her inhabitants were "*all of them unto me as Sodom.*"

But what about the reference to "*Egypt*," some may ask? Nowhere in the Bible is Jerusalem called Egypt. However, the first century generation of Jews were also in an Exodus as were the Children of Israel anciently. While Old Testament Israel's exodus was from the bondage of Egypt, the New Testament Israel's exodus was from the bondage of the Old Covenant Law – housed at Jerusalem. In this I think we have a

fairly clear reference to Jerusalem, (as both a Sodom and an Egypt) being referred to in Revelation.

POINT #6 *The Sixth King*

So far we have seen that Revelation deals with the revealing of Jesus to first century Israel. We've also seen, that "the woman" John saw was first century Jerusalem. We then read in Revelation 17:10:

"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

I would suggest that the "kings" spoken of here were the rulers of the known world of John's day (the Roman Empire) since the Jews had "no king but Caesar." These "kings" were not ruling at the same time, for as the text says "*five fell*," meaning that five of those kings had come and gone. Then "*one is*," referring to the "king" who was ruling at the time Revelation was written. This is where we have one of the clearest proofs for dating this book. If we simply examine the list of Roman Emperors, we will be able to determine who the sixth king was, and the time that Revelation was written.

Here are the Roman Emperors of John's day:

1. Julius Caesar
2. Augustus
3. Tiberius
4. Gaius (Caligula)
5. Claudius

and the sixth emperor, the one who "now is" was...
(that's right,) 6. Nero.

And when did Nero reign?
From 54 AD to June of 68 AD!

Again, Revelation 17:10 says:

"And there are seven kings: five are fallen (we named them), and one is (Nero), and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

This last king would be a man named Galba who would reign only six months after the horrid Nero. Nero did terrible things to Christians. He had both Peter and Paul put to death and he was whom God used to destroy the Jews in Jerusalem. It was Nero who was in power and gave the command to Vespasian to destroy Jerusalem. Historically, Nero is the one that persecuted Christians beyond all comparison. John's banishment to Patmos was itself a result of the great persecution of Nero. This was the sixth king mentioned in Revelation, proving beyond any doubt that Revelation was written before the Roman/Jewish war.

POINT # 7 *The Song of Moses*

To anyone familiar with the Law of Moses and Jewish tradition, Revelation 15:2-3 will have meaning. It says that those martyrs "*who had come off victorious from the Beast*" were singing "*the Song of Moses.*"

The first thing we have to ask ourselves is if these martyrs (spoken of here) are going to be Christian's living today why are they singing the song of Moses? How does the song go? What is the tune? The Song of Moses is found in Deuteronomy 32:1-43. The Jews were to sing this song to remind themselves of what would befall them "in the latter days" (Deuteronomy 31:29). The song specifically talks about "their end" - the Jews (verse 20), and details their destruction by a consuming "*fire*" (verse 22), "*famine*" (verse 24), "*plague*" (verse 24) and "*bitter destruction*" (verse 24). In it God calls them a "*perverse generation*" (verses 5 and 20), and says He will "*render vengeance*" upon them and "*vindicate His people*" (verse 41 and 36 respectively).

Why would Christian martyrs of the 21st century be singing this song? They wouldn't. Another evidence that the Book of Revelation was written to them in that day not to us in ours.

POINT #8 *The Element and References to Time*

As we have pointed out Revelation is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ," who tells John that the fulfillment of the prophecies of this book "was soon." Right off the bat in Revelation 1:1 and 3, John informed his readers, the seven churches of Asia (verse 4), that the contents of this volume "must shortly come to pass." Did you catch that? "The CONTENTS of this book!" Again - take note! John did not write that some of the events, or even most of the events must "*shortly*" take place. He wrote that all of the events contained in Revelation (the CONTENTS of this Book) "must shortly come to pass."

(Why?)

Because "*the time (was) at hand.*"

(At hand for whom?)

The seven churches of Asia, specifically, and to the church of the first century in general.

(The time was "*at hand,*" for what?)

"*The Revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

Then, in Revelation 22:6, John wrote that the Lord sent an angel to John "*to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*"

So here, at the end of the book of Revelation, John recorded the exact same message that he did in chapter 1. Have you ever noticed this? This again emphasizes that all of the events contained in Revelation were about to take place in the first century - not stretched throughout time, and certainly not for any future generation.

In Revelation 22:10, the angel of the Lord said to John,

"*Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*"

Once more, we have proof that the events of Revelation were about to take place in the first century. However, another element was added to this warning. Do you know what it is? The angel told John not to seal the Scroll. Why is this important? To get our answer we have to let scripture explain so let's look at the book of Daniel. After Daniel had received visions concerning his people (the nation of Israel), he was told, "thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (12:1). Daniel is then told how they would be rescued – by resurrection, some would be rewarded with "everlasting life" and others with "everlasting contempt" (verse 2). But then, Daniel is told something very peculiar. In verse 4, Daniel was told, "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." We have to refuse the temptation to believe that when Daniel says "*the time of the end*," it is not the same thing as "*the end of time*". There is a huge difference between the end of time and the time of the end. So the time of the end of what and for whom? Verse 1 told us that Daniel's visions were concerned the nation of Israel, not mankind in general. Next, Daniel saw two angels talking about the fulfillment of all that he had seen (verse 6). One asked the other, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The answer was, "when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." (verse 7). But Daniel could not understand what they meant, so he asked again, "When?"

This is what the angel said in reply:

"Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

Did you know that there is only one other place in the Bible where "a sealed book" is referred to? Revelation, chapter 5:1 which says:

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." The reason this has direct bearing on Revelation 21-22 is that Daniel was told to "*seal his book*" concerning the end "*for it pertains to many days in the future*" (Daniel 8:26), but John was told not to seal his book "*because the time is at hand*" (Revelation 22:10). The end of Old Covenant Israel was at hand. The end of that world or age. All things written had to be fulfilled by the time Jerusalem – that age, that world, fell. Then, speaking of timing Revelation 21:12 Jesus says to John:

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Notice that Jesus did not say that "when I come, I will come quickly," He emphatically said that He was coming "quickly." But He also said something else. He said "that His reward was with Him to give every man according to his works." Now some state that this has not happened yet. However, we AGAIN must let Scripture interpret Scripture and so we turn to Matthew 16:27-28, Mark 8:38-9:1 and Luke 9:26-27.

Did you know that Jesus said the exact same thing in these three verses that He did in Revelation 21. Again, in Revelation 21, He said He was coming and "*he shall reward*

every man according to his works." But Jesus also said in these three different Gospel verses,

"There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Notice that Jesus tied His coming to the lives of His disciples. And that He said that some of his listeners would not die until He came. And to whom was He coming? Those alive within that generation. And what will be their reward? Daniel told us that the "rewards" would be that some would be resurrected to "everlasting life" and others to "everlasting contempt".

POINT #9 *No mention of the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Seven Churches*

To believe that Revelation was written after the destruction of Jerusalem – but did not include one reference to the devastating destruction of Jerusalem or the Temple – is simply foolish. And while not empirical evidence, it's really, really odd.

POINT #10 *Conclusion*

If a person doesn't believe the first three verses of Revelation (i.e., the near expectation of the events), neither will he believe the rest of the book. For if a person is unwilling to accept the time constraints of the text, the rest of the document can mean anything that the reader desires.

If the Apostle John was banished to Patmos under the reign of Nero, as the internal evidence indicates, he wrote the book of Revelation about AD 68 or 69, which was after the death of that emperor.

If all the books of the New Testament were written after 70 AD why do they speak as if Jerusalem is still standing – temple and vibrant community in tact?

It is of interest that in the Syrian version of the Book of Revelation, first published in 1627 (and, afterwards in the London Polyglot) we find the following inscription:

"The Revelation which God made to John the evangelist, in the Island of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero Caesar." This places John's hand to paper well before 69 AD.

Let's drop the legends. We claim to love the Bible why not start letting it really speak for itself contextually and through the spirit instead of by the traditions and fears and myths of Man.

Chapter Two - Matthew Matters

“Christianity is a wholly subjective relationship between the individual and God established through saving faith in Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. Organized religion and all of its demands have absolutely no objective authority in or over this relationship whatsoever.”

“The matter is quite simple. The Bible is very easy to understand. But we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand we are obliged to act accordingly. Take any words in the New Testament and forget everything except pledging yourself to act accordingly. My God, you will say, if I do my whole life will be ruined. Herein lies the real place of Christian scholarship. Christian scholarship is the Church’s prodigious invention to defend itself against the Bible, to ensure that we can continue to be good Christians without the Bible coming too close. Dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Yes, it is even dreadful to be alone with the New Testament.”

-

Soren Kierkegaard

To make things really simple the Bible speaks of two resurrections – the first resurrection (or the resurrection of the just) and the second resurrection (or the resurrection of the damned). Once the first resurrection is complete there will follow what we call the second resurrection OR the resurrection of the damned. Many believers have been waiting for Jesus to return to initiate the first resurrection but they do this mistakenly as He – being the first-fruits of them that slept – initiated the first resurrection when He rose after three days in the grave. Shortly thereafter we read in Matthew that others also rose from the dead. In other words it was Jesus rising from the dead that ignited the First Resurrection. We’ll call His resurrection the first fruits or the very first phase of the First resurrection.

What most Christians are actually waiting for is the second phase of the First Resurrection which scripture plainly says will occur when Jesus returns. So our question is, “When does the Bible say Jesus will return?” Not “When does Shawn McCraney, or John McArthur, or any one else say Jesus will return but when does the Bible say Jesus will return. And I want to thank my pastor friend Glenn Hill for showing me from the Bible what it says on the subject.

Now, when it comes to teaching the Bible there is an approach that I think really helps. First, we “observe” what is being said, then we “interpret” what is said, and then we give what is being said “application” to our present-day lives. In my estimation it is a fantastic method for teaching the Word of God. In the first phase (observing – which is what I want to talk about here) we might ask things like:

Who is the writer?

Where is he writing from?

Who is the audience?

Why is he writing to them?

What is the surrounding situation (the context)?

What is occurring in the secular world around the time the word was written?

And perhaps most importantly, what would the words being written mean to the recipients at that time.

Let me repeat that last one:

“What would the words being written mean to the recipients at that time?”

Often believers walk about with this idea that the Bible (especially the New Testament) was first written *to us* – to readers and believers today. Many people today have allowed themselves to believe that the New Testament epistles were written to a people who didn't really understand what was being said at the time and that is because it was written for us. I would call that 100% pure baloney. The Epistles written to the Church at Rome were written to (drumroll please) the church at Rome, etc., etc..

In other words the New Testament letters were first written to the believers of *that* day, encouraging and instructing them first and therefore the primary application was to them and their physical needs, their understanding, and their Christian walk. At best the epistles have a secondary application to later generations like ours. If we read the New Testament in any other way we are quite likely to misinterpret what was being said wrongly and then make the mistake of thinking the text has meaning or application in areas and ways to us that it doesn't . . . that it couldn't.

Admittedly, the Word of God is the living word, and I am convinced that even though the purpose for passages being written back then often don't have the same application to us in our day, they can be applied to believers now with tremendous – even equal – significance. Mostly spiritual significance.

For example, Jesus employs a lot of imagery in His teachings that borrow heavily from an extremely agrestic community. Lots of stories and illustrations about planting, harvesting, reaping and sowing. To a city dweller the imagery may not carry the same weight, but then again, it might bear more, revealing things to the mind of someone not familiar with the processes of agriculture in ways that would go unnoticed by those who are – and of course, vice versa. This is just one of the beauties of the living word.

My point, then, is not to suggest that we lose benefit because we are not part of the original audience – the Word is Living – but when it comes to theology or issues like, *“When does the Bible say Jesus should return,”* we HAVE to include in our examination as many critical bits of information (as possible) in order to really comprehend what was being said, to whom it was being said and why.

Okay . . . so what we are going to do is break our study down on *“When the Bible says Jesus should return”* by looking at what specific speakers in scripture have said on the subject. In chapter one we observed who the writer of Revelation (John) was addressing which helped us see the primary purpose of the revelation itself.

In this chapter we are going to begin to see what Jesus Himself said – as recorded in the Gospel accounts – about when he would return. And we’ll start off by examining the big discourses the Lord gave in the synoptic accounts (located in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21). For efficiencies sake I am going to use Matthew 24 as the essential narrative and add to it from the other accounts of Mark and Luke as necessary.

Now, Matthew chapter 24 takes place when the Lord and His disciples (actually there are only three there with Him) as they are sitting on the Mount of Olives. Here Jesus Himself supplies to these men His own description of when He is going to return. In order to really get the full picture of this chapter however we have to start back three chapters (in Matthew 21). It was here that Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Remember that? He rode in on the donkey who had never been ridden upon and people waved psalm branches and threw down their coats and cried, *“Hosanna”* to the Lord.

Well after entering into this historic City of David Jesus went straight to the temple. And when He got there He drove out the money changers and over-turned the tables. This was incendiary behavior and I believe He did it to stoke the fires of the evil that burned within the hearts of the religious leadership of His day. Then with His disciples He retreated to Bethany. Remember all that?

The next day He came back into the city (from Bethany) and do you remember what He saw? A beautiful leafy fig tree which, (from a distance) had the appearance of being a fruit bearer, but when the Lord got closer He found that it actually bore no fruit at all (a picture of the Nation of Israel) and so He cursed it, and to the amazement of the disciples it immediately began to wither. From there Jesus returns back to the Temple mount and began one of the most railing accusations against the Jewish religious leaders imaginable.

His words compose chapter 21-23 of Matthew. In these chapters He calls them:

“hypocrites, a generation of vipers, blind guides, serpents” and heaps upon them a bunch of other imprecations. All through these two chapters Jesus is telling them that they are essentially *“done for.”* Chapter 23 ends with Jesus saying to those Jews (beginning at verse 35):

“ . . . upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often

would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Unquestionably, when Jesus tells them, "Your house is left unto you desolate," the "house" was not only the very temple that Jesus stood in but everything that represented the distinct features of this Nation – their culture in Jerusalem, genealogies, land, nation, priesthood, their way of life – all of it – left desolate. These things all bring us to the contents of Matthew chapter 24.

So let's now turn to it and see what happens next as the narrative continues.

Matthew 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

The Lord had just laid some tremendous and horrible predictions out against the Nation of Israel. For some reason the disciples decided to point out the grandeur of the temple to Him at this time. Maybe they were trying to change the subject, maybe as a means to indirectly say, "You know Lord, we believe all you said in the temple today but . . . but , wow, just look at the magnificence of the Temple!" Or maybe their purpose was much more significant than this – we don't know. Whatever the reason, (verse 2)

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

In my opinion all that happened in chapter 22-23 must have been really hard for the disciples to hear as Jesus was really making everything seem pretty dismal and futile and we might even imagine that as they traveled to the Mount of Olives, which would have given them the most magnificent view of the whole city of Jerusalem, they were pretty solemn and quiet. It appears that traveling with Jesus in the early years was probably fun, right? He was changing water into wine, and healing people right and left, and when they ran out of food He reproduced fish and bread, and when their family members got sick He healed them. But in the past few days He has ripped the temple thieves apart, cursed a beautiful fig tree (which immediately withered), threw down some really ugly imprecations on the Jewish leaders (of whom the disciples at this point were still terrified) and now He said the temple mount (which was a marvel to them) was going to be "thrown down" to the point that not one stone would be left upon another! The party was ending and its quite possible that the mood was very somber. (verse 3)

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately (Mark tells us it was only Peter, James, John and Andrew, by the way) and they essentially asked the Lord three questions.

Ready? Now remember all that has happened and all that Jesus has said (and the tone He has been taking) because this is what produced these specific questions. "Jesus . . .

1. *“Tell us, when shall ‘these things’ be?”*
2. *and what shall be “the sign of thy coming,”*
3. *and of the end of the world?*

Now, we are seeking to know the answer to the second question here, aren't we? But in order to get to it we have to examine questions one and three too. I am personally of the opinion that all three questions are interrelated. In fact, I believe they are all asking for the same answer to each question – *when?*

Some people believe the disciples were asking entirely different questions here that are not related. I disagree. I think the succession of them and the context surrounding when they are being asked proves a direct correlation. Now listen closely – the disciples knew that in the Old Testament, when GOD “brought judgment upon a nation” the prophets often spoke of Him *as having “come down and executing His wrath and judgment upon them.”*

And while we probably do not have all that Jesus told these disciples about His coming return we can see they associated His current prophecies of the coming judgment upon the nation with both His return and the end of *their* world (not the end of *the* World and I'll explain why in a minute). So the four disciples asked the Lord three questions that in my opinion were all interrelated:

1. *Tell us, when shall these things be?*
2. *and what shall be the sign of thy coming,*
3. *and of the end of the world?*

Now hang with me here. They had heard Jesus say that *“the Nation would be laid desolate,”* and that *“the grand temple toppled to the ground,”* that this would be the end of *“their world,”* and that all of it would happen in *“this generation.”* When disciples ask Jesus (in the King James) when *“will be the end of the world,”* they were asking *“when will all of this happen which would put an end to the world as we know it.”*

I think we can understand this on some level – or at least through the unfortunate lives of people as described in country songs. It's similar to a person discovering that their spouse is leaving them, that their house is being foreclosed upon, that they have been fired from their job and then their dog dies – all on the same day! So they sit down and write a song with a title that might be, *“The end of my world,”* right?

This is what the disciples wanted to know of the Lord – when is all of what you have described going to happen to us? (and not when is *the end of the earth*). If they were asking when the *“end of the world”* (earth) was going to occur we would read in the Greek that they would have asked, *“and when is the end of the kosmos”* which is the Greek word for world (as in, earth and even solar system). But that isn't what they asked! Instead they asked Him *“and when is the end of the “age”* – again, that Greek word meaning a period of time, and in this case, the apostles wanted to know when the end

of their “age” was coming . . . the end when all things Jewish, as they knew it, would be “left desolate,” the end when the temple would be brought down . . .

“When will judgment fall on the Nation, which you have described?”

My friends, Matthew 24 (and the Mark and Luke accounts of the same information) is Jesus’ answer to these specific questions.

IF . . . (and when) we are able to recognize this and the material contained in Matthew 24 we will take a giant step toward embracing a clearer eschatological picture of things and therefore a clearer picture of what church means, of what it means to be a Christian and will be equipped to set all the “end-time” scare tactics aside that churches have been pushing for nearly 200 years. Jesus words here to the disciples, if we accept that He was born in 4 or 3 AD, were spoken around 30 AD. The accepted length of a biblical generation is forty years. So if we take 30 AD when Jesus promised that *“all of these things will happen within this generation,”* (both to the Jews at the temple in Matthew 23:36 and then to His disciples here in Matthew 24:34) and add the full forty years of a generation, we have 70 AD – a most important date in the annals of biblical history because it was in 70 AD that the Roman army, under Titus, helped accomplish all of what we will read here in Matthew 24 from Jesus own mouth.

As an aside, we note that the Old Testament prophet Micah also prophesied of this temple destruction, saying in Micah 3:12:

“Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.”

In George Peter Holford’s book, *“The Destruction of Jerusalem,”* we read:

“It is recorded in the Talmud and by Maimonedes, that Terentius Rufus, captain of the army of Titus, absolutely ploughed up the foundation of the temple with a ploughshare.”

To show that it was God’s hand that moved this destruction we read the Jewish historian’s Flavius Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*) that the Roman general Titus actually decided to spare the temple from destruction feeling that it was too magnificent of an edifice to destroy. Instead, he believed that it ought to remain standing as proof of the Roman Empires success. But one of the soldiers ignorantly threw a firebrand through a window and set the place ablaze. In his account Josephus says that when General Titus got word of the fire and

“He rose up in great haste and ran to the holy house in order to have a stop to the fire,” that he gave orders with, *“a loud voice,”* and with *“his right hand gave signals to his soldiers to stop the fire,”* but the normally disciplined Roman soldiers went wild and pushed to see the whole thing destroyed – first by fire.

This was God's judgment upon the people – not Rome's. In fact, Josephus, in his "Essential Writings," (page 365) wrote the following:

"As Titus entered the city (September 26th AD 70) he was astonished at its strength, and especially the towers which the tyrants had abandoned. Indeed, when he saw how high and massive they were, and the size of each huge block, he exclaimed: Surely God was with us in the war, who brought the Jews down from their strongholds, for what could hand or engine do against these towers."

We can choose to believe that what Jesus said to His disciples about, "all these things would happen in this generation," that He was right, and what happened in 70 AD was the fulfillment of it OR . . . we can side with a number of believers today who contend that all the things he said have NOT happened, and Jesus was wrong. So let's go back to Matthew 24.

Now, Christians who believe that what Jesus has been describing has not yet happened use chapter 24 constantly trying to assign and describe these signs of our day and age. Frankly, it's quite easy to read these passages in this way. But let's go through them and see if they really apply to our day – or to the events of 70 AD.

In our first run through I want you to take note of to whom Jesus is directing His descriptive words. If these words were prophesied by our God and King for a date in our day and age why doesn't He make this clear? Instead, He (and the apostles) give plenty of indications He was speaking to them and to their generation and time. So let's read for ourselves (beginning at verses 3) and we are going to read all the way through to verse 35:

3 *And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (the three questions – Jesus replies)*

4 *"Take heed that no man deceive you."*

5 *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

6 *And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end (of the age) is not yet.*

7 *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.*

8 *All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

9 *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

10 *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.*

11 *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

12 *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

13 *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

15 *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*
16 *Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:*
17 *Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:*
18 *Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.*
19 *And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!*
20 *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:*
21 *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*
22 *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*
23 *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.*
24 *For there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*
25 *Behold, I have told you before.*
26 *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.*
27 *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*
28 *For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*
29 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:*
30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*
31 *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*
32 *Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:*
33 *So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.*
34 *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*
35 *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

I know there is a lot here – questionable things – but we are going to hit on the major explanations of what verses 4-16 are saying – relative to that time and place and the 70 AD destruction. Now as we read try and remember that when Jews write they often use hyperbole, illustration, and comparisons to convey what the Holy Spirit is saying to them.

For example, Paul, in Romans 1:8 says:

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”

Does this mean, “*the whole world?*” Catalina Island? Logan Utah? and to the inhabitants living at the base of Mount Fuji? No. How about the whole inhabited world? I don’t think so. But probably the established Roman empire? Yes. There is a time to take the words of the Bible literally and there is a time to read them as representations or figuratively. Literalists love to emphasize lines like the “whole world” and say it means the whole world but often their assumptions are incorrect – which, again, is why we try and ask and answer all those questions I gave you at the beginning when we analyze scripture. Oh and one more thing. Many people today (thanks to the newly created teachings promoted by pre-tribulation fanatics like Hal Lindsey) many people today believe that the end is going to be a nuclear holocaust, and that we are still awaiting for an anti-Christ to pop up on the scene. When we consider the contextual indicators the Lord provides His disciples we can clearly see that Jesus appealed to both local and ancient descriptions of things and did not use language that would describe nuclear holocausts or have futuristic meaning.

Alright so let’s go back and look at verses 6-14. Instead of teaching them in a modern application sense, I am going to explain them in the sense of them occurring before 70 AD. So Jesus says at verse 6:

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end (of the age) is not yet.”

The rumors of war and difficulties for Jerusalem were rampant in and around the decades prior to 70 AD – all reasonable precursors to its inevitable destruction.

Jesus tells these men plainly:

“see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end (of the age) is not yet.”

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

We have recorded history of all of these “terrors” existing prior to the destruction of Israel – even major devastating earthquakes. Most futurists glom onto “*nation shall rise against nation,*” as evidence that Jesus was NOT speaking of 70 AD but a future day, but the thing is the Greek word the King James Translators translated into “nations” is “ethnos” – a word where we get “ethnicities,” and that it a better description of the verse, “ethnicities will rise up against ethnicities” rather than entire Nations against Nations.

In verse 8 Jesus says:

“All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

See how He is mercifully describing for them a chronology to look for and to be aware of – a real one, with a real date confined to that generation? (Verse 9)

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations (ethnicities) for my name's sake.”

The Romans (as well as other ethnicities) were not, to say the least, happy with Jews in Jerusalem (to put it mildly). Verse 10-12 are all validated by Josephus as conditions existing in Jerusalem prior to 70 AD, as the Jews turned on each other, and many false Christ's arose and many of the Christian elect were deceived. In fact, the book of Hebrews was written to help the Jewish Saints avoid apostasy and to encourage all to hang on to the end during such difficult times.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Jesus then gives them each a promise here:

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

In my opinion this is speaking of being saved from utter physical destruction that was coming as legend has it that not one Christian perished in the destruction but escaped. Verse fourteen is thought to be the crowning glory for futurists and biblical literalists as it says:

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Had the Gospel of the Kingdom been preached unto “all the world” by 70 AD? Did the inhabitants of Catalina Island, and Tampa Florida hear the Gospel by then? Oh, wait . . . the Greek word here for world is Cosmos, right? Wrong. Instead of Cosmos Jesus said “OI KU MEN AY) not Kosmos. What OI KU MEN AY mean? The area. The land. Probably the Roman Empire. But not the entire earth. Let's read it again.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the (Oi KU MEN AY - land) for a witness unto all (ethnos – ethnicities, not nations) . . . and (He tells His apostles there) and then shall the end come.

Chapter Three - More of Matthew Matters

"It is, in fact, a sign and notable proof of the coming of the Word that Jerusalem no longer stands."
Athanasius 345 AD

"And so the times of the coming of Christ, the leader, must be inquired into, which we shall trace in Daniel; and, after computing them, SHALL PROVE HIM TO HAVE COME, EVEN ON THE GROUND OF THE TIMES DESCRIBED . . . "

Tertullian, 200 AD

Okay, before we continue with where we left off I failed to explain something important last week in our study about Matthew 24 verse 6. It plays and will play a very important role in our understanding what Jesus is saying (and what will be said) in our future analysis of the rest of the New Testament.

In verse six of Matthew we read:

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end (of the age) is not yet.

There are all sorts of Biblical tools out there that appeal to the Greek to help us understand what is being said. There are literal versions of the Bible (like Rotherham's, Weymouth's and Young's), and there are inter-linear versions, and there is something called the Emphatic Diaglott, which gives the original Greek in one column and the English in another.

The Greek word for "ye shall," (as in verse six where it says), "and ye shall hear of wars and rumors or wars" is "mello." Mello means, "this is about to happen," and/or "This is going to get started very soon." In fact, if you read either the Emphatic Polyglott or from Rotherham or Young's literal translations, we get a better idea of the timing of the message.

In fact Weymouth's New Testament translation of Matthew 24:6 says "And before long you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Do not be alarmed, for such things must be; but the End is not yet."

Young's Literal Translation says "and ye shall begin to hear of wars, and reports of wars; see, be not troubled, for it behoveth all [these] to come to pass, but the end is not yet."

And the Emphatic Polyglott reads:

"You are about to . . ."

We will come back to this word "mello" in other verses but understand this is the context of Jesus message here in Matthew 24. Okay, let's continue to seek answers to the question

"When does the Bible say Jesus should return?" in the Gospel of Matthew. There are a couple more issues I need to make clear as we continue to move through this attempt. First, our study is by no means exhaustive. Entire books – better said, entire volume-sets of books have been written that address, for example, the verse by verse of Matthew 24. Ours is to point out what we believe is the best general picture available. Secondly, I may be incorrect in some (I suppose even all) of my assessments. Obviously, I don't think I am, but you may differ. That is okay. At least the topic is cracked open for discussion. The last thing I want to do is divide believers on doctrine. Having said this however, you could probably step outside the door and throw a rock in any direction your front door find a pastor or teacher who are willing to present "their" view on end times as seamless and infallible. This is what churches and denominations are built upon – certainty. We would never suggest that our view is the only viable view among believers – there are just too many variables. But we think our views should be entertained and shared. Third, I personally stand by the stance that the Bible is more than clear on when it says Jesus should return. I do not believe the message is obscure or difficult but I do think it has become so due to faulty traditions.

Alright, as a quick reminder, we are hitting what Jesus said in the Gospels about His return. In chapter two we read the first fourteen verses of Matthew 24. We noted that chapter 24 is Jesus response to three questions given Him from Peter, James, John and Andrew (which were) *"tell us,*

1. *when shall these things (which we discussed last week) be?*
2. *and what shall be the sign of thy coming,*
3. *and of the end of the world?*

We noted, right off the bat that where the King James posits their last question as *"What shall be the sign of the end of the world,"* the better most literal translation would be, *"and what shall be the sign of the end of the age"* (meaning the age or dispensation of the Jews and their temple and economy, etc). We then ended our study with verse fourteen, where once again, the King James use of the English term "world" is not what it should be. We showed that if Jesus was speaking of the literal world the Greek would be kosmos. But where verse 14 reads, *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,"* the Greek word used described the area not the whole world. So let's read on in Matthew 24 and see if there are other evidences within its narrative that tell us *"when Jesus should return."*

After (in verse 14) Jesus says:

“Then shall the end come.” That is an emphatic statement. Jesus continues with more in verse 15 and says:

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

*16 Then let them which be **in Judaea** flee into the mountains:*

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

*20 But pray **ye** that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:*

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

History tells us, no matter how much we want these descriptions to describe our day or the signs before a rapture in our time, that in the mid-sixties AD, the Romans attacked Judea and Jerusalem. Then by 70 AD Jerusalem was utterly destroyed – the temple included. We know that over 1,000,000 Jews were slaughtered and the rest were taken and made prisoners or dispersed out over the world. After describing all these things to these four men and saying that they would occur, Jesus adds at verse 15:

*15 When **ye** therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*

I think it is significant that the Lord, in connection with his discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem used the remarkable prophecy that had been given five centuries earlier to the prophet Daniel.

This is what Jesus said in verses 15-16:

*“When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are **in Judaea** flee.”*

The dispensational theory, the pre-trib rapture folk have long argued that the “abomination of desolation” is coming. This is what they say:

“The Antichrist,” (an alleged world dictator) will *“make the temple abominable”* in the so-called tribulation period just prior to the Lord’s second coming. I would suggest that they are correct. “He, them, and it” did show up prior to His second coming with the tribulation beginning around 60 AD and it’s culmination being in 70AD in Judea.

