

INTRODUCTION

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation
(2Peter 1:20 NKJV).

The Bible speaks of Zechariah, "who had understanding in the visions of God." (2 Chron 26:5 NKJV) Peter says, "Knowing this first." This is the first thing we need to know if we want to understand the Old Testament visions of God. No prophecy is of any private interpretation. Any new insight into the meaning of Scripture must be accountable to both the historical church and the church at large. Humility demands it.

In order to receive understanding from God, it is required that we become as little children. Jesus said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes" (Mat. 11:25 NKJV). A man who had just returned from a visit to Russia said, "The Russian language must be easy to learn. Even the children speak it there." Yes. Children do learn languages faster than adults. Why? It is because they have open minds. An adult hears a new sound, and then equates it to the nearest sound with which he is already familiar instead of the exact one. Children, on the other hand, easily learn a new sound with no accent. We tend to do the same thing with spiritual truth. That is the sense in which we are to be as little children. "Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature" (1Cor 14:20 NKJV).

The author believes the method used by the Apostle Paul is a scientific method that can be learned through the Holy Spirit by the humble person that has his senses exercised to discern (Heb 5:14). It has been clearly illustrated in the New Testament. This book seeks to illustrate this method.

1

HERMENEUTICS

Anyone who interprets the Scriptures does so by using some form of hermeneutic. The apostles had a hermeneutic by which they understood the scriptures, and it is that hermeneutic which we will seek to discover.

The truth is to be measured or interpreted by a measuring stick given by God. In John's vision we see a reed¹ (cane) used as a measuring rod to measure the temple. At another time, an angel measures the New Jerusalem with a golden reed. Both the New Jerusalem and the temple are the church.² Ephesians 2:20 tells us that the church, which is also called the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim 3: 15 NKJV), is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

What rules of interpretation did the apostles use? What was the apostolic hermeneutic or, if you will, what was the golden reed by which they measured the "pillar and ground of the truth?" The apostles' rules for interpretation should be very simple to discover by looking at some examples. After observing the rules they used, it should be simple to apply those same rules to all other Scripture that fits those rules. Knowing, however, that "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation," (2 Pet 1: 20 NKJV) let us be careful to submit our interpretation to the church fathers of history and

¹ "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there'" (Rev 11:1 NKJV). "And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall" (Rev 21: 15 NKJV). This is where we get the word "canon." It comes from the word cane or reed. Our canon is the Bible, but not only the Bible. It is also the correct method of interpretation given by the Holy Spirit.

² "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God" (Rev 21:9,10 NKJV).

not “re-invent orthodoxy on the anvil of anti-historical provincialism,” (as Andrew Sandlin says).

THE APOSTLES' METHOD

Let us look at an example of the apostles' method. In the very first sermon preached by Peter, the leading apostle, we are given a law of first mention. In Acts 2:25 - 31 Peter quotes from Psalm 16:8-11:

For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken; Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh will also rest in hope, Because You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption (NKJV).

Peter clearly gives us his method of interpretation. He tells us that these words did not apply to David himself, but to the "greater" David, Jesus Christ, the son of David. This is called the "spiritual" method of interpretation. I can hear the objection now: "Peter! David is David, not Christ. When God says something He means exactly what He says. Why would He fool us?" Nevertheless, this is indeed the way the apostle interpreted the passage.

Practice:

Below are several similar passages regarding David from the Old Testament. Let's attempt to interpret them using the same rule Peter used:

“Behold, the days are coming” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth” (Jer 23:5 NKJV).

I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them - My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken (Ezek 34:23,24 NKJV).

David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever (Ezek 37:24,25 NKJV).

How does one interpret these verses and why? If the Holy Spirit did not mean the literal David in Psalm 16 as quoted by Peter, then could not the same rule apply to other parts of the Bible? If it could not, then why not? The David referred to by the prophets is Christ, the greater David.

Practice:

Let's do another exercise:

In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jer 23:6 NKJV).

Is this passage speaking of carnal Judah and carnal Israel, or true Judah and true Israel? (See John 8 to discover whom Jesus identified as true Jews.) If David is not David, as in the above passage, then who are Judah and Israel? They are God's people. Who are God's people? Since Jesus Christ is the last Jew and the last Israelite then the offspring of Christ are Judah and Israel. Who is the offspring of Christ? Is it not the church?

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh (Rom 2:28 NKJV)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28 NKJV).

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal 3:29 NKJV).

Jeremiah also says, "In His days" (Jer 23:6 NKJV). Are these His days or are they yet to come? Are these the latter days spoken of by Joel? Are these the days of the Messiah? Peter told us that the Day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy:

But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:16,17 NKJV).

The latter days of the Messiah, then, began with the coming of the Messiah. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1: 15 NKJV), (The end of the Old Testament age ended when the temple was destroyed.)

Look at the chart below and compare the four aspects of the covenants with David and with Mary as found in 2 Sam 7:11-17 and Luke 1:32,33 (NKJV).

The Covenant With David	The Covenant With Mary										
<p>2 Samuel 7</p> <p>12 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.</p> <p>13 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.</p> <p>14 "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.</p> <p>15 "But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.</p> <p>16 "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever</p>	<p>Luke 1</p> <p>32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.</p> <p>33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."</p> <p>Note that the order in Luke is mirrored as the reverse of 2 Samuel.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Luke 1</td> <td>2 Sam 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) God's Son</td> <td>1) A Kingdom</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) A Throne</td> <td>2) A House</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) A House</td> <td>3) A Throne</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) A Kingdom</td> <td>4) God's Son</td> </tr> </table>	Luke 1	2 Sam 7	1) God's Son	1) A Kingdom	2) A Throne	2) A House	3) A House	3) A Throne	4) A Kingdom	4) God's Son
Luke 1	2 Sam 7										
1) God's Son	1) A Kingdom										
2) A Throne	2) A House										
3) A House	3) A Throne										
4) A Kingdom	4) God's Son										

The Old Testament is the mirror and shadow. The New Testament is the substance. Examine below the four comparisons between Luke and 2nd Samuel:

1. God's Son

I will be his Father, and he shall be My son (2 Sam 7:14 NKJV).

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest (Luke 1:32 NKJV).

2. God's House

He shall build a house for My name (2 Sam 7:13 NKJV)

He will reign over the house of Jacob (Luke 1:33 NKJV)

3. God's Kingdom

I will establish his kingdom (2 Sam 7:12 NKJV)

Of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:32 NKJV)

4. God's Throne

I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:13 NKJV).

God will give Him the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32 NKJV).

Hebrews 5: 14 tells us "solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (NKJV). Those who have their senses exercised to discern can make the analogy between these two passages from 2 Samuel and Luke. It is not hard to see that the angel speaking to Mary in Luke 1 is alluding to the Davidic covenant. The same four aspects are mentioned. When God said to David, "I will set up your seed after you." He was not only talking about Solomon. He was also talking about the "greater Solomon." In Matthew 12:42 Jesus says of Himself, "a greater than Solomon is here" (NKJV). In the above passages, He was not only talking about the temple house of Solomon, He was also typifying the true temple and house of God - the church, the house of Jacob. The church is the greater temple of the greater Solomon. In addition, according to 1 Chronicles

29:23, the throne of David is the throne of God: "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father." Let us be very careful to observe the method of interpretation the Holy Spirit has revealed here.

I have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets (Hos 12:10 NKJV).

It was symbolic for the present time (Heb 9:9 NKJV).

When asked what sign He could offer to the Jews, Jesus offered the sign of Jonah the prophet:

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth . . . and indeed a greater than Jonah is here" (Matt 12:39-41 NKJV).

If Jesus is the greater Jonah, could it not follow that He is also the greater Adam, the greater Isaac, the greater Joseph, the greater Moses, and the greater Solomon?

Observe the similes "as Jonah" and "like Moses." The Holy Spirit is showing us patterns, examples, models, parables, visions, mysteries, and figures. The apostles say, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory" (1 Cor 2:7 NKJV).

Jesus said, "all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come" (Matt 11:13,14 NKJV). John the Baptist, therefore, is the greater Elijah. Elijah was the titular head of the prophets. John the Baptist was the sum and completion of them. The task of the prophets was to restore the house of David that was fallen, and to explain the paradox of why it was fallen and how God would keep His promise that it would last forever. John, therefore, came saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1: 15 NKJV). The New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. It is also the fulfillment of every other Old Testament covenant.

Question:

What does the apostle James call the tabernacle of David in the following Scriptures?

Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen down. I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up, so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things (Acts 15:14 -17 NKJV).

Answer:

James calls the tabernacle of David the church. He clearly implies that Gentiles coming to God is the same thing as rebuilding the tabernacle of David and calling the rest of mankind to seek the Lord. The tabernacle of David is the house God promised to build for David (2 Sam 7: 11). The greater tabernacle of David is the church. What measuring stick did the apostles use? Did they not use the "spiritual" method? What could be clearer?

The apostles unveiled the hidden meaning of the Old Testament visions. This was very offensive to those who subscribed to the literal method of interpretation. The apostles believed that "the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual" (1 Cor 15:46 NKJV). In other words, they first believed the literal historical record, and then applied the spiritual yardstick.

But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai, which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar . . . (Gal 4:23,24 NKJV).

Stephen, in his sermon, rehearsed the historical record, but clearly implied that Jesus was the greater Moses when he said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear" (Acts 7:37 NKJV). Stephen calls the tabernacle of Moses the tabernacle of Moloch³ and then says God does not dwell in temples made with hands. To the literalist this was blasphemy. Even today this same spirit in the church looks for a literal temple, land, and nation.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:21 NKJV).

³ Stephen did not mean it was literally the tabernacle of Moloch (Acts 7:43). It was their heart of unbelief that made it that. What God meant for good, they turned into an idol through disobedience

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him (John 4:23 NKJV).

Why are such things as a literal temple, land, and nation unnecessary? They are unnecessary because they were only symbols and shadows. Christ is the fulfillment of all those veiled mysteries that are called "weak and beggarly elements." The true worshipers worship neither here nor there, but in Spirit and in truth. That is, neither in Jerusalem nor in Samaria, but in Spirit and in truth. True worshipers do not need a geographical location. Anywhere they happen to be is a suitable place to worship God. They have no such words in their vocabulary as "the holy land, " because they are already dwelling in it.

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? (Gal 4:9 NKJV).

Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ (Col 2:16,17 NKJV).

The immature cannot make analogies. Someone told a five-year old child, "You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth." The child responded, "I was not." He had not understood what was meant. He had taken it literally. One must grow up in order to see the analogy of symbolism. The New Testament gives the substance of the symbolism. The immature focus on the symbols and take them literally. The mature are fixed on the substance that is represented by the symbols, for example:

The temple versus the greater temple,

David versus the greater David,

Solomon versus the greater Solomon,

Moses versus the greater Moses,

Animal sacrifices versus the greater Sacrifice (the Lamb of God),

The Promised Land versus a New Nation consisting of all nations, Etc.

If Christ is the fulfillment of David, then the land promised to David was only a

type and shadow of "heaven and earth." David was given all the land promised to Abraham. Christ has been given all authority in heaven *and* in earth. David's land spread from the River Euphrates to the River of Egypt. Christ's kingdom takes in all nations from one end of heaven to the other. David conquered with a sword. Christ conquers by the sword of the Holy Spirit, which is God's word. Look at the following verses:

All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's,
And He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship; All those who go down to the dust
Shall bow before Him, Even he who cannot keep himself alive.
A posterity shall serve Him.
It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation,
They will come and declare His righteousness to a people, who will be born,
That He has done this (Ps. 22:27-31 NKJV).

Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him (Ps.72:11 NKJV).

Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession (Ps. 2:8 NKJV).

According to these passages, worldwide revival can be expected if the house of David (the church) meets the conditions. If it does not meet the conditions, however, it will be carried to Babylon (so to speak). In one sense, the church may be there now.

My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me; It shall be established forever like the moon, Even like the faithful witness in the sky. Selah. But You have cast off and abhorred, You have been furious with Your anointed. You have renounced the covenant of Your servant; You have profaned his crown by casting it to the ground (Ps 89:34 -39 NKJV).

Do we understand the analogy? Talk of a rebuilt Temple, a blood and soil people, and red heifers are some signs that we may be living in Babylon. When one talks like Babylon, he might be living there! At this point, the literalist may raise an objection. He may say, "These are only isolated examples. We know Paul said the story of Hagar was an allegory, but how can we use this as a rule by which to interpret the rest of Scripture?" The author will argue that Psalm 32:9 carries the answer to this objection. "Do not be

like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle." God does not mean for us to be led around by a bridle. He offers us understanding in His Word by using the patterns and guides He has richly provided.

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you (1 John 2:27 NKJV).

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food (Heb 5:12 NKJV).

The problem today is the same as in the days of the apostles. Those who paint the tombs of the prophets would have killed them as their fathers did. As they rejected the apostolic method then, so now they look for a rebuilt temple and future fulfillment of the prophecies, just as the Jews of that day did. As the chief chose Barabbas (who killed a man in an insurrection against Rome), so now literalists choose the Zionists who used terrorism to overthrow the British control of Palestine. Which side should we choose?⁴ Barabbas or Christ? Should we choose Zionism or Mt. Zion? Should we choose a Rebuilt Temple or The Church? Should we choose Old Jerusalem or The New One? Should we choose carnal War or Spiritual War?

⁴ I am pro-Israeli, but not because they are God's chosen people. They are just another gentile nation. The Church is the Israel of God (Gal 6:16). "Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham" (Gal 3:7 NKJV).

2

God Hides His Truth

Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior! (Isa 45:15 NKJV)

In the visions and dreams of the Bible, God spoke in metaphors, enigmas, hieroglyphics, figures, types, patterns, models, copies, shadows, allegories, parables, mysteries, analogies, signs, and riddles:⁵

At that time Jesus answered and said, " I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes" (Matt 11:25 NKJV, emphasis added).

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matt 13:10,11, NKJV emphasis added).

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie (2 Thess 2: 11 NKJV).