In fact, listen to Luke’s account of these same passages chapter 21:20-21. This is how he has Jesus say it:

*Luke 21:20 And when **ye** shall see **Jerusalem compassed with armies**, then know that the **desolation** thereof is nigh.*

The Greek word for Desolation is “*Eray-mosis*” and it is used only three times in the entire New Testament – once in Matthew 24 (where Jesus answers when He should return) and in the similar accounts found in Luke 21 and Mark 13 – both places where Jesus is describing when He would return. Again, this is how Luke describes the abomination of desolation to the disciples:

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

His use of that word is purposeful tying it directly to Daniel and his prophesies. Even the Jewish Historian Josephus said, relative to the Daniel prophesy in his *Antiquities of the Jews* (10/11/7):

“Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them” (Antiquities of the Jews 10.11.7).

This abomination of Desolation was something that would happen to them not something that would happen thousands of years later but within a time frame of their own lives – “*their own generation.*”

Now, I want to pause here and address the resistances and questions that Christian futurists raise relative to the term “generation.” People wonder where generation is defined as forty years. We know from scriptures that the Hebrews reckoned time by “the generation.” In Abraham’s day a generation was a hundred years (as evidenced by Genesis 15:16. But when we get to Moses book of Deuteronomy we see that “a generation” has been re-defined as a period of “thirty-eight years” (this configuration is based on the contents of Deuteronomy 1:35 and 2:14). Also the “generation” that would perish in the wilderness during the Exodus was 38.5 years. There are plenty of evidences that a generation was about 42 years as well so from what I can tell the best Bible scholars say forty years is a close approximation and not a hard and fast span of time. However, what is hard and fast is that biblically a generation is close to forty years.

Additionally, if we look to Matthew 1:17 it says:

“So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.”

Since the Babylonian captivity occurred in 586 BC we can divide that by 14 and get about 41.89 years. Then there are those who say when Jesus said (twice in chapter 23 and 24 of Matthew) “*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled,*” that the Greek word for generation is “ghen-ee-ah,” and while it can mean generation (as in forty years) it can also mean “a nation,” or “a people” (admittedly, it is the word where we derive the term genealogy). From this futurists interpret Jesus

words as meaning, *“behold this people (the Jews) shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.”* I don’t see it this way for the following reasons.

First, in plain speaking, generation meant generation – around forty years. Admittedly, Jesus does speak in parables and so this is not the best reason. But here’s a challenge: get out your concordance and look up every New Testament occurrence of the word generation (in Greek, *genea*) and see if it ever means 'race' in any other place where it is used! Here are all the references where “generation” is used in the Gospels:

Matthew 1:17; 11:16; 12:39, 41, 42, 45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:36; 24:34.

Mark 8:12, 38; 9:19; 13:30.

Luke 1:48, 50; 7:31; 9:41; 11:29, 30, 31, 32, 50, 51; 18:8; 17:25; 21:32.

Not one of these references is speaking of the entire Jewish race over thousands of years but all use the word in its normal sense of the sum total of those living at the same time. In every case it refers to contemporaries. (In fact, even proponents of the *genea* theory - who say it means "race" or a people tend to acknowledge this fact but will say that that the word suddenly changes its meaning when Jesus uses it in Matthew 24!)

(They HAVE to say this to make Jesus words make sense in the face to their futurist views!) Then listen to this!

When Jesus was in the temple berating the Jewish leaders in Matthew 21-23, and He says to them (in Matthew 23:36):

“Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation,” futurists almost unanimously agree that here Jesus is speaking to those Jews who were alive and present at that time and looking out forty years. But then when Jesus exits the temple with His twelve, and predicts the temples fall, and then they go to the Mount of Olives and after they ask Him their three questions, and He answers them in detail and then adds (in verse 34) *“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled,”* they say that in this situation *generation* it doesn’t mean what it did in Matthew 23:36 but instead is talking about events and a people way out in the future!

In other words only in this singular case do they say “generation” does not mean what generation has always meant. Consider this – scholars and Bible commentators will cite the destruction of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Jesus words to the Jews who hear Him in the temple in Matthew 23 but when it comes to the same words to the apostles they say it means something entirely different! And the apostles were actually asking Jesus when everything He had been saying would occur! Nothing changes between Matthew 23 and Matthew 24 – in fact it’s the same message! But in order to excuse the fact that they don’t believe Jesus has returned, futurists (dispensationalists) change the meaning of this single New Testament instance.

Okay, so the Lord says that when Jerusalem is surrounded that

16 Then let them which be *in Judaea* flee into the mountains (by the way, that is not a very effective way to escape a nuclear holocaust, is it?) But they are very reasonable instructions for the people in Jesus day though, right? And then He says . . .

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

Let's cover verse 17 first. Bible scholar Edersheim mentions that this advice makes great sense when applied to 70 AD because the houses of old Jerusalem were flat-roofed and situated right next to each other allowing Christians to escape on "a road of roofs" to the edge of the city therefore escaping invading soldiers who flooded the streets. If we add in to all this the fact that when the Romans actually did attack Jerusalem and the Christians read these signs Jesus had supplied them, they fled to Pella (according to Eusebius) which was beyond the Jordan (this is found in *Ecclesiastical History* III.5) and not a Christian convert was lost. I personally question this report and wonder if the church at Jerusalem was raptured at that time - but that's another topic.

Then Jesus continues in Matthew 24, saying:

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20 But pray **ye** that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Knowing all the horrors that were going to fall on those very people must have tormented the Lord. We know He wept (wailed) over the city. But ask yourself, who cares if the Second coming occurs today on the Sabbath Day, right? But back in 70 AD Sabbath-day observances were really important and pressing on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, weren't they. Can you see from instances like this that Jesus descriptions of the end of the age could not possibly have had a place in our modern day and age?

Then in conjunction to what He said here in Matthew 24:19 Jesus responds to some women in a very interesting way in Luke's narrative (found in Luke 23:27-30) saying

27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 For, behold, **the days are coming**, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

Notice the similarity when Jesus speaks to the Daughters of Jerusalem here in Luke 23:28 and His words here in Matthew 24:19, where Jesus says:

"Woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck (are breastfeeding) in those days?"

Luke's account puts it this way:

"Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck."

Friends, all of this – and much much more fell upon the Jews at Jerusalem in those days and do not describe something we are still waiting to occur in our day and age some 2000 years later! I mean, in the Luke account, we read:

30 "Then shall they (especially the mothers, it seems) then shall they begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us."

You know where else this line is used? Revelation 6:15-17.

Speaking of the judgment of the Lamb falling on Israel John the Beloved wrote:

Revelation 6:15 And the kings of the earth (the country) and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

We've already described how Revelation was written to the seven churches to warn them of the impending destruction, right? So there is the explanation of Matthew 24:19-20. Then Jesus continues, saying (verse 21-22)

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Now, we have read of a lot of carnage when it comes to war in the world. Was Jesus right when He said (in verse 21) *"for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world,"* (and He does use Kosmos here, so He meant world) *"to this time, no, nor EVER shall be."* So we have a choice on how to see these words of the Lord. Either

1. Jesus was wrong about this (and we have either experienced a greater tribulation - World Wars, etc) or
2. there is a greater tribulation that awaits us or
3. what happened in 70 AD was the *"greatest tribulation the world has ever seen"*
4. or there is something we are missing in the language.

Admittedly, this one is tougher to explain in the context of scripture than any of these other points. Let me conclude this chapter with some possible explanations.

First of all, the Jews are known for describing apocalyptic events with tremendous hyperbole. Everything was expressed dramatically for emphasis. We look for it to fit

literally but that is not always the Hebrew manner of speaking. Was the Lord using this method to stress the point? This is the typical explanation most Preterist's give. Symbolic language was common in the Old Testament, which, if we take it all literally it leads to some real problems.

For example -

In describing Hezekiah 2 Kings 18:5 says:

"He (Hezekiah) trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him."

Then in describing Josiah 2 Kings 23:25 says:

"Now before him (Josiah) there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him."

How can Hezekiah and Josiah both be the most devoted kings of Judah of all time? They can't. Obviously the language is hyperbolic. Hebrew hyperbolic language was also applied to other earthly judgments well before the destruction of 70 A.D.

Exodus 11:6 says:

"Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again."

Is that literal or hyperbolic?

Ezekiel 5:9 says:

"And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations."

Daniel 9:12 says:

"And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem."

Daniel 12:1

"At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered,

Joel 2:2

*A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning clouds spread over the*

*mountains.
A people come, great and strong,
The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any such after them,
Even for many successive generations*

So it is highly possible that the Lord appealed to traditional hyperbole borrowed from the Old Testament to describe the destruction of Jerusalem in 64-70 A.D.

Another line of thinking is that it was the first century Jews crucified Jesus. Because their crime was *the worst* in history their punishment was therefore the worst in history “covenantally speaking.”

If this is the case, the “worst crime” deserves the “worst punishment.”

Israel was divorced by God as His covenant people. Never again would the Jews have a special status with God. “Now in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek.” So we could interpret verse 21 in this sense as well.

But I wonder if we look at the conditions of the day, the lack of pain killers and/ or antiseptics, and the fact that it was God pouring out His wrath upon Jerusalem who rejected His Son, that maybe Jesus was right? Let’s wrap this chapter up by consulting a report from Flavius Josephus on the end of that age (or the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD).

Most of our knowledge about the sufferings of the Jews during the siege and the fall of Jerusalem come from his writings. Josephus was a Jewish general who fought against the Romans and was captured in July of 67 AD. He made a very low-odds prophesy that the Roman general, Vespasian, would one day become the Emperor of the Roman Empire. This prophesy seemed doomed because Vespasian didn’t have a sound Roman pedigree. Nevertheless, two years after Nero killed himself (on June 9th 68 AD) Vespasian became the new Roman Emperor. And he was so impressed with Josephus prophesy that he freed him from prison, made him a Roman citizen, adopted him as a “Flavian” and then commissioned him to write a history of the Jewish people.

Josephus first work was “The War of the Jews.” Well Vespasian had a son by the name of Titus. And when Titus went into Jerusalem for the final destruction and Josephus went with him. This gave the historian a first-hand position to record what he saw occur in the final year of the war. Josephus, still a Jew and a man who loved the Jews, even tried to persuade them himself to surrender. No doing. So he ends up just reporting their destruction.

He began by noting the starvation. The Jews had enough wheat for a number of years but due to infighting (that’s right, the love among them waxed cold) they destroyed their own supplies. Then they robbed and slew each other through the most barbarous of means and methods. Josephus says “they did as much harm to themselves” as the

Romans. Soon dead bodies were all over the city. At first they tried to bury the dead (something very important to Jews so to not was the height of barbarism for them as a people) then they just piled them into houses and just shut the doors. Before long they tossed thousands upon thousands over the wall into the valleys below. Josephus writes:

“When Titus, in going his rounds along those valleys say them full of dead bodies, and the thick putrefaction running about them, he gave a groan; and spreading out his hands to heaven, called God to witness that this was not his doing; and such was the sad case of the city itself.”

When Jesus said to the Jewish leaders on the temple mount in Matthew 23:33

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

I believe He was speaking of this very fate. The reason, again, points to the Greek and the King James translators.

See, Jesus did not use the word that means hell in English today here. He said, “gehenna,” which in English refers to the literal Valley of Hinnom and not hell as the King James translates it! Hinnom was just one of the valleys surrounding Jerusalem and this very valley became “full of dead bodies.”

A better translation of Jesus words is what the literal Greek says:

“This generation of vipers would not escape the damnation of the valley of Hinnom,” and/or “How can you flee from the judgment of Gehenna?”

These terms Gehenna and Hinnom are in Matthew 23-24 have nothing to do with hell as taught by the futurist Christian church. But that subject is an all-together different one, isn't it? In any case, Josephus reported many horrors. For instance he witnessed a mother snatching up her son (who was breastfeeding at the time) killing him, then roasting him. He literally said she saved “half of the child for later.” He said the starvation was so horrible most wished they could die and viewed the dead with envy. He reported that they got so desperate for food they searched the sewers for human and cattle waste and consumed it – noting that by the law they were forbidden to even touch it. Outside the city walls Romans soldiers caught more than 500 people per day who were trying to escape and crucified as many as possible. Josephus adds:

“Their multitude was so great that room was wanting for the crosses and crosses wanting for bodies.”

Listen to Josephus' own words as we conclude today:

“Neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation (which was Jesus generation, by the way) more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world.”

He adds:

“those carried away captive 97,000. And those that perished one million one hundred thousand – a large number because the city was full of visitors due to the Passover.”

Ask yourself – in the face of all of this information, *“Have I been following a tradition of Man all these years instead of what the Bible plainly states?”*

Chapter Four - Miracles, Lightning, Carcasses and Eagles

“Remembering this saving commandment and all those things WHICH CAME TO PASS for us: the cross, the grave, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the sitting down at the right hand, THE SECOND AND GLORIOUS COMING AGAIN.”

Chrysostom, Liturgy

“I challenge anyone to prove my statement untrue if I say that the entire Jewish nation was destroyed less than one whole generation later on account of these sufferings which they inflicted on Jesus. For it was, I believe, forty two years from the time when they crucified Jesus to the destruction of Jerusalem.”

Origin, the 100's AD

Let's continue discussion what Jesus Himself said about His second coming (in the Gospel accounts) so we can then get into examples from the rest of the Bible of what His chosen twelve thought about it. All over the earth pastors almost screaming for believers to get themselves ready because, “He's-a-coming!” But again, what does the Bible really say on the subject?

In our study of Matthew 24 we have to recall that the disciples have come to Jesus (at the beginning of the chapter) with three questions. I would suggest that Matthew 24 contains Jesus answer to these three questions, which were:

“Tell us, when shall these things be?” (which were the “things” Jesus had been describing to the Jewish leaders in the temple and His prophecies of the things that would happen to the temple itself), and *“what shall be the sign of thy coming,”* and *“the end of the age?”* (NOT the “world” but the end of the Jewish age). Let's pick up Jesus where continues His description of the signs of “when these things should be?” at verse 23 through 26, where He adds (to last week's discussion) saying:

23 Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

During the first half of the first century there were many false prophets that had arisen in the Roman Empire claiming to have the authority to perform astonishing acts by divine power. According to the church historian Eusebius, when Fadus was procurator

of Judea, a man named Theudas led a vast multitude to the Jordan where he promised to divide the river before them. Josephus tells us that upon hearing of this, Fadus sent an armed cavalry against them and many were killed and captured. At about this time a self-proclaimed prophet from Egypt gathered a vast crowd of common people to the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. There he promised that at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall before them allowing them entrance into the city. However, when Felix heard of this, he sent his army against them and four hundred people were killed and two hundred more were taken prisoner. Furthermore, in Samaria many people worshipped a man named Simon. Claiming to be someone great, this man performed many magic acts and many people asserted that he was the “divine power.” But one of the more convincing cons was from Vespasian who believed himself to be the Messiah and was followed by many. Before his triumphal entry into Rome, Vespasian apparently healed a blind man and a man with a withered hand fulfilling Matthew 24:23-24 where Jesus said:

“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible.”

Paul wrote in 2nd Thessalonians 2:3-12

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Of course futurists are still waiting for this miracle-working demon to show up, but the historical record strongly suggests he already has! Immediately prior to becoming Caesar, Vespasian, the former Roman general of the Jewish War, was approached by a blind man and a man with a withered hand. These two men fell before the emperor and begged to be healed. Initially reluctant, Vespasian finally agreed to try to heal them. Josephus writes:

“With a smiling expression and surrounded by an expectant crowd of bystanders, he [Vespasian] did what was asked. Instantly the cripple recovered the use of his hand and the light of day dawned again upon his blind companion. Both these incidents are still vouched for by eye-witnesses, though there is now nothing to be gained by lying.”

Shortly after Nero's death, Rome fell into civil war. Not long after becoming emperor of Rome, Vespasian inaugurated a new age of peace having put an end to both the war in Israel and the civil war in Rome. Vespasian had "revived" the Roman Empire. Having done so, he easily represents "the beast" whose wound had been healed spoken of in Revelation 13. Furthermore, an ancient Jewish prophecy predicted that a king would arise out of Israel to rule the world. During Israel's war with Rome, many Jews fully expected the Messiah to rise-up and forcibly establish a new world order. The Jews, however, ultimately lost this war; and this prophecy was regarded by many to have been fulfilled in Vespasian. Having been stationed in Israel immediately before becoming emperor, Vespasian, the beast of Revelation, was widely regarded as the Jewish messiah by the people of his time.

Additionally, during the Jewish War, the leaders of the Jewish rebellion compelled a great many people to act as prophets sent by God. These people were suborned to predict that God would deliver Israel from the Romans in order to encourage the people to continue fighting. One of these prophets was the cause of a multitude of deaths. According to Josephus, this man made a public declaration in Jerusalem that God had commanded the people to seek refuge in the temple where they would be miraculously delivered.

Of course Jesus warned His apostles to be on the look-out for such deliverers. Naturally, these predictions proved to be false and these false prophets were collectively responsible for a tremendous loss of life. (In verse 27 Jesus continues, and says)

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

There are several ways to understand this apocalyptic verbiage and one or more of them could be correct – they are all that viable. First of all, re-listen to what Jesus says:

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

In the most simplest of terms we could say that that the coming of the Son of Man would be quick, bright, and evidenced in signs in the sky from the east, and not his literal presence on the ground.

In the Old Testament, when God was described as coming in the clouds, the spirit of the Lord was pictured riding dark storm clouds accompanied by rumblings of the earth, thunder and lightning.

Listen to 2nd Samuel 22:10-15 as an example:

"He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his canopy around him – the dark rain clouds of the sky. Out of the brightness of his presence bolts of lightning

blazed forth. The Lord thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy, with great bolts of lightning he routed them."

In Matthew 24:27, Jesus promises to return in a like manner.

The fact that Jesus likens his return to *"lightning that comes from the east"* illustrates the fact that when Christ comes on the clouds in judgment he will do so as the Lord had done in the past – riding on dark storm clouds accompanied by lightning.

Matthew 24:27 was fulfilled both literally and symbolically in the Jewish War. Historical confirmation of the lightening marking the second coming of Christ may found in the writings of the Roman historian Tacitus who said:

"In the sky appeared a vision of armies in conflict, of glittering armor. A sudden lightening flash from the clouds lit up the Temple. The doors of the holy place abruptly opened, a superhuman voice was heard to declare that the gods were leaving it, and in the same instant came the rushing tumult of their departure." [Josephus, Wars xxxiii]

In this brief account, Tacitus, a secular Roman, may have unknowingly recorded the lightning flash associated with the heavenly return of Jesus. Admittedly, Tacitus recorded this in A.D. 66. But Jesus is describing the sign of His coming so it is possible Tacitus inadvertently reported something prophetic that he didn't even understand.

Also notice how Tacitus mentions *"a superhuman voice was heard"* which is literally an echo of 2 Samuel 22:14 which says:

2nd Samuel 22:14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice.

Josephus also mentions this in his War of the Jews, saying:

"[B]efore sunseting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities.[War, xxxiv]

Perhaps the most detailed description of the second coming is found in Revelation 19:11-14.

Revelation 19:11-14 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

In these verses, Jesus is pictured riding a white horse leading an army of angels on horseback on the clouds. The description of the second coming in Revelation 19:11-14 and Josephus' account of the army in the clouds over Israel bear an uncanny resemblance.

Could both Tacitus and Josephus had unwittingly record the glorious second coming of Christ?

Additionally, according to Tacitus:

"[a] sudden lightening flash from the clouds lit up the Temple."

He seems to imply that lightning struck the Temple during what appears to be the miraculous appearance of Christ. Where did the Temple stand? On the "eastern" edge of Jerusalem. Therefore, if lightning struck the Temple, as Tacitus seems to imply, then in this event one can appreciate the literal fulfillment of the "lightning that comes from the east" mentioned in Matthew 24:27.

It seem that the lightning Jesus mentions in verse 27 that would accompany the miraculous coming "of Christ on the clouds" was a sign for the Christians in Jerusalem to leave the city, first at the start of the war in Iyyar of A.D. 66 (which Tacitus reports) and then following the entrance of the Roman army into the city under Florus, and then later again in the fall of that same year.

According to Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 2.19.4, the second time Jerusalem was surrounded by armies (during the Jewish War) was when Cestius encamped with the 12th Legion on Mt. Scopus to the northeast of Jerusalem in Tishri - A.D. 66. This "12th Legion" was mustered out of Syria where it at one time guarded Rome's eastern borders against the Parthians. The 12th Legion had another name - "*Legio duodecima Fulminata*" which means "*armed with lightning*." Additionally, the military flag of the 12th Legion which was flown wherever they went was none other than "a lightning bolt." Again, this army was brought in from the eastern borders of the Roman Empire and encamped to the northeast of Jerusalem before entering the city. When they entered its flags bearing lightning bold flying high, another possible sign connected to Matthew 24:27 which says:

"For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

Additionally, we have to note that the symbol of Rome was Aquila" who was the messenger of Jupiter that carried Jupiter's lightning bolt. Yet another way verse 27 had fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem.

At verse 28 of Matthew 24 Jesus says:

"For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

Vultures and eagles easily ascertain where dead bodies are, and come to devour them. So with the Roman army. Jerusalem is like a dead and putrid corpse. Its life is gone, and it is ready to be devoured. Could Jesus be saying that the Roman armies will find Jerusalem out (as an eagle would with a dead carcass) and will come around it, to devour it?

When it comes to how God has always worked on fallen men and nations all that Jesus says rings true - where wickedness abounds God uses instrument of chastisement to fall upon them - in this case, the Romans. I personally find it interesting that Jesus does not use the term vulture to describe the invading Roman armies but truly the Greek describes eagles. To me, this speaks of a superior "hawkish" army of power coming in and overwhelming prey while it's still living and not just a crusty old buzzard picking on the bones of something already dead.

Additionally, it is said that the Roman armies had eagles sewn onto the epaulets of their uniforms. More potentiality. Then, just prior to the fall of Jerusalem, the remaining Jewish rebels fled to the temple fortress for refuge. Eventually the Romans broke into the temple causing a great massacre. Concerning the aftermath, Josephus writes:

"Nor was there any place in the city [of Jerusalem] that had no dead bodies in it, but what was entirely covered with those that were killed either by the famine or the rebellion; and all was full of the dead bodies of such as had perished, either by that sedition or by that famine.[xxxvi]

I think there is a sound implication in verse 28 (and later in Revelation 19:21) that these unburied bodies became food for the vultures. Listen - because of the apocalyptic nature of the words Jesus uses these explanations (which in my opinion are solid) are the weakest in proving His return in 70AD. Keep reading - there's more to come.

Chapter Five – Signs, the Son of Man in the Clouds, and this Generation

“A great many people think they are thinking when all they are doing is rearranging their prejudices.”

William James

“If merely “feeling good” could decide, drunkenness would be the supremely valid human experience.”

William James

Let's continue to push through Jesus reply to Peter, James, John and Andrew's questions:

“When will these things be, and what will be the sign of thy coming and the end of this age?”

In verse 29 Jesus then adds:

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Now, futurists love this passage because they don't believe such things have happened yet and it gives them some things to seek in the heavens as signs that Jesus is on His way. Before explaining this verse I want you to read the following passage and then ask yourself, “Exactly what are these words describing?” Ready?

“For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.”

What is this passage describing? First of all it is found in Isaiah 13 and it is Isaiah's description of the destruction of Babylon! How about another?

“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

What is being described? The destruction of Tyre as described by Isaiah in Isaiah 24:23! Oh, check this one out:

“And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.”

Where is this written and what is it describing? The slaughter in Bozrah and Idumea written in Isaiah 34:4! I'm doing this to show how these passages certainly sound like a description of the end of the world, don't they? They certainly describe things that once they have occurred that the whole world would have recognized them and would speak of them even till this day, right? Hardly. When was the last time you heard of someone talking about the "slaughter in Bozrah and Idumea" where "*all the host of heaven was dissolved,*" and "*the heavens were then rolled together as a scroll?*"

The point is the Hebrew writers were renown for describing God's visiting hand of judgment upon them in these very descriptive terms. To take literary license and apply then to our day is a foolish mistake.

Here on the Mount of Olives Jesus is simply following suit (since He authored the words Isaiah used to describe these Old Testament judgments) by speaking in a way and with language that those to whom He was sent (the House of Israel) would understand. The imagery Jesus used to answer His disciples questions should not be taken any more literally than we would take Isaiah 34:4! So "*the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars*" could be translated as "an inexpressible calamity" so could the overturning of Jerusalem (which Jesus is describing) be summarized in the same manner. But instead of Jesus simply saying, the destruction is going to be great," he uses Old Testament imagery to describe how bad it will be. Luke's account of Jesus words adds that there would be a

"distress of nations (with nations being ethnos again, which could mean peoples of varied ethnicities instead of actual nations) with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts falling them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth."

Again, all figures of speech describing a great and terrible calamity but with very Hebrew imagery. Lines like the "*roaring of the waves of the sea*" suggests a great tumult and affliction among the people, "*perplexity*" means doubt, "*anxiety,*" means people not knowing what to do to escape. Etc., etc.

For thousands of years futurists have taken these very descriptive, Hebraic literary tools that have been used for centuries to describe actual events (which have already occurred) and gotten us to believe they are still in our future because in their mind we have not experienced anything like how they are described. Moving on, those who believe in a worldwide second coming often quote Matthew 24:30 where Jesus says:

"Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."

For most futurists this verse cannot be dismissed away. "*This is proof that Jesus has not yet come because it describes something that has not happened or we would have heard about it,*" comes the claim. Those who read the NIV translation of the Bible should examine their

Bibles closely relative to this verse. Why? Because in it there is a footnote after the line "all the peoples of the earth."

Do you know what the footnote says? "All the tribes of the land," meaning the twelve tribes of Israel. Additionally, the Greek word translated "earth" in Matthew 24:30 is once again "ge" (*and not kosmos*) which can be a global term, though it is often used to specify an isolated city, kingdom or nation. Looking at context the interpretation is best applied to the Nation of Israel alone. If you are interested in reading more about how the ancients interpreted Hebraic language and descriptions go to:

www.preteristarchive.com as it is full of great information.

My purpose in challenging you to seek these things out is always the same - the truth sets us free, God seeks us to "worship Him in spirit and in truth," and the philosophies and traditions of man must be rejected from wherever they originate - Mormonism, Evangelicalism, Calvinism, whatever - if they do not hold up to a contextual understanding of scripture.

At verse 30 I believe Jesus begins to answer the second question the apostles asked which was, "*And what is the sign of thy coming.*" Here Jesus says:

*30 And then shall appear **the sign of the Son of man in heaven:** and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Then He adds (using Hebraic language, of course)

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Now, while verse 31 sounds even more futuristic than verse 30, it is far easier to understand than 30 right off the bat. We know from previous studies that the word "angelous" in the Greek (where we get angel) simply means messenger - of ANY kind - human, heavenly, disease - any messenger - ANYTHING God employs to rescue his people from danger. Biblically speaking it most commonly refers to the race of heavenly beings more exalted than man who are often employed in God's work among men. In either of these senses, this verse might refer to angelic deliverance granted to his believers amidst the calamities of Jerusalem. I say this, in part, because of the mention of the "trump" sounding. To a Jew "a trump sounding" was a familiar thing as their assemblies were often initiated in this manner (Leviticus 25:9; Numbers 10:2; Judges 3:27)

For Jesus to say to these men here that angels are coming with the sound of a trump we have Him giving them a well recognized picture taken from the Old Testament of a gathering of the chosen (or elect as verse 31 plainly states). I interpret Jesus words to mean that when He comes, angels will arrive and gather the elect (or the Christians)

and help escort them to safety (in this case it was either to Pella or they were raptured up). However, it is the last two lines of the verse that make my interpretation difficult for people to believe, as Jesus says:

“and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

It’s understandable to view these scriptures as futuristic – and they may very well have application in the futuristic sense. But it is a mistake to think that they do not have application to the context of what Jesus is saying here about the destruction of Jerusalem (and what we could consider His second coming). In this sense and setting, God gathered together His elect by sending forth his “messengers” (which could have been other spirit led humans AND/OR heavenly messengers) so they would not be destroyed along with the rest of Jerusalem.

Where Jesus says “the four winds” the Jews described the globe as being quartered – east, west, north, and south – and often expressed those quarters by the winds blowing from them. We could take this literally or as representing the north south east and west of that area where all believers had been scattered. Contextually, this makes the better historical sense.

Then we have another line that is easy to apply only to a futuristic sense, where Jesus says, *“from one end of heaven to the other.”*

Really, this is just another way of saying, from every direction – from the four corners of the land. Listen to the passage again and hear the words the Lord chooses. Try and hear them relative to Jesus describing the destruction of Jerusalem and how the Christian believers would be saved from its ravages . . . see if you can apply his literary license to what would actually happen there in 70 AD. Ready:

*“and they shall gather together his elect from **the four winds**, from **one end of heaven to the other**.”*

The primary sense and purpose of Jesus saying these word was in response to the disciples three questions - this cannot be lost.

At this point Jesus launches into a parable – right here on the Mount of Olives. He says:

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

In the parable or illustration, Jesus says “LEARN” the Parable of the Fig Tree.

He tells them – sitting there with Him – to learn to apply this parable to all He has said. And He goes on and says:

“Just as when they could look at a fig tree and its leaves they could know that summer is near, likewise” He tells them, “When they begin to see these signs come to pass they would KNOW that it is near, even at the doors.”

What would be “at the doors?” What would be near happening? Everything the apostles had asked Him about! All that He has described to them! When they saw the signs it would be like viewing a fig tree and knowing that summer was on the way.

When THEY saw the signs . . .