THE KEY TO VISIONS

In the following passage, God gives us the key to understanding prophecy:

⁵ Note: 'mystery' means 'secret'. "[Pray] that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6: 19 NKJV) "...having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself" (Eph 1:9 NKJV). "He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Eph 3:3-5 NKJV). "...who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things" (Heb 8:5 NKJV). "It was symbolic" (Heb 9:9 NKJV). "Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." (Col 2: 16, 17 NKJV). "...which things are symbolic!" (Gal 4:24 NKJV).

Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" (Num 12:6-8, NKJV emphasis added)

Note in the above passage the rule God lays down for understanding prophets. He contrasts 'visions' and 'dreams' on the one hand, with 'face to face' and 'plainly', on the other hand. He then likens visions and dreams to 'dark sayings' (sometimes translated 'riddles'). God clearly tells us that His prophets speak in riddles. Visions and dreams are given in riddles. Though God spoke plainly to Moses, the meaning was hidden from the people. God showed the pattern to Moses in the mount. The law was given in shadows and symbols to the people.

The tabernacle	=	the church
The Passover lamb	=	Christ
The high priest	=	Christ
The sacrifices	=	our prayers and offerings
The Sabbath	=	our rest in Christ

WHY DOES IMMATURITY CHOOSE THE CARNAL METHOD?

You have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb 5: 11-14 NKJV).

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection (Heb 6:1 NKJV).

Though God hides His truth from babes and unbelievers, He still longs to reveal Himself to all. He will, however, hide until we humble ourselves as little children. We must approach God's Word as if we had never known anything before. Our hearts must be made as fresh wineskins, because old wineskins cannot hold new

wine. We must fall on our faces and cry out to God to not send us a delusion. But we must remember that His conditions are absolutely unyielding and non-negotiable. His condition depends on our willingness to have innocence of eye.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:5-8 NKJV).

There are several reasons immaturity gravitates toward the carnal method. An individual may still need to grow or be broken by God's discipline. Books may have been written, or a ministry built based on the carnal method, causing the person to wonder what people would say if the whole structure came tumbling down. Without doubt, leaving the elementary principles is costly. Finally, immaturity may simply be occupied in serving the Lord in a good matter instead of a better one. "Milk" and "the first principles of the doctrine of Christ" are indeed good things.

It is time to make a change to higher ground. As God said to Jacob, "Now arise, get out of this land" (Gen 31: 13 NKJV).

This author of thirty years ago would argue with this author of today. God passed him through the fire until his mind opened a little. Only afterward was God able to show him wondrous things from His law. Augustine also used milk in his early days. Until we leave the "first principles," we will not be able to chew adult food. This does not mean that the author was a false prophet, nor am I saying others who use the carnal method are. The Corinthian Christians were not false prophets. We simply need to grow. This in no way implies that we understand, or even the Apostles, understood all mysteries. Paul said that we look through a glass darkly and see in part. Only in the resurrection will we understand all. Nor does it mean that just because one could understand all mysteries that he could boast.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing (1 Cor 13:2 NKJV).

Prayer: Father, help us to humble ourselves as little children and open our minds to be taught by Your Spirit. Help us to cast out our preconceived notions. Help

us to be quiet and listen.

A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, to understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles (Prov 1:5,6 NKJV).

LITERALISM

The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Cor 3:6 NKJV).

The word literal comes from the word letter. The letter kills because it is based on literalism. Only the "spiritual" method gives life.⁶ Sometimes even English teachers and lawyers fail to understand that one word can have opposite meanings, or various shades of meaning. In legal documents, there is a concerted effort to eliminate this problem, but since humans are imperfect, there is no possible way to totally eliminate various shades of meaning by means of the letter of the words alone. What one says is not necessarily what others hear. It might also be noted that literalists are often, if not always, legalists. One way to clarify the meaning of a word is through the context in which it is used. Another way is through illustrations. One must learn to use word pictures or hieroglyphics to penetrate the letter, or surface meaning, of the word. The letter of the spoken word is like a shell. The letter embodies the real spirit of the meaning. The letter is the body or flesh that embodies the true meaning of the spirit.

When Jesus said we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. His disciples took offence and forsook Him and "went back and walked with Him no more" (John 6:66). Do you suppose the disciples understood what He meant? Apparently, they interpreted this statement literally and, in all probability, thought He had lost his mind. It seems that He deliberately tested them to see if they would seek further clarification or simply jump to conclusions. The question was: Would they interpret by the spirit or the letter?

In John 6:63, Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." He refers to their method of interpretation as "the flesh" method. "Flesh" means carnal. Just as the flesh

⁶ The actual method the author is proposing is called the grammatical-historical method. It believes the historical record is literal and observes the genre of the language as to whether the usage is literal or figurative. This method believes all Scripture is inspired by God.

embodies the spirit, so the true meaning of words is embodied in carnal words. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14 NKJV).

God has gone to great lengths to give us types, shadows, visions, word pictures, and the paradigms of history so that we would go beyond the outward appearance in order to judge truth. As Isaiah 11:3 tells us: "His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge" (NKJV).

Since we are human, we rarely speak in perfectly technical terminology. Even God does not do that. The Bible says of John the Baptist, "All of Judea went out to hear him" (Mark 1:5 NKJV). The technical literalist would understand this to mean every single person in Judea went out to hear him. This is obviously not the meaning. I have heard people say in Spanish, "The whole world went to the meeting." Everyone understood this figure of speech without any further explanation. In the same way, we as Americans have no difficulty understanding the following figures of speech:

"It was raining cats and dogs." "He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth."
"He's too big for his britches." "Your sun and moon will refuse to shine" (Isa 13:10 NKJV). "He's a super star."

In every day speech this is done all the time. For example, if one were to say, "I've told you this a million times," you would understand that part of this sentence is literal ("I've told you"), and part is figurative ("a million times"). The method of interpretation that is used with the Bible is called the "grammatical-historical method." It accepts the historical record as literal, but also realizes that it is a type (Greek *tupos*)⁷ and a deeper lesson. In Revelation 1, the angel gives the interpretation of what John sees. The interpretation is literal and what he sees is a symbol. Both the literal and the symbolic are used in the same vision.

Why does the literalist not take what Jesus said literally when He said, "This generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place" (Matt 24:34 NKJV)? When Jesus said the visions of Revelation "must shortly take place," Why does he not take it literally? These things did take place soon, and in that generation.

⁷ "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1Cor 10:11 NKJV). The Greek word is *tupos* (*types*).

In the Gospel of John, we find various examples of figurative language used by Jesus. Several times, the hearers interpreted Him literally. Nicodemus initially thought Jesus meant he must re-enter his mother's womb (John 3:4). The Samaritan woman, at first, thought that Jesus had some literal magic water when she said, "Please give it to me so I won't have to come back to this well" (John 4: 11 NKJV). Some might even think that those who come to Christ would urinate constantly; based on Jesus' statement that living water would flow from their bellies (John 7:38)!

Let us try to understand what is meant by the shell of the word, rather than what is said. Let us seek to translate the meaning of the word from the speaker's language into our own. Let us strive to understand "the words of the wise and their riddles," rather than insist that they speak in our own language. Let us not be like the horse and mule that need a bridle because they have no human imagination.

When Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," they thought He was rebuking them for not bringing bread. This illustrates how current-day Disciples of Christ can do the same thing when reading the Bible.

3

“But That’s Old Testament”

Old Testament Secrets Uncovered By Christ

Have you ever heard someone say, "But that's Old Testament"? The implication seems to be that if it came from the law or the prophets that it does not count. Both Catholics and Protestants have been known to say this. In Matt 5:17, Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (NKJV). How does Christ fulfill the Old Testament? He does it by unveiling the secret or mysterious meaning. When Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. He took away the veil that separated us from the throne of God. That same act opened to everyone the secret meaning of the Law and the Prophets. In Hebrews, we are told that we have "boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Heb 10:19,20 NKJV). Since His transfiguration, we see no man, but Jesus only in the Old Testament. The Old Testament becomes the New Testament when Christ unveils it.

THE RULE NOW IS THE SPIRIT OF THE LETTER

Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2Cor 3:6 NKJV).

Actually, this has always been the case with the letter. No one at any time was ever saved by the letter of the law. Abraham, Moses, and David were all saved by grace through faith just as we are. They did not know the history of Christ, but they knew the Christ of history.

THE GLORIOUS MINISTRY OF DEATH

The ministry of the letter was so brilliant, that God had to hide its true meaning, just as He hid the face of Moses:

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious (2 Cor 3:7 -11, NKJV emphasis added).

THE GREATER GLORY

Unlike Moses, the Apostle Paul spoke in plain unveiled speech. He uncovered the glorious message of the Old Testament:

Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away (2 Cor 3:12,13, NKJV emphasis added).

THE VEIL TAKEN A WAY IN CHRIST

But their minds were hardened. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor 3: 14 -18 NKJV).

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

While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor 4: 18 NKJV).

Both those who are blind and those who are immature focus on the literal. The

literal is also called the flesh, or the carnal, or the natural. A little child cannot make analogies. Children focus on what is seen - that which is obvious.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able (1 Cor 3:1,2 NKJV).

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14 NKJV).

The literal translation of the word "natural" is "soulish." The word in Greek is 'psychicos,' from which we get the word 'psyche' or 'soul.'

THE "SPIRITUAL" METHOD

The Apostolic method of interpreting the Old Testament was the "spiritual" method. When Jesus said they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, many of His disciples got mad and left Him because of their literal method of interpretation. He responded, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63 NKJV). He deliberately called their literal method, "the flesh." The literal method profits nothing. Only the "spiritual" method gives life.

The proper method of interpreting the Scriptures must be given by God's Spirit. In Revelation 11:1, John "was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there'" (NKJV). Only with a spiritual reed can we properly measure the temple (church), the altar (its worship), and its worshipers.

The Apostles spiritualized the Scriptures. This is how they unveiled them. 1 Corinthians 2:6,7 tells us they would speak "wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory" (NKJV).

In the following passage, Paul uses the word "spirit," "spiritual," or "spiritually" twelve times. He plainly declares that the things of God are to be

understood "spiritually" and not carnally or literally as the disciples did in John 6 when they thought that Jesus meant they should literally eat His flesh and blood. He then said in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." He very clearly says that their literal interpretation was of the flesh. They were unable to make the analogy. The natural or "soulish" man rejects the "spiritual" method.

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:10 -16, NKJV emphasis added).

Man's wisdom is carnal and "soulish." God's wisdom is spiritual.

THE RULE NOW IS THE SPIRIT OF THE LETTER

I believe that the church today is crippled by not using the Old Testament as its foundation. Many Christians seem to think that our foundation is the New Testament. The New Testament is not the foundation of the Bible. It is the superstructure. The apostles never preached from the New Testament. The New Testament is the inspired commentary on the Old Testament.

The order of importance in the Old Testament is as follows:

- 1) The law is the base.
- 2) The prophets are next in importance.
- 3) Then come the writings.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3: 16 NKJV). It is God breathed. Christ is presented throughout. The New Testament is a bare outline. It gives us just enough to enable us to understand the Old. The New cannot be understood without using the Old as the first foundation. The New Testament is the capstone and inspired commentary on the hidden meaning of what had been hidden

from ages. “The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints” (Col 1:26 NKJV).

4

A Better Covenant

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17 NKJV).

For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come (Heb 13:14 NKJV).

Because we have no "city," i.e., "country" here on earth, we are to suffer outside the camp as a living sacrifice. That is, outside the "establishment." Even after the church convinces the world by the power of the Holy Spirit, and even if all men believed, we would still would have no continuing city in the present ungodly system. We are to never settle down with truth as if we had arrived.

According to Ephesians 3:10, God's truth is "manifold." It has many folds. He starts by showing us shadows, symbols, figures, riddles, and parables. He then seeks to unfold the "many folds" behind these outward signs and wonders. This does not imply that He comes to destroy the old revelation (see Matt 5:17). Rather, He comes to build on it and fulfill it in a more meaningful way. He begins by teaching us as babes with milk:

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection (Heb 5:13-6:1 NKJV).

He then says: "not laying again the foundation." The foundation truths are great, but it is wrong to keep on laying a foundation and never building on it. The foundation would get bigger and bigger, but we would never have a house. Then he goes on to list the better things:

A better priesthood (Heb 7: 11 NKJV)
A better hope (Heb 7:19 NKJV)
A better covenant (Heb 7:22 NKJV)
A better tabernacle (Heb 8:2 NKJV)
A better promise (Heb 8:6 NKJV)
A better sacrifice (Heb 9:23 NKJV)
A better country (Heb 11:16 NKJV)
A better mountain (Heb 12:18 NKJV)
A better city (Heb 12:22 NKJV)
A better speaking blood (Heb 12:24 NKJV)
A better shaking (Heb 12:26 NKJV)
A better kingdom (Heb12:28 NKJV)

In Hebrews 7:12 we are told: "For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law" (NKJV). When he speaks of a change in the priesthood and a change in the law, he does not mean that we are destroying it, but only understanding that it is now fulfilled in Christ. The only change is that we now understand these things were mere symbols of the real thing. When he says there is an annulling of the former commandment (Heb 7: 18 NKJV), he does not mean that it is destroyed. He means that it was a figure of the better hope. The symbol is annulled, but not the substance. He does not say the old tabernacle was not good. It was simply a "copy and shadow of the heavenly things." When He says the Old Covenant is obsolete, he does not mean to break it, but to truly fulfill it by keeping the New Covenant.

It was symbolic . . . (Heb 9:9, NKJV emphasis added).

The holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true (Heb 9:24, NKJV emphasis added)

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come (Heb 10:1, NKJV emphasis added).

He takes away the first that He may establish the second (Heb 10:9 NKJV).

In the above scripture, "the first" refers to "sacrifices and offerings" of the law (Heb 10:8). "The second" refers to "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." (Heb 10: 10 NKJV).

God has revealed to us a better way of measuring truth. However, if we were to stop and settle here, it would be just as much error as stopping back there. "Here we

have no continuing city." God's wisdom, grace, works, and mercies are manifold. Let us keep letting Him unfold the many folds of His manifold wisdom to us.

THE LAW OF GOD

God's law through Moses was divided into three parts, all of which are fulfilled in Christ:

1. The moral law
2. The civil law
3. The ceremonial law

Is the moral law obsolete? No. Only the ceremonial law is because it is fulfilled in Christ. The moral law is to be fulfilled by God placing it in our hearts (See Jer 31:33). The spirit (not necessarily the letter) of the civil law is to be fulfilled by the laws of nations when they submit to the kingship of Christ.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5: 19 NKJV).

Whoever stays with the copy and misses the spirit of it will also miss the kingdom.

This method of spiritualizing the Old Testament⁸ is the same apostolic method, which caused the literalists to gnash their teeth and stone Stephen. This same method still offends literalists today.

⁸ This does not mean that we do not accept the literal historical account. We do, by all means, consider it to be the literal historical account as inspired by God. We take the natural first, and after that the spiritual.

**DOES THE NEW COVENANT HAVE BLESSINGS AND CURSES
THE SAME AS THE OLD COVENANT DOES?**

The answer to this is obvious. Would God suddenly and arbitrarily change the pattern?

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition (1 Cor 10: 11 NKJV).

For He said, 'See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain' (Heb 8:5 NKJV).

If the command is to make all things according to the pattern, where are we given the right to change it? Why would we want to nullify the Old Testament pattern? Could it be that we would like to get out from under the responsibility of keeping covenant? Have we broken our word? Are we oath breakers? There is a way to be cleared from guilt, but it is not through denial. It is through confession and repentance. The only thing about the Old Testament that is abolished is the carnal (i.e. literal) method of interpreting it. Literal circumcision is not required, heart circumcision is. Animal sacrifices are not required because Christ is the sacrificial lamb. No temple is needed because God is the true temple (as envisioned and measured by Ezekiel in chapter 40ff). John saw no temple in the New Jerusalem (the Church).

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Rev 21:22 NKJV).

DID THE LAW SAVE PEOPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Again, the answer should be obvious. No one was ever saved by the works of the Law. Anyone who was ever saved at any time was saved the same way you and I are saved today - by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The works of the law cannot and never could save anyone. You may ask, "How could they know Christ before He was born?" They knew Him the same way you know Him today - by the Holy Spirit. We are not saved only by a mental assent to a historical Christ. We are saved by faith

in a living, personal Christ. "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1 NKJV).

DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT DO AWAY WITH THE OLD?

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (Matt 5: 17 NKJV).

Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law (Rom 3:31 NKJV).

To fulfill means to fill full. It does not mean to destroy. The New Testament does not make the Old Testament void. The apostles explain the Old Testament in the New. The New Testament is the inspired commentary on the Old.

IS THE NEW COVENANT LESS SEVERE THAN THE OLD?

According to the following verse, the New Testament is more severe than the old. Herod, Ananias, and Safira were stricken dead in the New Testament just like people were in the Old Testament.

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven" (Heb 12:25,26 NKJV).

Question:

Did the apostles ever preach from the New Testament?

Answer:

No. It did not exist yet. It was not yet complete. They preached from the Old Testament exclusively.

5

Symbols

When we use the "spiritual" method of interpretation, the book of Revelation becomes a practical guide to prayer and evangelism. Rather than fortune telling and headline speculations about the future, it becomes a book for present application. All eschatology must point to Christ alone and not to fruitless disputations. It is not the Revelation of Antichrist. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It is not called "The Book Of Revelations." It is singular, not plural.

SYMBOLS IN REVELATION

<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>VERSE</u>	<u>SUBSTANCE</u>
Babylon	16:19	Jerusalem ⁹
The beast	13:1	Rome / Nero
Lamp stand	1:20	The church
Lamb with two horns	13:11	The false prophet ¹⁰
Lamb of God	5:6	Christ
Four horsemen	6:8	God's four judgments ¹¹

⁹ "In her was found the blood of prophets and saints" (Rev 18:24 NKJV). Who kills the prophets? It was neither Rome nor Babylon. The answer is in Matt 23:37 - "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets" (NKJV), and Isaiah. 1:2 - "How the faithful city has become a harlot!" (NKJV).

¹⁰ The false prophet caused others to worship the beast by saying, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15 NKJV). The false prophet is the whore of Babylon and synagogue of Satan.

¹¹ They are Oppression (sometimes called beasts or captivity), war, famine, and death (sometimes called plague or pestilence).
"And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction,' says the LORD: 'the sword to slay, the dogs to drag (famine), the birds_of the heavens and the beasts of the earth (death) to devour and destroy'" (Jer.15:3 NKJV).

<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>VERSE</u>	<u>SUBSTANCE</u>
Ten horns on the beast	13:1	The ten Roman provinces ¹²
The dragon	12:3	Satan
The sea	17: 1,15	The nations
God and Magog	20	The nations
The bottomless pit	11:7; 20:3	The human heart ¹³
Sword in Christ's mouth	1:16	The word of God
Bride of the Lamb	21:9	The church
The great harlot	17:1	Corrupt Jerusalem ¹⁴
Incense	5:8	Prayer
The 144,000	7:4	The first Jewish believers
The two olive branches	11:4 & Rom 11:17	The church ¹⁵
The two witnesses	11:3,4	The church ¹⁶
The seal of God	7:3	Seal of the Holy Spirit ¹⁷

"I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, (captivity)" (Jer 15:4 NKJV).

"For thus says the Lord God: 'How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem--the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence --to cut off man and beast from it?'" (Ezek 14:21 NKJV).

These four judgments not only come outwardly, they also come inwardly to the souls of men.

¹² Rome was divided into ten provinces. The ten horns (provinces) destroyed the whore of Babylon (Jerusalem).

¹³ The beast arises from the abyss (Rev 11:7). He also arises from the sea (Rev 17:8). "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" (Rev 17: 15 NKJV). Where is the abyss then? It must be under the sea. If the sea represents nations, then the abyss is in the hearts of unbelieving men. The only power Satan has is if we believe his lies. He gets his power from the human heart. We cannot say, "The devil made me do it." Pogo was right.

¹⁴ Talmudic Judaism came from Babylon. The Talmud was called "oral tradition." It was what Jesus referred to when He said, "You, by your traditions, make the Word of God of none effect" (Mark 7:13 NKJV). Paul called it "The Jerusalem that now is" (Gal 4:25 NKJV).

¹⁵ "And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree" (Rom 11:17 NKJV).

¹⁶ "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth." The lampstand is the church. "The seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches" (Rev 1:20 NKJV). Compare with Zec 4: 11-14 "Then I answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive trees, one at the right of the lampstand and the other at its left?' And I further answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?' Then he answered me and said, 'Do you not know what these are?' And I said, 'No, my lord.' So he said, 'These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth'" (NKJV).

¹⁷ "You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph 1: 13 NKJV).

<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>VERSE</u>	<u>SUBSTANCE</u>
Mark of the beast	13:7	Worship of the state ¹⁸
1000 years	20:2	An undetermined time ¹⁹
Earth dwellers	12:12	Unbelievers
Heaven dwellers	12:12	Believers
Woman clothed with sun	12:1	God's people ²⁰
New Jerusalem	21:2	The church ²¹
Seven stars	1:20	Pastors ²²
Synagogue of Satan	2:9	Judaizers
Earth quakes	6:12	Revolutions
White robes	19:8	Righteous acts
Egypt and Sodom	11:8	Corrupt Jerusalem
Fallen stars	6:3; 8:10;9:1; 12:4	Fallen rulers
666	13:18	Nero's name ²³
First resurrection	20:5	The new birth

SYMBOLS IN GALATIANS

Which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar--for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children--but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear!

¹⁸ If the seal of God is invisible to the carnal eye, then the mark of the beast must be also. To worship the image of the beast is to be convinced that the values of the world are what we need. This is not just for the future. Many unsaved persons are taking it now, just as believers are now sealed with the seal of God. This mark could also be a veiled reference to the demand for circumcision. Those who worshipped Nero, had this mark on their head (mind) and on their hand (actions). Without it, commerce was forbidden

¹⁹ One day is as 1000 years. 1000 years is also as one day. That is pretty indefinite (2 Pet 3:8). God makes His covenant with 1000 generations (Deut. 7:9). That is pretty indefinite. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps.50: 10). That is pretty indefinite. "A thousand shall fall at thy side" (Ps.91:7 NKJV). That is pretty indefinite. It just means a lot of generations, hills, and people.

²⁰ I used to think this was natural Israel because the same symbols in Joseph's dream referred to the family of Israel. But now I see that all believers in Christ have been grafted into the same good Olive tree (Rom 11: 17 NKJV).

²¹ Note that the city is coming down now (present tense).

²² The word "angel" means messenger. The seven messengers were the overseers. Pastors, then, are stars in the hand of Christ.

²³ In Hebrew each letter is also a number. The letters of Nero's name add up to 666.

Break forth and shout, you who do not travail! for the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband." Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now (Gal 4:24 -29).

SYMBOLS IN GALATIANS

SYMBOL	VERSE	SUBSTANCE
Abraham's two wives	4:24	Two covenants ²⁴
Ishmael, the Son of Hagar	4:24	Sons of bondage ²⁵
Hagar	4:25	Jerusalem ²⁶
Free Sarah	4:22	New Jerusalem
Our mother	4:26	The church
Isaac, son of the promise	4:28	Believers
Persecutors	4:29	Unbelieving Jews
Persecuted	4:29	Believers

NOTE THE ANALOGY

Hagar equals bondage. Bondage equals Ishmael. Ishmael equals the Jerusalem of Paul's day (natural Jerusalem). Natural Jerusalem equals the son of the flesh (Ishmael). The son of the flesh equals Sinai. Sinai is in Arabia. Sinai equals the natural Jews. They persecute like Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Therefore they must be Arabs (sons of Ishmael). This is using the same sort of logic Jesus used in John 8 when He said the unbelieving Jews were not sons of Abraham or sons of God, but sons of the devil because they were liars like their father, the devil.

²⁴ One is to condemnation and the other to life.

²⁵ Ishmael, the son of Hagar, is the father of the Arabs.

²⁶ Paul is overtly calling unbelieving Jews Arabs. So when Jews fight Arabs it is really Arabs fighting Arabs. Jesus called unbelieving Jews sons of the Devil and not sons of Abraham and that they were of the synagogue of Satan (John 8:44; Rev 3:9). Ezekiel said their "father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite" (Ezek 16:3 NKJV).

PAUL SAYS UNBELIEVING JEWS ARE ARABS

Sarah equals freedom. Isaac is likened to the New Jerusalem, the church. Sarah is also called our mother, the church. The church is our mother and is persecuted like Isaac was. (Note that just as Old Testament Israel is our mother, so is New Testament Israel (the church). Both Sarah and Isaac are called the church. The Bible mixes metaphors.

OLD TESTAMENT SYMBOLS

In Christ the veil that was over the Old Testament is taken away.
For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ (2 Cor 3:14 NKJV).

THE LETTER OF LAW	VERSE	THE SPIRIT OF LAW
The 10 plagues	Exodus 7-12	Spiritual torment ²⁷
The 10 commandments	Exodus 20	Love
Circumcision	Rom 2:29	A changed heart
Forbidden foods		Spiritual discrimination
The new moon Sabbaths		Rest in Christ ²⁸
The high priest		Christ
The temple	Ezek 41	The church
Animal sacrifices	Rom 12:1	Our worship
Zion	Heb 12:22	The church ²⁹
Israel		All believers
Jerusalem		The church ³⁰
THE LETTER OF LAW	VERSE	THE SPIRIT OF LAW
Judah		The church

²⁷ These torments are sent by God to destroy the world's confidence in their god's, in order that they might look to the Lord. For example, the water of Elvis Presley was turned to blood and he died a very miserable person. Rev 11:10 says these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

²⁸ "Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Col 2: 16 ,17 NKJV).

²⁹ "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn" (Heb 12:22,23 NKJV).

³⁰ Praying for the peace of Jerusalem means praying for the church, not for what the world calls Jerusalem. That Jerusalem is cursed. It is not a holy land.

The house of David		The church
The nations		Demons ³¹
The Assyrian	Isaiah 10	A principality
The king of Babylon	Isaiah 14:4,12	Lucifer

It was symbolic for the present time (Heb 9:9 NKJV).

But without a parable He did not speak to them (Mark 4:34 NKJV).

I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets (Hos 12: 10 NKJV).

These things I have spoken to you in figurative language (John 16:25 NKJV).

THE SYMBOLISM OF STARS

A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles (Prov 1:5,6 NKJV).

God's Word is full of hidden wisdom and riddles. A wise person will listen and learn to solve these riddles. Let us look at the symbolism of stars in the Bible and see if we can solve their meaning.

Stars fight:

They fought from the heavens; the stars from their courses fought against Sisera (Judges 5:20 NKJV).

Stars sing:

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7 NKJV).

Stars rule:

The moon and stars to rule by night, For His mercy endures forever (Ps136: 9 NKJV).

³¹ Each nation has its own principalities ruling over it because the people subscribe to their lies. The angel that appeared to Daniel had to wrestle with the principality of Persia and later with the principality of Greece (Dan 10:12,13,20). With the veil taken away from the Old Testament, we see that God is not talking about what can be seen in the natural, but about what He sees as the real problem. After we leave Egypt (the world system) we are to enter the Promised Land and little by little destroy the nations (demons) that dwell in our inheritance (our lives). "Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land" (Exo 23 :30 NKJV).

Stars (rulers) are darkened:

The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw (Isa 13:1 NKJV).

They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD and His weapons of indignation, to destroy the whole land (Isa 13:5 NKJV).

Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it (Isa 13:9 NKJV).

For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine" (Isa 13: 10 NKJV).

Stars exalt themselves:

Though you exalt yourself as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down" says the LORD (Obad 1:4, NKJV emphasis added).

For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit (Isa 14: 13-15 NKJV).

How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger! He cast down from heaven to the earth the beauty of Israel, and did not remember His footstool in the day of His anger (Lam 2: 1, NKJV emphasis added).

This casting down from heaven refers to the fall of Jerusalem in 606 B.C.

And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades (Matt 11 :23, NKJV emphasis added).

Some stars cast down other stars and trample them:

And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them (Dan 8: 10 , NKJV emphasis added).

Note that stars are called the "host of heaven."

He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down (Dan

8:11 NKJV).

Wandering stars are false teachers:

Raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 1:13, NKJV emphasis added).