“The judgment upon Judah would be near.”
“The desolation of Judah would be near.”
“The destruction of the grand and glorious temple was near.”
“The end of the Covenant age was near.”
“And the return of Jesus, His second coming, was near.”

This brings us to the verse of which there is no getting around – Matthew 24:34

34 Verily I say unto you (Peter, James, John, and Andrew), This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled!

The Greek word here for generation is *genea* and it means “an age” – forty years if we are speaking contextually of a biblical age. Some people have tried to say that generation here means a people type – like the Jews – but the Greek word for this type of generation is *genos* (see 1st Peter 2:9 (KJV) “But ye are a chosen generation . . .”)

So how do we as believers explain Matthew 24:34?

I would suggest that the Word can be trusted. Jesus (and His disciples) were right on, they meant what they said, what they said is what it means, and everything He described has occurred! But a futurist cannot agree to this faithful stance. They HAVE to either say Jesus was wrong or generation does not mean generation – and in either case, they have twisted the clear meaning to suit their twisted views.

Did you know that even the great Christian thinker and apologist C.S. Lewis despaired at finding a solution to this dilemma? Typically a brother provided reasonable defenses of the Christian faith in this one instance he reluctantly conceded that skeptics had some ground upon which to stand.

“Say what you like,” he wrote, “we shall be told [by some critics – and at this point Lewis gives critics a voice, supposing that they could say], “the apocalyptic beliefs of the first Christians have been proved to be false. It is clear from the New Testament that they all expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime. And, worse still, they had a reason, and one which you will find very embarrassing. Their Master had told them so. He shared, and indeed created, their delusion. He said in so many words, ‘This generation shall not pass till all these things be

done.' And he was wrong. He clearly knew no more about the end of the world than anyone else."

Then at this point in his narrative Lewis stops giving voice to the complaints of the imaginary critics and adds, speaking of Matthew 24:34

"It is certainly the most embarrassing verse in the Bible. Yet how teasing, also, that within fourteen words of it should come the statement "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The one exhibition of error and the one confession of ignorance grow side by side. To this, the skeptic may reply, "If Jesus incorrectly predicted His return within the contemporaneous generation, but actually did not know that He was going to return within that time frame, then why did He so confidently assert that all of the words He had just spoken would come to pass in Matthew 24:35? He said, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' "

We are all allowed mistakes and CS Lewis was not above making them. I do not judge the man as I love his heart and works for God. But to call this passage, *"the most embarrassing in scripture,"* was an error on his part. It is NOT embarrassing in the least – it was correct, it occurred and we have embarrassingly misunderstood this fact.

Bringing more reason to the topic, in 1993, at the Covenant Eschatology Symposium in Mt. Dora Florida, another Christian scholar, R.C. Sproul (who is still alive and standing over Ligonier ministries) said this about the "this generation" passage spoken by Jesus and the Churches interpretation of it:

"Maybe some church fathers made a mistake. Maybe our favorite theologians have made mistakes. I can abide with that. I can't abide with Jesus being a false prophet, because if I am to understand that Jesus is a false prophet, my faith is in vain."

Looking at the words of Jesus here to His apostles, we are left with only three real choices:

1. He was speaking to them and He was speaking to what would exist again (for us) at another time with another coming, or
2. He was speaking to them only (and He was absolutely correct in what He said),
or
3. He was speaking to them only (and He was wrong).

We have already covered the meaning of generation so I'm not going to explain it all again. But the bottom line is: If Jesus words were not fulfilled completely within that generation CS Lewis description of our critics attacks against us were dead on – and Jesus was wrong – along with all of His chosen apostles. This is an impossibility in my book and it's time for pastors and churches to step up to the plate, admit that the descriptions of Jesus second coming **were correct**, and put the mistaken, errant, idiotic excuses and ideas of man behind us. Jesus came, and all He said to the Pharisees in chapters 21-23, and to his Apostles about the temple at the end of Matthew 23, and all

He has described in the first 33 verses of Matthew 24 have been fulfilled – period and like it or not.

Then resorting to more figurative language the Lord delivers yet another line that is frequently used to justify all sorts of things, but in context, the line relates to the validity of all Jesus has said here to these seeking men.

In the face of this reality many people, at this point exclaim:

“So where’s the hope, then? If He has come, what do Christians have to look forward to?”

I understand this question to some extent but I have to admit that the full emotional brunt of it escapes me and the reason might be because I was first never exposed for any length of time to hyper-end times teachings and secondly I have never viewed my walk in relation to His return. I have always maintained a personal view that I had better be ready to meet Him whether He returns or I die – whichever comes first. So I haven’t been brainwashed by all the rapture-ready-rhetoric – which has made adjusting to the idea of Him already having returned easy. But for those who have expectantly looked for Him to appear, to be raptured, what can we say? Let me attempt some insights and perspective. First of all, ask yourselves:

What does or has the second coming and/or rapture meant to all the believers who have died physically since post 70 AD? Really? When we really think about it Jesus expected return has a very limited application to most believers, and will only affect one generation of His church, right? So why have we allowed ourselves to make such a big deal out of it?

Secondly, why are Christians always hopping “He would just come back?” I mean, aren’t there a lot of people who have yet to receive Him by faith? Wouldn’t we want Him to delay His return rather than expedite it? In my estimation the desire for Jesus return is rather selfish, self-centered, and contrary to our hope that he would delay so more could receive Him before this life is over. In my opinion the “self-centered” “please Jesus come and destroy this world” attitude fostered and maintained by many churches today is frankly antithetical to a heart that does not want any to be left behind or cast into hell.

Finally, we still have all of the elements of his return with us but our perspective has got to change on how it is applied. In other words I am convinced that all believers experience a personal rapture (being taken up), a second coming, a judgment, and the experience of either being saved from hell and going to heaven or the reverse. And it all occurs at the moment of our individual and respective deaths.

Just as the believers in Jerusalem were warned to prepare for His arrival, so are we – knowing we could personally and individually exit this world at any given moment – therefore we’d better always be ready. Since this has been the reality of every person to

live since the post 70 AD destruction, why do we need to believe He is personally coming back to meet all of us in the air when we know we will all individually be caught up to meet Him at our respective deaths?

The physical, material Kingdom is complete and all believers now relate to Him through spiritual means - not the physical. That was completed in 70AD with the end of that age.

So now we all are freed to prepare our own individual existences for life with Him on high. We savor every moment of life knowing that it could end at any moment - but whenever it does, we are, by faith, ready to meet Him - just like we would have been if we were living in Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Chapter Six – Last Days before a New Heaven and a New Earth

After Jesus said in Matthew 24:34

*“Verily I say unto you” (to the Apostles with Him right there and then), “this generation shall not pass, till **all** these things be fulfilled.”*

He then adds some even greater emphasis to this promise, saying:

Matthew 24:35 *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

I want to talk about this passage, and about what contextually speaking the phrase heaven and earth will pass away, and what the “last days” means from this reasonable biblical point of view. If we hear anything repeated over and over again today – among the church and even the unbelieving communities – it is references to this being “the last days.” Add in the speed and clarity with which technology keeps us in the loop of nearly every evil happening on earth and our fears and phobias tend to seem justified.

Pandering to the fears keeps a majority of “believers” in the pews, reading the signs of these times and filling the storehouses with grain for the eminent tribulation ahead. Is heaven and earth getting ready to pass away? Are we in the last days truly right now? What do you use to support such a belief? Is it because your pastor keeps reminding you of it – like they have been reminding believers for nearly 2000 years? More importantly, are you reading the Bible to fill your fears? Do you read the Bible and believe it is telling you that these are the last days? I read the same Bible. How come I don’t read these things and you do? Perhaps the best way to put this debate to bed is to ask:

When did the writers of the New Testament believe “the last days” were happening?

Obviously in the New Testament Jesus had come. He came to fulfill all the Law and the Prophets. The Old Testament prophesied of Him and His time, and the New Testament was a fulfillment of Him doing all that was said of Him. In the Old Testament book of Joel we read of one of these prophesies. It says:

Joel 2:28-29 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Jumping to the New Testament, on the Day of Pentecost, (where the Holy Spirit fell on a large group and some supposed they had been drinking) we read: (listen carefully)

Act 2:14-21 *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, "Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But **this** (what you are seeing) **is that** which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass **in the last days**, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out **in those days** (in those LAST DAYS) of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

When did Peter believe the LAST DAYS were? Right then and there, my friends. If we jump to the first verse in the Book of Hebrews we discover when the writer of Hebrews believed the last days to be. Ready?

Hebrews 1:1-2 says:

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake **in time past** unto the fathers by the prophets, hath **in these last days** . . . spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*

These last days? These last days? We are talking almost two thousand years ago the writers of the New Testament narrative spoke and wrote that they were in the last days? What gives? We can't suggest they were talking about something else or we would be totally dishonest with ourselves. So what most futurists say is, "We'll they were writing by the Holy Spirit and didn't really know what they were saying because it was all for us in our day and age. But this is not true. They were writing to actual people, in actual places who were reading and trusting their actual words as being inspired. So when they wrote "in these last days" the recipients of their words trusted that they knew what they were talking about and that they were truly in the last days.

Of course the futurists fumble around and try to explain these passages:

"Ya see, Shawn, the last days started way back yonder and continue to us today! That's what they meant!" But the whole Old Testament economy under the law of Moses lasted only about 1500 years and we are supposed to believe that "last days" spoken of by Peter and the writer of Hebrews has lasted for nearly 2000 years! There is absolutely no biblical support that suggests that the last days started in the New Testament and have extended out to our day and age. So of what last days does the Bible speak? Who was the Bible written to? What was being "wrapped up," what was "ending" once Jesus came and fulfilled all that was prophesied would be fulfilled? Does the Bible anywhere say anything about the book being written so it could all be applied to our day and age?

Extending "the last days" is one of the only options futurists have to explain their view that Jesus has not returned and is just around the corner. That, and the claim that the

apostles, when they wrote about the Last Days had no idea what they were talking about either! And that position is even more difficult to accept.

We are NOT living in the last days now my friends – not from a biblical perspective. The Bible was written to the Jews, and to the early converts (most of whom were Jews) and is a record of how Jesus glorious Good News sprang forth to the world and of a wrapping up of all God did dealing with that age which was ending.

In 1st John, the beloved apostle wrote this:

1st John 2:18 "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

We've talked about the Last Days (a term used by Peter and the writer of Hebrews) and now John, who wrote last among the apostles, giving us an even more specific allusion to time! He says:

It is "*the last time*" twice (in the King James the Greek term translated to last time is taken from the Greek term horah (who-rah) which means "hour." So John is saying it's the last hour! Peter used the term "last days" in his narrative which was written years before John but when we get to John's epistle he says, "the last HOUR" twice! When a generation gets to the "last day" of the "last days they are then left with remaining hours, and then ultimately, the "last hour." This is what John is saying here – nearly two thousand years ago – it was "the last hour!"

By the way John was sitting on the Mount of Olives with Jesus and was one of the apostles who asked,

"Lord, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of thy coming, and the end of this age?" (which futurists love to read as "*and of the end of the world*").

And then John, so many years (decades) later, when he saw everything Jesus had warned about coming into play, he, who knew the signs of the end of their world, was bold enough to put away the phrase "*last days*," and actually used, the "*last hour*."

He was encourage his "little children" to hang on, that the end was imminent, that the end was more than near, it was at hand. So we have to ask ourselves, if they were in the last days – even the last hour – then . . . how could we still be in the last days . . . here and now?

We aren't, my friends – not physically.

Here's the deal – they were in the last days of that physical economy of religion. We too are in the last days of our respective lives – every second – never knowing when we will be called forth. We will be similarly taken up or left behind to face salvation or destruction. I mean the spiritual application to our lives would take years to properly articulate, but it is high time we take the idiocy of taking this contents of this book –

especially when it comes to making it apply to us and this age – and trying to twist it all to this time.

What was actually ending in these last days and hours in the New Testament? What was passing away in the early church which was established by Lord and His Hebrew Apostles? The Age of Moses and the Prophets was what was in its last days and was passing away, making way for who and what? Christ and His Church. The age of the Old Covenant was in its last days and was passing away, making room for the new Covenant. Is this discussed in the Bible? Listen closely to what the writer of Hebrews says in chapter 8 beginning at verse 6:

6 But now hath he (Christ Jesus) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

*13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old **is ready** to vanish away."*

So the age of being in God's family by blood, by genealogy, by being Abraham's descendent, was coming to an end. These were the last days of all of that. Now there is no difference between Jew and Greek, male and female, bond and free – they were in the LAST DAYS of all of that and the world with the age of anyone coming into the family of God opening up to the world.

Additionally, the age where natural Jerusalem being "the place where men ought to worship," (as Jesus said) was giving way to the time when, as Jesus said, "when ye shall neither worship in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem" will worship the Father.

Instead, those were the last days of all of that. Now, (again as Jesus intimated) the Father seeks those to worship Him in spirit and in truth." Then (and LDS people need to pay particular attention to this) the last days of a Levitical priesthood were coming as well. The genealogies of the Jews were about to totally be wiped out in the destruction of the temple and the time was coming when God would establish a "royal priesthood of believers – male and female – rather than a priesthood by direct lineage.

The Law of Moses – harsh and condemnatory was ending – in its last days – and was being replaced by grace and truth and love of Christ Jesus.

And so (finally, it's taken me some time) we come to the words Jesus said in Matthew 24:35:

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words (to you Apostles about all of this) shall not pass away.”

Listen closely,

The old physical Jerusalem was in its last days and would soon be gone. In its place a NEW JERUSALEM, a NEW SPIRITUAL CITY which is above, which is the mother of us all, the city of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem was about to come.

Ever wonder what Paul meant when he said in Galatians 4:26:

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”

This is not a physical Jerusalem restored. It is all spiritual now. We have no idea who are real Jews of the right priesthood or lineage. And it does not really matter because in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. Where is the New Jerusalem?

*Hebrews 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

Nothing to do with physical restoration or repatriotization, or Zionism, or any of that. Christ did something better, gave something better, established something better and it was no longer tied to the physical of a physical people and nation.

Speaking to Jewish converts to Christianity, the writer of Hebrews said:

Hebrews 13:14 “For here have we no “continuing city,” (Not a material earthly city) but we seek one to come.”

So when Jesus said, *“Heaven and earth will pass away”* (within “that generation,” by the way) He was not speaking of literal heaven and literal earth (as zealous, unthinking literal futurists love to imply) but he was speaking of everything related to that world, that age – they were in the last days of all of that. He was preparing for a “new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwell righteousness,”

Let's wrap this up and put another nail in the New heaven and new earth mess. In Isaiah there is a fascinating set of passages which say to the nation of Israel:

“But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.”

I am showing you this passage to help illustrate Hebrew writing style and inference. Here God is saying that He brought Israel through the Red Sea, and then at Sinai He put His words in their mouths by giving them the law and then establishing them as His people. In doing this God says this line:

“That I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth.”

We all know that He literally planted the heavens and literally laid the foundations of the earth well before this so we can see that such language is figurative. That in culling the Nation of Israel out for His purposes God is figuratively (or spiritually) planting a new heaven and new earth. So when Jesus says:

“Heaven and earth will pass away” it is the heaven and earth established when God created and carved out Israel that He is speaking about not the literal heavens and the literal earth upon which we are still living some 2000 years later. Get it?

Remember what Paul said in 1st Corinthians 7:31? He said

“the fashion of this world passeth away.”

Which world? The only fashion of a world Paul could have been writing about was the Nation of Israel, Judaism. John says something similar in 1st John 2:17

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Both Paul and John were speaking of the world and the fashion of it “PASSING AWAY.” But it was not the natural world. It was the heavens and earth created when God culled the Nation of Israel out. It was that world and its fashions. In place of this former system of Law, and condemnation, and religion, and ordinances, and objective rites and demands, was a far more glorious way:

God would write His laws upon our hearts and minds and He would be our God and we would be His people subjectively and not through yet another system of religion. Speaking of the last days of the former system being replaced by Latter-days of subjective relationship, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:11

“For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.”

John put it this way in describing what remains and what it looks like, saying:

1st John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

Way back then the whole former system was utterly getting ready to completely decay. The new has no vestiges of the old or former. The new is spiritual, heavenly, based in grace, not in law whatsoever, based in faith first followed by love. Church and playing church and using the New Testament as a new law to beat each other with was never the plan. He writes His laws upon our hearts and minds and no man needs to teach His neighbor anything for we (believers) will all know Him.

Let me end with Hebrews 8:8 where the writer says plainly, of the former Jerusalem, of the former Law, of the covenants, of religion, of demands, he says:

Hebrews 8:8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Chapter Seven – Wrapping up the Matthew Matters

Jonathon Edwards 1736 (Author of “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”)

Tis evident that when Christ speaks of HIS COMING; His being revealed: His coming in His kingdom; or His Kingdom coming; He has respect to His appearing in those great works of His power, Justice and Grace, WHICH SHOULD BE IN THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM and other extraordinary providences which should attend it (meaning the destruction of Jerusalem).

RC SPROUL

(from The Last Days According to Jesus page 158)

“The coming of Christ in AD 70 was a coming in judgment on the Jewish nation, indicating the end of the Jewish age and the FULFILLMENT of a day of the Lord. Jesus really did come in judgment at this time, FULFILLING his prophecy in the Olivet discourse.”

So far in Matthew 24 we have read through Jesus words up to verse 35, where He said:

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

Up to this point Jesus has responded *generally* to the questions:

“When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming (note, they did not ask, when shall be the day of thy coming but the sign – which He has abundantly delivered), and the end of the age.”

Now it seems at this point he begins to speak directly to the actual day that He will return and says in verse 36:

*36 But of **that day** (singular, meaning the specific day) **and hour** knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but **my Father only**.*

Notice a change in focus compared to the previous verses where in verses:

*19 He says And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck **in those days!***

And in verse 22 He says:

*“**And except those days should be shortened,**” there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

And then in verse 29 he says:

*And immediately after **the tribulation of those days** shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*

But suddenly, here in verse 36, He speaks of a specific day? Why? Because up to verse 36 Jesus was describing to them when all the things He had been warning about would happen and the signs that would proceed His arrival. But now in verse 36 He addresses the actual day of His coming, which would wrap up the end of the age (or the “end of the world”). So He says:

*36 But of **that day and hour** knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

Not only does He get more specific here Jesus admits something to His disciples – He did not know the day or hour of His return. “*But my Father only,*” Jesus says. Plain and simple.

In John 14:28 Jesus says to His disciples:

“Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.”

The Greek word for greater here is “*miezon*” and it literally means, “*larger and or older*” but in scripture the word is used forty plus times and almost always means *superior* – like the way we would use *greater*. Part of the Trinitarian creedal system of Man is to say that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-equal. I do not understand this belief in light of what Jesus Himself says of He and the Father. For instance, consider John 12:44-50, where Jesus actually cries:

*“He that believeth on me, believeth **not on me**, but on **him** that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come “**a light**” into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”*

Scripture likens the true and living invisible God to love, fire and light – and we have long said that His light, and fire and love filled His only literal Son who was completely covered in flesh as a means to reveal the Invisible God to the world. In any case, we can

see here that Jesus (the Man) as in “no man knows the day or the hour” Jesus did not know the exact time ONLY His Father did.

Then He adds this caveat:

37 But (in other words, “But where I cannot tell you the exact day or hour” I can tell you this) as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Now, in the first 35 verses Jesus is describing the signs of his coming and the end of the age. I believe the signs were exactly that – signs that would stand out amidst an otherwise typical everyday life scenario. At verse 36 Jesus, having described the signs of His coming reveals that the exact day and hour He cannot say because He does not know them. But He does give them something. In verses 37 through 39 He warns them to remain alert because the day of His actual coming will be like the day it started raining on Noah and His ark. People will be doing regular things – eating, drinking, marrying and getting betrothed, and nobody was aware that the day was at hand until the first rain drops fell. And He wraps this up saying to them:

“So shall the Coming (not the sign of His coming anymore but His actual coming) be.”

Now, the next verses are rejected by many traditional Preterists as speaking of the rapture because of its connection to Noah and the flood. Instead they suggest that verses 40-42 are speaking of the wicked being taken (as they were in the days of Noah) and not the righteous. This is what verses 40-42 have Jesus say:

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

*42 Watch therefore: for ye know not **what hour your Lord doth come.***

I am of the personal opinion that this does in fact speak of the rapture of believers who were in the Lord’s Church prior to 70 AD. I think it is entirely possible that they were Jewish converts who recognized the Messiah for who He was (from the promises in the Old Testament) and so they being the faithful received and believed on Him and were rewarded by being taken up prior to the utter destruction of Jerusalem.

Were all believers taken then? Can’t say. Maybe the gentile converts were left to carry the word forward. Maybe John was too. All I can say is Jesus has plainly described the signs of His coming and he is speaking of one being left and one being taken in the context OF His coming. Taking scripture plainly, it seems to me that what He was describing to four of His twelve applied to them and one would be left in the field when another was taken. What we can also say, definitively, is that to take these passages and

apply them to our day totally ignores the setting, the audience, and the context of what Jesus says here in Matthew 24.

At verse 43 Jesus now offers these four apostles a parable. It is given in light of what He has just said about not knowing the day or hour and that His coming would be a surprise. So He adds

43 But . . . know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

(In other words, be like a watchful goodman over his house, who would never allow a thief to sneak up on his house)

44 Therefore (in light of this parable, He warns these four) be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

To me, the Lord is saying, you know the signs – look for them. But remember, things will also appear quite normative – as they were in the days of Noah before the rain began to fall. And at this point He appears to instruct them on being good servants now, on living up to what they were called to do in His name in the face of all this. So He says (or asks):

45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

In other words, Jesus seems to say,

“Which of you will be found a faithful and wise servant? Which of you, who have been made a ruler over my church will do my will, and feed my household and will be seen as a blessed servant because you are so doing such things when I return.”

47 Verily I say unto you, (He says at verse 47) That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

And then He gives them a warning, saying:

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, “My lord delayeth his coming;”

49 And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

It is an obvious stern warning to these four that they need to remain vigilant until the day He appears; to not rest back on their laurels, to refuse the attitude of eat drink and be merry but to hold fast serving until His return. But this is just one view of verses 45-51. There is another just as cogent thought that says Jesus here was speaking of the prophets of the House of Israel in his description of their ultimate destruction.

You have to decide what you think Jesus is speaking to – I just hope you will avoid the temptation to assign these passages to you and this age in a physical sense of the modern church.

So that is Matthew 24 (along with insights taken from Mark 13 and Luke 21-24 which cover the same teaching of Jesus on the Mount of Olives).

In my opinion, the Lord would have been highly misleading, and frankly incorrect, if He has spent all of this time talking with four (of His twelve) and describing all of this stuff, and personalizing it to them (“ye,” “ye,” “you,”) only to have been describing a bunch of stuff not applicable to them. Let me sort of pull some other highlight verses from the Gospel accounts to bolster my argument that the Bible clearly says Jesus returned in 70 AD.

They are found in:

Matthew 16:27-28

John 21:21-23

Matthew 26:64

Matthew 10:23

Okay, to Matthew 16:27-28 Jesus clearly says something reasonable and logical about His return. There He says:

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Now, this is pretty straight forward, isn't it?

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Do you know how the futurists explain this? They say Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit falling on the day of Pentecost! I've never heard of the Holy Spirit called the Son of man, have you? But it's the only way to explain this unless they agree that He already came at another time – like 70 AD – but they won't admit that. So they say that the Holy Spirit falling on Pentecost is the fulfillment of this passage. By the way, to add some flame to this powder keg of a passage, let me give you a few additional bits of information about them.

When we read in the King James verse 27, where Jesus says:

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

We really don't get much information from the English about our question:

"When does the Bible say Jesus will return?"

But when we turn to the Greek our eyes are illuminated. Why? Because when the first line says *"For the Son of man shall come,"* the word shall in Greek is "mello," which does not allow for a long period of time to pass between the pronouncement and the fulfillment.

This is why all the literal New Testament translations say

"For the Son of Man is about to come in the Glory of His Father."

Now, when futurists argue that this speaks of Pentecost we know that this could not mean Pentecost because well after Pentecost the apostles were still writing about *"the glorious appearing to come."* If Jesus words here were fulfilled at Pentecost, we would never read Paul saying in Titus 2:13 that they were:

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

Finally, note one last important little detail – the phrase coming of the Son of Man or the words coming (tied to) the line Son of Man, are only used by Jesus in Matthew, Mark and Luke? Never anywhere after Jesus life do any of the apostles use the phrase Son of Man in connection to Christ coming. The Apostles always refer to Him (post ascension) as the Son of God, and only in Acts is Son of Man used but it is not in connection to his return but to His standing on the right hand of the Father.

I point this out because Jesus, when speaking of His return, always uses the title, Son of Man in connection to it because His return was going to be for His brethren the Jews – and to them this was how He referred to Himself. Even to Caiaphas he referred to Himself as the Son of Man coming in the clouds, not the Son of God. However when Paul (apostle to the Gentiles) writes of Him it is never Son of Man, but always Son of God.

I say this so we have yet another evidence that Jesus came back to the House of Israel, His brethren, as the Son of Man but there is no reference of His return to the rest of the world (who know Him as the Son of God). By the way, one more aside to this line of thinking:

My daughter Cassidy pointed out to me that in some ways the Christian church is no different than Jews today.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

“Well,” she said, “the Jews today are still waiting for the Messiah to show up on the scene and a lot of Christians are still waiting for Him to come back. But both parties have yet to see that He has both come (the first time) and that He has come back (the second time) and everything is finished- in Him.” A fantastic point. Just the other day I had an ardent defender of futurism tell me that she is convinced Jesus is coming back to establish a literal physical kingdom here upon the earth. Remembering Cassidy’s insight I replied, *“And that position is the very same way the Jews in Jesus day viewed the Messiah – as a literal earthly king. But Jesus clearly made it known that His Kingdom was not of this world.”*

We then we have a unique discussion that Jesus has with Peter in John 21. Peter has just been rebuked (in a sense by the Lord) and was reminded that he had denied the Lord and was then told by Jesus that he was going to suffer for His names sake. We then read at verse 20-23:

John 21:20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, “Lord, and what shall this man do?”

22 Jesus saith unto him, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.”

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”

Jesus here plainly tells Peter, *“what business is it of yours if I want this disciple (who was presumably John) to live until I return?”* This automatically implies that His return would be within a reasonable period of time – not some 2000 years later. In fact, a rumor was spread that the disciple would not experience death but John clarifies the matter, and bringing in reason says in verse 23:

Jesus said not unto him, “He shall not die;” but, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”

It stands to reason then that they believed Jesus return would come within a reasonable amount of years and not so far out in the future that magical thinking had to be put in place, right?

In Matthew 26 we read of Jesus standing before Caiaphas, the High Priest. This is what the account says at verse 63:

Matthew 26:63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.”

*64 Jesus saith unto him, **Thou** (Caiaphas) hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and **coming in the clouds of heaven.**”*

That is one heck of a bold statement and it would have no wriggle room at all to prove Jesus return except for two points. Reading it in the English it seems to have Jesus telling Caiaphas that He would personally see Jesus both sitting at the right hand of

power and coming in the clouds of heaven.” The problem is Caiaphas died in 37 AD – so was Jesus wrong? The key, as usual, lies in the Greek.

Let me re-read verse 64 with proper Greek tense.

64 “Jesus saith unto him, **Thou** (singular – meaning, “You, Caiaphas”) hast said: nevertheless I say unto you (plural – the Nation that Caiaphas represented), Hereafter shall ye (plural – the nation that Caiaphas represented there in Jerusalem) shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

Understanding the verse in this manner allows us to see that first, Jesus was not wrong, and two, His words were fulfilled when the people Caiaphas represented as high priest of that area at the time were around when Jesus returned in 70 AD.

Finally, in Matthew 10 beginning at verse 18-23 Jesus says to His disciples:

Matthew 10:18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, (this is the applicable part) Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.”

The Revised Version puts this last verse this way:

“When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes.”

(The TCNT) says:

“But, when they persecute you in one town, escape to the next; for, I tell you, you will not have come to the end of the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

And Weymouth’s literal Translation says:

“ . . . for I solemnly tell you that you will not have gone the round of all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

Again, was Jesus wrong – or have we been wrong all along?

I would strongly suggest the latter

Chapter Eight – The End of the World?

“What the caterpillar calls the end of the world the master calls a butterfly.”

Richard Bach

“I think this is irresponsible preaching and very dangerous, and especially when it is slanted toward children, I think it's totally irresponsible, because I see nothing biblical that points up to our being in the last days, and I just think it's an outrageous thing to do, and a lot of people are making a living – they've been making a living for 2,000 years – preaching that we're in the last days.”

– Charles M. Schulz, *Conversations*

“And now, we have no option. We can't say 'maybe' 'it's possible' 'it looks very probable...' No way! We have to say this is what the Bible teaches! This is fact! May 21, 2011 is the day of the Rapture, it is the day that Judgment Day begins...”

Harold Camping, Christian Pastor

So, in our examination of the question, “Does the Bible say when Jesus would return?” we have covered the essentials to the question from the Gospels. In addition we have pointed out when Revelation suggests His coming would be, and then we also talked about the phrase “last days,” and “last hour” used by John. Before we get into the specific references from the Apostles themselves I want to talk about the notion – the biblical notion (or lack thereof) of what we have come to call “the end of the world.” It almost goes without saying that Christians, in general, believe there is going to be an end of the world.

Have you ever wondered why Christians believe this? Because its written in the Bible? Hmm. Maybe we ought to examine this claim that the Bible tells us that this world is going to end. Generally speaking the way Christians think that the end of the world is going to end looks something like this (if you are a futurist):

The good guys will have been removed from the earth – (raptured, if you will.)

Then the world is going to be wiped clean by fire so intense that (to some) it will even melt the heavens. We are talking some very powerful fire, my friends. This imagery has been used by Christian preachers and pastors for years on end – decades – centuries. And yet the world has not ended. Do want to know the reason why it hasn't ended? For starters the Bible never says it would.