Jesus holds stars in his hand:

He had in His right hand seven stars. out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength (Rev 1:16, NKJV emphasis added).

Stars are called angels:

The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands which you saw are the seven churches (Rev 1:20, NKJV emphasis added).

A fallen star holds a key to the pit:

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. And to him was given the key to the bottomless pit (Rev 9:1 NKJV).

A woman in heaven has 12 stars on her head:

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars (Rev. 12:1, NKJV emphasis added).

Satan throws down stars:

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born (Rev 12:4 NKJV).

Note the symbolism:

Stars rule, sing, fight, and fall (Judges 5:20, Job 38:7, Ps 136:9).

Stars refuse to shine (Isa 13: 10).

Seven stars are in the hand of Jesus (Rev 1).

Twelve stars are worn on the woman's head (Rev 12).

The little horn cast stars to the ground (Dan 8).

Stars are called angels (Rev 1 :20) and the powers of heaven (Mk 13 :25).

Jude's mockers are called wandering stars (Jude 13).

The dragon's tail knock's down a third of the stars (Rev 12:4).

Eleven stars bowed to Joseph (Gen 37).
The key to the bottomless pit was given to a fallen star (Rev 9: 1).
Stars are called sons of God (Job 38:7).

What is the function of the morning star?

Answer: To rule all the other stars.

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star (Rev 2:26 -28 NKJV)

How you are fallen from heaven, 0 Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! (Isa 14:12 NKJV).

Lucifer means “morning star.” The function of the morning star is to weaken the nations (see Num 24: 17 below and Rev 2:27,28 above).

To Him who made great lights, For His mercy endures forever - The sun to rule by day, For His mercy endures forever; The moon and stars to rule by night, For His mercy endures forever. To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn, For His mercy endures forever (Ps 136:7 -10 NKJV).

We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts (2 Pet 1: 19 NKJV).

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star (Rev 22:16 NKJV).

I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult (Num 24: 17 NKJV).

The fall of Babylon's stars was foretold two hundred years beforehand:

The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amos saw (Isa 13: 1 NKJV).

Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it (Isa 13:9 NKJV).

For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun

will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine (Isa 13: 10 NKJV).

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them (Isa 13: 17 NKJV).

Cyrus the Mede overthrew Babylon in Daniel's day. Therefore, the stars or "powers" over Babylon refused to shine.

Judgment on earth's heavenly powers prophesied:

And it shall be that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken. The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again. It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth. They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; after many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously (Isa 24:18 -23 NKJV).

The phrase "the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed" means that the earth's days of rebellion will be over and the Lord will reign.

A pre-told history of judgment on earth's stars:

Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, and His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. Also their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, and as fruit falling from a fig tree. For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; indeed it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse, for judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made overflowing with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. The wild oxen shall come down with them, and the young bulls with the mighty bulls; their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust saturated with fatness. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion" (Isa 34:1-8 NKJV).

The expression "mountains shall be melted with their blood," means, "Kingdoms will be destroyed." "My sword shall be bathed in heaven;" and "filled with blood" is a poetic way of saying, "I am very angry!" "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down" is prophetic language for "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion."

Pharaoh's lights were put out by Babylon:

Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh (Ezek. 32:2 NKJV)

When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light (Ezek 32:7 NKJV).

“All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, and bring darkness upon your land,” says the Lord God (Ezek 32:8 NKJV).

For thus says the Lord God: “The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you” (Ezek 32:11 NKJV).

This prophecy of Ezekiel was fulfilled when Babylon took Egypt. God put out Pharaoh's light and covered the sun with a cloud and the moon refused to shine. This is metaphorical language.

The little horn (Antiochus Epiphanes) is pictured as a star:

And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered" (Dan 8:9 -12 NKJV).

How did he cast some of the stars down? He overthrew the authorities and powers of Judea. The Prince of the Host is Christ. Antiochus sacrificed a pig on the altar and the temple lay desolate for three and one-half years until the Maccabees

recaptured it in 165 B.C.

A star named Wormwood fell around A.D. 70:

Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell II from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water; and the name of the star is Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter (Rev 8:10,11 NKJV).

The star of the bottomless pit:

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. And to him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit (Rev 9:1,2 NKJV).

And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon (Rev 9:11 NKJV).

Fallen stars are principalities:

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born (Rev 12:4 NKJV).

A garland of twelve stars:

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars (Rev 12: 1 NKJV).

The twelve stars are the symbol of God's people in Joseph's dream. Therefore, this woman is not Mary. It is God's people.

Stars who bow:

Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me. " So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" (Gen 37:9,10 NKJV)

The stars over Jerusalem predicted to fall:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken (Matt 24:29 NKJV).

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled (Matt 24:34 NKJV).

It is impossible to interpret the falling of stars as literally falling to earth. The gravity of stars is much greater than the gravity of the earth. This prophecy was fulfilled forty years later in A.D. 70. If you were standing there and heard Jesus say that this generation would not pass away until all these things were fulfilled, what would you think? Would you think He meant two thousand years from now, or the generation in which you were living? The stars fell in that generation just as He promised. The stars, which fell in that generation, were the established authorities. They were the powers of the heavens.

6

THE BOOK OF REVELATION DE-MYSTIFIED

There are three main ways scholars interpret the book of Revelation. They are (1) the Futurist, (2) the Historical, and (3) the Preterist. The Futurist method puts the fulfillment of all the predictions in our future. The problem with this is that Jesus indicates some nine times in the book that these things would happen soon. The Historical method says that the prophecies of Revelation are being fulfilled throughout history. Many Reformers, Jonathon Edwards, Albert Barnes, and the Adventists subscribed to this method. The Preterist (from the Greek word for past tense) sees the prophecies of Revelation as already fulfilled. Partial Preterists see all except chapter 19, 20, and 21 as fulfilled. R.C. Sproul, David Chilton, Gary DeMar, John Bray, and Kenneth Gentry are some of the well-known preterists. Some of the futurists are the popular writers such as Scofield (the Scofield Bible), Hal Lindsay, and Tim LaHaye.

The word “revelation” or “apocalypse” means unveiling. Is it not ironic that what God says is unveiled, is today the most mysterious and misunderstood book in the Bible? To most people, it is still veiled.

What the church needs today is a Joseph, a Daniel, or a "Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of the Lord" (2 Chron 26:5). The author believes God has supplied these men as gifts to His church. These men are not just teachers. These men are humble, open, and teachable. They are willing to change their minds and hearts. They are not controlled by fear of error. They trust God to give them wisdom as He promised in James 1:5.

The other thing the church needs is an understanding and knowledge of history.

If we know the events of John's time, we can apply the analogies of John's Revelation. It could definitely be called "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ."

God says visions are given in riddles and symbols.³² Joseph's sun, moon and eleven stars (he is the twelfth) are his father, mother, and brothers. Jacob's ladder is Christ. Seven fat cows are seven years of plenty. Fallen stars are principalities and powers. Daniel's golden-headed image is a symbol of world empires. Revelation 1:1 clearly says God "sent and signified" this revelation to John. The word "signified" in the Greek is SEMAINO- "to give a sign" (W.E. Vine).

I have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets (Hos 12:10 NKJV).

God gave this vision to John in signs and pictures, or hieroglyphics. He also used word pictures and numerical symbolism as signs. Seven is a number symbolizing qualitative completeness. Ten is a number symbolizing quantitative completeness or many-ness. Twelve is a number symbolizing God's people. Below is a list of the possible significance of Bible numbers.

7 = Complete Quality

10 = Complete Quantity (Many-ness)

12 = God's Covenant People

144,000 = 12 X 12 X 10 X 10 X 10 (12 tribes multiplied by 12 apostles multiplied by many-ness)

1000 = 10 X 10 X 10

24 = 12 tribes + 12 apostles (Both Old & New covenant saints)

To symbolize a statement, which is not part of a vision or poetic language, is to interpret incorrectly. To take literally what is plainly meant to be symbolical, however, is also incorrect.

We can only receive understanding and revelation from God by means of the

³² "Then He said, 'Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?'" (Num12:6-8 NKJV). Note that dark sayings (sometimes called riddles) are synonymous with visions and dreams.

Holy Spirit. If we ask for wisdom, God said He would give it (James 1:5). Before we proceed further, let us pray.

Father, in Jesus' name I renounce all my preconceived notions. Help me to be as open and as teachable as a little child. By your grace make me willing to be taught better by the Holy Spirit through any man. I come against pride, prejudice and fear. In Jesus name I command them to go! I ask for wisdom to understand the apocalypse. I ask for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. Amen.

WHEN WAS REVELATION WRITTEN?

Revelation 17 (NKJV) clearly tells us when John wrote this book. It was during the reign of the sixth king of the beast. The beast has seven heads, which the angel says are the "seven mountains on which the woman sits" (v.9). The beast, then, is Rome, the city of seven hills. But the angel also says that the seven heads are seven kings: "Five have fallen, one is" (v. 10). The sixth emperor of Rome was Nero! He killed himself in A.D. 68. He was a beast in the image of the other beast (Rome). Rome was a beast in the image of the dragon. Nero killed many members of his own family and was a sexual pervert who would attack both men and women sexually while dressed in the skin of an animal. For three and one-half years he killed many thousands of Christians, including the two witnesses Peter and Paul. His name in Hebrew adds up to 666. (Every letter in Hebrew is also a number.) The false prophet caused men to worship the image of the beast by saying, "We have no king but Caesar." Whoever says that, is the False Prophet.

But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" (John 19:15 NKJV).

The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet unanimously cry, "We have no king but Caesar!"

The Divine Order:

Father
Son (image of the Father)
Angels/Overseers
Church (image of the Son)

The Satanic Counterfeit

Dragon
Beast (image of the dragon)
False prophet
Synagogue of Satan (image of the beast)

Who kills the prophets? The synagogue of Satan (those who say they are Jews but lie) is the false religion of the whore of Babylon. She rides on and is supported by the beast. Revelation 18:24 tells us that she kills the prophets: "and in her was found the blood of prophets and saints." Who is the one who kills the prophets? The synagogue of Satan is also the false prophet who says there is no king but Caesar. This was none other than corrupt Jerusalem!

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets (Matt 23:37 NKJV).

But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" (John 19:15 NKJV).

How the faithful city [Jerusalem] has become a harlot (Isa 1:21 NKJV).

WHEN WOULD THIS BE FULFILLED?

Jesus is very clear about this. He says "shortly" (Rev 1: 1 NKJV). Shortly means shortly. It does not mean a thousand years. If He said shortly and meant two thousand years or more, would that not be deceptive? In Matthew 23 and 24, He said that all these things would be fulfilled in the generation in which He lived. The prophecy given in Matthew 24 is sandwiched by the promise that it would be fulfilled in that generation. It is given once before and once after the prophecy.

Before:

That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation (Matt 23:35,36, NKJV emphasis added).

After:

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled (Matt 24:34 NKJV).

Does God mean what He says or not? God is not waiting for the final coming of Christ to fulfill all these words. He did it in A.D. 70 - in that same generation. Daniel was told to seal his prophecy because the time for its fulfillment was a long way off (Dan 8:26).³³ His prophecy in Daniel 8 began its fulfillment two hundred years later with Alexander the Great. John was told the opposite (not to seal) his prophesy because the time was near: "And he said to me, 'Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand'" (Rev 22:10 NKJV).

John's prophecy was fulfilled not more than seven years later. It was all fulfilled in A.D. 70. The Roman war with the Jews started three and one-half years before A.D. 70. It was the great tribulation. The Christians escaped Jerusalem in A.D. 66 when they saw the Roman armies encircling Jerusalem.

And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled (Rev 17:16,17 NKJV).

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! And her smoke rises up forever and ever!" (Rev 19:1-3 NKJV).

What could be clearer?

Before Jerusalem Fell, by Kenneth Gentry, Jr., and published by Gary North's Dominion Press, seeks evidence for the true date of the book of Revelation. The evidence seems to tilt dramatically toward a date of A.D. 65 or 66 during the great tribulation period that included Nero's persecution of the church. It seems to have

³³ "Therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future" (Dan 8:26 NKJV).

been written before the outbreak of the Jewish war with Rome in A.D. 66.

IRENÆUS

Mr. Gentry starts by examining the external evidence. The tradition for a late date writing of A.D. 96 originated with Irenaeus, who wrote *Against Heresies* in about A.D. 180. Irenaeus was the bishop of Lyons and had been acquainted with Polycarp, who knew the Apostle John. All others who say Revelation was written during Domitian's reign about A.D. 96 base their information on Irenaeus. They quote the following passage in support of their position:

We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of the 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.

The problem with this statement may be the translation. It is a very poor translation from Greek to Latin, and the Greek version is no longer available. What is translated "that was seen," should possibly be translated as "he was seen." Many great scholars agree on this.

In addition, Irenaeus was not fully informed about some things. He states in one place, for example, that Jesus died at age 50!

Also, it is a fact that one of Nero's titles was Domitius Nero. Perhaps this fact confused Irenaeus. In addition, Domitian himself ruled briefly for Vespasian shortly before A.D. 70. We must agree with Gentry that "A bold 'thus saith Irenaeus' cannot be conclusive of the matter."

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Mr. Gentry goes on to examine the external evidence in the writings of the other church fathers. I will mention a few of these writings. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215) says that "after the death of the tyrant" the Apostle John was moved from the island of Patmos back to Ephesus. He does not say who "the tyrant" was. There were many tyrants who ruled, but if we are speaking of *the* tyrant, there was only one. His name was Nero. Even pagan authors described Nero as a serpent and a

beast. Pliny the Elder (died A.D. 79) described Nero as the "destroyer of the human race" and "the poison of the world." Apollonius of Tyana (born 4 B.c.) says:

In my travels, which have been wider than ever man yet accomplished, I have seen many, many wild beasts of Arabia and India; but this beast, that is commonly called a Tyrant, I know not how many heads it has, nor if it be crooked of claw, and armed with horrible fangs...and of wild beasts you cannot say that they were ever known to eat their own mothers, but Nero has gorged himself on this diet.