Ever.

What? Then why have so many smart Christian scholars and apologist said it would? For the same reason there are LDS men and women with Ph.ds and medical doctors

who followed Jim Jones. Intelligence does not always equate to rational approaches to spiritual things. But let me say this: Not only does the Bible not say that there will be an end of the World, the idea actually stands in contradiction with what the Bible says!

All the way back in Genesis 8:21 we read God say:

"Neither will I smite anymore every living thing as I have done."

In Psalm 78:69 the Lord tells us that He has *"established the earth forever."* Psalm 93:1 adds that the earth *"cannot be moved."*

Ecclesiastes 1:4 says:

"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh but the earth abideth forever."

Where on earth did we get the idea that there is going to be an end of the world? Ye Old King James version of the Bible, is where. The phrase "end of the world" occurs five times in the King James Bible with the phrase "the end of this world" occurring once and the phrase "the ends of the world" occurring once too. These all add up to a total of seven times the end of the world is suggested. Now, we know that the words for world (as in earth and/or heaven and earth) is either "Ge" or it's "Kosmos." In all seven instances where we read the phrase, "end of this" or "the world" in the King James the Greek word they translated to world is aion - which means age.

Properly understood, all the phrases in the King James that say "end of the world" ought to read "end of the age." Is this important? So important that all seven of these verses have been changed in the New King James Version, and the NASB, and the ESV, and the NIV. Why? Because they should be changed! Because truth be told, neither Jesus nor any of his apostles ever said or intimated that there would be an end of the physical earth.

Why did the King James use the term world? Was it malicious intent? Not at all. It was because what was being described was the end of that world or time - the end of that Jewish age, the end of "their world" (as they knew it). So it's understandable that they used world. The problem is they were not experiencing an end of the entire physical earth. It was an end to the world of the Nation of Israel and all that orbited around them. The whole Mosaic system - done. The best Bible scholars agree that the Jews believed in two ages - the age that contained the Law and the Prophets - and "an age to come," one that brought the Messiah. This was known to them anciently as "the age to come."

When we understand this passages like Matthew 12:32 make sense. Remember what Jesus said in that passage:

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world (aion, not Kosmos or ge), neither in the world (not in the original mss) to come.” (which word is mello and means, “neither in the age that is about to come upon you shortly.”)

See, all the things of the former age prohibited many Jews from realizing Jesus was the Messiah. Even the writer of Hebrew said that for the Jews under the Law –

“that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.”

In 70 AD God destroyed all those impediments to their understanding of who the Messiah was (and is). Additionally, and just to put it out there, the Bible does not talk about the end of time either! There are two phrases that futurists will use to suggest that there will be an end of time - one is found in Daniel and one is found in Revelation.

The Daniel (12:4) line speaks of *“the time of the end”* which has a very different meaning than, *“the end of time,”* and the Revelation passage says the line, *“that there should be time no longer.”* But it is NOT talking about time not existing any longer but that there should be time no longer left for the Nation of Israel to repent and accept the Messiah!

This was the time in their history when the writer of Revelation said (in Revelation 22:11):

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.”

Sorry folks but the Bible does not speak to the end of the physical earth nor does it speak to the end of time existing. Just to be sure let’s look at the seven verses in the King James that mention the end of the (or this) world.

Five of them are found in Matthew. Here are the first three – Matthew 13 verses 39, 40, and 49:

Where Jesus is teaching a parable and says:

(verse 39-40) “The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.”

(then in verse 49)

“So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.”

If you were reading the King James it would be easy to believe the Lord was speaking of the literal end of the whole wide world, right? But Jesus is simply explaining to His disciples the end of that age – because in each instance the word for world is *“aion,”* not

“kosmos,” suggesting that, “all of these things were going to happen to the Jews at the end of their age.”

Notice in verse 39 where Jesus said: *“the harvest is the end of the age?”* Got that? Then do you remember when He said in John 4:35 to His disciples?

“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”

Contextually speaking this was Jesus speaking to them about “that age” and “those people” and not us. The next two times “end of the world” that are mentioned in scripture are also located in Matthew – 24:3 and then in Matthew 28:20.

Matthew 24:3 ought to be really familiar to you by now because it is when Peter, James, John and Andrew came to Jesus on the Mount of Olives privately and said:

“Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Of course the word is *aion* and the question was, *“tell us Jesus, when will be the end of this age.”*

The last time world is used in the King James version of Matthew is in the last chapter (or what we call the Great Commission verses).

Here, Jesus says (to them, about their job as apostles)

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (which means in the name of Christ which is exactly what they did from every account henceforth – verse 20) “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

We would like, as modern New Testament readers to believe that this means to the end of the physical world of which we are still apart but it doesn't. Jesus plainly says:

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Amen.”

He came to His own, He called His own right there in the Great Commission to go out to His own, and He tells them that He would be with them even unto the end of their age – and He was – even till the end of the age of Israel – 70 AD – when judgment fell. So that's five of seven times the Bible speaks of the end of the world.

The sixth time is found in 1st Corinthians 10:11. Here Paul is speaking to the believers at Corinth about the things written in the Old Testament, that they were written as examples for them to benefit by. And so he says, speaking of the events in the Old Testament:

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Again, the Greek is age here, not worlds, and what Paul is saying is *“all the things that happened to the Nation of Israel were examples that were written for the admonition of believers UPON WHOM (this is speaking of the Nation of Israel and not believers) upon whom the ends of the age are come.”* Did you notice the tense of the verb Paul uses here – *“Are come?”* not *‘will come;’* not are going to come some two thousand years later – *are come.*

The last time *“the end of the world”* is used in scripture is in Hebrews where the writer says, speaking of Jesus:

“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once (in the end of the world) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26). We don’t even need to interpret this passage it is so straight forward on how the writers used and understood the line *“the end of the world.”* But let me read a few other translations of Hebrews 9:26 which say it more plainly than the King James. Ready?

“For then Christ would have had to undergo death many times since the creation of the world. But now, once and for all, at the close of the age, (instead of at the end of the world) he has appeared, in order to abolish sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Weymouth’s Literal Translation of Hebrews 9:26 says it this way.

“In that case Christ would have needed to suffer many times, from the creation of the world onwards; but as a matter of fact He has appeared once for all, at the Close of the Ages, in order to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

So there are the seven times the *“end of the (or this) world”* is used in the New Testament – are you still convinced that the Bible tells us that there is going to be an end of this physical earth? Oh. I see. There are other passages that use other language to describe the end of the world? Well, let’s look at them then.

1st Peter 4:7? It says:

“But the end (of all things) is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

“The end of “all things” Peter writes, *“is at hand.”* It is believed that Peter wrote this about 65 AD – and here the Apostle said, *“the end of all things was at hand!”* It was near! Close! It was then! He was speaking of his day, when he wrote this epistle. If Peter said the end of *“all things”* was near, and the earth and the oceans and the stars and sun continue to function today – 2000 years later – then when Peter said the end of *“all things”* was at hand he must have meant all the things contained in something other than this earth, right? Could he have meant that the end of all the things related to the Nation of Israel were about to end? I would strongly suggest so. He was speaking of *“The end of ALL things,”* relative to that age.

In fact that end of all things of that age was so close, so much “at hand,” that Paul said in 1st Corinthians 7:29 *“But this I say, brethren, the time is short.”*

Know the context? Paul was preaching that the time was so short that the people of Corinth ought to avoid marriage! It is believed that Paul wrote this letter to the believers at Corinth about 56-57 AD – so within three years of the end beginning at thirteen or so years before the fall of Jerusalem.

The Greek word used was not Mello, which means the time is “at hand” but “sustello,” which means things “are gonna start wrapping up,” but not that they are just around the bend. These lines have nothing to do with our day and age – and yet pastor after pastor – and church after church have used (and abused them) to scare hell out of believers – or as Tunnel Vision suggested last week, to control them.

How about another one. It’s a passage pulled from scripture often and used to say that when the last day comes the heavens and the earth are going to get torched. Again from the Apostle Peter who says in 2nd Peter 3:10:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Now, part of the solution to this we covered two weeks ago when we cited Isaiah 51:16 which says:

*“But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, **that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth,** and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.”*

Here we noted that God planted a special heaven and laid a special foundation of the earth for the nation of Israel. So we know that when Peter is describing the heaven’s passing away with a great noise and the elements of the earth melting and the works therein being burned Peter was speaking of the special heaven and earth God established for the Nation of Israel. But additionally, earlier in chapter 3 of Second Peter the apostle brings up (in verses 5-6) what happened in Noah’s day, and speaks of the World perishing. Interestingly, the world did not perish – I mean, Noah landed in actual mountains and had a dove bring him an olive branch – but Peter said the “world” of Noah perished. We know it wasn’t the natural world around Noah that perished so what was it? The world of the ungodly, according to II Peter 2:5 – that is what perished!

So when Peter says in II Peter 3:10 says:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up,” we know it is not the natural world that was going to go, but the world of that age – the age of those who refused the Messiah.

Let me conclude this area of study by looking at one more parable of the Lord’s – it’s found in Matthew 22 and known as the parable of the King’s son. We know from the parable that Jesus tells of a King who prepared a wedding for his Son and sent servants out to tell the people that they were invited. But the people paid no attention to the invites – and even killed and abused some of the servants. We could see this as a parable of the Jews rejection of Jesus and His gospel. But in the parable Jesus has the King respond very angrily to those who rejected his invitation to his Son’s wedding, saying things like:

(Matthew 22:7) *“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”*

In this parable I would strongly suggest that when we read what Jesus says in verse 7, that this was when Malachi 4:1 is fulfilled, which says:

Malachi 4:1 *“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”*

It’s the fulfillment of all Jesus said in Matthew 24, including the “end” Jesus said would come, and “those who were in Judea ought to flee to the mountains.” This is the end that Peter was referring to when he said, “But the end of all things is at hand.” (1st Peter 4:7) It is what Paul was talking about when he said, “brethren, the time is short.” (1st Corinthians 7:9) It’s what Revelation 21:4 was speaking to when it says: *“The former things have passed away,”* and it is the judgment Jesus was speaking of in Matthew 23:33 when He said to the Pharisees:

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the judgment of gehenna?” (Matthew 23:33)

Are there military idiots out there with their hands on buttons? Certainly. Are there nuclear weapons that could really do some awful damage to our earth? Sure. Will we continue to war with each other, and pollute this planet, and kill each other. Probably. But this is not biblical prophecy being fulfilled. It’s the work and ways of Man being played out.

So we share Jesus, and we teach all who will hear the Good News, and we help them prepare for the day when they will come to meet him in the air – at their respective death – like MILLIONS of his followers have met Him since the destruction of Jerusalem, the city of peace, He tried to save.

Chapter Nine – A World of Hype

There are times – often times of a critical or heightened nature – where drastic measures are required to take charge of a situation, to wake people up and to snap them out of the state they are in. In my opinion our focus on the end of the world today is one of those times. We have before us an accumulating mass of hysteria in the Body. Good, God-fearing believers are igniting up over blood moons, end times, raptures, and second comings. Collectively we're like a hysterical woman, or an angry man who are so out of control that they cannot be reached by normal means – and so we might be forced to deliver a strong slap across the face before we can expect reason to step in and get working. This is what we are attempting to do here in this book.

Of course not many are hearing because they can't. They are too hysterical. So they put their fingers in their ears and scream, "*I don't care, I don't care, I don't care! I know He's coming back and soon!*" And they are no different than anyone else who has a pet belief that fails to hold up in the face of scrutiny but continues to be upheld. This happens when facts become irrelevant. So let's do a little exercise.

Of all the historical items you are about to read only one of them is true. As you read them try and make mental note of how the coincidence of special dates and events seemed to play into the creation of the prediction. Also note the number of revisions many prophecies and predictions undergo. Finally, take note that both humanist cults and Christian based groups all make predictions. Why? Because it is human nature to believe that there is an end heading our way and to run screaming that people need to get ready.

The end references are the citations of where the information came from. But I wish to thank the following magazines, newspapers, reporters, authors, cynics, and online bloggers for their contributions to this lengthy chronology:

Troubled Times, WWRN, Jacksonville.com, Time Magazine, CENSUR, CNN, ABC News, Escape666.com, SF Gate, Cult Observer Archives, the Doomsday List, Korea Times, Factnet, The BBC, The Straight Dope, The Skeptical Inquirer, St. Cloud Times, 20/20 NBC, ExMormon.org, Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, PBS Frontline Specials, Center for Millennial Studies, The Watchtower, Encyclopedia Britannica, Hgo McCord, John Baskette, and Thomas Williamson for their articles, and the following authors and their work: Leon Festinger, Ronald Pine, Richard Abanes, Rick Ross, H.J Hoekstra, Issac Assimov, Schwartz, Kyle, McIver, Randi, Weber, Thompson, Shaw, Gould, Skinner, Cohen, Boyer, Mann, Heard, Alnor, Robbins, Babinski, Grosso, Oropeza, Shermer, Oshea, Wojcik, Adams, Hanna, Agee, Paulus. Commentary on the events is in bold.

2800 BC. According to Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts (1979), an Assyrian clay tablet of this date as unearthed bearing the words "*Our earth is degenerate in these latter days. There are signs that the world is speedily coming to an end. Bribery and corruption are common.*" This

is one of the earliest examples of the perception of moral decay in society being interpreted as a sign of the imminent end.

634 BC Apocalyptic thinking gripped many ancient cultures, including the Romans. Early in Rome's history, many Romans feared that the city would be destroyed in the 120th year of its founding. There was a myth that 12 eagles had revealed to Romulus a mystical number representing the lifetime of Rome, and some early Romans hypothesized that each eagle represented 10 years.

389 BC Some Romans figured that the mystical number revealed to Romulus represented the number of days in a year (the Great Year concept), so they expected Rome to be destroyed around 389 BC. (Thompson p.19)

1st Century Jesus said, "*Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.*" (Matthew 16:28)

70 AD The Essenes, a sect of Jewish ascetics with apocalyptic beliefs, may have seen the Jewish revolt against the Romans in 66-70 as the final end-time battle. (Source: PBS Frontline special Apocalypse!)

2nd Century AD The Montanists believed that Christ would come again within their lifetimes and establish a new Jerusalem at Pepuza, in the land of Phrygia. Montanism was perhaps the first bona fide Christian doomsday cult. It was founded ca. 156 AD by the tongues-speaking prophet Montanus and two followers, Priscilla and Maximilla.

247 AD Rome celebrated its thousandth anniversary this year. At the same time, the Roman government dramatically increased its persecution of Christians, so much so that many Christians believed that the End had arrived. (Source: PBS Frontline special Apocalypse!)

365 AD Hilary of Poitiers predicted the world would end in 365. (Source: Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance)

380 The Donatists, a North African Christian sect headed by Tyconius, looked forward to the world ending in 380. (Source: American Atheists)

Late 4th Century St. Martin of Tours (ca. 316-397) wrote, "*There is no doubt that the Antichrist has already been born. Firmly established already in his early years, he will, after reaching maturity, achieve supreme power.*" (Abanes p.119) 500

Roman theologian Sextus Julius Africanus (ca. 160-240) claimed that the End would occur 6000 years after the Creation. He assumed that there were 5531 years between the Creation and the Resurrection, and thus expected the Second Coming to take place no later than 500 AD. (Kyle p.37, McIver #21)

Hippolytus (died ca. 236), believing that Christ would return 6000 years after the Creation, anticipated the Parousia in 500 AD. (Parousia is a word that means "arrival" or "visit made" in GREEK) (Abanes p.283)

The theologian Irenaeus, influenced by Hippolytus's writings, also saw 500 as the year of the Second Coming. (Abanes p.283, McIver #15)

At this point we might ask, "If Jesus returned in 70 AD why didn't believers in the early church recognize this and speak of the Second Coming as having already happened instead of speaking of His return as if it was still a future event - like Irenaeus, for example? From what I can tell some believed the that destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD did, in fact serve as the Second Coming where Christ came and took His bride (the believers at Jerusalem) while others did not recognize it as such. Right or wrong it's the best response I can produce.

April 6, 793 AD The Spanish monk Beatus of Liébana prophesied the end of the world that day in the presence a crowd of people. The people, thinking that the world would end that night, became frightened, panicked, and fasted through the night until dawn. Sextus Julius Africanus revised the date of Doomsday to 800 AD. (Kyle p.37)

Beatus of Liébana wrote in his Commentary on the Apocalypse, which he finished in 786 AD, that there were only 14 years left until the end of the world. Thus, the world would end by 800 at the latest. (Abanes p.168)

806 AD Bishop Gregory of Tours calculated the End occurring between 799 and 806. (Weber p.48)

848 AD "The prophetess" Thiota declared that the world would end this year. (Abanes p.337)

Mar 25, 970 Lotharingian computists foresaw the End on Friday, March 25, 970, when the Annunciation and Good Friday fell on the same day. They believed that it was on this day that Adam was created, Isaac was sacrificed, the Red Sea was parted, Jesus was conceived, and Jesus was crucified. Therefore, they believed, the end would naturally follow in at the same time. (Source: Center for Millennial Studies)

992 AD Bernard of Thuringia calculated that the end would come in 992. (Randi p.236)

995 AD The Feast of the Annunciation and Good Friday also coincided in 992, prompting some mystics to conclude that the world would end within 3 years of that date. (Weber p.50-51)

There are many stories of apocalyptic paranoia around the year 1000. For example, legend has it that a "panic terror" gripped Europe in the years and months before this date. However, scholars disagree on which stories are genuine, whether millennial

expectations at this time were any greater than usual and/or whether ordinary people were even aware of what year it was.

1033 After Jesus failed to return in 1000, some mystics pushed the date of the End to the thousandth anniversary of the Crucifixion. The writings of the Burgundian monk Radulfus Glaber described a rash of millennial paranoia during the period from 1000-1033. (Kyle p.39, Abanes p.337, McIver #50)

1184 Various Christian "prophets" foresaw the Antichrist coming in 1184. (Abanes p. 338)

Sep 23, 1186 John of Toledo, after calculating that a planetary alignment would occur in Libra on September 23, 1186 (Julian calendar), circulated a letter (known as the "Letter of Toledo") warning that the world was to going to be destroyed on this date, and that only a few people would survive. (Randi p. 236)

1260 Italian mystic Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) determined that the Millennium (see chapter Ten please) would begin between 1200 and 1260. (Kyle p.48)

1284 Pope Innocent III expected the Second Coming to take place in 1284 - why? It was 666 years after the rise of Islam. (Schwartz p.181)

1290 Followers of Joachim of Fiore (the Joachites) rescheduled the End to 1290 when his 1260 prophecy failed. (McIver #58)

1306 In 1147 Gerard of Poehilde, believing that Christ's Millennium began when the emperor Constantine came to power, figured that Satan would become unbound at the end of the thousand-year period and destroy the Church. Since Constantine rose to power in 306, the end of the Millennium would be in 1306. (Source: Christian author Richard J. Foster)

1335 Another Joachite doomsday date. (McIver #58)

1367 Czech archdeacon Militz of Kromeriz claimed the Antichrist was alive and well and would manifest himself between 1363 and 1367. The End would come between 1365 and 1367. (McIver #67)

1370 The Millennium would begin in 1368 or 1370, as foreseen by Jean de Roquetaillade, a French ascetic. The Antichrist was to come in 1366. (Weber p.55)

1378 Arnold of Vilanova, a Joachite, wrote in his work *De Tempore Adventu Antichristi* that the Antichrist was to come in 1378. (McIver #62)

Feb 14, 1420 Czech Doomsday prophet Martinek Hausa (Martin Huska) of the radical Taborite movement warned that the world would end in February 1420, February 14 at the latest. The Taborites were an offshoot of the Hussite movement of Bohemia. (McIver #71, Shaw p.43)

1504 Italian artist Sandro Botticelli wrote a caption in Greek on his painting The Mystical Nativity: *"I Sandro painted this picture at the end of the year 1500 in the troubles of Italy in the half time after the time according to the eleventh chapter of St. John in the second woe of the Apocalypse in the loosing of the devil for three and a half years. Then he will be chained in the 12th chapter and we shall see him trodden down as in this picture."*

Apparently Botticelli thought he was living during the Tribulation, and that the Millennium would begin in three and a half years or so, which is understandable given the fact that he is known to have been a follower of Girolamo Savonarola.

June, 1523 Some astrologers predicted that the End would occur by a flood starting in London on February 1st 1524. Around 20,000 people abandoned their homes, and a clergyman stockpiled food and water in a fortress he built. (Randi p.236-237)

Feb 20, 1524 A planetary alignment in Pisces was seen as a sign of the Millennium by astrologer Johannes Stoeffler. The world was to be destroyed by a flood on this date (Julian), Pisces being a water sign. (Randi p.236-237)

1525 The beginning of the Millennium, according to Anabaptist Thomas Müntzer. Thinking that he was living at the "end of all ages," he led an unsuccessful peasants' revolt and was subsequently tortured and executed. (Gould p.48)

1528 Stoeffler recalculated Doomsday to 1528 after his 1524 prediction failed (Randi p. 238)

May 27, 1528 Reformer Hans Hut predicted the end would occur on Pentecost (May 27, Julian calendar). (Weber p.67, Shaw p.44)

1532 Frederick Nausea (*what a name!*), a Viennese bishop, was certain that the world would end in 1532 after hearing reports of bizarre occurrences, including bloody crosses appearing in the sky alongside a comet. (Randi p. 238)

1533 Anabaptist prophet Melchior Hoffman's prediction for the year of Christ's Second Coming, to take place in Strasbourg. He claimed that 144,000 people would be saved, while the rest of the world would be consumed by fire. (Kyle p.59)

Oct 19, 1533 "Mathematician" Michael Stifel calculated that the Day of Judgment would begin at 8:00am on this day. (McIver #88)

Apr 5, 1534 Jan Matthys predicted that the Apocalypse would take place on Easter Day (April 5, Julian calendar) and only the city of Münster would be spared. (Shaw p.45, Abanes p.338)

1537 French astrologer Pierre Turrel announced four different possible dates for the end of the world, using four different calculation methods. The dates were 1537, 1544, 1801 and 1814. (Randi p. 239)

1544 Pierre Turrel's doomsday calculation number two! (Randi p. 239)

1555 Around the year 1400, the French theologian Pierre d'Ailly wrote that 6845 years of human history had already passed, and the end of the world would be in the 7000th year. His works would later influence the apocalyptic thinking of Christopher Columbus. (McIver #72)

July 22, 1556 a rumor was circulating that the world would end on Magdalene's Day, as recorded by Swiss medical student Felix Platter. (Weber p.68, p.249)

April 28, 1583 The Second Coming of Christ would take place at noon, according to astrologer Richard Harvey. This was the date of a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, and numerous astrologers in London predicted the world would end then. (Skinner p.27, Weber p.93)

1584 Cyprian Leowitz, an astrologer, predicted the end would occur in 1584. (Randi p. 239, McIver #105)

1588 The end of the world according to the sage Johann Müller (aka Regiomontanus). (Randi p. 239)

1600 Martin Luther believed that the End would occur no later than 1600. (Weber p.66)

At least Luther wasn't so bold to give us a specific date. Luther presents us - me in particular - with a problem. He was a scriptural genius by comparison - why would I and/or Preterist today see something Luther didn't? It's more than a fair question. We might, however also ask why Luther, who saw grace so clearly, believed babies ought to be baptized, or why he was an ardent anti-Semite - so much so one can easily see a connection between his vitriol and Hitler's. I appreciate Luther, but he - like the rest of us - was human and had prejudices like the rest of us which certainly could have blinded him.

1603 Dominican monk Tomasso Campanella wrote that the sun would collide with the Earth in 1603. (Weber p.83)

1623 Eustachius Poysse used numerology to pinpoint 1623 as the year of the end of the world. (McIver #125)

February 1, 1624 The same astrologers who predicted the deluge of February 1, 1524 recalculated the date to February 1, 1624 after their first prophecy failed. (Randi p. 236-237)

1648 Using the kabbalah, Sabbatai Zevi, a rabbi from Smyrna, Turkey, figured that the Messiah would come in 1648, accompanied by miracles. The Messiah, according to Zevi, wound up being none other than . . .himself! (Randi p.239, Festinger)

1654 In 1578, physician Helisaeus Roeslin of Alsace, basing his prediction on a nova that occurred in 1572, foresaw the world ending in 1654 in a blaze of fire. (Randi p.240)

1656 was believed to be a possible date for the end of the world, with 1656 being the number of years between the Creation and the Flood. (Skinner p.27)

1657 Final apocalyptic battle and the destruction of the Antichrist were to take place between 1655 and 1657, as per "the Fifth Monarchy Men," a radical group of English millenarians who attempted to take over Parliament to impose their extremist theocratic agenda on the country. (Kyle p.67)

Sound familiar? Cough Tea Party?

1658 In his *The Book of Prophecies*, Christopher Columbus claimed that the world was created in 5343BC, and would last 7000 years. Assuming no year zero, that means the end would come in 1658. Columbus was influenced by Pierre d'Ailly. (McIver #77)

1660 Joseph Mede, whose writings influenced James Ussher and Isaac Newton, claimed that the Antichrist appeared way back in 456, and the end would come in 1660. (McIver #147)

1666 As this date is 1000 (millennium) + 666 (number of the Beast) many Londoners feared that 1666 would be the end of the world. The Great Fire of London in 1666 did not help to alleviate these fears (Schwartz p.87, Kyle p.67-68)

Sabbatai Zevi recalculated the coming of the Messiah to 1666. Despite his failed prophecies, he had accumulated a great many followers. He was later arrested for stirring up trouble, and given the choice of converting to Islam or execution. Pragmatic man that he was, he wisely elected for the former. (Festinger)

1673 Deacon William Aspinwall, a leader of the Fifth Monarchy movement, claimed the Millennium would begin by this year. (Abanes p.209, McIver #174)

1688 John Napier's doomsday calculation #1, based on the Book of Revelation. Napier was the mathematician who discovered logarithms. (Weber p.92)

1689 Pierre Jurieu, a Camisard prophet, predicted that Judgment Day would occur in 1689. The Camisards were Huguenots of the Languedoc region of southern France. (Kyle p.70)

1694 Anglican rector John Mason calculated this date as the beginning of the Millennium. (Kyle p.72) so did German theologian Johann Alsted. (Kyle p.66)

Fall 1694 Drawing from theology and astrology, German prophet Johann Jacob Zimmerman determined that the world would end in the fall of 1694. Zimmerman gathered a group of pilgrims and made plans to go to America to welcome Jesus back to Earth. However, he died in February of that year, on the very day of departure.

Johannes Kelpius took over leadership of the cult, which was known as the “Woman in the Wilderness” cult and they completed their journey to the New World. Fall came and went and, needless to say, the cultists were profoundly disappointed at having traveled all the way across the Atlantic just to be stood up. (Cohen p.19-20)

1697 The beginning of the Millennium, according to Anglican rector Thomas Beverly. (Kyle p.72, McIver #224) Additionally, the notorious witch hunter Cotton Mather predicted the end of the world with 1697 being his first dooms date. After the prediction failed, he revised the date of the End two more times. (Abanes p.338)

1700. end of the world, according to some Puritans. (Kyle p.79)

- John Napier's doomsday calculation #2, based on the Book of Daniel. (Weber p.92)
- The date of the Second Coming, according to Henry Archer, a Fifth Monarchy Man. Archer made this prediction in his 1642 book, *The Personall Reign of Christ Upon Earth*. (McIver #158)

This is the first record of a book being sold in connection to a prediction of the second coming. So many more to follow.

1705, 1706 and 1708 The End, according to some Camisard prophets. (Kyle p.70)

1716 Cotton Mather's end-of-the-world prediction #2. (Abanes p.338)

Apr 5, 1719 The return of a comet was supposed to wipe out the Earth, said Jacques Bernoulli, progenitor of the mathematical Bernoulli family. (Randi p.240-241)

1734 Doomsday was to come between 1700 and 1734, predicted 15th century Cardinal Nicolas of Cusa. (Weber p.82, McIver #73)

1736 Cotton Mather's end-of-the-world prediction number 3. (Abanes p.338)

Oct 13, 1736 William Whitson predicted that London would meet its doom by flood on this day, prompting many Londoners to gather in boats on the Thames. (Randi)

1757 In a vision, angels supposedly informed mystic Emanuel Swedenborg that the world would end in 1757. Few took him seriously.

April 5, 1761 Religious extremist William Bell claimed the world would be destroyed by earthquake on this day. Since there had been an earthquake on February 8 and another on March 8, he reasoned that the world must end in another 28 days' time! Again, Londoners gathered in boats on the Thames or headed for the hills. When his prediction didn't come true, he was promptly thrown into Bedlam, London's notorious nuthouse. (Randi p.241)

February 28, 1763 Devout Methodist George Bell foresaw the end of the world on this date. (Weber p.102)

May 19, 1780 On this day in New England the skies mysteriously turned dark for several hours in the afternoon, causing people to believe that a biblical prophecy had come true and Judgment Day had arrived. In reality, the darkness was caused by smoke from large-scale forest fires to the west. (Abanes p.217)

1789 The coming of the Antichrist, according to 14th century Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly. (Weber p.59)

1790 The Second Coming, according to Irish orator Francis Dobbs. (Schwartz p.181)

1792 The end of the world according to the Shakers. (Abanes p.338) 1794

1794 Charles Wesley, brother of Methodist Church founder John Wesley, predicted Doomsday would be in 1794. (Source: Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance)

1795 The Millennium would begin between 1793 and 1795, claimed retired English sailor Richard Brothers, who called himself "God's Almighty Nephew." He was convinced that he would lead the ten lost tribes of Israel, and once said that God told him he would become king of England. He was eventually committed to an insane asylum. (Kyle p.73, McIver #301)

November 19, 1795 While campaigning for Richard Brothers' release, Nathaniel Brassey Halhead proclaimed that the world would end on Nov 19. (McIver #310)

1801 Pierre Turrel's doomsday calculation number 3 (See 1537). (Randi p. 239)

1805 Destruction of the world by earthquake in 1805, followed by an age of everlasting peace when God will be known by all, as foretold by 17th century Presbyterian minister Christopher Love. He eventually lost his head, literally. (Schwartz p.101)

1814 Pierre Turrel's doomsday calculation number 4 (See 1537). (Randi p. 239)

December 25, 1814 Jesus was to be re-born on Christmas Day, according to the 64-year-old virgin prophet Joanna Southcott, who claimed to be pregnant with the Christ child. Witnesses claimed that she did indeed appear pregnant. She died on Christmas Day, and a subsequent autopsy proved that she was not pregnant after all. (Skinner p.109)

October 14, 1820 Southcott follower John Turner claimed the world would come to an end on this day. After this prophecy failed, John Wroe took over leadership of the cult. (Randi p.241-242)

Let's point out that right around this time there was religious (and therefore Millennialist, Second Coming)fervor cumulating in and around the Eastern United States. The Shakers, and many other movements in and around the area contributed to it. It was under this umbrella that Mormonism was born - and it began as an extreme

Millennialist movement that were looking and preaching the eminent coming of Christ. But the LDS are pretty saavy people and after they saw focusing on the end was a crap shoot they turned to focusing on the here and now - leaving the return of Christ to the Father.