Gentry lists at least twelve pagan authors who mock Nero in similar terms. Nero was the first emperor to be declared an enemy of the state. He killed his own parents, brother, aunt, wife, and many close friends. He was a sodomite who castrated a boy and married him. He would clothe himself in an animal skin and attack the private parts of men and women while they were tied up. He killed multitudes of Christians, including Peter and Paul. He forced four hundred senators and six hundred knights to fight in the arena. This is only a partial description of this tyrant's character. No other tyrant could compare to this one. In addition, we are not even certain that there was a persecution under Domitian. Clement also says that after John was released he spent the rest of his life visiting the churches. He even relates one example of John chasing a backslidden elder on horseback. This would be difficult to believe if he were over one-hundred years old, but would not be unlikely if he were released around A.D. 70 at about the age of sixty or seventy.

SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

Gentry also examines the ancient book called Shepherd of Hermas. Much of the same imagery used in Revelation is used by Hermas. Origen says this is the same Hermas mentioned by Paul in Romans 16: 14. If a contemporary of Paul is quoting from Revelation, this calls for the earlier date.

TERTULLIAN

Jerome understood Tertullian (A.D. 160-220) to say that John was banished by Nero.

SYRIAC WITNESSES

The Syriac History of John the Son of Zebedee makes reference to John's banishment under Nero:

After these things, when the Gospel was increasing by the hands of the Apostles, Nero, the unclean and impure and wicked king, heard all that had happened at Ephesus. And he sent [and] took all that the procurator had, and imprisoned him; and laid hold of S1. John and drove him into exile; and passed sentence on the city that it should be laid waste.

This ancient statement is clear and to the point. Also in the Syriac Version of the Revelation, the title statement says that John was banished by Nero. This is pretty heavy evidence!

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

The purpose of the book of Revelation, to bring judgment on those who pierced Christ, is stated in Revelation 1:7: "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. " In Revelation 1: 1 these events were predicted to take place shortly: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John." Shortly does not equal two thousand years. These events took place almost immediately, and were fulfilled in A.D. 70. When Jesus prophesied judgment on Jerusalem, He said it would happen in that same generation: "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation" (Matt 23:36 NKJV), and "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled" (Matt 24:34 NKJV).

THE SIXTH KING

Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on

which the woman sits (Rev 17:9 NKJV).

There are also seven kings. Five have fallen. one is. and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time (Rev 17: 10, NKJV emphasis added).

Listed below are the first ten emperors of Rome.

1. Julius Caesar (49-44 B.C.)
2. Augustus (31 B.C.- A.D. 14)
3. Tiberius (A.D. 14-37)
4. Gaius, also known as Caligula (A.D. 37-41)
5. Claudius (A.D. 41-54)
6. Nero (A.D. 54-68) "one is"
7. Galba (A.D. 68-69) "he must continue a short time"
8. Otho (A.D. 69)
9. Vitellius (A.D. 69)
10. Vespasian (A.D. 69-79)

The book was written during the reign of the sixth head. Galba ruled for six or seven months. Otho was hailed by the masses to be the spirit of Nero. The wound that the beast received seemed as though it would have slain Rome (the beast). However, Rome somehow revived and came back from the mortal wound it had received during all of the civil wars and upheaval. One of the heads of the beast is himself the beast. Could it be that the assassination of Julius Caesar was the mortal wound that was healed by the re-appearance of the beast in the second head, Augustus? The senators thought they could/had killed it, but it arose from the dead in the form of Augusts Caesar.

666

Nero Caesar, in Hebrew adds up to 666. It was quite common to add up names in those days. Each letter of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin alphabets also represented a number. In the ruins of Pompey the following words were found written on a wall: "I love her whose number is 545." Only she knew who she was.

FURTHER EVIDENCE

And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword (Rev 6:3-4 NKJV).

There was great peace and stability in the Roman Empire from about 4 B.C. until the time of Nero. At that time the Pax Romana (Roman peace) was taken from the earth.

It has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city under foot for forty-two months (Rev 11:2 NKJV).

The Jewish war with Rome lasted precisely forty-two months from AD 66 to AD 70.

And great hail from heaven fell upon men, every hailstone about the weight of a talent. And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great (Rev 16:21 NKJV).

Josephus tells us that the stones cast by the Roman engines weighed one talent (one-hundred pounds).

And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. And their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man" (Rev 9:5 NKJV).

Rome laid siege to Jerusalem for five months starting in April and ending in September.

And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months (Rev 13:5 NKJV).

The persecution under Nero lasted forty-two months, from November of A.D. 64 to June of A.D. 68.

7

THE MILLENNIUM

The word millennium means one thousand years. The teaching of the millennium is taken from Revelation chapter 20:

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Rev. 20:1-10 NKJV, emphasis added).

THREE INTERPRETATIONS

There are three basic interpretations of the millennium in the universal church: Pre-Millennialism, A-Millennialism, and Post-Millennialism. Never in the history of the church has there ever been such a thing as an "orthodox eschatology" or an

"orthodox" doctrine on the millennium. Before we get stricken with hysteria, or with the "bogey-man syndrome," let wisdom prevail. Many evangelicals today think that pre-millennialism is the only orthodox alternative. This is simply because they have been ill informed.

Pre- Millennialism

This interpretation says that Jesus will return and set up a literal kingdom on earth that will last one thousand years. At the end of this time Satan will be released to deceive the nations and persecute the saints. God will destroy the nations and the earth at that time. This interpretation is based on the literal method of interpretation. "Pre" means before. They believe Jesus comes before the millennium.

A-Millennialism

The majority of Reformed Christians and Roman Catholics are a-millennialists.³⁴ "A" means "no". This interpretation says there is no literal millennium. It uses the "spiritual" method of interpretation. It says that Christ bound Satan for a figurative one thousand years for those who believe. (The promises of prophecy are conditional.) Satan is not bound unless we believe the Word of God. If we do not believe, he is bound in the bottomless pit of our own hearts.³⁵ If we do believe, we sit on thrones as those who have lost their own headship and taken on the headship Christ. This first resurrection takes place, according to Ephesians 2: I and John 5:25, at the moment of the new birth: "And you He made alive, who at were dead in trespasses and sins" and "most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. "

The A-millennialist believes in a literal interpretation of Ephesians 2:1 and John 5:25, because the apostles are speaking in literal terms in these passages. In Revelation, however, the apostle is speaking in the symbolic language of a vision.

³⁴ Some of the a-millennialists are St. Augustine, Calvin, Berkhof, Ridderbos, Gordon Spykman, Geerhardus Vos, and Dooyeweerd.

³⁵ Where is the bottomless pit? Rev 11:7 says the beast ascends out of the bottomless pit. Rev 13:1 says the beast ascends out of the sea. The pit then must be under the sea! What is the sea? "And he said to me, 'The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, sea multitudes, nations, and tongues'" (Rev 17:15 NKJV). If the sea is the nations, then the pit must be in the heart of the nations.

John plainly states in Revelation 1:1 that God gave him the revelation in sign language: "And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John." "Signified" means "given in symbols." It is a vision like almost all other visions - a vision of symbols.

I have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets (Hos 12:10 NKJV).

Without a parable He did not speak to them (Matt 13:34 NKJV).

Which things are symbolic (Gal 4:24 NKJV)

The pre-millennialist, who prides himself on the literal method, simply seems to be blind to the connection between Ephesians 2: 1, John 5:25, and Revelation 20. Some simply ignore the obvious connection, others spiritualize Ephesians 2:1 and John 5:25 (above). Those who do this always seem to take visions literally and spiritualize what is given in literal terms. A convenient, albeit inconsistent, method of interpretation!

I believe 2 Peter 3 gives us a commentary on Revelation 20. He wrote it before Revelation was written. Then the Holy Spirit gave us the same thing in vision or symbolic form. Let us read each passage and note the comparisons.

But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up (2 Pet 3:7-10 NKJV).

He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Rev 20:2-10 NKJV).

Note that when Peter speaks of Christ's second coming, he does not speak of a seven-year tribulation or a millennium. He says when Christ returns the elements shall melt with a fervent heat.³⁶ The pre-millennialist says that this will not happen until after the millennium. The pre-millennialist bases his doctrine solely on one passage in the entire Bible. All rules of interpretation forbid this.

Does God mean something else when he says one thousand years? Did He mean something else when He said "candlestick?" Yes. He meant church. Did He mean something else when He said "seven heads?" Yes. He meant seven kings. Did He mean something else when He said "the sea?" Yes. He meant nations, and peoples and tongues. Did He mean one thousand when He said, "He owns the cattle on a thousand hills?" Surely God owns more hills of cattle than that. Did He mean one thousand when He said, "He makes His covenant with a thousand generations?" If we took that literally we would have to say that the world would not end until one thousand generations from Moses. That would be forty thousand years. Did He mean one thousand when He said, "A thousand shall fall at thy side?" Or did He mean ten thousand?

Peter clearly interprets the meaning of the thousand years when he says, "a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day." That is pretty indefinite

Post- Millennialism

Many of the second generation of Scottish Reformers, Jonathon Edwards, Dr. David Livingston, O.T. Allis, and Benjamin B. Warfield are examples of some of the post-millennialists.³⁷ This school uses the same rule of interpretation as the a-mil school. The only difference is that the post-mil school believes that this symbolic thousand years also represents a period of worldwide revival in which "All the ends of

³⁶ The preterist view says that Peter's prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70. The "weak and beggarly elements" of the ceremonial law melted with a fervent heat when the temple was destroyed. The destruction of Jerusalem was the sign of Christ's first coming and the end of the Old Testament age.

³⁷ Gentry, Kenneth L Jr. *He Shall Have Dominion*, Institute For Christian Economics 1992, page 66. Some recent post-millennialists include R.C. Sproul, Loraine Boettner, J. R. Rushdoony, Greg Bahnsen, David Chilton, Gary North, Kenneth Gentry, and Gary DeMar. Wilhellmus á Brakel wrote that before Christ returns, "the glorious millennial state of the church upon earth" must take place first. *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995, page 348.

the world Shall remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You" (Ps 22:27 NKJV). Christ will not return until the meek have inherited the earth first. "Post" means after. Christ will come after this symbolic thousand years.

Those who object to this interpretation do not believe that this is possible. They believe only the physical presence of Christ can convert the world. But Jesus said:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father (John 14:12 NKJV).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away (John 16:7 NKJV).

Post-millennialists are sometimes accused of believing in the use of politics, force, or revolution to bring this about. This accusation is a total fabrication and a careless interpretation of what the postmillennialists really say. For a thorough investigation of the post-mil evidence, read *He Shall Have Dominion* by Kenneth L. Gentry.

WORLDWIDE REVIVAL

The following scriptures predict worldwide revival. Men will turn to the Lord because they remember, not because they are forced by Christ's physical presence.

All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You (Ps 22:27 NKJV).

Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him (Ps 72:11 NKJV).

When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD (Ps 102:22 NKJV).

8

HOW TO BE A BETTER ZIONIST

This chapter was inspired by what a television preacher said and did. He covered himself with an Israeli flag and told how to be a “good Zionist.”

WHAT IS ZIONISM?

There are two definitions of Zionism. Encyclopedia Britannica defines Zionism as "a Jewish nationalist movement that has had as its goal the creation and support of a Jewish national state in Palestine. It is in many ways a continuation of the ancient and deep-felt nationalist attachment of the Jews and of the Jewish religion to Palestine."

It was this same ancient nationalist movement that rebelled against Rome in A.D. 66. That rebellion culminated three and one-half years later with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. At that time it was not called Zionism. Those in the movement were sometimes called Zealots, and at other times called Robbers. Barabbas was a robber who killed a man in an insurrection against Rome. The television preacher who wanted us to be good Zionists did not understand that he was encouraging people to be followers of Barabbas.

A GOOD ZIONIST

To be a good Zionist, one must say, "Give us Barabbas," and "Crucify Christ." Barabbas represents a national Jewish homeland in Palestine with a temple and a Jewish religion that resorts to the arm of the flesh and to terrorism. This is the way to be a good Zionist. Now let us look at how to be a better Zionist.

A BETTER ZIONIST

The Apostles give the second definition of Zionism. Hebrews 12:22 and 23 says, "you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God . . .to the church of the first-born" (NKJV). According to the Apostles, to come to the church of the First Born (Christ), is to come to Mt. Zion. Those who bless Christ are blessed. Those

who say, "Give us Barabbas," are cursed. Good Zionists are cursed. Better Zionists are blessed.

And the sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you. And all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet and they will call you the city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel (Isa 60:14 NKJV).

Jesus alluded to this verse in Isaiah when he said, "Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie - behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you" (Rev3:9 NKJV).

To whom is God speaking? He is speaking to the Zion of the Holy One. Who is Zion according to Hebrews 12:22 and 23? It is the church of the First-Born. Who is the first-born heir of God? It is Christ. All kings must and will come to Mt. Zion, the City of God. "All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You" (Ps 22:27 NKJV).

WHO SAYS THEY ARE JEWS AND LIE?

He is not a Jew who is one outwardly . . . But he is a Jew who is one inwardly (Rom 2:28,29 NKJV).

Christ and Christ alone is the last true Jew. Those who are in Christ are what He is through the work of the Holy Spirit. Who afflicts Christ? Those of the Synagogue of Satan who are children of the bondwoman and children of the devil do. Their sons will come and bow at the feet of Christ's sons, who are called the Zion of God.

As one converted rabbi has said, "The greatest revelation I ever received was when I realized that in the sight of God I was a Gentile. " Any nationalist is the enemy of God until he becomes a true Jew. Even the natural branches must now be grafted back into the good olive tree. The good olive tree is the "Israel of God."

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God (Gal 6:15,16 NKJV).

THE DOCTRINE OF BLOOD AND SOIL

The doctrine of blood and soil is a doctrine of demons. It is a lie from the father of lies that promises identity through race and land. True identity can only be found by being born of the Spirit. Flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Nationalism is just as wrong for a Jew or an American as it is for Hitler and Germany. In Christ we are one holy race made up of all nations. Ever since the sign of the Son of Man appeared in heaven at the destruction of Jerusalem, God has been sending forth His messengers with the sound of a trumpet to gather His elect from the four winds - from one end of heaven to the other. No longer are we commanded to go to the lost tribes of the house of Israel only. Now the command is universal.

Nationalism is a curse sent by God because of sin. Nationalism has been the real issue throughout the twentieth century and still is. Hitler was the beast of nationalism incarnate. Since the break-up of the Soviet Empire, we see nation against nation. We also see an attempt by the United Nations to build a tower to save them from the flood that God promised would never come again. They will again be divided. There will be no one-world government. "They will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay" (Dan 2:43 NKJV). When God created nations at the tower of Babel, He confused their languages and divided them:

And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city (Gen 11:6-8 NKJV).

He then chose (elected) one of those nations by which He planned to bless all nations. When God created one new nation on the day of Pentecost, they all spoke in various languages, but still understood one another. This was the opposite of what happened at the Tower of Babel. This was a sign and a wonder to illustrate what God is doing now.

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us (Eph 2: 14 NKJV).

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people (1 Pet 2:9 NKJV).

WHAT MAKES ONE A JEW?

First of all, let us define our term. What do we mean by the term 'Jew'? Better yet, what does God mean by that term? Men may mean one thing while God means something else. The word 'Jew' was first used sometime after the Babylonian Captivity. Its first appearance in the Bible is found in 2 Kings 25:25. It comes from the word "Judah." However, it came to include not only those of the tribe of Judah, but also the rest of the tribes of Israel. Paul considered himself a Jew, even though he was from the tribe of Benjamin. This term also encompassed proselyte Gentiles such as Herod.

But what was the connotation of the word? What did the term really mean when God used it? Did it not mean God's people and God's heirs? After Jacob, God's people were called Israel. Before that, they were sons of Abraham. The term Jew and/or Jews is synonymous with "child of Abraham," "son of God," "heir of God," "the chosen ones," etc.

When the unbelieving Jews called themselves sons of Abraham and sons of God in John 8, Jesus said they were children of the devil. To be a child of God, one must be born again. To be a true Jew, one must be born again. If a man is not born again and calls himself a Jew, he lies and is of the synagogue of Satan. He is a false Jew.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50 NKJV).

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly. . . but he is a Jew who is one inwardly (Rom 2:28 NKJV).

Gentiles who are born again become fellow heirs with the people of God. They are grafted into the good olive tree and become Jews. Branches of natural Jews who do not believe are cut off and burned.

If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned (John 15:6 NKJV).

And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree (Rom 11:17 NKJV).

They are now not a people, just as the Gentiles who do not believe are not a people. They are Gentiles, even though men call them Jews. What made Abraham's son an heir? His firstborn son, Ishmael, had the legal right as heir. But with God it is faith and promise that makes one an heir, not flesh and blood. Ishmael, yes, is blessed; but not like the real heir. As Isaac had no legal right in the flesh, so Gentiles who trust Christ have no legal right in the flesh. But we have been born into the family and are made fellow heirs with Abraham by faith. Isaac's firstborn was Esau. What made Jacob the chosen one? It was faith, not flesh. What saved Joseph's eleven brothers? Was it their flesh and blood or the faith of Joseph that brought them to Egypt? Did God choose flesh and blood, or faith? What made Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, part of the family of God? Was it flesh and blood or the laying on of Jacob's hands in faith? If you say flesh and blood, you contradict the Scripture we just quoted. Joseph had been cut off from his brethren in the mind of Jacob. Only Jacob's faith brought them back into the family. What made Caleb a Jew? Caleb was a Gentile Kenite, from the tribe of Moses' father-in-law. Was it not faith? Who led the ten spies in faith? It was Caleb, a Gentile, and Joshua, who was of the adopted tribe of Ephraim. Was it flesh and blood or the Spirit of adoption? Why did the first generation die in the wilderness? They were flesh and blood heirs, but they did not believe, and were therefore cut off just as the Jews of the early church period. What made Rahab an heir, a Jew, and an Israelite? Only faith. She was an accursed Canaanite in the flesh, but God blessed her and made her the ancestor of Christ by faith, "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt 12:50). What made Ruth the Moabite one of God's chosen ones? It was when she said:

Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me (Ruth I:16,17 NKJV).

What made Jerusalem a harlot? It became unfaithful. "How the faithful city has become a harlot!" (Isa 1 :21 NKJV).

Some might ask, "Why, then, is natural Israel so blessed if they are not God's chosen people?" The answer is simple. Just as Esau and Ishmael were blessed (and cursed), so are the natural Jews. In many ways, the Arabs are much more blessed than the natural Jews. They by far outnumber the Jews, and they also have a greater supply of oil. In addition, the Arabs have never suffered a holocaust. Speaking to natural Israel, God says, " You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; for the Lord God will slay you, and call His servants by another name" (Isa 65:15 NKJV). God's promises regarding particular grace apply only to His chosen ones. His promises regarding common grace apply to others. Only those who believe and are born again by the Spirit of adoption are chosen. In the prophets, God addresses His chosen, and always calls them by various names. In Romans 11:28, Paul contrasts Israel in the flesh with the word 'elect': "Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. " In Romans 11:7, Paul says, "What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were hardened" (NKJV).

9

PAUL'S STAMMERING LIPS

Some have accused the apostles of taking arbitrary liberty in interpreting the Old Testament scriptures. The author does not believe that this is the case. I believe they used a scientific method of interpretation that was given by the Holy Spirit. Let us take one passage as an example. This passage is 1 Corinthians 14:19-23, where Paul deals with the gift of tongues:

Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. In the law it is written: "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord. Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? (NKJV).

Some have accused Paul of taking liberty with the word of God and of quoting Isaiah out of context. The author would like to demonstrate that he did not. It will be shown that the apostles used a scientific rule of interpretation - a golden reed that came from the Holy Spirit. It was neither an arbitrary liberty, nor a dictation from God. The passage in Isaiah cannot and did not mean something different to Paul than it did to Isaiah's contemporaries. It had nothing to do with the gift of tongues, but it did have to do with immaturity and other languages. And that is what Paul is dealing with.

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there" (Rev 11: 1 NKJV).

This reed (or cane) that was given to John is the same cane (canon in Greek) that was given to the other apostles. It was a very exact measuring tool. The Holy Spirit did not leave us to guesswork when it comes to the Canon (Word of God).³⁸ Nor did God dictate His Word to the apostles. He gave them an exact and pure tool that we too can now use to interpret His Word.

Both Paul and Isaiah are dealing with two identical subjects in these two passages:

1) Immaturity with lack of knowledge, and 2) Stammering lips with other tongues.

It is true that Isaiah was not talking about the gift of tongues. Isaiah was talking about foreign Assyrians coming to teach God's immature people knowledge. He would do it through captivity and trouble. God would use the Assyrian as His ax to chasten His people. But for those who "see the King in His beauty" (Isa 33: 17 NKJV), "you will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech, beyond perception, of a stammering tongue" (Isa 33: 19 NKJV).

Isaiah says, "they err in vision, they stumble in judgment" (Isa 28:7 NKJV). How then "will He teach knowledge? And whom will He make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk?" (Isa 28:9 NKJV) They were still too immature, so He had to speak baby talk with "line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little" (Isa 28: 10). In Hebrew this sounds like baby chatter. "For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people" (Isa 28:11 NKJV). When adults teach toddlers, it is as if they speak in another language. Israel, however, preferred their baby talk of "Precept, upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line," etc. In other words, they preferred baby talk to the other tongue of adults. They preferred the weak and beggarly elements. For this reason, God sent the Assyrians to teach His people with a rod. In this way, they would learn knowledge through the influence of the Assyrian tongue. What is the lesson for us? If we will not learn adult language voluntarily, God will indeed teach us with the strange tongue of Assyrian captivity "that we might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught" (Isaiah 28:13). This is why we are chastened. Paul is drawing the same analogy that Isaiah was! Paul was dealing with the same two subjects - immaturity

³⁸ "Canon" is the term used to describe the books the Church uses as our rule. In other words, it is the Bible. The books that are included in our Bible were chosen as "canon" in the 4th century.

with lack of knowledge, and stammering lips with other tongues. He says, "Brethren, do not be children in understanding" (1 Cor 14:20 NKJV). He then quotes Isaiah, "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people" (1 Cor 14:21 NKJV). After this, he goes on to illustrate how childish it is to speak in tongues in the hearing of the "unlearned or unbelievers" if there is no interpretation: "... will they not say you are mad?" (1 Cor 14:23 NKJV). Evidently, God does not think it is a virtue for us to be looked upon as being crazy. The point is this: understand and be mature!

Paul knew that Isaiah was not referring to the gift of tongues. He clearly understood that Isaiah was referring to the need of the immature to indulge in baby talk. He was simply using the same analogy and applying it to tongues. The passage in Isaiah did not mean something different to Paul than it did to Isaiah's audience.

Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. In the law it is written: "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord. Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? (1 Cor 14: 19 -23 NKJV)

In other words, "For all that, they will not hear Me." The point of the author is that Paul, although he was applying a secondary meaning to Isaiah's writing, did not necessarily negate the primary meaning. He simply made an analogy from the first meaning.

The following is from *How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart (Zondervan), which is highly recommended. The quotation concerns prophecy and second meanings:

At a number of places in the New Testament, reference is made to Old Testament passages that do not appear to refer to what the New Testament says they do. That is, these passages seem to have clear meaning in their original Old Testament setting and yet are used in connection with a different meaning by a New Testament writer.

As an example, consider the two stories of how Moses and the Israelites were miraculously given water from rocks in the wilderness: once at Rephidim

(Exo 17:1-7) and once at Kadesh (Num 20:1-13). The stories are, it appears, simple enough and abundantly clear in their original contexts. But in 1Corinthians 10:4, Paul seems to identify the experience of the Israelites as an encounter with Christ. He says that "they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ." In each Old Testament story there is no hint that the rock is anything other than a rock. Paul gives the rock a second meaning, identifying it as "Christ." This second meaning is commonly called the *sensus plenior* (fuller meaning).

Upon reflection, one can see that Paul is drawing an analogy. He is saying, in effect, "That rock was to them as Christ is to us a source of sustenance in the same way that spiritual things are a sustenance for us." Paul's language in verses 2-4 is highly metaphorical. He wants the Corinthians to understand that the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness can be understood as an allegory of their own experience with Christ, especially at the Lord's Table.

The author enthusiastically agrees with this. But then Fee and Stuart go on to say that modern writers are not authorized to do what Paul did. With all due respect, I beg to differ. The very fact that Paul and the other apostles left us the pattern of how to interpret the Old Testament should authorize the church to follow their example. I do not believe the apostles took the Old Testament words out of their original context and assigned a whole new meaning. I believe they used the first or natural interpretation as a pattern and a guide from which to draw the spiritual analogy.

As an example, Matthew 2:15, referring to Christ being taken to Egypt, quotes Hosea 11:1: "Out of Egypt I called My Son" (NKJV). Hosea is first of all speaking of Israel, not Christ. Matthew, not bothering to explain this, simply gives it a double interpretation by applying it to Christ. This seems to be a common method used by the Essenes³⁹ and by the school at Alexandria. After all, was not the Christ to be the ultimate, or last Israelite? Since it was true of Israel, would it not also be true of Christ? Just as Isaiah's suffering servant is Israel, so also, He is Christ.

It seems to the author that to say that we have no right to interpret the Old Testament as the apostles did because they were inspired and we are not is the same thing the Catholic Church demanded before the Reformation. "The people," they said, "cannot interpret the Bible for themselves. We must think for them." Does the Bible

³⁹ The Essenes were a Jewish sect who headquartered in the wilderness of Judea. Their writings, the Dead Sea Scrolls, were found in 1948. There was great Messianic hope among them. Some believe John the Baptist was one of them.

not speak against this form of popery? It is always wrong to surrender your will and mind to someone else. You should always do your own thinking. I am not saying we should not be teachable. We should love the Lord with all our heart, strength, and mind.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you (Ps 32:8 -9 NKJV).

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him (1 John 2:27 NKJV).

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

The very fact that Jesus rebuked the disciples and called them foolish for not interpreting the Old Testament Scriptures correctly is evidence that God expects us to use the proper method of interpretation. He does not mean for us to leave it to apostles only. The disciples should have understood from the Old Testament that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, beginning at Jerusalem with the Jews:

And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem' (Luke 24:45 -47 NKJV).

God expects us to understand the apostolic method of interpretation, to be teachers and not babies, and to have our senses exercised to discern.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb 5:12 -14 NKJV).

10

CHRIST'S FINAL COMING

It is doubtful that there are any verses in the Bible that say the final advent of Christ in current times is soon. Let us examine the verses that are commonly used to advance that view.

Matthew 24 is commonly thought to refer to Christ's final coming. But on further investigation, we discover that when the disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the age?" (NKJV), they could not possibly have been asking about His second coming. They did not find out He was coming the second time until He ascended in Acts chapter one. What did they mean, then? They were asking about the sign of His coming in His kingdom. That is, the sign of His first coming and the end of the Old Testament age. He then tells them of the wars, famines, earthquakes, false prophets, and betrayals that would precede that sign. The greatest of these preliminary signs would be "the abomination of desolation" standing in the holy place. Or as Luke puts it, the armies gathered about Jerusalem. Then would follow the great tribulation. After that the "sign of the Son of Man who is in heaven would appear" (an alternate translation). Then He says,

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled (Matt 24:34 NKJV).

What, then was this sign? It was the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. What greater sign could there be to the Jew that the end had come for them? All of their worship depended on the temple. The prophecy of Christ and Stephen had come true! All of the ancient prophecies were fulfilled in Christ. The apostles were vindicated. The Great Whore was punished. Great Whore?

How the faithful city has become a harlot! (Isa 1:21 NKJV)

Jerusalem is the only city in the Bible that is called a harlot. Jesus made this prophecy concerning its destruction in A.D. 30. It was fulfilled in that generation forty years later in A.D. 70.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matt 24:30 NKJV).

This verse is probably the most misunderstood verse in the Bible. The words "They shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" are taken from Dan. 7.

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him (Dan 7: 13 NKJV).

Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed (Dan 7: 14 NKJV).

Jesus also made this statement to the high priest.