1832 The beginning of the Millennium, according to John Dilks. (Weber p.176)

In 1835 Joseph Smith foresaw the Second Coming taking place in 56 years' time, or about 1891. (Source: exmormon.org)

1836 Methodist Church founder John Wesley foresaw the Millennium beginning in 1836, the same year that the Beast of Revelation was to rise from the sea. (McIver #269)

1843 Harriet Livermore's Parousia prediction number one. (McIver #699)

April 28, 1843 Although this date was not officially endorsed by the Millerite leadership, it was a popular belief among William Miller's followers that the Second Coming would take place on this day. (Festinger p.16)

December 31, 1843 Many Millerites expected Jesus to return at the end of 1843. (Festinger p.16)

March 21, 1844 William Miller, leader of the so-called Millerite movement and former Baptist minister, predicted through careful calculation that Christ would return sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. He gathered a following of thousands of devotees. After the failure of Jesus to show up during this window, the cult experienced a crisis of faith and in the confusion began reinterpreting the prophecy and aggressively proselytizing. (Gould p.49, Festinger p.16-17)

October 22, 1844 Rev. Samuel S. Snow, an influential Millerite, predicted the Second Coming on this day. The date was soon accepted by Miller himself. On that day, the Millerites gathered on a hilltop to await the coming of Jesus. After the inevitable no-show, the event became known as the "Great Disappointment." (Gould p.49, Festinger p. 17)

1845 The Second Coming according to the Second Adventists, a group that formed from the remaining hardcore members of Miller's cult. The Second Adventists were the forerunners of the Seventh Day Adventists (Kyle p.91)

1846 Another Second Coming according to the Second Adventists. (Kyle p.91)

1847 Harriet Livermore's Parousia prediction Number 2. (McIver #699)

August 7, 1847 "Father" George Rapp, a German ascetic who founded a sect known as the Harmonists (aka the Rappites) and established a utopian commune in Economy, Pennsylvania, was convinced that Jesus would return before his death. Even on his deathbed he refused to give up hope for Christ's return, saying "If I did not know that

the dear Lord meant I should present you all to him, I should think my last moment's come." It turned out that his last moment had indeed come, yet Jesus failed to show up. Rapp died on August 7, 1847. (Cohen p.23, Thompson p.283, Encyclopedia Britannica)

1849 Yet another Second Coming according to the Second Adventists. (Kyle p.91)

1851 You guessed it! Still another Second Coming according to the Second Adventists. (Kyle p.91)

1856 The Crimean War (1853-56) was seen by some as the Battle of Armageddon. After all, Russia had plans to wrest control of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire. Maybe this was this war that triggered the popularity of the "Russia invades Israel" scenario so popular among modern prophecy teachers. (McIver #437)

1862 The end of 6000 years since Creation, and thus the end of the world, according to John Cumming of the Scottish National Church. (Abanes p.283)

1863 Southcott follower John Wroe, who in 1823 tried (and failed) to walk on water and underwent a *public circumcision*, calculated that the Millennium would begin in 1863. (Skinner p.109)

1867 The Anglican minister Michael Paget Baxter was an ardent date setter. In one of his earliest publications he predicted the End for 1861-1867. (McIver #348)

1868 In another publication Michael Baxter claimed the Battle of Armageddon would take place this year. (Abanes p.338, McIver #349)

1869 Another "End" according to Michael Baxter. (McIver #350)

June 28, 1870 The end of the world as per Irvin Moore's book, *The Final Destiny of Man*, to be followed by Christ's millennial reign on Earth. He predicted that during this year, France would fall, and Jerusalem would become the capital of the world. (McIver #746)

1872 Michael Baxter predicted another Armageddon in 1871-72 or thereabouts. (McIver #351)

1874 The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. This was to become the first in a long string of failed doomsday prophecies by members of this group. (Gould p. 50, Kyle p.93)

The Parousia according to the newly formed Seventh Day Adventists, a group founded by former Millerites. (Abanes p.339)

1878 The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Kyle p.93)

1880 Thomas Rawson Birks in his book *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy* determined that the end of the world would be in 1880 by employing the time-honored "Great Week" theory. (McIver #371)

- 1881 1) The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Kyle p.93)
- 2) The end of the world according to some pyramidologists. (Randi p.242)
- 3) 16th century prophetess Mother Shipton is said to have written the couplet:

*The world to an end shall come
In eighteen hundred and eighty one.*

In 1873, it was revealed that the couplet was a forgery by Charles Hindley, who published Mother Shipton's prophecies in 1862. (Schwartz p.122, Randi p.242-243)

1890 Northern Paiute leader Wovoka predicted the Millennium beginning in 1890. This prediction came from a trance he experienced during a solar eclipse in 1889. Wovoka was a practitioner of the Ghost Dance cult, a bizarre hybrid of apocalyptic Christianity and American Indian mysticism. (Gould p.56-57, p.69)

1895 The Millennium, according to Reverend Robert Reid of Erie, Pennsylvania. (Weber p.176)

1896 Michael Baxter makes a return with a book entitled, *The End of This Age About the End of This Century* in which predicted the Rapture taking place in 1896. According to Rev. Baxter, 144,000 true Christians were supposed to be summoned to Heaven during this year. (Thompson p.121)

1899 Charles A.L. Totten predicted that 1899 was a possible date for the end of the world. Interestingly, the infamous "NASA discovers missing day" urban legend has its roots in Totten's writings. (McIver #924) 1900

Father Pierre Lachèze foresaw Doomsday occurring in 1900, eight years after the Temple in Jerusalem was to be rebuilt. (Weber p.136)

Followers of Brazilian ascetic Antonio Conselheiro expected the end to come by the year 1900. (Thompson p.125-126)

November 13, 1900 Over 100 members of the Russian cult "Brothers and Sisters of the Red Death" committed suicide, expecting the world to end on this day. (Sources: Portuguese article and this site)

1901 A sect calling itself the Catholic Apostolic Church claimed that Jesus would return by the time the last of its 12 founding members died. The last member died in 1901. (Boyer p.87)

April 23, 1908 Once again, it's Michael Baxter. In his (next) book, *Future Wonders of Prophecy*, the Rapture was to take place on March 12, 1903 between 2pm and 3pm, and Armageddon was to take place on this day, which is after the Tribulation. (McIver #353)

October 1908 Pennsylvanian grocery store owner Lee T. Spangler claimed that the world would meet a fiery end during this month. (Abanes p.339)

1910 The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Kyle p.93)

May 18, 1910 Many people believed the arrival of Halley's Comet would spell the end of the world. Some thought that cyanide gas from the comet's tail would poison the Earth's atmosphere. In Germany, one could buy postcards depicting apocalyptic scenes bearing the caption, "End of the World on May 18". Con artists took advantage of people's fears by selling "comet pills" to make people immune to the toxins...or so they claimed. (Weber p.196-198, Abanes p.339)

After so many fails it only seems natural that cons would start selling products to go along with the hype and their books.

1911 19th century Scottish astronomer and pyramidologist Charles Piazzi Smyth concluded from his research on the dimensions of the Great Pyramid of Giza that the Second Coming would occur between 1892 and 1911. (Cohen p.94)

October 1, 1914 The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. In fact, they viewed World War I as the Battle of Armageddon. (Skinner p.102)

1915 The beginning of the Millennium according to John Chilembwe, fundamentalist leader of a rebellion in Nyasaland (present-day Malawi). (Gould p.54-55, p.69)

1918 The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Kyle p.93) Dec 17,

1919 According to meteorologist Albert Porta, a conjunction of six planets on this date would cause a magnetic current to "pierce the sun, cause great explosions of flaming gas, and eventually engulf the Earth." Panic erupted in many countries around the world because of this prediction, and some even committed suicide. (Abanes p.60-61)

1925 The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Kyle p.93)

February 13, 1925 According to Margaret Rowan, the angel Gabriel appeared before her in a vision and told her that the world would end at midnight on this date, which happened to be Friday the 13th. (Abanes p.45)

Spring 1928 J.B. Dimpleby calculated that the Millennium would begin in the spring of 1928, with the Rapture and Second coming taking place between 1889 and 1928. But the true end of the world, he claimed, wouldn't take place until around the year 3000. (McIver #495)

1934 Final apocalyptic battle was to begin, claimed Chicago preacher Nathan Cohen Beskin in 1931. (Abanes p.280)

September 1935 Wilbur Glen Voliva, in 1931 announced that "the world is going to go 'puff' and disappear in September, 1935." (Abanes p.287)

1936 Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God, told members of his church that the Rapture was to take place in 1936, and that only they would be saved. After the prophecy failed, he changed the date three more times. (Shaw p.99)

1938 Gus McKey claimed in a pamphlet that the 6000th year since Creation would come between 1931 and 1938, signifying the end of the world. (Abanes p.283) 1941

The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Shaw p.72)

The end of the world according to Leonard Dale-Harrison. (Kyle p.111)

1943 Herbert W. Armstrong's Rapture prediction Number two (Shaw p.99)

September 21, 1945 In 1938 a minister named Long had a vision of a mysterious hand writing the number 1945 and a voice saying the world would be destroyed at 5:33pm on September 21. His prophecy failed, naturally.

1947 In 1889, John Ballou Newbrough (aka "America's Greatest Prophet") foresaw the destruction of all nations and the beginning of post-apocalyptic anarchy in 1947. (Randi p.243)

1950 The end of the world, as per Henry Adams. (Mann p.x)

1952 In 1950, a young Billy Graham stated "We may have another year, maybe two years. Then I believe it is going to be over." (Source: Article by Hugo McCord)

January 9, 1953 The end of the world, according to Agnes Carlson, the founder of a Canadian cult called the Sons of Light.

August 1953 Pyramidologist David Davidson, in his book *The Great Pyramid, Its Divine Message*, wrote that the Millennium would begin sometime during this month. (Source: article by John Baskette)

December 21, 1954 The world was to be destroyed by terrible flooding on this date, claimed Dorothy Martin (a.k.a. Marian Keech), leader of a UFO cult called Brotherhood of the Seven Rays (a.k.a. The Seekers). Among the members of this cult were George Hunt Williamson and Charles "Laughhead." This case became the subject of Leon Festinger's book, *When Prophecy Fails*, the classic, ground-breaking case study of cognitive dissonance and the effect that failed prophecy has on "true believers". (Festinger, Heard p.46-48, McIver #1949)

From what I can tell this was one of the early Alien UFO connections to the end of the world which has only grown in popularity over the years.

April 23, 1957 According to Mihran Ask, a pastor from California, "*Sometime between April 16 and 23, 1957, Armageddon will sweep the world! Millions of persons will perish in its flames and the land will be scorched.*" (Watchtower, Oct 15, 1958, p.613)

1958 David A. Latimer, in his book *Opening of the Seven Seals and the Half Hour of Silence*, predicted that the Second Coming would take place in 1956 or 1958, right after the Battle of Armageddon. (McIver #1501)

April 22, 1959 Victor Houteff, founder of the Davidians -- an offshoot of the Seventh Day Adventists -- prophesied that the End would be coming soon, but he never set a date. After his death, however, his widow Florence prophesied that the Rapture would take place on April 22, 1959. Hundreds of faithful gathered at Mount Carmel outside Waco to await the big moment, but it was not to be. (Thompson p.289)

1960 Pyramidologist Charles Piazzi Smyth (see the 1911 entry) claimed that the Millennium would begin no later than 1960. (Source: article by John Baskette)

Now I want to pause at this point and thank God that all but one of these predictions and prophesies mentions so far failed. Why? Because they all came before I was born and had ANY of them been true except the one that was, I would never have been born. And neither would my children, or my grandchildren . . . (Are you starting to think yet?)

February 4, 1962 A planetary alignment on this day was to bring destruction to the world. Incidentally, the Antichrist was supposed to have been born the following day, according to pop psychic/astrologer Jeanne Dixon. (Abanes p.340)

1966 Between 1965 and 1966, the Nation of Islam joined the fervor as an apocalyptic battle was to occur, resulting in the fall of the United States, they said. (Kyle p.162)

1967 The establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven, according to Rev. Sun Myung Moon. (Kyle p.148)

Also in 1967 a young Jim Jones, former Christian pastor who later became guru of the Kool-Aid cult People's Temple, had visions that a nuclear holocaust was to take place in 1967. (Weber p.214)

August 20, 1967 The beginning of the third woe of the Apocalypse, during which the southeastern US would be destroyed by a Soviet nuclear attack, according to UFO prophet George Van Tassel, who claimed to have channeled an alien named Ashtar. (Alnor p.145)

December 25, 1967 Danish cult leader Knud Weiking claimed that a being named Orthon was speaking to him, saying that there would be a nuclear war by Christmas 1967 that would disturb the Earth's orbit. His followers built a survival bunker in preparation for this catastrophe.

August 9, 1969 Second Coming of Christ, according to George Williams, leader of the Morrisites, a 19th century branch of Mormonism. (Robbins p.77)

November 22, 1969 The Day of Judgment, according to Robin McPherson, who supposedly channeled an alien named "Ox-Ho," (Shaw p.154)

1972 Herbert W. Armstrong's Rapture prediction number three. (Shaw p.99)

1973 David Berg (aka Moses David), guru of the Children of God (aka the Family of Love, or just "The Family"), predicted in his publication *The Endtime News!* the United States would be destroyed by Comet Kohoutek in 1973. (McIver #2095)

January 1974 David Berg predicted in his so-called Mo Letters that Comet Kohoutek would destroy the US during this month. (Kyle p.145)

1975 The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Kyle p.93)

Herbert W. Armstrong's Rapture prediction number four. (Shaw p.99)

The Rapture, as per end-time preacher Charles Taylor. This is the first in a long series of failed predictions. (Abanes p.99)

1976 Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number two. (Abanes p.99) 1977

John Wroe (the Southcottian who had himself publicly circumcised in 1823) set 1977 as the date of Armageddon. (Randi p.243)

Fundamentalist cult leader William Branham predicted that the Rapture would take place no later than 1977. Just before this, Los Angeles was to fall into the sea after an earthquake, the Vatican would achieve dictatorial powers over the world, and all of Christianity would become unified. (Babinski p.277)

Pyramidologist Adam Rutherford expected that the Millennium would begin in 1977. (Source: article by John Baskette)

1978 In his book *The Doomsday Globe*, John Strong drew on scriptures, pyramidology, pole shift theory, young-earth creationism and other mysticism to conclude that Doomsday would come in 1978. (McIver #3237)

"Sometime in the 1980s" In his book, *Armageddon 198?* Stephen D. Swihart predicted the End would occur sometime in the 1980s.

1980 Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number 3. (Abanes p.99)

April 1, 1980 Radio preacher Willie Day Smith of Irving, Texas, claimed that this day would witness the Second Coming. (Source: What About the Second Coming of Christ?)

April 29, 1980 Leland Jensen, founder of the Bahá'ís Under the Provisions of the Covenant -- a small sect that mixes mainstream Bahá'í teachings with pyramidology and Bible prophecy -- predicted that a nuclear holocaust would occur on this day, killing a third of the world's population. After the prophecy failed, Jensen rationalized that this date was merely the beginning of the Tribulation. (Robbins p.73) 1981

1980 The establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven, according to Rev. Sun Myung Moon. (Kyle p.148)

Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number four. (Abanes p.99)

Pastor Chuck Smith, founder of Calvary Chapel, wrote in his book, *Future Survival*, "I'm convinced that the Lord is coming for His Church before the end of 1981." Smith arrived at his calculation by adding 40 (one "Biblical generation") to 1948 (the year of Israel's statehood) and subtracting 7 for the Tribulation. When 1981 passed by, the group members experienced a mini version of the "Great Disappointment" of 1844. (Abanes p. 326)

June 28, 1981 Rev. Bill Maupin, leader of a small Tuscon, AZ, sect named Lighthouse Gospel Tract Foundation, preached that the world would come to an end on this day, which they called "rapture day." Those who were saved would be "spirited aloft like helium balloons." Some 50 people gathered in a Millerite-like fashion, only to have their dreams predictably dashed. (Source: Philosophy and the Scientific Method by Ronald C. Pine)

1982 Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number 5. (Abanes p.99)

Also, Jesus was to return and rapture Christians away from the Tribulation in 1982, taught Canadian prophet Doug Clark. He used the Jupiter Effect to support his thesis, claiming it would trigger earthquakes and fires that would kill millions. (Abanes p.91)

Emil Gaverluk of the Southwest Radio Church suggested that the Jupiter Effect would pull Mars to out of orbit and send it careening into the Earth. (Abanes p.100-101)

March 10, 1982 When the planets lined up, their combined gravitational forces were supposed to bring the end of the world. A book called *The Jupiter Effect*, by John Gribbin and Stephen Plagemann, helped to spread these fears. (Abanes p.62)

June 25, 1982 Benjamin Creme, British artist and founder of Tara Center, on April 25, 1982 took out an ad in the Los Angeles Times proclaiming "THE CHRIST IS NOW

HERE", referring to the coming of Maitreya within 2 months. Creme supposedly received the messages from Maitreya through "channeling." (Grosso p.7, Oropeza p.155)

Fall 1982 In the late '70s, Pat Robertson predicted the end of the world would occur in the fall of 1982. "*I guarantee you by the end of 1982 there is going to be a judgment on the world,*" he said in a May, 1980 broadcast of the 700 Club. (Boyer p.138)

1983 Apocalyptic war between the US and the Soviet Union was supposed to break out by the end of 1983, said the End Times News Digest. (Shaw p.182)

Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number six. (Abanes p.99)

October 2, 1984 The end of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Shermer p. 203, Kyle p.91)

1985 The end of the world according to Lester Sumrall in his book, *I Predict 1985*. (Abanes p.99, 341)

Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number seven. (Abanes p.99)

The Socialist National Aryan People's Party was convinced that Jesus would return in 1985. (Weber p.209)

March 25, 1985 The beginning of World War III, as prophesied by Vern Grimsley of the doomsday cult Family of God Foundation. This cult was a small offshoot of the Urantia Foundation, a loosely organized religious group that uses as its scripture a tedious 2000 page tome called the Urantia Book.

August 1985 Date of World War III, according to the 1977 bestseller *The Third World War: August 1985* by retired NATO General Sir John Hackett. While not really a prophecy, the book was written as a warning to world leaders about what could realistically happen based on world developments at that time.

1986 Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number eight. (Abanes p.99)

April 29, 1987 Leland Jensen of the Bahá'ís Under the Provisions of the Covenant predicted that Halley's Comet would be pulled into Earth's orbit on April 29, 1986, and chunks of the comet would pelt the Earth for a year. The gravitational force of the comet would cause great earthquakes, and on April 29, 1987, the comet itself would crash into the Earth wreaking widespread destruction. When the prophecies failed, Jensen rationalized the failure as follows: "A spiritual stone hit the earth." (Robbins p.73, 78)

1987 Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction #9. (Abanes p.99)

August 17, 1987 The "Harmonic Convergence." New Age author José Argüelles claimed that Armageddon would take place unless 144,000 people gathered in certain places in

the world in order to "resonate in harmony" on this day. (McIver #2023, Kyle p.156, Wojcik p.207)

1988 Hal Lindsey's bestseller, *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, suggested that the Rapture would take place in 1988, reasoning that it was 40 years (one Biblical generation) after Israel gained statehood. (Abanes p.85)

Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number 10. (Abanes p.99)

Canadian prophet Doug Clark suggested 1988 as the date of the Rapture, in his book *Final Shockwaves to Armageddon*. (Abanes p.91)

David Webber and Noah Hutchings of the Southwest Radio Church suggested that the Rapture would take place "possibly in 1987 or 1988." (Abanes p.101)

The Rapture, according to TV prophet J.R. Church in his book *Hidden Prophecies in the Psalms*. He used a bizarre theory that each of the Psalms referred to a year in the 20th century (i.e. Psalm 1 represents the events in 1901, etc.), to arrive at this conclusion. (Abanes p.103)

Colin Deal wrote a book entitled *Christ Returns by 1988: 101 Reasons Why* (Oropeza p. 175)

September 13, 1988 Edgar C. Whisenant wrote his best-selling book, *88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be in 1988*. He predicted the Rapture between September 11 and 13 (Rosh Hashanah). After his prediction failed, he released another book: *The Final Shout: Rapture Report 1989*. (Kyle p.121, Abanes p.93)

September 15, 1988 After Whisenant's prediction failed, he insisted that the Rapture would take place at 10:55 am on September 15. (Abanes p.94)

October 3, 1988 Incredulous that yet another prediction failed, Whisenant pushed the date of the Rapture forward to October 3. (Abanes p.94) 1989

Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number eleven. (Abanes p.99)

In his 1968 book, *Guide to Survival*, Salem Kirban used Bishop Ussher's calculations to conclude that 1989 would be the year of the Rapture. (Abanes p.283)

In 1978, Oklahoma City's Southwest Radio Church published a pamphlet entitled, *God's Timetable for the 1980s* in which were listed prophecies for each year of the 1980s, culminating with Christ's return and the establishment of his kingdom on Earth in 1989.

September 30, 1989 After his 1988 Rapture prediction failed, Edgar C. Whisenant pointed to Rosh Hashanah 1989 as a possible date for the Rapture. (Abanes p.94)

Hart Armstrong, president of Christian Communications of Wichita, repeatedly suggested that the Feast of Trumpets 1989 would be the date of the Rapture. (Abanes p. 93)

1990 Baptist preacher Peter Ruckman predicted that the Rapture would come round about the year 1990. (Source: article by Thomas Williamson)

Singaporean prophecy writer Kai Lok Chan foresaw Jesus Christ returning sometime between 1986 and 1990. Armageddon (a war between the US and USSR) would take place between 1984 and 1988. He argued that the Jupiter Effect corroborated his claims. (McIver #2195)

April 23, 1990 Elizabeth Clare Prophet, leader of the Church Universal and Triumphant, foresaw nuclear devastation and the end of most of the human race on this day, and convinced her followers to sell their property and move with her to a ranch in Montana. (Kyle p.156, Grosso p.7)

1991 The Rapture, according to fundamentalist author Reginald Dunlop. (Shaw p.180)

Louis Farrakhan declared that the Gulf War would be the "War of Armageddon which is the final war." (Abanes p.307)

March 31, 1991 An Australian cult looked forward to the Second Coming at 9:00 am on this day. They believed that Jesus would return through Sydney Harbor! (Source: Knowing the Day and the Hour)

1992 Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number twelve. (Abanes p.99)

April 26, 1992 Prophecy nutcase Doug Clark announced on Trinity Broadcasting Network's show Praise the Lord that World War III would begin within 3 years. (Abanes p.92)

April 29, 1992 When the LA riots broke out in response to the verdict of the Rodney King trial, members of white-supremacist group Aryan Nations thought it was the final apocalyptic race war they had been waiting for. (20/20, NBC, Dec 12, 1999)

September 28, 1992 Christian author Dorothy A. Miller in her book, *Watch & Be Ready! 1992 Millions Disappear?* predicted the "last trumpet" would sound on Rosh Hashanah, heralding the Second Coming. (McIver #2923)

Also in 1992 Rockin'" Rollen Stewart, a born-again Christian thought the Rapture would take place on this day. Stewart went insane, setting off stink bombs in churches and bookstores and writing apocalyptic letters in a mission to make people get right with God. He is now serving a life sentence for kidnapping. (Adams p.18-20)

October 28, 1992 Lee Jang Rim, leader of the Korean doomsday cult Mission for the Coming Days (also known as the Tami Church), predicted that the Rapture would occur on this date. Lee was convicted of fraud after the prophecy failed. Lee's cult was part of the larger Hyoo-Go (Rapture) movement, which took Korea by storm in 1992. (Thompson p.227-228, McIver #2747)

1993 David Berg of the Children of God claimed in, *The Endtime News!* that the Second Coming would take place in 1993. The Tribulation was to start in 1989. (McIver #2095, Kyle p.145)

November 14, 1993 Judgment Day, according to self-proclaimed messiah Maria Devi Khrystos (né Marina Tsvigun), leader of the cult Great White Brotherhood. Members of the cult planned to congregate in Kiev on that day to celebrate God's coming to Earth, but their plan was thwarted by the arrest of many of the cultists. (Alnor p.93)

December 9, 1993 James T. Harmon added 51.57 years to May 15, 1949 (the date the UN recognized Israel) and subtracted 7 to arrive at the date of the Rapture, approximately December 9, 1993. He also suggested 1996, 2012 and 2022 as alternative rapture dates. (Oropeza p.89)

R.M. Riley, in his book, *1994: The Year of Destiny*, wrote that 1994 would be the year of the Rapture. (McIver #3098)

Charles Taylor's Rapture prediction number thirteen. (Abanes p.99)

Om Saleem, an Arab Christian, prophesied that the Rapture would take place in 1994, after the Antichrist was to reveal himself. (Oropeza p.148)

Dutch authors Aad Verbeek, Jan Westein and Pier Westein predicted the Second Coming in 1994 in their book, *Time for His Coming*. (McIver #3348)

May 2, 1994 Armageddon. Neal Chase of the Bahá'ís Under the Provisions of the Covenant predicted that New York would be destroyed by a nuclear bomb on March 23, 1994, and the Battle of Armageddon would take place 40 days later. (Robbins p.79)

June 9, 1994 Pastor John Hinkle claimed that God told him the Apocalypse would take place on this day. In a cataclysmic event, God was supposed to "rip the evil out of this world." When the prophecy failed, he claimed that it's only the beginning and it's taking place invisibly. (Oropeza p.167-168)

July 25, 1994 On July 19, 1993, Sister Marie Gabriel Paprocski announced to the world her prophecy that a comet would hit Jupiter on or before July 25, 1994, causing the "biggest cosmic explosion in the history of mankind" and bringing on the end of the world. Indeed, a comet did hit Jupiter on July 16, 1994. However, it is important to note that her announcement was made nearly two months after astronomer Brian Marsden discovered that Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 would hit Jupiter. (Skinner p.116, Levy p.207)

September 23, 1994 Reginald Dunlop claimed this was the last date encoded in the Great Pyramid of Giza, meaning that the world would not last beyond this date. (Oropeza p.128)

September 27, 1994 Harold Camping, head of Oakland's Family Radio and host of the station's Biblical discussion talk show Open Forum, predicted the end in his book 1994? He calculated that the Tribulation would end on September 6, followed by the Last Day and the Second Coming of Christ between Sep. 15 and Sep. 27. (Camping p.526-7, p.531)

September 29, 1994 Harold Camping's doomsday prediction number two. (Abanes p.95)

October 2, 1994 Harold Camping's doomsday prediction number three. (Abanes p.95)

1995 Armageddon, according to Henry Kresyler, head of the doomsday group Watchers in the Wilderness. (Shaw p.181)

The Second Coming of Christ, as foreseen by J.R. Church, using his Psalms theory (see 1988 above). The Battle of Armageddon would take place in 1994. (Abanes p. 103)

March 31, 1995 Harold Camping's doomsday prediction number four. He gave up setting dates afterwards. (Until 2011) (Abanes p.95)

1996 James T. Harmon's Rapture prediction number two. (Oropeza p.89)

September 1996 The Second Coming of Christ, according to Guatemalan preacher Marvin Byers. (Oropeza p.29)

November 1996 The Second Coming of Christ, as foreseen in doomsday author Salty Dok's book Blessed Hope, 1996. (Oropeza p.48)

December 17, 1996 Famed psychic Sheldon Nidle predicted that the world would end on this date, with the arrival of millions of space ships. (Abanes p.341)

1997 Mary Stewart Relfe, claiming that God communicated with her in her dreams, predicted the Second Coming in 1997, right after the battle of Armageddon. "America will burn" and be totally destroyed in 1993 or 1994, she claimed. (Kyle p.120, Oropeza p. 104)

1994 The end of the world, according to the calculations of Super dave the Wonderchemist.

March 23, 1997 Richard Michael Schiller, posting under the name Eliyehowa and a host of other pseudonyms, flooded various Usenet newsgroups with his prediction that an asteroid trailing behind Comet Hale-Bopp would bring destruction to the Earth on this date. As the date drew near, he began back-peddled, claiming the world would be

destroyed 9 months later when the Earth supposedly would pass through the comet's tail, and anyway there was no way the world would survive beyond 1997.

March 26, 1997 Heaven's Gate suicides. The suicides occurred between March 24 and March 26, during a window of time that the cultists had predicted a UFO trailing behind Comet Hale-Bopp would pick up their souls and save them from the imminent Apocalypse. Notice the similarity between their prophecy and Schiller's that we just read? Both claim that an object is following the comet. This rumor started when amateur astronomer Chuck Shramek mistook a star for what he thought was a "Saturn-like object" following the comet. With the help of the Internet and the Art Bell show, the false rumor that a UFO or asteroid was trailing the comet spread like wildfire. (Alnor p. 13, 38)

May 5, 1997 On this date, the solar system was supposed to enter the Photon Belt, a mystical energy field floating through space. Once we enter the Photon Belt, something unusual is supposed to occur. Depending on the source, the world will end, aliens will land, mankind will be enlightened or achieve super powers, electrical equipment will fail...you get the picture. Nothing happened, but that hasn't stopped people from thinking we're still going to enter the Photon Belt soon! (Sources: The Straight Dope, The Photon Belt Page)

October 1997 The Rapture, according to Brother Kenneth Hagin.

October 11, 1997 Internet prophet posted in various Usenet newsgroups that this date would be Judgment Day. His post can be seen on Google. Oct 23, 1997 6000th anniversary of Creation according to the calculations of 17th Century Irish Archbishop James Ussher. This date was a popular candidate date for the end of the world. (Gould p.98)

November 27, 1997 According to the Sacerdotal Knights of National Security, "A space alien captured at a UFO landing site in eastern Missouri cracked under interrogation by the CIA and admitted that an extraterrestrial army will attack Earth on November 27 with the express purpose of stripping our planet of every natural resource they can find a use for -- and making slaves of every man, woman and child in the world!" (Source: Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance)

1998 Larry Wilson (of Wake Up America Seminars) predicted the Second Coming "around 1998". The Tribulation was supposed to start in 1994 or 1995, and during this period an asteroid was to hit the Earth. (Robbins p.220)

Centro, a religious cult in the Philippines, predicted that the end of the world would come in 1998. (Source: Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance)

The year of the Rapture, claimed Donald B. Orsden in his book, *The Holy Bible - The Final Testament: What is the Significance of 666?*. Said he: "Take your super computers, you

scientists, and feed the number 666 into them. The output will be the proof God gives that 1998 is the year Jesus will take the faithful with him...." (McIver #2986)

In *Ominous Portents of the Parousia of Christ*, by Henry R. Hall, he predicts that the world will end in 1998 because, among other reasons, $666 + 666 + 666 = 1998$. The Rapture was to take place in 1991. (McIver #2488)

January 8, 1998 31 members of a splinter group of the Solar Temple cult headed by German psychologist Heide Fittkau-Garthe were arrested by police on the island of Tenerife, Canary Islands, amid fears that the cultists were planning a mass suicide. They were convinced that the world would end at 8:00 pm on this day, but that the cult members' bodies would be picked up by a space ship. (Hanna p.226 and FACTNet)

March 8, 1998 A doomsday cult from Karnataka in southern India claimed that much of the world would be destroyed by earthquakes on this day, and the Indian subcontinent would break off and sink into the ocean. After the destruction, Lord Vishnu would appear on Earth. The leaders of the cult claimed that El Nino and the chaotic weather that accompanied it was a sign of the coming destruction.

March 31, 1998 Hon-Ming Chen, leader of the Taiwanese cult God's Salvation Church, or Chen Tao - "The True Way" - claimed that God would come to Earth in a flying saucer at 10:00 am on this date. Moreover, God would have the same physical appearance as Chen himself. On March 25, God was to appear on Channel 18 on every TV set in the US. (Shermer p.204, McIver #2199)

Chen chose to base his cult in Garland, Texas, because he thought it sounded like "God's Land."

May 31, 1998 Author Marilyn J. Agee used convoluted Biblical calculations to predict the date of two separate Raptures. In her book *The End of the Age*, she boldly proclaimed, "I expect Rapture I on Pentecost [May 31] in 1998 and Rapture II on the Feast of Trumpets [September 13] in 2007." (Agee)

The Rapture, as per Tom Stewart's book *1998: Year of the Apocalypse*. (McIver #3226)

June 6, 1998 Eli Eshoh uses all sorts of numerical games to show that the Rapture was to take place in 1998. On this page he explains away the apparent failure of the June 6 Rapture, claiming that it did indeed occur, but the number of raptees was small enough not to be noticed.

June 7, 1998 Marilyn J. Agee's Rapture prediction number two, which she made on her website after the failure of her original prediction.

June 14, 1998 Marilyn J. Agee's Rapture prediction number three.

June 21, 1998 Marilyn J. Agee's Rapture prediction number four.

July 5, 1998 The Church of the SubGenius designated this day X-Day. Xists from Planet X would arrive in flying saucers and destroy humanity on this day, and only ordained clergy who have paid their dues to the Church would be "ruptured" to safety! When that didn't come to pass, XX-Day (July 5, 1999) was declared the true end of the world.

September 20, 1998 Marilyn J. Agee's Rapture prediction number five.

September 30, 1998 Using Edgar Cayce's prophecies, Kirk Nelson predicted the return of Jesus on this date in his book *The Second Coming 1998*.

October 10, 1998 Monte Kim Miller, leader of the Denver charismatic cult Concerned Christians, was convinced that the Apocalypse would occur on this date, with Denver the first city to be destroyed. The cult members mysteriously disappeared afterwards; but later resurfaced in Israel, where they were deported on suspicion of planning a terrorist attack at the end of 1999. Miller had also claimed he will die in the streets of Jerusalem in December 1999, to be resurrected three days later. (Sources: Watchman Fellowship, Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance)

November 1998 *The Second Coming and the beginning of the Tribulation*, according to Ron Reese. He wrote that he had "overwhelming evidence" that this was true. (McIver #3081)

December 12, 1998 The beginning of the end, according to Linda Newkirk of www.prophecies.org. "USA will be invaded by Russia, China, an Arab Alliance, and even the UN and NATO. It will take place at around 1:45 AM on this date, and 75 million people will die immediately. Huge cities will be nothing more than potholes. Places like San Francisco will be eradicated immediately. Millions more will die of starvation and all kinds of diseases brought about by chemical, nerve and biological warfare."

1999 End of the world according to some Seventh Day Adventist literature. (Skinner p. 105, Mann p.xiii)

The End of the world according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. (Skinner p.102, Mann p.xiii)

The height of the Antichrist's power, when a terrible holocaust will occur, as foreseen by astrologer Jeanne Dixon. In *The Call to Glory*, Dixon wrote, "As the [Russian] armies begin to move on the Middle East about 1999, Russian MIRVs and FOBSs will rain down a nuclear holocaust upon our coastal cities, both east and west." Dixon also claimed the Antichrist was born on Feb. 5, 1962. (Kyle p.153, Dixon p.168)

A pole shift will cause natural disasters and World War III, or so the "Sleeping Prophet" Edgar Cayce claimed. (Skinner p.127)

The end of the world according to Charles Berlitz, as predicted in his book *Doomsday: 1999 A.D.* Any of a number of scenarios could happen, claimed Berlitz, including nuclear devastation, asteroid impact, pole shift or other earth changes. (Kyle p.194)

March 25, 1999 On September 25, 1997, Hal Lindsey predicted on his TV show *International Intelligence Briefing* that Russia would invade Israel within 18 months. Many fundamentalists believe from highly questionable scriptural interpretation that Russia's invasion of Israel is predicted in the Bible and that it will lead to Armageddon. (Abanes p.286)

April 3, 1999 *The Rapture*, according to H.J. Hoekstra.

May 8, 1999 According to an astrological pamphlet circulating in India, the world was to meet its doom by a series of severe natural disasters on this date. This prediction caused many Indians to panic. (Source: BBC News)

May 22, 1999 Marilyn Agee's Rapture prediction number six.

May 30, 1999 Marilyn J. Agee's Rapture prediction number seven. This is "Orthodox Pentecost."

June 20, 1999 Marilyn J. Agee's Rapture prediction number eight. This is "astronomical Pentecost."

Now for just a moment we enter into some Nostradamus stuff.

In the following quatrain, Nostradamus made a grim-sounding prediction (Source: *The Mask of Nostradamus* by James Randi):

*The year 1999, seven months,
From the sky will come a great King of Terror:
To bring back to life the great King of the Mongols,
Before and after Mars to reign by good luck. (Quatrain X.72)*

July 7, 1999 The Earth's axis was to shift full 90 degrees at 7:00am GMT, resulting in a "water baptism" of the world, according to Eileen Lakes.

July 24, 1999 According to a book published in February by the Japanese author Akio Cho, Nostradamus' "Great King of Terror" was supposed to descend from the sky at 5:00pm on this date (some sources say July 26). (Source: Rick Ross)

July 28, 1999 A lunar eclipse would signify the end of the Church Age and the beginning of the Tribulation, according to Gerald Vano. (Source: *The Doomsday List*.)

August 1999 A cult calling itself *Universal and Human Energy*, (also known as SHY (Spirituality, Humanity, Yoga), predicted the end of the world in August. (Source: FACTNet)

August 6, 1999 The Branch Davidians believed that David Koresh would return to Earth on this day, 2300 days (Daniel 8:14) after his death. (Source: Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance)

August 11, 1999 During the week between August 11 and August 18 a series of astronomical events took place causing end of the world'ers to come apart at the seams. These events included the last total solar eclipse of the millennium (Aug 11), the Grand Cross planetary formation (Aug 18), the Perseid meteor shower (Aug 12), the swingby of NASA's plutonium-bearing Cassini space probe (Aug 17-18), and Comet Lee's visit to the inner solar system. Add to this the fact that some of these events are taking place before the end of July (according to the Julian calendar) and you have the makings for apocalyptic chaos. Even fashion designer Paco Rabanne claimed that Mir would crash into Paris on this date. Others said that a monstrous asteroid or comet, previously unseen, would become visible during the eclipse and strike the Earth thereafter.

August 18, 1999 The end of the world, as foreseen by Charles Criswell King (aka The Amazing Criswell) in his 1968 bestseller *Criswell Predicts: From Now to the Year 2000*. As he wrote:

"The world as we know it will cease to exist...on August 18, 1999.... And if you and I meet each other on the street that fateful day...and we chat about what we will do on the morrow, we will open our mouths to speak and no words will come out, for we have no future."

Also on August 18th many alarmists were convinced that the Cassini space probe would crash into the Earth on August 18.

August 19, 1999 The end of the world, according to Prof. Hideo Itakawa. (Mann p.xi)

August 24, 1999 In 1996, Valerie James wrote in The European Magazine, "The configuration of planets which predicted the coming of Christ will once again appear on Aug 24, 1999."

August 24th 2014 The End, according to Jack Van Impe. (Shaw p.131)

According to Escape666.com, Nostradamus's King of Terror was to descend on Earth in September, heralding the beginning of the Tribulation and the Rapture. Escape666 said, regarding Nostradamus's infamous quatrain X.72: "now we know EXACTLY when he meant: SEPTEMBER 1999."

September 3, 1999 Judgment Day was to be on September 2 or 3, according to the notorious Japanese doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo. Only members of Aum were to survive.

September 9, 1999 was touted by some Y2K paranoiacs as a possible day that computers would crash and bring modern civilization to its knees. Apparently, some old programs

used 9999 as a "terminate" flag. Not a single computer crashed due to this problem. (Source: SF Gate)

September 11, 1999 Bonnie Gaunt used the Bible Codes to prove that Rosh Hashanah 5760 (September 11, 1999) is the date of the Rapture.

Using over-imaginative numerology and unorthodox scriptural interpretation to arrive at his conclusions Jason Hommel spammed Usenet with claims that the Rapture was to take place on this date on September 11 1999. In a bit of honesty rare among doomsayers, Hommel actually admitted he was wrong and apologized. Michael Rood also jumped on the Rosh Hashanah bandwagon for the basis of the end. Jan Weaver Gindorf posted an email to the webmaster of The Doomsday List, in which she predicted the Rapture would occur on or around this date.

September 23, 1999 Author Stefan Paulus combines Nostradamus, the Bible and astrology to arrive at September 23 as the date that a doomsday comet will impact the Earth. (Paulus p.57)

October 1999 Apparently, there are still some active members of the Korean Hyoo-go (see October 28, 1992) movement left. These Tami Sect proponents predict the demise of this earth in October 1999. (Source: Korea Times)

Jack Van Impe, predicted the Rapture and the Second Coming for October 1999. (Wojcik p.212)

October 12, 1999 Escape666.com rescheduled the arrival of the King of Terror by this day.

November 1999 Armageddon to culminate with "wholesale obliteration" as foreseen by Richard Kieninger in his 1963 book The Ultimate Frontier. (Abanes p.68)

November 7, 1999 Internet doomsday nut Richard Hoagland claims that an "inside source" called him anonymously and warned of three objects that will strike the earth on this day. The objects were supposedly seen during the August 11 eclipse.

November 29, 1999 According to a vision he received in 1996, Dumitru Duduman claims that the destruction of America (i.e. Babylon) will occur around November 29, 1999.

December 1999 Second Coming: Monte Kim Miller of the cult Concerned Christians claimed he would die in the streets of Jerusalem during a violent confrontation, and be resurrected three days later. No word on whether or not he's still alive. (Source: Watchman Fellowship)

December 21, 1999 Sometime between November 23 and December 21, 1999, the War of Wars was to begin, claimed Nostradamus buff Henry C. Roberts. (Skeptical Inquirer, May/June 2000, p.6)

December 25, 1999 The Second Coming of Christ, according to doomsday prophet Martin Hunter. (Oropeza p.57) Dec 31, 1999

Hon-Ming Chen's cult God's Salvation Church, now relocated to upstate New York, preached that a nuclear holocaust would destroy Europe and Asia sometime between October 1 and December 31, 1999. (Source: the Religious Movements Page)

Joseph Kibweteere's doomsday prediction number one.

2000

There's something about the three zeroes that made 2000 a favorite year among doomsday prophets. But now that mysterious year, anticipated and wondered about for centuries, has slipped into realm of history. There are far too many doomsday predictions to list for 2000, but here are some of the more notable ones:

Hal Lindsey, whose 1988 prediction failed, suggests the end in his recently published book, entitled *Planet Earth - 2000 A.D.* However, he leaves himself a face-saving outlet: "Could I be wrong? Of course. The Rapture may not occur between now and the year 2000." (Lindsey p. 306)

The beginning of Christ's Millennium according to some Mormon literature found on Mormonchurch.com. Using publications like *"Watch and Be Ready: Preparing for the Second Coming of the Lord,"* these LDS believers suggested that, *"The New Jerusalem will descend from the heavens in 2000, landing in Independence, Missouri.* (McIver #3377, Skinner p. 100)

19th century mystic Madame Helena Petrova Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy, foresaw the end of the world in 2000. (Shaw p. 83)

Even Sir Isaac Newton was bitten by the millennium bug too. He predicted that Christ's Millennium would begin in the year 2000 in his book *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John.* (Schwartz p. 96)

Ruth Montgomery predicts Earth's axis will shift and the Antichrist will reveal himself in 2000. (Kyle p. 156, 195)

The establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven, according to Rev. Sun Myung Moon. (Kyle p. 148)

The Second Coming, followed by a New Age, according to famed psychic Edgar Cayce. (Hanna p. 219)

The Second Coming, as forecasted in Ed Dobson's book *The End: Why Jesus Could Return by A.D. 2000.*

The end of the world according to Lester Sumrall in his book, *I Predict 2000*. (Abanes p. 99, 341)

The tribulation is to occur before the year 2000, said Gordon Lindsay, founder of the Christ for the Nations Ministry. (Abanes p. 280)

According to a series of lectures given by Shoko Asahara in 1992, 90% of the world's population would be annihilated by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons by the year 2000. (Thompson p. 262)

One of the earliest predictions for the year 2000 was made by Petrus Olivi in 1297. He wrote that the Antichrist would come to power between 1300 and 1340, and the Last Judgement would take place around 2000. (Weber p. 54)

According to American Indian spiritual leader Sun Bear, the end of the world would come in the year 2000 if the human race didn't shape up. (Abanes p. 307)

18th century fire-and-brimstone preacher Jonathan Edwards concluded that Christ's thousand-year reign would begin in 2000. (Weber p. 171)

The world will be devastated by AIDS in the year 2000, according to Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Afterwards, the world will be rebuilt by a peaceful matriarchal society. (Robbins p. 164)

William Kamm, aka Little Pebble, is the leader of the Australian doomsday cult Order of St. Charbel, predicts that a comet will destroy the Earth before the dawn of the new millennium.

Fundamentalist conspiracy advocate Texe Marrs stated that the last days could "wrap up by the year 2000." (Abanes p. 311)

Members of the Stella Maris Gnostic Church, a Colombian doomsday cult, went into Colombia's Sierra Nevada Mountains over the weekend of July 3-4, 1999, weekend to be picked up by a UFO that would save them from the end of the world, which is to take place at the turn of the millennium. The cult members were reported to have disappeared, but later it was revealed that the disappearance was a hoax. (Source: BBC News).

A radical apocalyptic sect emerged in early 18th century France: the Convulsionaries. One of the members, Jacques-Joseph Duguet, anticipated the Parousia in 2000. (Kyle p. 192)

Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), President of Yale University, foresaw the Millennium starting by 2000. (Kyle p. 81)

Martin Luther looked at 2000 as a possible end-time date, before finally settling on 1600. (Kyle p. 192)

Sukyo Mahikari, a Japanese cult, preached that the world might be destroyed in a "baptism of fire" by 2000.

A Vietnamese cult headed by "Ca Van Lieng" predicted an apocalyptic flood for 2000. But doomsday came much earlier for the cult members: he and his followers committed mass suicide in October 1993. (Source: Cult Observer archives)

Before the end of 1999, Hon-Ming Chen of the 30-member cult Chen Tao began backpedalling on his prediction of a nuclear holocaust and UFO rescue by December 31. Now Doomsday has been rescheduled to sometime "in the next year," according to cult spokesman Richard Liu. (St. Cloud Times, Dec. 26, 1999)

Sometime in 2000 ("either a few days or a few months away," according to this Sep. 12, 2000 CNN article) the End of Days will take place, say members of a Mormon-based cult near the Utah-Arizona border. Hundreds of members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints pulled their kids out of school in preparation for the Big Day.

January 1st 2000 - the following are just some of the predictions leveled at this particular day in history:

The Christian apocalyptic cult House of Prayer, headed by one Brother David, expected Christ to descend onto the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem on this day. The Israeli government kicked them out of the country in a preemptive strike against potentially violent doomsday nutcases who may attempt to catalyze the Apocalypse through terrorist acts such as blowing up the Dome of the Rock.

Bobby Bible, a 60-year-old fundamentalist, believed that Jesus would descend from Heaven at the stroke of midnight in Jerusalem and rapture his church.

A Philippine cult called Tunnels of Salvation taught that the world would end on January 1st. The cult's guru, Cerferino Quinte, claimed that the world would be destroyed in an "all consuming rain of fire" on January 1. In order to survive the world's destruction, the cult members built an elaborate series of tunnels where he had stockpiled a year's worth of supplies for 700 people. CESNUR)

UK native Ann Willem spent the New Year in Israel, expecting to be raptured by Jesus on New Year's Day. "It didn't happen the way it was supposed to," she said of the failure of the Rapture to take place. (USA Today, p. 5A, 1/3/00)

Jerry Falwell foresaw God pouring out his judgment on the world on New Year's Day. According to Falwell, God "may be preparing to confound our language, to jam our communications, scatter our efforts, and judge us for our sin and rebellion against his

lordship. We are hearing from many sources that January 1, 2000, will be a fateful day in the history of the world." (Christianity Today, Jan. 11, 1999)

Timothy LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, authors of the bestselling Left Behind series of apocalyptic fiction, expected the Y2K bug to trigger global economic chaos, which the Antichrist would use to rise to power. As the big day approached, they, like other doomsayers, backpedaled. (Source: Washington Post, Dec. 27, 1999)

January 1st 2000 came and went almost unnoticed.

January 16, 2000 Religious scholar Dr. Marion Derlette claimed the world was to end on January 16, according to an article in Weekly World News. This event was to occur after a series of natural and manmade catastrophes starting in 1997, and will be followed by an era of paradise on Earth. (Abanes p. 43)

February 11, 2000 On his broadcast on the morning of February 7, 2000, televangelist Kenneth Copeland claimed that a group of scientists and scholars (he gave no specifics) studied the Bible in great detail and determined that Feb 11 would be the last day of the 6000th year since Creation, a date when the Apocalypse would presumably happen. Copeland did not imply he believed this to be accurate, though, but he went on to say that the Rapture will come soon.

March 2000 The Rapture is to take place in March 2000, 3 1/2 years after Christ's Second Coming, according to Marvin Byers. (Oropeza p. 29)

On March 17, 2000, over 600 members of a Ugandan cult calling itself, "the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God" sealed themselves into a church and were burned to death. It remains to be seen whether it was a mass suicide, or a murder by their leader. (Source: CESNUR)

April 4, 2000 The Rapture will occur by this date, said Ola Ilori, and she said that immediately following the Rapture there would be an "earth shift" which would crack the earth's crust "like an egg shell."

April 5, 2000 Doomsday, according to Michael Rood, who claimed that this day would start out with "bloodshed, plagues, and all manner of pestilence." Rood had said the same about September 11, 1999.

April 6, 2000 The Second Coming of Christ according to James Harmston of the Mormon sect True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of The Last Days . (McIver #2496)

April 2000 The Whites, a family of ascetic doomsday cultists living near Jerusalem, expected the End to take place in March or April after the Ark of the Covenant was to reappear in a cave in the Old City in Jerusalem. They claimed that there was a mistake in the chronology of the Hebrew calendar and that the year 6001 will begin this Spring.

May 5, 2000 According to archaeologist Richard W. Noone in his book, *Ice: The Ultimate Disaster*, a buildup of excess ice in Antarctica is causing the earth to become precariously unbalanced? All that's needed to upset this supposed imbalance and cause the obligatory pole shift -- which would cause billions of tons of ice to go cascading across the continents -- was a planetary alignment that took place on this date!

The Nuwaubians (also known as the Holy Tabernacle Ministries or Ancient Mystical Order of Melchizedek) claimed that the planetary lineup would cause a "star holocaust," pulling the planets toward the sun. (Alnor p. 121)

May 9, 2000 Toshio Hiji, having analyzed the quatrains of Nostradamus, announced that the Giant Deluge of Noah would inundate the Earth on May 9, 2000, and "all humans will be perished." Prior to this, a third of the world's population was to be destroyed during an alien attack on October 3, 1999.

May 17, 2000 "Dr." Rebecca S. Harrison claimed that Jesus would reappear on "EArth" (her capitalization) on May 17, to be followed by Mighty Battle in June 2003. Lakhota prophetess White Buffalo Calf Woman predicted that Jesus would return in a UFO on this day.

June 2000 A Ugandan cult calling itself the World Message Last Warning Church claims the End will come in June. Previously they had claimed the world would end in 1999. (Source: ABC News)

June 1, 2000 Jim Bramlett shows on his website how he came to this date as a possible day for the Rapture.

June 10, 2000 Marilyn Agee's Rapture prediction number nine.

July 5, 2000 XXX-day, brought to you by the mocking Church of the SubGenius, humorously said "This time there WILL be saucers"!

August 20, 2000 Ephraim claimed the 7-month Battle of Armageddon would begin on this day. His prediction for the Rapture (March 20-22, 2000) also failed.

Marilyn Agee's Rapture prediction number ten (based on scripture this time).

September 2000 Jerry Grenough foresaw the end of the present age, and perhaps the Rapture, in September of 2000, using various passages from the Bible to divine this date.

September 17, 2000 Many pyramidologists, basing their calculations on measurements of the Great Pyramid of Giza, claim that the Second Coming will occur on this date. (Abanes p. 71)

Moira Timms, author of *Beyond Prophecies and Predictions*, claims that the Great Pyramid's supposed 6000-year "prophetic timeline," and thus the world, will end on this day.

September 19, 2000 Somewhere between September 16 and 19, Phil Stone expects something he had dubbed the "Coastlands Disaster" to occur. He derived his chronology from, you guessed it, the Bible.

September 21, 2000 Dan Millar boldly proclaimed that this date "is the true date for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

September 29, 2000 According to the Jewish-based cult "Love the Jew," whose website has disappeared without a trace, claimed the world would end on Rosh Hashanah, 2000. According to the cult, "America will be destroyed in one hour after the Rapture by an all out nuclear attack by Russia."

October 2000 Elizabeth Joyce predicted nuclear war in October 2000 as a result of conflict in the Middle East. Lizzy has a litany of other failed prophecies, including one of the sun splitting in two.

October 9, 2000 Christian prophet Grant R. Jeffrey suggested this date as the "probable termination point for the 'last days.'" (Abanes p. 341, McIver #2608)

October 14, 2000 According to the House of Yahweh, the seven-year Tribulation began on September 13, 1993, when Yitzhak Rabin shook hands with Yasser Arafat at the White House. This means the end of the world is due on October 14, 2000. (Source: religioustolerance.org)

November 17, 2000 The famous handshake between Arafat and Rabin on Sep 13, 1993 started the seven-year peace process, claims David Zavitz, and Armageddon will take place seven years later. David shows on this page why he thinks the Last Day will be on November 17, 2000.

December 31, 2000 Joseph Kibweteere's doomsday prediction number two.

2001 A man calling himself The Last Adam says, "The hour is coming this year, 2001. This earth will be destroyed these year, by God. This is an election between the good and evil."

Jan 20, 2001 According to a guy calling himself "BANDS" the Bible says that the US would be totally destroyed before the end of Clinton's term (January 20, 2001). He used numerous Bible verses to "prove" his thesis.

March 2001 Dale Sumnerèru claimed in his book, *The Greatest Deception: An Impending Alien Invasion* claimed that March 22, 1997 was the beginning of the Tribulation, and the Second Coming will take place between July 2000 and March 2001. (McIver #3239)

April 16, 2001 Bill Singleton claimed that the Rapture would take place during Easter weekend, 2001.

May 5, 2001 Gabriel of Sedona, guru of the New Age doomsday cult Aquarian Concepts Community, located in Sedona, Arizona, foresees the destruction of humanity between May 5, 2000 and May 5, 2001. Only people faithful to the cult will be saved from this destruction by UFOs.

May 28, 2001 The indefatigable Marilyn Agee, whose Rapture predictions have failed time and time again, pinpointed the exact date of the beginning of the Tribulation. She insisted that the Rapture will happen some time before May 28, 2001.

July 2001 Jamaican cult leader Brother Solomon and his Seventh-day Adventist followers staked out some space on the Mount of Olives in anticipation of witnessing the Second Coming, which he is convinced will occur sometime between mid-April 2000 and July 2001.

September 11th, 2001 one of the most tragic and significant days in US history. The World Trade Center was destroyed and the Pentagon attacked by madmen, causing thousands of deaths, billions of dollars in damage and untold suffering. If there's any day that the doomsayers should have foreseen, it's this day. However, nobody was able to predict this event or pinpoint this day. However, there are people who are retroactively looking back to 9/11 and incorporating it into their current predictions.

Earth changes maven Gordon-Michael Scallion predicted major earth changes taking place between 1998 and 2001, culminating in a pole shift. (Heard p. 26-27)

Nation of Islam numerologist Tynetta Muhammad figured that 2001 would be the year of the End. (Weber p. 213)

2002 The end of the world, according to Church Universal and Triumphant leader Elizabeth Clare Prophet, following a 12-year period of devastation and nuclear war. (Kyle p. 156)

April 14, 2002 Mike Keller claims that the "doomsgate" will open a half second before midnight (Israel time) on this day, followed immediately by the return of Jesus, as well as a nuclear war within 45 days.

May 19, 2002 A man named Barry Muraff said the probability is extremely high that Christ is returning on Pentecost...on May 19th, 2002.

July 19, 2002 Marilyn Agee has not yet tired of setting dates for the Rapture. Now the Rapture is scheduled to take place on July 19.

April 22, 2003 The prophet foresees the Rapture occurring between October 10, 1999 and April 22, 2003, more likely closer to the later date than the earlier date.

May 5, 2003 A UFO will pick up true believers on this date, according to the Nuwaubians, a Georgia cult headed by Dr. Malachi Z. York, who claims to be the incarnation of God and a native of the planet Rizq. (Time Magazine, July 12, 1999)

May 13, 2003 Nancy Lieder (of Zeta Talk) believes that the "end time" will take place on this day with the approach of a giant planet known as the "12th Planet". This planet supposedly orbits the sun once every 3600 years. The planet will cause...you guessed it! A pole shift. (Troubled Times)

May 15, 2003 A Japanese cult called Pana Wave, whose members dress in white, claimed that a mysterious 10th Planet would pass by Earth, causing its axis to tip and engendering devastating earthquakes. (Source: WWRN)

November 29, 2003 The human race all but wiped out by nuclear war between October 30 and November 29, 2003, according to Aum Shinrikyo. (Alnor p. 98) 2003

The end of the Kali Yuga and the arrival of Krishna as the Kalki Avatar according to Sree Veera Brahmendra Swami.

A number of Internet prophets are predicting that a giant planet called Planet X or the "Twelfth Planet" will pass by Earth in 2003 and cause anything from pole shifts to altered orbits or what have you. In any event, the results are supposed to be catastrophic and apocalyptic.

Taoist prophet Ping Wu says 2004 will see major world events beginning in August 1999 will lead to full-scale war in the year 2000, followed by a rebirth from the ashes in 2004.

April 24, 2005 Ted Porter claims that the Second Advent will take place April 23 or 24, 2005. He also said that the Rapture would occur at 6:13 pm (Jerusalem time) on April 23, 2002.

October 4, 2005 The end of the world, according to John Zachary in his 1994 book Mysterious Numbers of the Sealed Revelation. The Tribulation was to begin on August 28, 1998. (McIver #3477)

October 15, 2005 In an earlier posting, Ted Porter calculated that the Second Advent will happen on this date.

October 17, 2004 Clay Cantrell puts the dimensions of Noah's Ark through some contorted mathematics to arrive at this day as the date of the Rapture.