But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God. " Matt 26:64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matt 26:63 NKJV)

It was the same as claiming to be the Son of God! The only one to come on the clouds of heaven is the one who comes to the Ancient of Days to receive His kingdom. It says, "You will see the Son...." How does one see Christ? Did the Pharisees see Him? No. They were blind. They only saw him carnally. Does one see Him on a water tower or on a tortilla? No. That is only an image. We are not to worship images. To see Him with the physical eye is not necessarily seeing Him. To know His glory is to know Him. But, to see the evidence (the sign), and not be able to honestly deny it; that also is seeing the Son. When the temple was destroyed, they, so to speak, saw! Through that sign, every eye saw Him coming.

His glory can only be seen spiritually

The expression, "One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven,"

is the code language taken from Dan 7: 13, NKJV. In this passage He is not coming to earth. He is coming to the Ancient of Days who is seated on His throne. At that time He receives His kingdom. "The one which shall not be destroyed" (Dan 7: 14 NKJV).

Then He sent His messengers to preach the gospel to the nations and gather all into one family as His elect. Not just Jews. He broke down the wall of partition.

And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt 24:31 NKJV).

The words, "From one end of heaven to the other", are taken from the Old Testament Scriptures also.

...but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name. (Neh 1:9 NKJV)

Now let us examine some other scriptures. Peter says that the fathers would fall asleep before Christ comes again. Was not Peter one of those fathers? He evidently did not believe Christ would return to earth in his lifetime. He did not believe in the soon return.

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

Are not people denying the progressive growth of the Kingdom of God today? They say things are getting worse and worse, therefore the end must be nigh. We were plainly told, "It is not for you to know times or seasons..." (Acts 1:7 NKJV). Yet Christians persist in this pagan tradition of "doom saying." Yes, destruction is coming to covenant breakers. But we have no way of knowing it is the final end. We were told that the little stone of Daniel would continue to grow and grow until it became a great Mountain (kingdom) that would fill the whole earth and destroy all other kingdoms. We are now progressively moving in that direction. All things do not continue the same since the fathers (the apostles) fell asleep (died). The Kingdom is coming progressively. The meek shall inherit the earth. We are not told to pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in heaven or when we get there." Abraham and his

heirs are heirs of the world.

For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith (Rom 4: 13 NKJV).

To deny that the kingdom of God is progressively "coming" or progressively growing, or progressively manifesting itself on earth is to say "My master is delaying his coming" or "all things continue as they were". Every move of God is the gradual Coming of the Kingdom.

But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you (Luke 11:20 NKJV).

But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and maidservants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware; and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers (Luke 12:45,46 NKJV).

Christ has done this to every disobedient servant throughout history. He did it to Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He comes in judgment on a day when they are not expecting it. Another example of this type of coming was threatened to the church of Pergamos.

Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth (Rev 2:16 NKJV).

He also says it to the church of Philadelphia, "Behold, I come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown (Rev 3:11 NKJV).

The same Peter who said in 2Peter 3 that the fathers would fall asleep says these words: "But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers" (I Pet 4:7 NKJV). Then James says, "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:8 NKJV).

If Peter meant the end of the earth, and James meant the final coming of Christ, they were wrong. But, since the Holy Spirit inspired them, they must not have been wrong. Then they must have meant the end of something else. Could it be that the Spirit was referring to the coming of the Lord to destroy Jerusalem and bring the end of that age? That is, the destruction of the temple and the ceremonial law. That was the "end of all things" in regards to the issue at that time. That was the end of the Old

Testament age. It was the end of Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmudic Phariseism. It was the end of the shadows and symbols and the coming of the Substance.

Below are examples of other “comings” of the Lord:

So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians (Exo 3:8 NKJV).

He bowed the heavens also, and came down With darkness under His feet (Ps 18:9 NKJV).

The burden against Egypt. Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst (Isa 19:1 NKJV).

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus (Rev 22:20 NKJV).

This "coming" refers to His coming to destroy the false prophet (Jerusalem) and the beast (Nero). Nero Caesar spells 666 in Hebrew. He was the sixth emperor of Rome.

There are also seven kings. Five have fallen. One is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time (Rev 17: 10 NKJV).

Revelation was written during the reign of the sixth king. It says, "One is." That is present tense. He was king when John wrote.⁴⁰

Nero was even called a beast by pagan historians of that time. He killed his own relatives, burned Rome, and slaughtered many Christians for three and a half years. He finally killed himself around A.D. 68.

The book of Revelation gives the same prophecy that Jesus gave in Mat.24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. John did not give it until he wrote Revelation. It predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and Nero. Satan gets it later. For now he is only bound in the abyss of unbelieving human hearts.⁴¹

Paul did not believe in the imminent return of Christ. Observe the following.

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our

⁴⁰ See "*Days Of Vengeance*" by David Chilton, Dominion Press, and *Before Jerusalem Fell*, by Gentry, Dominion Press.

⁴¹ St. Augustine says, "[I]n the depth of whose blind hearts he [Satan] is continually shut up as in an abyss" (City of God XX:8).

gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition (2Thess 2:2,3 NKJV).

Paul prophesied that two things had to happen before the Lord could come. (1) There must be a falling away of many from the faith. (2) The man of sin must be revealed. The falling away took place when many believers betrayed other believers to Nero. Nero was the man of sin who was restrained for a time by Roman law. He then sat in the temple of God (the church) wreaking havoc as if he were God.⁴²

This was repeated later in history when the Church of Rome fell from the faith and the pope sat in the temple instead of Christ. In both cases it was Roman law that restrained his manifestation until it (the law) was taken out of the way and that "lawless" one was revealed.

In our own day we are witnessing another falling away by evangelicals into a rejection God's law. The coming result could be another man of sin. This, however, does not necessarily mean the end of the world but just the end of another age. Beware lest the lawless one be found within your own temple!

For the Jews, the greatest tribulation of all time came in A.D 66 - A.D. 70. What greater wrath and curse than for God to pronounce? "Let no fruit grow on you ever again" (Matt 21:19 NKJV). Women ate their babies in the siege by Rome. The church today must beware lest a similar curse fall on it.

NOT SOON

Both Peter and Paul made it clear that the final coming of Christ would not be soon. Only the "coming" to destroy Jerusalem and the beast (Nero) would be soon. That would be the 'sign" of His first coming and the end of the Old Testament age. And what a sign it was! That sign indicates what He would do throughout the ensuing ages until He shall have put down all of His enemies. What He did to the whore and Nero is what He is still doing. He is destroying the nations that do not obey His law

⁴² John Bray has a little book, *The Man Of Sin*, in which he gives a strong argument for John of Giscala as the man of sin. See the bibliography for his address.

and the faithful city that has become a harlot. That was the sign and the pattern.

AFTER A LONG TIME

For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them (Matt 25:14 NKJV).

After a long time_the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them (Matt 25:19 NKJV).

Note that it says, "after a long time". Forty years passed before this prophecy was fulfilled. This parable could also apply to the final coming, but at this time the disciples did not even know of a final coming. If it applies to the final coming, it clearly says "after a long time". Forty years is also a long time to the young disciples of that generation.

NOT FOR US TO KNOW

And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7 NKJV).

WE ARE NOT TO STAND GAZING

Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into_heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven (Acts 1: 11 NKJV).

THE FATHERS WOULD FALL ASLEEP

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

HOW, NOT WHEN

God does not tell us when Christ will come. He only tells us how.

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night (1Thess 5:1,2 NKJV).

We have no need to know when because he has already told us how.

Discussing when is nothing but vain speculation or sensationalism. The Spirit of God does not discuss such matters. Only uninformed men say, "I believe He's coming soon." This subject does, however, sell. The best selling books are in this category of "tabloid" journalism. Some preach Christ out of selfish ambition. To intrude into the authority that belongs exclusively to the Father, is dangerous.

And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7 NKJV).

I heard a preacher say in 1970, "I believe the Lord is coming this year." I ask you. What did he believe, the truth or a lie? No matter how much one believes a lie, it will not make it come to pass. Finney used to say, "You have no right to believe a thing unless you have evidence that it is true." If we as preachers and guardians of the Word of God are going to waste our time in vain speculations, and intrusions into the authority of God, God might just take our candlestick away from us. God says, "No trespassing"!

Then, what did John mean in the following verse?

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come whereby we know that it is the last hour (1 John 2:18 NKJV).

LAST DAYS

The last hour or the last days began with the coming of Christ. John tells us that the proof is the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy of false prophets and betrayals by antichrists.

[God] has in these last days spoken to us by His Son (Heb 1:2 NKJV).

But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams (Acts 2: 16,17 NKJV).

The apostles were in the last days of the Old Testament period. It ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The term "last days," however, can just mean "in the future." Observe the following.

And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days" (Gen 49: 1 NKJV).

This prophecy of Jacob was fulfilled during Old Testament times, within 600 years.

WHAT IS "SOON" TO GOD?

"A thousand years is as a day and a day is as a thousand years." That means an Indeterminate time! But that is not what "soon" means. We are given a clear definition of what "soon" means by comparing the command *to seal* Daniel's prophecy with the command *to not seal* John's prophecy. To seal, or not to seal; that is the question.

Seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future (Dan 8:26 NKJV).

The vision referred to was about Alexander the Great. This vision was fulfilled 200 years later. To God, then, 200 years is "many days in the future".

And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king (Dan 8:21 NKJV).

Now let us look at what is "soon" to God.

And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand" (Rev 22: 10 NKJV).

"At hand" means soon. The Greek word is *eggus*. It means "near". If 200 years is "many days in the future" to God, then "at hand" must be sooner than 200 years! When God says something, He means what He says. John's prophesy of Revelation was fulfilled soon. John gave it around A.D. 63 and it was fulfilled in AD 70. If God did not mean it was near when He said it, then near does not mean near, soon does not mean soon, shortly does not mean shortly, and at hand does not mean at hand, and words do not mean what they say. He never lied before. Why should He start here?

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place (Rev 1: 1 NKJV).

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AT HIS COMING?

He Would Appear

Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2: 13 NKJV).

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1John 3:2 NKJV).

Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom (2Tim 4: 1 NKJV).

He Comes To Judge

You who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Thess 1:7,8 NKJV).

Believers Are Caught Up

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thess 4: 16 NKJV).

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1Cor 15:52 NKJV).

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN BEFORE HIS COMING?

Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power (1Cor 15:24 NKJV).

For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1Cor 15:25 NKJV).

The end will not come until He puts an end to all rule, authority, and power. When He comes He will destroy death. He is now in the process of destroying these lesser enemies throughout history.

For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined (Isa 60: 12 NKJV).

See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant (Jer 1:10 NKJV).

Just as Jeremiah was set over the nations, so Christ and His church are seated

above the nations. Through priesthood ministry, preaching, and prophesying the church is destroying God's enemies. The little stone is becoming a great mountain that will fill the whole earth. Jesus said that the kingdom of God is like leaven (teaching) that is leavening the whole world (MAT 13:33 NKJV).

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Hab 2:14 NKJV).

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the Apostles were not arbitrary in their interpretation of Scripture and did not use Scripture out of context. Nor was the Holy Spirit that guided them arbitrary. They used a spiritual method that was logical. We have also seen that it was a method that had been hidden before, but was now revealed by the Holy Spirit through the Redemption accomplished by Christ. Christ opened the seals of the Old Testament prophecies. This method did not do away with what had been given in the Old Testament, but rather built on it and uncovered the hidden meaning of the shadows and types.

Using this same method of interpretation, we examined the possible meanings of various Old Testament and New Testament symbols. In light of this, we explored the prophecies of Christ's return and the various interpretations concerning the Millennium. In Appendix A, we shall examine the prophecies concerning the promise that the Jews would return to Jerusalem. In Appendix B, we shall examine the Olivet Discourse.

Appendix A

THE JEWS' RETURN

The author does not believe the prophets ever foretold of a Jewish return to Palestine in 1948. It would seem that all of the prophecies concerning the return of Israel were fulfilled seventy years after they went to Babylon, or are now being fulfilled by God's people being brought to Mount Zion, the Church. As Heb. 12:22 says, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels" (NKJV). Christ has sent forth His angels "with a sound of a trumpet to gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt 24:31 NKJV). This is in fulfillment of God's promise in Deut 30:4: "If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you" (NKJV). At the time of the return from Babylon, Nehemiah reminds God of his promise. "Though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name" (Neh 1: 9 NKJV).

It can be argued that when God speaks of a return, He means returning to Himself, not just to the "weak and beggarly elements"⁴³ of a land and a temple. The value of returning to Jerusalem after the Babylonian Captivity was to prepare for the coming of Christ. Since Christ came, the true worshipers of God do not worship in a geographical location. They now worship in Spirit and in truth (see John 4:21-22). The place God has now chosen as a dwelling for His name is neither in Samaria nor in Jerusalem, but in Spirit and in truth. The reason He cast them out of the land and destroyed their temple was because they trusted in those things instead of in Him. Why should He give them those things again if they will not believe? The destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was the sign of His coming (See chapter 10).

⁴³ "But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal 4:9,10 NKJV).

When the weak and beggarly elements were removed, then the spiritual temple and the blood of Stephen were vindicated. “[F]or we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us” (Acts 6:14). Why would He change the customs back to the “weak and beggarly elements” that He had melted with a “fervent heat?” Why would God exchange the real thing for a copy?

Let us now examine some of the prophecies that are commonly misunderstood concerning the Jews' return.

AMOS - 751 B.C.

“On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name,” says the LORD who does this thing. “Behold, the days are coming” says the LORD, “When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them” says the LORD your God (Amos 9:11-15 NKJV).

When the Apostle James quoted this passage in Acts 15:16, he seemed to be calling the church the tabernacle or house of David. God is now rebuilding this house that was fallen and bringing the Gentiles in "to boot." In Acts 15:14 James said that the bringing in of the Gentiles to the church was in fulfillment of this prophecy in Amos: "Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David’” (NKJV).

Matthew Henry (A.D. 1700) is a good example of how our Puritan fathers interpreted passages such as this one in Amos. In commenting on Amos 9:14 and 15, he says:

The remnant shall return, and shall build the waste cities and inhabit them, shall form themselves into Christian churches and set up pure doctrine, worship, and discipline among them, according to the gospel charter, by which Christ's cities are incorporated. The kingdom of the Messiah shall take such deep rooting in the world as never to be rooted out of it (v.15): I will plant them

upon their land. God's spiritual Israel shall be planted by the right hand of God himself upon the land assigned them, and they shall no more be pulled up out of it, as the old Jewish church was.