Oct 18, 2005 The beginning of Christ's Millennium, according to Tom Stewart in his book 1998: Year of the Apocalypse. The Rapture was to take place on May 31, 1998, and the Parousia on October 13, 2005. (McIver #3226)

An atomic holocaust started by Syria is to take place between the years 2000 and 2006, according to Michael Drosnin's book *The Bible Codes* (O'Shea p. 178). This is an excerpt from Drosnin's:

"I checked 'World War' and 'atomic holocaust' against all three ways to write each Hebrew year for the next 120 years. Out of 360 possible matches for each of the two expressions, only two years matched both - 5760 and 5766, in the modern calendar the years 2000 and 2006. Rips later checked the statistics for the matches of 'World War' and 'atomic holocaust' with those two years and agreed that the results were 'exceptional.'"

The British cult The Family believes the end will come in 2006.

February 12, 2006 According to an unnamed Internet prophet, this will be the date of the height of the Antichrist's power. The Antichrist is none other than Prince William of England!

2007 The unnamed author of www.oocities.com/secondcoming1 suggests 2007 as the year of the Second Coming and the end of the world. He (she?) marks the Sharm Memorandum signed by Israel and the Palestinians on September 5, 1999. Everett Vasek claims that Jesus might return between 2000 and 2007.

April 29, 2007 In his 1990 book *The New Millennium*, Pat Robertson suggests this date as the day of Earth's destruction. (Abanes p. 138)

August 2007 Thomas Chase uses an incredible mishmash of Bible prophecy, numerology, Y2K, Bible codes, astrology, Cassini paranoia, Antichrist speculation, news events, New Age mysticism, the shapes of countries, Hale-Bopp nuttiness and more to show that Armageddon will happen around the year 2007, perhaps in August of that year.

September 13, 2007 The second Rapture, according to Marilyn J. Agee. An asteroid is also supposed to hit the Earth on this day, she claims. (Oropeza p. 89)

March 21, 2008 On this page, the Lord's Witnesses use convoluted numerology to demonstrate that "the end of the world is 2008 March 21st." They also claim that the United Nations will take over the world between March 26 and April 24, 2001, and afterward nobody will be able to buy or sell without the Mark of the Beast!

April 6, 2008 The beginning of Christ's millennial reign, according to Philip B. Brown.

2009 According to Earth changes prophetess Lori Adaile Toye (of the "I AM America Foundation,") a series of Earth changes beginning in 1992 and ending in 2009 will cause much of the world to be submerged, and only 1/3 of America's population will survive.

2010 The final year according to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. (Shaw p. 223)

2011 Another possible date for Earth's entry into the Photon Belt. (See the May 5, 1997 entry)

May 11, 2011 A Taiwanese prophet calling himself "Professor Wang" predicted that Taiwan would be destroyed in a 14.0 earthquake, triggering a tsunami that would kill millions.

May 21, 2011 Harold Camping, whose rapture predictions failed in 1994 and 1995, decided to jump back in to the date-setting game, predicting this as the day of the Rapture. His prediction attracted major publicity. "The Bible Guarantees It", the billboards proclaimed, and thousands of people around the world actually fell for it.

May 29, 2011 Marilyn Agee has been at it consistently throughout the last couple of decades. After countless failed predictions over the years, she has set yet another date for the Rapture.

October 21, 2011 After the embarrassing non-rapture of May 21, Harold Camping called the non-event an "invisible Judgement Day" and reset the Rapture to October 21.

December 31, 2011 In an interesting parallel to the Harmonic Convergence concept, Solara Antara Amaa-ra, leader of the "11:11 Doorway" movement, claims that there's a "doorway of opportunity" lasting from January 11, 1992 to December 31, 2011 in which humanity is given the final chance to rid itself of evil and attain a higher level of consciousness, or doom will strike. (Wojcik p. 206)

2012 James T. Harmon's Rapture prediction number three. (Oropeza p. 89)

December 21, 2012 Terence McKenna combines Mayan chronology with a New Age pseudoscience called Novelty Theory to conclude that the collision of an asteroid or some "trans-dimensional object" with the Earth, or alien contact, or a solar explosion, or the transformation of the Milky Way into a quasar, or some other "ultranovel" event will occur on this day.

December 23, 2012 The end point of the ancient Mayan calendar. Some interpret it to signify the end of the world. (Abanes p. 342)

And lets' try and wrap this all up by citing some future predictions:

Early 21st Century Legend has it that, in 1143, St. Malachy prophesied that there would only be 112 more popes left before the end of the world. Pope Benedict is the 111th, which means that the world will end in the early 21st century. According to Malachy, the last pope will be named Peter of Rome. Time will tell. (Skinner p.74-75)

2017 The "Prophet Gabriel" supposedly told the Sword of God Brotherhood that the "dying time" will come in 2017, and only members of the cult will survive. Everyone else will "perish in hellfire."

September 28, 2020 George Madray predicts a Yom Kippur Parousia in 2020. (McIver #2854)

2022 James T. Harmon's Rapture prediction #4. (Oropeza p.89)

2023 Ian Gurney predicts in his book *The Cassandra Prophecy - Armageddon Approaches* that the "final date, Judgement Day, the end of mankind's time on this planet, is less than twenty two years away" from 2001, which means that the world is set to end by 2023 at the very latest.

2025 In this post, Georgann Chenault, a frequent poster on Usenet, wrote "I think the rapture of the church will be before 2025."

November 13, 2026 According to an article published in *Science* magazine in 1960, this was the date that the world's population would reach infinity, a result of the so-called "doomsday equation." (Source: Jacksonville.com)

2033 Believed by many to be the 2000th anniversary of the Crucifixion, this is a date just begging to be targeted by doomsayers whose prophecies for 2000 and 2001 will have failed.

2035 The Raëlians are working hard to establish an embassy in Jerusalem in anticipation of the 2035 arrival of aliens called "elohim", who will usher in a New Age. (Robbins p. 164)

2037 In her book, *The Call to Glory*, psychic Jeane Dixon wrote, "The years 2020-2037, approximately, hail the true Second Coming of Christ." The Battle of Armageddon is to take place in 2020. (Dixon p.170, 172)

2040 Pyramidologist Max Toth predicts the physical reincarnation of Jesus Christ occurring in 2040. Like other pyramidologists, he used the dimensions of the Great Pyramid's passageways to predict future events. (Weber p.195)

Futurist John Smart of Acceleration Watch (formerly Singularity Watch) estimates that a technological singularity will take place around the year 2040, when technological advancement reaches asymptotic levels. After this apocalyptic event, a new era of balance and compassion will begin.

This book is going to publication in the month of September 2015. All around us are the most adamant cries pointing to September of this year for the end of the world - or at least the beginning of the end of the world. Will we ever learn?

Chapter Ten – Judgement is at Hand

So we have associated the “last days,” and “the end of the world” (or age) with the Second Coming of Jesus. This is a correct association – it’s what scripture itself does. In other words when we are able to identify the last days spoken of in scripture, and when we are able to identify the end of the age,” spoken of in scripture (which we did last week) we will discover the Second Coming of Jesus Christ – and vice versa.

I think we have more than proved that the two events (end of time and end of the age) occurred in the first century at 70 AD. Because of Jesus words He HAD to have returned at that time or His words were false and He was wrong. I don’t think so. He came as promised and did exactly as He said He would. This I trust. Anyone who does not believe what He promised in scripture has occurred has to answer the content of Matthew 24 especially verse 34.

But there are a few other things that we naturally associate with the return of Jesus – Judgment is one of them. This too is a correct association because scripture associates His second coming with Judgment. So flipping it around, if we can say when scripture says judgment will occur we can then say when Jesus Second Coming would be. Get it? Of course most churches today teach that the Second Coming is out in our future so this means that they also are teaching that judgment is out there in the same place – the future.

At that time (as it is taught) all of humanity will be judged – the good and the evil.

Now, I realize that there are some twists out there in Christianity about this judgment – that some say (because this is what I used to say) that Christians will not be judged with everyone else (since our judgment came at the cross) but I am 1), not so sure this is true and 2), know a lot of Christians who reject this and believe there is only one judgment waiting us all – so I am going to teach as if this was the standard – as it is what I believe the Bible teaches. Apparently this judgment will not occur from God’s mind but will be according to what is written about each person in the books.

Apparently, not just those who are living names will be recorded in the books, but everyone who has ever lived – past, present, and future – will be gathered and will wait for their case to be found, read, and judgment passed down – eternal life or an eternal visit to the house of pain (otherwise known as the Lake of Fire). This is standard fare for most Christian churches (again, the exception are those who say Christian go directly to heaven and pass judgment at death but I’m unclear where they are able to get such a teaching). But the story doesn’t end here.

Christianity also generally teaches that at each one of our individual deaths the “immortal soul” (not a biblical term) of believers goes to heaven and the soul of unbelievers go to hell. But then, everyone who has ever died, once Jesus actually comes

back to earth, they will have their long decayed natural bodies rise from the grave, they will then enter these resurrected bodies again, and then that massive meeting for judgment begins.

Ever thought how nonsensical that all is? Have you fumbled around for decades like me sort of mumbling when people want to know the specifics of these murky events? Think about this – just for a minute, okay? A man one thousand four hundred years ago dies as a sold out believer in Christ. Got that? Pastors would tell you he went directly to heaven, right? So he goes to heaven, and has been waiting there for 1400 years only to have to leave heaven once Jesus returns to earth again, join His body that comes back up out of the dirt, only to stand before God and be judged?

Was the man sent to heaven in error in the first place 1400 years ago? I mean, that is where we say he has been this whole time, right? And then after the judgment of everyone is it possible that it will be discovered that he has spent the past 1400 in heaven wrongly because when he is judged out of the books he is found to deserve the Lake of Fire? The chronology makes no sense whatsoever, folks. It's all implausible. So what do we do with the judgment we have all been waiting for?

First of all, I would suggest that when we read of judgment and the judgment in scripture it clearly means Jesus passed judgment on Jerusalem in 70 AD. To not see judgment as having taken place at that time makes all the passages that speak of judgment unintelligible. But when we see them in their correct context, that Jesus and the Apostles were warning and speaking of a judgment to fall on Israel at Jerusalem the light will begin to break over our minds.

And since judgment is always associated with “the last days,” and “the end of the World or age” in scripture and we can see that those are past, we can also see that judgment is passed. History. So let's discuss this for a minute.

Jesus – as the Messiah to the House of Israel to whom He came in His earthly ministry – came both in the role as Savior and as Judge. These roles of His are reiterated over and over again toward the House of Israel – Savior (Messiah) and Judge. To some of the House of Israel He was Savior but to others He was Judge. We know the utter frustration God had with the House of Israel all through the Old Testament. There was continued disobedience, following after other gods, and forsaking Him. Jesus tells parables about this; about how God sent prophets into the vineyard whom they ignored, and abused and even killed. Jesus then says, *“then last of all God sent His Son.”*

Hundreds of years before Christ God sent most of His people (ten tribes) into Assyrian bondage from where they never returned as a people. Right? Then the remainder called Judah and Benjamin lived in all sorts of captivity and foreign rule. When the promised Messiah came to them they were under Roman rule. But there in Judea God kept Judah together until their Messiah, born of that tribe, came. In other words,

“Last of all He sent His Son.”

And what did they do to Him? They rejected and killed Him – and God’s patience was exhausted – judgment was now about to come upon them. I mean what else was God going to do, send MORE prophets (like the LDS suggest) or send Himself again? The arrival and rejection and death of His only begotten was the end of the line of a long history of God dealing with a recalcitrant people.

Judgment was coming and it was judgment on them – they had the law, they had the promises, they had the prophets, they had the actual Messiah, they had apostles and they had forty years since the death of the Messiah to receive Him and then God’s outreach was exhausted. Judgment would fall His Son returned – and the only remaining portion of the House of Israel – Judah, gathered there in Judea, was wiped out – their temple, their priesthood, their genealogies, their city of David, all of it – destroyed and if not destroyed – scattered. The destruction of Judah in Judea by the Romans was the coming judgment described in the Old and New Testaments. How can I prove this? By a reasonable, non-manipulated reading of the Bible.

The last book of the Old Testament is Malachi. He was a prophet of doom. 400 years before the birth of Christ God (through Malachi) was accusing His people of great evil and rebellion.

What was their response to Gods accusations through Malachi? They asked:

“Wherein have we wearied God?” and “When did we rob Him?”

So Malachi ends his short book with a prophesy - and He says:

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” (Malachi 4:1)

I would suggest that when God says, “that it shall leave them neither root nor branch,” speaks to the utter destruction of all the genealogies that burned up in the temple destruction – and the nation was left without ANY genealogical tree from which to prove heritage. But as we also know, God is merciful and always reaching, and in the very next verse He says (to those who are faithful):

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.” (Malachi 4:2)

This “Sun of Righteousness” speaks to the Son of God coming and healing and saving those who received Him. Now stay with me. In verse four of Malachi God adds a message to the faithful who, four hundred years later would be looking for the Messiah, and so He says to them (as a means to keep them prepared to receive the promised Messiah):

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” (Malachi 4:4)

And then He says in verse five:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:”

What is this *“great and dreadful day of the Lord?”* It’s the same day as when the Lord would *“leave the house of Israel without root or branch.”* This is an horrible way to end the Old Testament, with God – fed up with the sins and rebellious hearts of His people – warning them that the end of the line is coming.

Then we have 400 years between Malachi and the opening of the Book of Matthew.

And what does Matthew open up with in one his first narratives? The story of a man named John the Baptist. And what does the Baptist come preaching? The same message that Malachi left off with, saying:

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

(in the Greek, *“the wrath that is about to come”*)

John appealed to more of Malachi’s words, and said in Matthew 3:10:

*“And now also the **axe** is laid unto **the root** of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into **the fire**.”*

And then in verse 12:

*“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he **will burn up** the chaff with **unquenchable fire**.”*

All the emphasized words included in Malachi’s warning.

Now, Malachi said that merciful God would send Elijah the prophet to them before the dreadful day of the Lord. Did He do this or are we still waiting on Elijah to return?

In Matthew 11:12-15 Jesus said these revealing, prophecy fulfilling words of Malachi:

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias (that’s the Greek way to say, Elijah), which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

And John the Baptist, the promised Elijah, came, preaching *“the wrath to (shortly) come,”* asking how the religious rulers would escape becoming burned stubble, and chaff. These words are the very same words Jesus used in His parable of the wheat and the tares – *“fire, stubble, chaff.”*

Peter describes the event as fervent heat and melting elements – all verses depicting the judgment day approaching them which was the utter desolation of Judah in the land of Judea.

Now, we can take all of this and see it reasonably and applicable to the context and people to whom it was given OR we can say utterly unreasonable things like:

“We’ll, John the Baptist was the promised Elijah (cannot be disputed by the Bible) but we are still waiting for judgment to come – knowing that the best straight-forward application of all these facts deal with the destruction of Jerusalem. What kind of sign is it that Malachi gave saying “that God would send Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord” if Elijah came 2000 years ago but we are still waiting for the great and terrible day of the Lord?

The Prophet Joel also prophesied of the great and terrible day of the Lord. This is what the Lord said through him:

“I will pour my spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28) then in verse 31 adds, “Before the great and terrible day of the Lord.”

Of course, Peter, on the day of Pentecost used the text of Joel and said in Acts 2:16:

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. So the outpouring of His spirit upon all flesh (as prophesied by Joel) was fulfilled there and then, (and once again this was before, “the great and terrible “day” of the Lord (which was the day Jesus described in Matthew 24.

Again, God promised that before the great and dreadful day He would send Elijah. And Elijah came and within 40 years fell the Great and Terrible day of the Lord.

And Again, God promised through Joel to pour His spirit out on all flesh – which He did at Pentecost (according to Peter) before the great and terrible day of the Lord, which again, came within that generation.

And again – if these were the signs given by God to show the people that judgement was coming what good were they if we are still waiting on the judgment? But if we read them in context, and see how vitally important they were as signs to those Jews who received Christ then, we can see what tremendous signs they were at that time before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Now, let me revisit a word from the Greek – mello. As stated, the word does not mean a long way off – and the use of it would and could never pertain to our day and age.

Unfortunately the King James Translators were not consistent in their translation of the word and when we read it in this version we are led to believe that things are not about to happen. But the Word Mello means “about to happen,” or “shortly will happen.”

For example:

In Luke 7:2 where it says: *“And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.”* **“Ready to” is mello.**

John 4:47 *When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.”*
“At the point of” is mello

Where it says in Acts 18:14 *that Paul was about to open his mouth,* “about to” is - **mello.**

Acts 20:3 “and he was “about to” sail . . .” **mello.**

Acts 20:7 “ready to” depart” - **mello.**

And “when the seven days were “almost” ended” Acts 21:27 . . . **mello.**

Got all that. So how about some passages where writers are speaking of coming judgment? The word in all of these examples is mello but because the King James was translated many years later by people who believed that judgment was still to come, the quickness of the Greek mello was discarded and exchanged for English words that conveyed a longer period or time. For example:

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (Mello would say “from the APPROACHING vengeance,” not “the wrath to come.”)

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Mello would say, “he has appointed a day in which He is about to judge the inhabitants”).

*Acts 23:3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, (Mello would say, God is “about to” smite you) *thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?**

Acts 24:25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come (Mello – about to come), Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

2nd Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge (Mello – who is “about to” judge) the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Hebrews 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall (MELLO - which is "about to") devour the adversaries.

All of these verses put Judgment in the proper real time frame of the original language of the Bible. And all of them undermine the stance that judgment is still headed our way but all of them read contrary to the meaning of the word mello.

Let me step away from the mello argument and just give you some plain old straight up English? Ready? James said this plainly to believers alive in His day:

James 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

*8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: **for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.**
9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, **the judge standeth before the door.**"*

Can we get more emphatic than this?
Is the judge still drawing nigh? 2000 years later?

Listen to what Peter said in 1st Peter chapter four:

First, speaking of he said in verse 5:

*1st Peter 4:5 Who shall give account to him **that is ready to judge** the quick and the dead.*

And then in verse 7 adds:

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

Did you hear this? The words of Peter the apostle to those living in HIS DAY and HIS AGE?

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

How do Christians take these words and apply them to our day in a physical sense? It's sheer non-sense. But Peter is not done! He adds in verse 17:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

And here we have ONLY been talking about what scripture means when it speaks of judgment.

Now, before we open up the phone lines, we know that all of these verses speak to Israel, their time, the end of the age (or world) and their Judge coming back to render to every one either blessing or curse. How do these passages apply to us today?

The exact same ways as they applied to the recipients of the Words then - but only spiritually to us in this age and day. So where the House of Israel was promised a great and terrible day of the Lord physically, every single individual will too will have their own great and/or terrible day of the Lord - experienced spiritually - meaning when we die.

Like the Jews in Judea we too will be judged at that time - those faithful will be blessed by being taken up and those unfaithful will be cursed by going to hell.

At this time our world will come to an end just as their age did.

The time is "away's at hand" for all of us because none of know the day nor the hour of when we will be caught up to meet Him.

I hope all of this is becoming clear. Why do I hope for this? First, because it's true. But secondly to know the truth sets us free. And I hope to free anyone who is in bondage to the traditions of man - no matter where they come from.

Chapter Eleven - Nero, the Millennium, and the 144,000

"The greatest enemy of any one of our truths may be the rest of our truths."

William James

"The truth was obscure, too plain and too pure. To live it you had to explode."

Bob Dylan

In response to all we have said some continue to come forth claiming that Revelation was written after 70 AD and therefore we know that the Preterist position is a fail. An emailer named Adnan wrote me and offered up this reason why Revelation had to have been written before 70 AD, saying:

In Revelation 13:18 John writes: *"This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six."*

"Many Jewish, Christian, and secular scholars and mathematicians have come to interpret the number 666 as describing Emperor Nero. In other words, John was warning the readers of the evils that Nero will bring upon the early Jewish-Christians. John couldn't use Nero's name in his letter, so he used the Jewish numerology system to spell out Nero's imperial name. The Jews reading it would easily be able to "calculate" (as John puts it) the number 666 and transcribe it as being Caesar Nero. It was the perfect way to warn the Jews about Nero, without actually having to use Nero's name; which is important, being that all of John's activity was being monitored by the Romans. And where the Romans could never have deciphered the coded language John used to describe Nero, the Jews could. So what does this have to do with the dating of Revelation? Historians have pretty accurately dated Nero's reign being from 13 October 54 – 9 June 68 A.D. This means that Revelations could NOT have been written later than 68 A.D.! John was warning early Jewish Christians about the evils to come by Nero's hands; therefore to believe that Revelations was written in 90 A.D., negates the warning and the numerology written by John to warn the early Christians of him. I think this is the most substantial proof that hints at when revelations was written." I think this was such a great insight I decided to include it in this book.

So, again, *"when does the Bible say Jesus will return?"*

Let's continue by trying to answer a few questions that automatically pop out of people's mouths the moment they hear the suggestion that Jesus returned in 70AD. These questions are almost always prefaced with the word *THEN* . . .

"Then . . . why . . . does the Bible say this or that?"

"Then . . . what does the Bible mean when it says . . .?"

"Then . . . how do you explain" (this and that) . .

"Then . . . when was this fulfilled?"

You get the picture.

Two of the biggest knee-jerk responses that come flying have to do with questions about "the Millennium" and the references to the 144,000 in the Book of Revelation. Let's try and address these two specific points. Millions of Christians around the world assume that the doctrine of the Millennium has tremendous support in scripture and is almost a central tenet to the faith.

Churches like Calvary Chapel have what they call, "Distinctives" that state that acceptance of specific Millennial teachings must exist before a church can call itself a Calvary Chapel and have claim to their proprietary dove. Many denominations present the "dispensational system" as the biblical teaching and nothing else is deemed acceptable. Dispensationalism says that Jesus' return would be in two phases - the first phase would be the Rapture of the church, and the second phase of the Second Coming would be when Christ would return to earth to establish His earthly Kingdom for a thousand years (or the Millennium).

Dozens of Bible teachers, "prophecy book authors" and end-time devotees have speculated on what the Millennium would be like. I remember being in the doctor's office as a kid and looking at these colorful magazines that showed really clean-cut people sitting with lions and tigers and lambs in peaceful utopias (I realize now those magazines were printed by the Jehovah's Witnesses).

The idea of a thousand years of a peaceful reign of Christ on earth is certainly inviting but when we examine the doctrine of the Millennium the first thing we notice is that the term, like Trinity, does not appear in Scripture. I know, I know, there are other words we use to capture scriptural concepts (like omnipotent) that aren't in scripture so in and of itself this is no reason to question the term millennium. Using the example of omnipotence we do find passages that speak of God as, "the first and the last, the Almighty, the Lord of Hosts, and we summarize these general terms outside of the biblical text with words that best capture them all - like Omnipotent. So what happens when we look at the term, "the Millennium" to find support? Are you ready?

The entire case for this period - being a literal 1,000 years - is built upon one 7-verse section in the Book of Revelation.

This is what this seven-verse segment says:

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, **and bound him a thousand years,***

3 *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, **till the thousand years should be fulfilled:** and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; **and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.***

5 *But the rest of the dead lived not again until **the thousand years** were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, **and shall reign with him a thousand years.***

7 *And when **the thousand years** are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,*

Six references to this thousand years, in the apocalyptic book called Revelation, and it is a standard doctrine assumed to be understood by millions. Many scholars see this period of time predicted in the Old Testament in passages like

Isaiah 11:6 *“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.”*

Isaiah 65:25 *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.*

Or Hosea 2:18 which says (again, in very symbolic language):

“And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.”

Interestingly enough, the idea of “a thousand years” of actual peace was around in the early church. You see, in all the verses just cited in Revelation 20, the Greek word for thousand years is “kileeoi.” Some early church fathers (as early as the second century men like Irenaeus and Justin Martyr) were what was termed “killiasts.” In fact, there is documentation that even some Jews were chiliastic 200 years before Christ!

When some early Christians began to incorporate “chilism” into Christianity it was condemned by many as “selectively using scripture while avoiding others.” As an example of this, scripture clearly states that the Kingdom of God *would have no end* (Luke 1:33) and would therefore certainly not be limited to just a thousand years.

In the 4th century “chiliasm” regained some popularity. Once again it was utterly condemned by a Church Council at Augsburg. Again in the 16th century John Calvin

also condemned the teaching (Institutes 3.25.5) and described the chiliasts as believers who *"limited the reign of Christ to a thousand years."*

Now, I realize that most millennialists do not limit Christ's reign to a thousand years but this is just one example of grand misinterpretation of scripture – which leads to heresy.

The major problem I have with all the emphasis on millennialism begins with how we understand the biblical language today – especially language contained in the extremely esoteric book of Revelation. If you go with me to the very first verse of the Revelation. There is a very important phrase here that is often overlooked. This is what John says:

Revelation 1:1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:*

That line, *"and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John,"* is important because from the Greek (eshmanen) this means Jesus "indicated" the Revelation by signs and symbols. In other words, it properly refers to some sign, signal, or token by which something is made known. It is not by mistake this word is used because it was in this manner that John received the events referred to in the Book - I mean the whole book is made up from signs and symbols.

I would therefore suppose that God, communicating through his angel, had the task of teaching John through some expressive signs or symbols. Due to the very unique nature of the Books origins we have to be extremely careful when we go about interpreting what these things actually mean.

It is really easy to take selected passages of scripture (or a series of scripture) and translate them through our wooden or literal models to make things fit. Since the term *"a thousand years"* is used only in three places outside of these verse in chapter 20 of Revelation (Psalm 90:40; Ecclesiastes 6:6, and 2nd Peter 3:8 which we will address in a minute) I think it is important to try and get a sound understanding of the use of the term thousand by the Hebrew writers of scripture.

First of all we know that numbers are often symbolic in scripture – especially in apocalyptic revelation. When it comes to the term thousand we need to know that it is used to represent "a maximum" or total number for the Hebrew writer. An English speaking American might say "a jillion" to represent such a number. So the best way to understand the use of thousand in scripture is to say it means the "total amount or number of a thing." Again, instead of using "jillion" the Jews used a thousand. It's a number that's **not meant** to be counted.

We see this played out in verses like Psalm 50:10 which says:

"For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

(Zealous Bible literalists would probably claim that we have to take this literally and if they didn't we would have to ask how they have the right to pick and choose) But the line, "God owns the cattle on a thousand hills does not mean that cattle on all the hills over a thousand are not His, right?)

Christ shall reign for a thousand years does not mean that Christ's kingdom will have this limited time. Quite the contrary! It means His kingdom will exist in numbers that were never meant to be counted. When we read language like Isaiah that describes a time when the wolf and lamb will lay down side by side (and the lion and wolf will eat grass and cause no harm) we need to understand the Biblical use of metaphor and contrast.

Literalist (like the illustrators for the colorful magazines I used to look at in my doctor's office) love to paint (and take) these expressions literally and use them to describe a future utopia but in reality they are merely word-pictures that denote the difference that Christ and the New Covenant can make in the lives of individuals and this world.

Rather than fantasizing about some kind of Christianized utopia to come we have to remember that Christ prayed to the Father that "His" would *not* be taken out of this world, but that we would be *distinct* from it. It is in and through these distinctions that we salt the earth, make it better, and contribute to the established Kingdom Christ rules and reigns over that is NOT of this world.

The parables of the Kingdom teach advancement of the Kingdom through prayer, and preaching and persuasion which have occurred over the past 2000 years and will continue for who knows how long.

The "Millennium" is not about a future 1,000 year utopia but a present "timeless" reality where Christ rules and reigns in the hearts of people. There's no need to wait for a Millennium for Christ to reign. He reigns in the hearts of His people now.

Interestingly enough, what Peter says in 2nd Peter 3:8 is often used to try and suggest that the idea of literal thousand year reign is a biblical reality. In actuality, Peter's words support my position that a thousand years is representative not literal. Listen to what Peter says:

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

This verse says nothing at all to support the idea of a literal millennium, though believers often resort to it to prove it does. Here Peter uses the term 1000 years to represent all years, all time, and not literally a thousand years. And he uses extremes to prove that all measurements of time are irrelevant to how God relates to them.

SO he writes

“that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” so when people try to speak of a literal 1000 years as literal we have to ask them, could it really only be one day?

Okay, now to the 144,000 question.

Revelation chapter 6 talks about the seven-sealed scroll. John separates the 1 through 6th seal from the 7th by inserting a “gracious interlude” into his narrative. his interlude is described in Revelation 7:1-8 and again, provides for a period of rest between the 6th and 7th seal. It is in this interlude that we read about “four angels” who temporarily hold back the “winds” and defer the destruction of the four destroying horsemen (Revelation 6:1-8). Then another angel appears (Revelation 7:2) and commands: *“Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads”* (Revelation 7:3).

The next verse, speaking of those who were sealed in this peaceful interlude between the sixth and seventh seal, says:

“And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” (Revelation 7:4)

And of course this passage is fodder for every eschatological stance on earth, right? Who are they? First of all, the space of peace between the sixth and seventh seal serves as an angelic interruption that pauses God’s judgment on Israel. The pause is not there for God to help Israel. Instead it was a brief period of time (a gap or space) where God allowed Jewish Christians to flee from Jerusalem while Vespasian is attending other matters (including the death of Nero and Roman Civil wars). Got all that?

Josephus, eyewitness and historian of the Jewish War with Rome reveals that a pause in the military operations did (in fact) occur. (Josephus, *J.W.* 4:9:2; 4:11:5). And when it did, the “sealed” Christians trapped in Jerusalem had an opportunity to flee. Guess the number of Christians who escaped? We don’t know! But the number of twelve (as in twelve tribes of Israel) squared times the symbolic number of 1000 in scripture represents them. Support for this comes in the fact that we know the number 144,000 relates to the House of Israel (Revelation 7:4-8). John calls them “the first-fruits” (in Revelation 14:4 - meaning the first-fruits of Christ’s church). Christianity’s first converts come from Israel (the true remnant). That they are distinguished by John from *“the great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues.”* (Revelation 7:9).

The Old Testament source (from which John draws his imagery) is Ezekiel 9:4, which clearly specifies they are from Jerusalem:

“The LORD said to him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.’”

God protects them in “the Land” which is being judged (Revelation 7:1 and 14:3). It fits with Jesus telling his followers to flee Jerusalem before its overthrow and that those who are His will be protected (Matthew 24 and Luke 21) and finally, that the book of Revelation says (both at the beginning of the book and the end) that the events of it are to “shortly, quickly come to pass” including the saving of the significantly symbolic 144,000.

Chapter Twelve – James, Hebrews, John, Peter and Satan being bound

“In the matter of a difficult question it is more likely that the truth should have been discovered by the few than by the many.” Rene Descartes

“Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

Let's hit on some of the major points provided by the apostles that support the idea of that the Bible says Jesus was going to return within forty years of His death and resurrection. Whether you realize it or not all of the New Testament writers fully expected, taught, and encouraged the believers who trusted them in that day to believe His return – His second coming – was on its way and would happen within forty years or so of His death and resurrection. We can't get around this point and I am going to try and prove it through scripture in a rapid fire succession of examples. But before these examples are presented, we might ask ourselves:

If Jesus own apostles believed this, where did they get the impression?

Jesus Himself.

Then we have to ask: “If the apostles were wrong in their estimation of when Jesus would return, and they misunderstood Jesus and His teachings on the subject, how can we trust anything else they said, wrote, or taught?” I would go so far as to say that if they were wrong about the time of Jesus return we can't trust a word they say about anything else!

(long beat)

But they weren't wrong. They were dead right and we are the ones who have misinterpreted their words. So let's start with words of James, the writer of Hebrews, then John, then Peter, and finally Paul.

JAMES

There are five James' in the Bible and this one was believed to be the half-brother of the Lord who was martyred in 62 AD so his words have to have been written before. Let's

let his own words do the talking. Remember, this was a letter written to believers at that time. Bold emphasis mine:

James 5:7-9 *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: **for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh**. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, **the judge standeth before the door**.*

That line “draweth nigh” in the King James is translated, “is at hand” in the ESV and the New King James, and, “is near” in the NASB. James was either leading them in truth and they ought to have trusted his words or he was deceiving them and His return was not at hand.

THE WRITER OF HEBREWS

Forgetting the dogma, we don't know who wrote Hebrews. But scholars think it was written 67-69 AD. The whole thing was written to encourage Jewish converts to hang on to faith in Christ and to get them to realize He was faithful to His promises, promises that were better than anything they had under the Law. Perhaps the whole point and purpose of the writer can be summarized on chapter 10 verses 22-39. Here the writer is instructing them on what to do in the face of persecution and failing faith, and what to look forward to in the future – their future. So let's read it.

*Hebrews 10:22-39 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, **as ye see the day approaching**. (this is the same day that Jesus spoke of not knowing in Matthew 24.) For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for **of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries**. (phraseology which pictures the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD) He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches*

*and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. **For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.** (Did you hear the promise the writer of Hebrews made to those saints in that day? Reread it! By the way The Greek for "little" as in a "little while" is micron – "a very little while" is a better translation. In fact the NASB translates this passage as: "For in a very little while," which is consistent with the Greek word Micron.) *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.**

John

In 1st John 2:17-18 the Beloved, who also wrote Revelation and the Gospel of John says:

"And the world passeth away, (the age of their world, the whole Jewish system under the law) and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (and what is the will of the Father? John 6 – to believe on the Son whom He has sent, right?) Little children, it is the last time: (Here he appeals to all the signs and prophesies of the Anti-Christ that had been provided to them) and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

This is completely fitting to that time, to that age, and to Nero and his numerological identifier of 666. John is saying, look around, they are present, here! And the last time, the last hour is upon us.

Later in this same chapter John writes:

1st John 2:28 *"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."*

As stated before, we always have to ask, when we read scripture, the W's – Who was the writer speaking to? What was he trying to impart to them? Why, and Where and When was this taking place? Again, Christians today love to read the passages and assign them to our day all the while ignoring these W questions which clearly teach us context. So obviously John was writing to encourage the believers in that day to "abide in Him" so that "when He appears" they would have "confidence" and not be ashamed at his coming." All based in and around their standing with the Lord when He was expected to return at any moment.

Finally, we have evidence of John instilling hope and expectation into the hearts of the readers of his epistles AT THAT TIME that they would be there to witness His return.

Consider 1st John 3:2 where he says:

*“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for **we shall see him** as he is.”*

Was John blowing smoke . . . or was he correct in his encouragement? I would suggest he was totally correct and if he was wrong we can toss the Bible aside.

PETER

We'll begin with a passage that is a little vague but from it we discover an interesting support. 1st Peter 5:4 says

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

From this passage I think that we can see that Peter believed that many of the people reading his words would be alive when *“the chief Shepherd would appear.”* The Bible often speaks of believers receiving glory at Christ's return and here, at his appearing, Peter tells those who were reading his words that they would receive a crown of glory at His appearing. What didn't he say? He didn't say they would be resurrected (which is often tied to Jesus return). Therefore, not speaking of their resurrection infers that they would be alive, and therefore his coming was eminent. Peter actually opens this chapter up by saying the following:

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.”

Again, the Greek word translated shall be revealed is *“mello,”* and means is about to be revealed. This word could not be used (unless Peter and God were wrong) if applied to our day and age. It means *“about to,”* not will happen 2000 years later. With judgment being tied to Jesus return, Peter also wrote, speaking of Christ

1st Peter 4:5 *Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.*

Peter knew from the signs around him that the Lord was *“ready”* to judge. Which is why he used this term. Of course 1st Peter 4:7 says:

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

Obviously, the end of *“all things”* does not relate to the natural, material world as the frenetic futurists froth on about. The end of all things relative to the Nation of Israel, typified by the coming judgment and destruction of Jerusalem. Remember now, Peter didn't always teach that the *“end of all things was at hand.”* In the book of Acts, right after Jesus ascended into the heavens Peter is preaching to a crowd that had gathered

after he healed a lame man at the gate called Beautiful. This is what he said to those Jews gathered around:

Act 3:19-21 "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

There is great debate as to what the restitution of all things spoken of the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began is talking about and when (or if) it occurred. For instance the LDS say the restitution (or restoration of all things) occurred when Joseph Smith restored all things to the earth. But here Peter tells us that the heavens would receive (or retain) Christ until this restoration was fulfilled. We can debate the "restitution of all things" phrase here until the cows come home. But when we take all the other explainable evidence I am of the opinion that the restitution of all things Peter says has to happen before Jesus leaves heaven to return had to occur prior to 70 AD because now in 1st Peter Peter is suggesting the end is near, at hand, and on it's way. Therefore the restitution of all things had to have occurred and I suspect it has something to do with the Law of Moses and justice for failing it, and possibly the Garden of Eden state being restored to the hearts of Men by and through the Holy Spirit. One final note on this passage from Peter where He was assuring his listeners that the time was NOT at hand - Remember this is what he said at that time, speaking of Jesus :

"whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Stay with me. According to Peter all the prophets since the world began had spoken of the restitution. At this we have to ask if all the prophesy of the Old Testament have been fulfilled? In Luke 21:22 Jesus, in describing the end of Jerusalem says:

"For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

If all was fulfilled, then we can say that prophesies of the restitution of all things were fulfilled too. And since Jesus would return when the restitution of all things would occur we can say that His return was at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Before we get to Paul's words in the next chapter there is one more question that always pops up when futurists speak on the subject of Jesus return in 70 AD. It comes in connection with the Millennium question we touched on in the previous chapter but this question is: *"If Jesus came in 70 AD is Satan now bound?"*

Revelation 20:2 clearly says:

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."

If you are right about all this McCraney, people will say, then Satan must be bound and obviously this is not so. It is frankly a great question. My mom used to describe the binding of Satan to me by telling me the day would come when God would come down and throw Satan in hell, and with a huge chain and lock shut the doors and chain them shut for a thousand years. The imagery was palpable and I took her explanation to heart, looking forward to the day.

The trouble is my Mom believed the fulfillment of Revelation 20 was literal and not spiritual. So again to the question - *"If the millennium is the whole span of time and not a thousand literal years, and if this span of time began back in 70 AD, has Satan been bound?"*

Looking around the world we would have to say, *"No, Satan has definitely not been bound so therefore this whole thing is a façade."* But maybe we have not understood what scripture means when it says Satan would be bound? Let me explain.

In Isaiah 25:8 we are blessed with a prophecy that says:

"He (meaning Jesus) will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it."

Where did death come from and why? Going back to the garden of Eden there was no sin (partly because there was no law (but one) and there was no disease or death. Right? Was Satan there? Yep. What was He doing? Tempting Adam and Eve. Did Satan have any power over them? None whatsoever. But was Satan able to tempt them? Certainly. Then when Satan was able to get Adam and Eve to fall He obtained power and became (for lack of a better term) the author and finisher of physical and spiritual death which reigned until Christ. What did Jesus do on the cross and through resurrection? He conquered death - all death, both physical and spiritual. And listen - the power Satan had over death was bound! Since Christ and His victory Satan has absolutely no claim or power on Men. Sin has been utterly abolished except the sin of unbelief and failing to love. So Christ, the second Adam, had utter victory over Satan and His power over all human beings. And he is back to where he started - able to tempt. For this reason Jesus, well before going to the cross said in John 12:31:

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

Paul says in Colossians 2:15 *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

2nd Timothy 1:10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

1st Peter 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

And yet, we might note, Satan continues to tempt. To what end? In the Garden of Eden Satan was also able to tempt. What was he tempting Adam and Eve with? The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil which they were told not to eat. So he was tempting them to do their own thing. To follow their will and not God's will for them. What did Adam and Eve eating of the fruit symbolize? A number of things:

Self-will over God's will

Succumbing to temptation of Satan rather than living by the promises of God

In the end, not believing God, not trusting in God, but trusting the promises or insights of Satan.

The fruit was the fruit of unbelief.

So I would suggest that Satan is allowed to continue in this very same work. To unbelievers it is to keep them in the chains of unbelief, to keep them blinded and in the dark, to cause them to love the darkness more than the light. Are they sinning? Only against the light in unbelief as all other sin has been wiped away. In other words Satan's temptations to not believe is aimed at thwarting their salvation and to get as many as possible to experience continued separation from God here and after this life in hell and/or the lake of Fire.

But he also tempts believers, looking to render us ineffective, to re-direct us, get us off the path of faith, to darken the light around us with the ultimate aim is to stifle fruitfulness (fruits of love). I personally believe Satan seeks to snatch believers and bring them into captivity to the flesh, hoping to drag some into the dark after this life; working to give God as few true children as possible. Will Satan in his efforts to either keep unbelievers in the dark or render believers unfruitful and ineffective, have victory? Never. He has already lost. And his powers over physical or spiritual death are bound by the permanent victory of Christ who will, in the end, have total and utter victory, reconciling all, in the end, over to Himself.

Chapter Thirteen - Paul

Let's now look at Paul and what he had to say regarding the question, "When will Jesus return?" We need to get right to it because Paul wrote more than anyone else on the subject. Some of it very powerful and some simply persuasive. We'll start at Romans but remember the "W" of our examination: **Who** was he writing to, **Why** was he writing to them, **Where** were they, **What** was going on around them, and **when** did this all take place?" This is the reasonable and responsible way to understand scripture. Or you could do something that God never tells us to do in the Bible – forget context and assign everything to our day and age. We can do what many Christians do today – they read into everything as if Paul was writing to us here and now forgetting that it is a literal book of historical significance and its contents are covering those people at that time. Believers ever since have the benefit of learning spiritual lessons from the content. Okay.

Romans 8:17-18 Paul writes:

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory "which shall" be revealed in us."

The King James as it does us a disservice because "which shall be revealed in us" ought to say something about expediency, like: "Is about to be revealed in us," because the Greek word (again) is mello. Last week we showed how Peter used the same word in 1st Peter 5:1

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed."

showing that Peter and Paul agreed – "the glory was about to come!"

Moving on, Romans 13:11-12 says

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

Here Paul gives his readers some direct insight. Almost all scholars agree that "the day" of which he speaks refers to is the Judgment day. Referring to "the day" he says, the "night is far spent," (if the night "before the day of Judgment" was far spent in Paul's day how could we have any night left today?) and he adds that the "day is at hand." Now we could say to you this obviously means was really close but that could just be an opinion, right?

So let's take another example taking from another place where Paul uses the phrase. In II Timothy 4:6 Paul is getting ready to die. The time was approaching and he knew it and it happened. And this is what he wrote:

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."

If Paul didn't die at that time and he is still living today we know that the phrase, "at hand," means way down the road. But Paul died - close to the time he wrote this. "At hand" means "near, close."

And this is what he meant in Romans 13:11-12. Now every futurist on earth has to say that Paul was wrong. Paul was not wrong. We have been wrong, but not Paul, not Peter, not James, not John and not Jesus. They spoke truth. The Bible presents their truths to us.

In 1st Corinthians 1:7-8 we read:

"So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul knew that the Lord was coming back within a generation and so he preached it to the people. He admits first that they were "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," and then he says: "who shall also confirm you unto the end . . ."

If these people were all going to die before Jesus second coming then Paul was wrong in his assurances, and Jesus did not "confirm them (establish) them unto the end."

In first Corinthians 16:22 Paul says

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."

Ever hear Christians use these words? The phrase means something to the effect of, "let him be accursed at his coming." Anathema is set - we get the meaning - but "maranatha" is the one we're interested because several translations make the words say, "the Lord IS coming," but the word comes from the Syriac, "moran-etho" and means, "the Lord Comes." Present tense verses future tense - a clear indication that Paul was speaking of his time and his day.

In Philippians 3 (20-21) Paul is talking about the Lord's coming. Then in chapter four he uses the phrase we have already discussed, and says:

Philippians 4:5 *Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*

This was not written to us, friends. It was written to people that Paul was personally leading and guiding and protecting.

In 1st Timothy 4:8 Paul writes:

"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Again mello - *"which is about to come!"*

In 1st Timothy 6:13-14 Paul is giving Timothy instructions, and says:

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is more than apparent that Paul believed that Timothy would be around when Jesus returned. It is also believed that Paul wrote this epistle around 64 AD and the signs of His coming were not only evident, the forty years Jesus said His return would occur in were close to being fulfilled. If Paul thought that the Lord's coming was going to be way out in the future, he would have said to Timothy *"to keep these commandments"* without spot *"until the end of your life,"* or *"until you die!"* But Paul doesn't write this to Timothy, does he? He writes, *"keep these commandments until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Why?

In Titus 2:13 Paul writes:

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

Taking the "W"s into account this is really a wonderful and encouraging passage of scripture to the early Saints, isn't it? Again -

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

Reading it today, 2000 years later, and thinking it is still lingering out there can produce faithlessness, and disappointment, and disillusionment. But to read it as historical fact, and in context we are uplifted by the stories, just like Jewish children have been uplifted by the stories of David and Goliath today - stories that occurred many years ago, but contain great spiritual lessons to all who consider them now.

In Paul's infamous chapter on the resurrection - 1st Corinthians 15 - many people challenge the meanings contained therein but almost all agree that Paul was writing about the Second Coming of Jesus when the *"saints who sleep"* (are dead) will be resurrected to incorruptibility and the saints who are alive at that time will be *"changed"* in the *"twinkling of an eye."* That is all in there, right? Paul was writing to the Christians at Corinth about resurrection and how it was tied to the coming of the Lord. The book was written around 56-57 AD. There were questions about what was the process and Paul says to them - TO THEM - the believers there at Corinth:

1st Corinthians 15:51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; "We shall not all sleep, (most agree this means die) _We will not all die before the Lord's return."* He promises this to them! He was literally reassuring them that some of them would be living when Jesus returned!

Should they have believed him? Of course. Because he was right. Notice he wrote, "We" so he included himself in this. In other words he believed it possible that he might be around for His return. Then he uses or refers to the "we" twice in these passages, and says:

"Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all die (was he correct?), but we (those of us who do not) shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

If all of the Corinthian Saints died before Jesus came Paul was a fraud, and his promises to them were utterly deceitful! But he wasn't. He was correct. And all the other men since who have promoted and promised Christ's return were wrong. And are wrong. It's done, folks. He reigns - spiritually - on high, over his kingdom.

We learn something else from this passage in 1st Corinthians 15. Listen closely to it again:

"Behold I show you a mystery: WE shall NOT all die, but WE (those of us who do not) shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, (when?) at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

When does Paul say the resurrection of the dead will occur in this passage? He actually says that some of those saints at Corinth would live to hear the last trump and would see Jesus come. But the order is that before they would be changed the dead would be raised incorruptible. This places the resurrection right there in the first century too. Can you see that?

"Does this mean we won't be resurrected?" Of course not. It just means the resurrection promised in scripture, and tied to Jesus coming, is done. All people now die and are immediately resurrected - probably in the twinkling of an eye - and prior to entering heaven. The only exception might be (might be) those who die and do not go to heaven. They may wait to be fitted with their resurrected body at another time.

Okay, into Thessalonians. Lots to discuss because Paul provides large chunks of information on the subject of the Second Coming in his writings here. Let's read the first big chunk - 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Apparently, the saints at Thessalonica were under the impression that the Lord's return was eminent and some of them, it appears, were upset or concerned because some of their brothers and sisters were dying before it happened. Maybe their deaths were due to persecution. And it seems they believed that these dead believers were going to miss out on everything the apostolic church was expecting would happen when He came back (in other words they would miss out on the Glory that was about to be revealed as both Paul and Peter have described). I would suggest that Paul was trying to comfort these believers here in the face of these concerns. What he tells them here is essentially the same thing he told the believers at Corinth (which we read in part in 1st Corinthians 15) saying:

"We will not all sleep (die) but some will be changed in the twinkling of an eye after the dead were raised."

Here Paul is promising the church at Thessalonica the same thing and he says:

Some of them would be alive a remain until the coming of the Lord and then regarding those who had died, he said, *"The dead in Christ will rise first and then (like he said in 1st Corinthians) those who are living would be changed after."* In these passages the "W" s are really important to remember. If we do we will understand what Paul is saying far more clearly than if we just read and assume he is speaking to us today. Paul made these promises 2000 years ago! Then in verse 15 he says something interesting. He says:

15 For this we say unto you "by the word of the Lord," that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Notice first there are no if, ands or buts here used by Paul. He doesn't say *"And we that might be here,"* or *"we are could be alive,"* or *"and if some of us are alive then."* He says

"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," clearly indicating that he believed the second coming was . . . coming.

Additionally, Paul says in verse 15:

"For this we say unto you "by the word of the Lord,"

Now, to Paul the Word of the Lord could mean one, two or three things. First, it could mean the Old Testament - not in this case. The Old Testament did not give Paul these insights. Or, the Word of the Lord Paul mentions could mean direct revelation he received either by the Spirit OR when he was tutored by Christ Himself in the Arabian desert. That's possible. But I think the fact lies in the third option - that it is by the Lord's very words He spoke when He was on earth. In other words if you read Matthew 24 you will discover that Paul echoes 10 statements of the LORD in His writings to the believers of Thessalonica. Due to time I'll let you make the comparisons.

They are not overwhelming but clearly show that “*the word of the Lord*” Paul was citing were the Lord’s very words spoken in Matthew 24.

In these next passages listen to what Paul writes: (remember the W’s”)

1st Thessalonians 5:1 But of the times and the seasons (which, by the way was the title of the LDS owned newspaper back in the day when they too were sure the end was near - anyway, Paul writes to the believers of that day) “*But of the times and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.* (in other words, Paul says to them, I don’t need to detail to you the signs of the times – you are aware of them – and he adds (verse 2)

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (And then at verse four)

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”

These are reassuring passages given by Paul to these believers reiterating to them that they were not ignorant but were alive and awake and informed of His return. If the LORD was not coming for thousands of years later why did he write like this to them? I mean why did the early church need to be reminded of these things if He wasn’t going to return for thousands of years later? The evidence is beyond clear – the Apostles believed He was on His way and taught it. If wrong, why do we trust the rest of the things they write? If right, why are still looking for His return today? Then continuing on in this same chapter Paul writes:

1st Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What does this passage tell us about Paul’s views of the Lord’s coming? He prays that the Saints in His care would be kept blameless until they died? Nope? But “*until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!*” All five chapters of 1st Thessalonians ends with a reference to this highly anticipate event. If the coming of the LORD was eminent in the days of the Apostles it cannot be eminent today.

Let’s look at 2nd Thessalonians. We’ll begin with *2nd Thessalonians 1:3-10*. Bottom line, the passages we are about to read show that Paul was promising the Saints at that time that Christ was coming and would comfort and reward them for their suffering. The NIV reads better than the King James here but let’s read the King James.

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: (did you catch that? That is context.) Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense

tribulation to them that trouble you; (so Paul is promising recompense to them for their suffering) And to you who are troubled rest with us (Got that - He is speaking of them right then and there - to those who are troubled with US, he says) when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

Cannot get around it - Paul was writing to them and encouraging them - and He used and appealed to the Lord's coming to encourage and support their perseverance. Either he was inspired and led of God or he was no different than Harold Camping. You decide.

One more - *2nd Thessalonians 2:1-8.*

Now in the previous chapter we showed how Peter had predicted the end but that he also gave a clarification - that the return would not happen until there came a restitution of all things - and we talked about what this meant and when it could possibly occur relative to the rest of scripture. So here in II Thessalonians we have Paul doing the same thing. Yes, he has been preaching the second coming - and has had expectations of it. But here Paul details some things that had to occur first, and so he says:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Admittedly, the King James makes comprehension of these passages difficult while the NIV is far easier but since I am always teaching from the King James we'll stick with it. These passages play such a huge role in how Christians view the second coming we have to take a minute and review them carefully.

To begin, remember - our initial question which we posed at the start was: "When does the Bible say that Jesus will return?" That was our query. And so this is what I will try and speak to from these verses. The first verse lays this out for us, saying:

“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him.”

Then in the next verse he addresses an apparent misunderstanding about the Lord’s second coming. Apparently there was a rumor that the Lord had already come. (verse 2) The King James puts it this way:

“That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

But the New King James translates it as,

“That the day of Christ HAD come,” and the NASB reads, *“that the Day of the Lord has come,”* and the ESV reads, *“the day of the Lord has come.”*

In other words, in this case, the question was not, *“Is the day of the Lord at hand,”* but was, *“has the Lord come already?”* Again, Paul was addressing the notion in the church *“that the Lord had already come.”* Note something important here – Paul and others (including Jesus) taught what all the signs would be like to the believers in the early church right? They had been told that Jesus would appear on a white horse, and that the earth would be consumed by fire, and the dead would rise to life, etc. right? They knew these things! So how on earth could they have believed that Jesus had come. Because they understood these statements properly and very differently than we understand and read them today! Isn’t that interesting? From this alone I think we can see that our understanding of Jesus apocalyptic words must be faulty because these believers though Jesus had come, so therefore the signs we look for must truly have presented themselves in a manner far different than what we have been looking for. Anyway . . .

There was a belief that Jesus had come and at verse three Paul says:

3 “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

At verse four Paul describes the nature of this “man of sin, and says he:

4 (Who) . . . opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Then down in verse 8 Paul says that this man of Sin (or lawlessness) would be *“destroyed at Jesus second coming.”*

The *“falling away”* that would have to first come has been interpreted by many in a number of ways. The LDS leaders and missionaries love this line, and suggest the *“falling away”* was the loss of what they call “priesthood authority” and the principle elements of Christ’s church – which they claim were restored by Joseph Smith in 1830. I would suggest that the falling away was the Saints who fell back into the Law (which

the writer of Hebrews so strongly fought against) and that this is a much better contextual definition of it than the LDS contrivance. Yet the real focus Christians make of this passage is the part where Paul speaks of *"the man of sin being revealed the Son of Perdition."*

Of course this guy has been suggested a thousand ways to Sunday but nothing has materialized – except for who he really was back in the day. Paul gives us a little more information on this Man of Sin and says in II Thessalonians 2:4 that he would *"set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God,"* but the problem is today there is no temple for which to set himself up in? HMMMMMMMM. What to do?

The futurists have fixed this by saying that another temple will be built but NOWHERE does scripture say this – nowhere. Additionally, we find that in the church that the Man of sin is called, the anti-Christ. They typically infer that the antichrist is mentioned in Revelation. Not so. The only place the term is used is in John's epistles and there John tells us that antichrist has already come! All that is hodge-podge make-believe rhetoric employed by the Schofield futurists to take this literal history and to apply it to our day. Look at verse five of our text, where Paul says:

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you "these things?"

Obviously Paul had given them instructions before and maybe they had forgotten or been misled – but he had told them about this "man of sin" and about the falling away." But he was not fully operational or in place, in verse 6 Paul reminds these believers again, and says:

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

In other words they knew who this Man of Sin was – they could identify him and they KNEW what stood in His way (at that time) from exalting himself over *"everything that is called God or was worshipped."*

Then Paul says (to them) that this man of Sin was already at work or in play. He puts it this way:

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

In other words the Man of Sin was already at work in Paul's day! Did you miss this? Then Paul tells them:

8 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

In our day and age there are all sorts of opinions on who this man of sin was. Vespasian. Nero. But opinions are irrelevant. What we do know is the Man of Sin is history, and He was destroyed at His coming, and the whole thing is yesterday's news. These are the proofs we can take from these passages:

Verse 5-6: Paul knew who the man was.

Verse 6: He knew who was hindering his power. Since he knew the identities of these two men we also know he did NOT reveal their names – probably to avoid persecution.

Verse 6: Not only did Paul know his name the believers at Thessalonica knew it too!

Verse 5: we know he was a contemporary figure to Paul and that Paul had already addressed this person to them.

Verse 7: Tells us the activities of this lawless one were already at work at THAT time, with them.

Verse 4: Let's us know he was going to desecrate the temple. That makes sense. Not for us now – especially where there is no temple.

The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written around 57 AD. The temple was destroyed at 70 AD. So we know that whatever occurred during these 13 years was speaking to this man of sin. All of this proves that the Man of Sin was a contemporary of Paul.

CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT

So there it is – an estimation of when the Bible says Jesus would return.

Thirteen chapter. I want to thank all the brave Preterist's who have endured countless attacks and dismissals for their work in this area. I could never have compiled this book without their courage, insights, research and strength. These people include my brothers in Christ Dr. Don Preston, Glenn Hill, all those who contribute to the Preterist archives online, my dear brother Mark Payzant, the support of my wife and family who too have had to challenge many of their long held notions to clearly see the forest for the trees.

One of the greatest difficulties many faithful believers have with the contents of books like these is the information is so earthshaking to their "world" they really don't know how to be a Christian any longer. I mean this with all sincerity because I have witnessed it first hand in the lives of people who are willing to entertain the information.

So many believers today have cut their teeth on Jesus Second coming being just around the corner that taking this away from them is tantamount to taking the tires off a high performance car. They honestly don't know how to walk their Christian walk once the information has taken root. Additionally, many Christians who embrace Preterism experience a disconnect on how to read the Bible – so much so that many of them actually give up reading it all together! Again, when a person has been trained to read the Bible as if it was written to them in this day and age it can be challenging to retrain oneself to see it as having been fulfilled but having great spiritual applications to all people since it became available. Finally, people wonder, amidst what they are perceiving as spiritual chaos, what the purpose of life is if Jesus is not coming to rapture believers up and to destroy the world. Let me conclude with a brief summary followed by some insights and suggestions.

1. The Bible is a written record of God dealing with the Nation of Israel start to finish. That's what it is physically and materially. Nowhere, anywhere, does God ever in the text suggest that it applies to us literally and materially today – nowhere. Hear me clearly – this does not mean it does not bless us spiritually – it certainly does – in more ways that we can even articulate, but we must not allow ourselves to read the Bible as if it was written to us – it was written to them and was immediately addressing the circumstances and situations they faced – including the promised Messiah, his birth, life, death, resurrection and His return upon them with judgment. The record is done. The events over. The author and finisher of our faith, overcoming sin and death and rendering Satan powerless (not ineffective but having no power to put us in chains) now reins over a

spiritual Kingdom at the right hand of the Father bringing sons and daughters to God by His grace through faith in Him.

2. All that was recorded, reported, and commanded in the Bible, since Jesus wrapped the physical applications up with Judgement falling upon Jerusalem continues to serve believers today. But instead of taking the book and trying to do what they were actually doing nearly 2000 years ago and in some very different circumstances, we read, and study and consult the Bible for spiritual insights, to increase our faith and to learn from its contents about the nature and person of God through Christ. Everything that was materially played out then is spiritually played out in our lives today. This concept is not so far-fetched. All we have to do is look at the Old Testament relative to the New and we see the same situation.
3. When men and women try and recreate the early apostolic church based on what is described in the New Testament they miss the whole point: Jesus told Matthew that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church. He was correct. And the Apostolic Church He sent His chosen apostles to was not touched. Then in 70 AD He came and took it - a church full of His brethren (brought in by the Apostles and the Holy Spirit).
4. But Jesus also called Paul, whose purpose was to take the Good News out to the rest of the world. Those of us who believe do not make up His Church, we do not reside in a brick and mortar institution - we are His Body. Hell cannot touch the Body of Christ, but it has certainly prevailed against every single brick and mortar institution men have created in an attempt to replicate the Apostolic Church.
5. As a Body of Believers we look to, study, learn and consult the Bible realizing that everything has occurred but God is sanctifying us by the washing of His Word in conjunction with His laws which He has written in our hearts.
6. Finally, just as Jesus came and taking His church up, saved those who believed on Him from destruction but allowed the rest to be destroyed by Romans hands, we too, upon our own individual second coming, will be taken up, resurrected, and saved from the destruction awaiting those who in this life would not believe on Him. They will be turned over to the hands of others to destroy them in the flesh.

For more information about his ministry
please go to: www.hotm.tv

To view verse by verse sermons of the Word of God
From Shawn McCraney go to: www.campuschurch.tv

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