Matthew Henry clearly assigns the fulfillment of these verses to the Gospel age and not to any future return of Israel to Palestine.

MOSES 1500 B.C.

Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deut 30: 1-6 NKJV).

Notice the condition of this prophecy. If they returned to the Lord, God would bring them back to the land. This was fulfilled seventy years after the Babylonian captivity. First they had to repent, and then God would bring them back to the land. God as a model of the true Land and the True Zion used that land.

EZEKIEL - 600 B.C.

Ezekiel was among those carried away to Babylon in the first deportation in about 597 B.C. The larger exile occurred eleven years later.

“For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel,” says the Lord God, “there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the first-fruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things. I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I lifted My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings

with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, ' says the Lord God" (Ezek 20:40-44 NKJV).

This was fulfilled partially after the seventy years in Babylon. Yet not "all" Israel returned. The only possible way "all" Israel could possibly fit in the land is if they come to the True Land which is Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem. Thus, "all Israel shall be saved." In other words, they say they are Jews and are not (Rev 2:9). Everyone who comes to Christ is grafted into Israel. Only they are truly Israelites.

"And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God" (Ezek. 36:23-28 NKJV).

The land referred to in this passage was the land spoken of in Hebrews 12:22. It was the New Jerusalem. It was the Kingdom of God. The apostles were very clear on this. The Judaizers objected very much to this type of interpretation.

Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. "Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it*," says the LORD.'" (Ezek 37:11-14 NKJV).

This prophecy was fulfilled at the return from Babylon. Matthew Henry says, "This was fulfilled when the captives got their effects about them."

Say to them, "Thus says the Lord God: Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I

will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand" (Ezek 37: 19 NKJV).

And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again (Ezek. 37:22 NKJV).

When Israel returned from Babylon, they were one nation made up of all the tribes. They were no longer divided into two nations. They were not given a king until Christ came. He has now broken down the middle wall of partition that divides and has made us one nation. As Matthew Henry comments on this passage: "Here are more exceedingly great and precious promises made of the happy state of the Jews after their return to their own land; but they have a further reference to the kingdom of the Messiah and the glories of gospel-times."

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar (Ezek 47: 1 NKJV).

This temple, as foreseen by Ezekiel, is the true temple from which flows the river of the Holy Spirit. Jesus referred to this Scripture when He said in John 7:37: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (NKJV emphasis added).

All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: The LORD Is There" (Ezek 48:35 NKJV).

Literal Jerusalem will never be called "The LORD Is There." It was rejected and destroyed by God. The New Jerusalem, to which we have come, is called "The LORD Is There. "

HAGGAI - 516 B.C.

For thus says the LORD of hosts: "Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory," says the LORD of hosts. "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," says the LORD of hosts. "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former," says the LORD of hosts. "And in this place I will give peace," says the LORD of hosts (Hag 2:6-9 NKJV).

The New Testament writers call the latter temple the church. The glory of the Lord came into it on the day of Pentecost.

HOSEA - 721 B.C.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return, seek the LORD their God and David their king, and fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days" (Hos 3:4 -5 NKJV).

This prophecy was given before the Babylonian captivity. They returned seventy years after their exile, but the greater fulfillment will be when they return to the Lord. They must return to the Lord and seek David their king (Christ) before they can return to Zion.

ISAIAH - 700 B.C.

I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city (Isa 1: 26 NKJV).

This promise is, as are all others, conditional. What does the New Testament call the City of Righteousness and the Faithful City? It may not use these exact terms, but it is obvious that the apostles would say it is the New Jerusalem.

It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four comers of the earth. Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah

shall not harass Ephraim. But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they shall plunder the people of the east; they shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; and the people of Ammon shall obey them. The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dryshod. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt (Isa 11: 11-16 NKJV).

This was fulfilled at the return from Babylon.

So it shall be in that day that the great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem (Isa 27:13 NKJV).

You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech, beyond perception, of a stammering tongue that you cannot understand. Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that will not be taken down; not one of its stakes will ever be removed, nor will any of its cords be broken. But there the majestic LORD will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, in which no galley with oars will sail, nor majestic ships pass by (for the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us) (Isa 33: 19-22 NKJV).

Here again, the Lord is referring to the real Mount Zion, which is the church.

Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples; they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; they shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me” (Isa 49:22-23 NKJV).

In referring to this passage, Jesus says that Jews will bow down to the church:

Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie - indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you (Rev 3:9 NKJV).

The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in My wrath I struck you, but in My favor I have had mercy on you. Therefore your gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night, that men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, and their kings in procession. For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish,

and those nations shall be utterly ruined" (Isa.60:10-12 NKJV).

The nation and kingdom that will not serve God's people (His church) will be destroyed: "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Matt 21:43 NKJV).

JEREMIAH - 610 B.C.

Jeremiah was in Jerusalem when it was taken by Babylon. He was given his freedom by the king of Babylon because he had prophesied that this would happen. He was later forced by evil Jews to go with them to Egypt.

"Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says the LORD, "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore. At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem; they shall walk no more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers" (Jer 3:14 -18 NKJV).

The shepherds spoken of here are the apostles. The "land" is the church's inheritance in Christ. There is no temple in the New Jerusalem, the Lamb's bride. "For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Rev 21 :22 NKJV), therefore there is no ark. The church itself is the throne of the Lord and the Ark of the Covenant.

"But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD. "Behold, the days are coming" says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the LORD lives who

brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them,' And they shall dwell in their own land'" (Jer 23:3-8 NKJV).

After the return from Babylon, God set up shepherds over his people. They were the apostles. The Branch of righteousness is Christ. He is the reigning King. In these His days, true Judah and true Israel are being saved. In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul makes it very clear that the only way to make sense of these prophecies is to interpret them spiritually.

MALACHI - 400 B.C.

Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like fuller's soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, as in former years (Mal 3: 1-4 NKJV).

The messenger spoken of here is John the Baptist. The Lord suddenly came to His temple on the Day of Pentecost. Now, the offering of Judah and Jerusalem is pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old.

MICAH - 750 B.C.

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. "In that day," says the LORD, "I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I

will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever. And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem" (Mic 4: 1-8 NKJV).

This passage in Micah is being fulfilled now in the Messiah's day. The law is going forth from Zion, the church. Little by little it is growing until He puts all His enemies under His feet. The former dominion to come is not limited to that land. It is now universal. That former kingdom was only a type and model for the Greater David's Kingdom. Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons (A.D. 120-202), interpreted this passage as being fulfilled in the Gospel age (Against Heresies 34:4). He said, "From the Lord's advent, the new covenant which brings back peace, and the law which gives life, has gone forth over the whole earth as the prophets said: 'for out of Zion shall go forth the law.'" etc.

ZECHARIAH - 520 B.C.

Again proclaim, saying, Thus says the LORD of hosts: "My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; the LORD will again comfort Zion, and will again choose Jerusalem" (Zec 1: 17 NKJV).

I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back, because I have mercy on them. They shall be as though I had not cast them aside; for I am the LORD their God, and I will hear them. Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as if with wine. Yes, their children shall see it and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD. I will whistle for them and gather them, for I will redeem them; and they shall increase as they once increased. I will sow them among the peoples, and they shall remember Me in far countries; they shall live, together with their children, and they shall return. I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, until no more room is found for them (Zec 10:6-10 NKJV).

This prophecy was given after the return from Babylon. Not all of them, however, had returned. The prophet is using their return as a model for the future return of God's people to Himself and to the true Zion. I believe the entire world, including Jews and Moslems, will come to Zion. There will be no divisions in the church as there was between Judah and Ephraim.

And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—"the LORD is one, and His name one." All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses. The people shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor's hand; Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together: gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance. Such also shall be the plague on the horse and the mule, on the camel and the donkey, and on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be. And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain (Zec 14:8-17 NKJV).

Here again is a reference to the Holy Spirit flowing out of the true Jerusalem. The plague spoken in this passage is happening now to God's enemies and will culminate at His return to earth. Judah (praise) fights at Jerusalem with the high praises of God, not with flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places. Everyone left of the nations which came against the church shall some day worship the King. If they do not, God will send famine upon their souls.

CONCLUSION TO APPENDIX A

The last time the Jews attempted to rebuild the temple was during the reign of Julian the Apostate who died in A.D. 363. He was the emperor who rejected Christianity and favored paganism. He financed an effort by the Jews to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, but an earthquake interrupted their efforts and they gave up. I will be so bold as to say that there will never be a rebuilt temple! The establishment of Israel as a land in 1948 was not a fulfillment of prophecy. The fig tree blossomed

when Jesus came - not in 1948. Modern day Israel is nothing more than an appendage of New York City! It is also financed in the same way, by the United States. Maybe we should just make it our fifty-first state!

APPENDIX B

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

The Olivet discourse is Christ's answer to the two questions: "When will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" It is called the Olivet discourse because He gave it while seated on the Mount of Olives across from the temple. There is only one Olivet Discourse. Christ gave this prophecy one time. Below is the record of the three gospels that relate it. The Holy Spirit spoke through all three writers, but in order that we might understand it better, each writer uses his own words. In other words, where Matthew 24:5 says, "I am the Christ," and Mark 13: 6 and Luke 21: 8 say, "I am He," both are the same statement (NKJV). "The sign of your coming" (Matt 24:3 NKJV) must be the same as "the sign when these things will be fulfilled," (Mark 13:4 NKJV) or the sign when all these things are "about to take place" (Luke 21:7). "Wars and commotions" must be the same as "wars and rumors of wars" (Matt 24:6 and Luke 21:9). "Famines and pestilences" must be the same as "famines and troubles" (Matt 24:7 and Mark 13:8 NKJV). "Deliver you up to tribulation" is the same as "lay their hands on you and persecute you" (Matt. 24:9 and Luke 21:12 NKJV). The "abomination of desolation" must be the same as "Jerusalem surrounded by armies" (Matt 24:15 and Luke 21:20 NKJV).

Because of the apocalyptic and figurative language used in such prophecies, many have misinterpreted this prophecy to be a prediction of Christ's final return to earth. A close examination of the cross references convinces one that Matthew's account means the same as Luke's and as Mark's. It is a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem.

As you examine each account, take time to check the references in the footnotes as you go.

<p>MATTHEW 24 (NKJV) 1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." 3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"⁴⁴</p> <p>FALSE CHRISTS 4 ¶ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." WARS & RESULTS 6 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Matthew (NKJV)</p>	<p>LUKE 21 (NKJV) 5 Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 6 "As for these things which you see, the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down." 7 So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"</p> <p>FALSE CHRISTS⁴⁵ 8 And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them." WARS & RESULTS⁴⁶ 9 "But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately." 10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Luke (NKJV)</p>	<p>MARK 13 (NKJV) 1 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" 2 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down." 4 "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"</p> <p>FALSE CHRISTS 5 ¶ And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 6 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and will deceive many." WARS & RESULTS 7 "But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. 8 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mark (NKJV)</p>
---	--	---

⁴⁴ "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (Matt 16:28 28 NKJV).

⁴⁵ According to Josephus, many came saying they were He at the time just preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. We should learn from that example that we should not follow those who say, "The time has drawn near" (Luke 21:8 NKJV).

⁴⁶ At the time that Jesus gave this word, the earth was filled with "Pax Romana." When His words were fulfilled, the earth was filled with wars and commotions.

<p>ONLY THE START 8 “All these are the beginning of sorrows.</p> <p>PERSECUTION 9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10 “And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 “Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.</p> <p>APOSTACY 12 “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 “But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.</p> <p>ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION 15 “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 “Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 “And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 “And pray that your flight Matthew (NKJV) may not be in winter or on the</p>	<p>PERSECUTION 12 “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. 13 “But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 “Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 “for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.</p> <p>APOSTACY 16 “You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. 18 “But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 1 “By your patience possess your souls.</p> <p>JERUSALEM SURROUNDED 20 ¶ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 “Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22* “For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. Luke (NKJV) 24* “And they will fall by the</p>	<p>PERSECUTION 9 “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10* “And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11* “But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>APOSTACY 12 “Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 13 “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.</p> <p>ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION 14 ¶ “So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15* “Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. 16 “And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 17 “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 18 “And pray that your flight Mark (NKJV) may not be in winter.</p>
--	--	--

<p>Sabbath. 21 “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 “And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FALSE CHRISTS</p> <p>23 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. 24 “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 “See, I have told you beforehand. 26 “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. 27 “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 “For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.</p> <p>AFTER TRIBULATION</p> <p>29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.</p> <p>UNIVERSAL CALLING</p> <p>31 “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather Matthew (NKJV) together His elect from the four</p>	<p>edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.</p> <p>AFTER TRIBULATION</p> <p>25 “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 “men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. 27 “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.</p> <p>UNIVERSAL CALLING</p> <p>28 “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your Luke (NKJV) redemption draws near.”</p>	<p>19 “For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. 20 “And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FALSE CHRISTS</p> <p>21 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, He is there!’ do not believe it. 22 “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 23 “But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand</p> <p>AFTER TRIBULATION</p> <p>. 24 ¶ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 “the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.</p> <p>UNIVERSAL CALLING</p> <p>27 “And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from Mark (NKJV) the farthest part of earth to the</p>
--	---	--

<p>winds, from one end of heaven to the other.</p> <p>32 ¶ “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.</p> <p>33 “So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors!</p> <p>WHEN IT WOULD HAPPEN</p> <p>34 “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.</p>	<p>29 ¶ Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.</p> <p>30 “When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.</p> <p>31 “So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near</p> <p>.</p> <p>WHEN IT WOULD HAPPEN</p> <p>32 “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place.</p>	<p>farthest part of heaven.</p> <p>28 ¶ “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.</p> <p>29 “So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors!</p> <p>WHEN IT WOULD HAPPEN</p> <p>30 “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.</p>
---	--	---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. *City of God*, Chicago, Ill: Great Books of The Western World, 1952.

Barnes, Albert. *Commentary on the Bible*, Baker, Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1979.

Bray, John. *Israel In Prophecy*, John Bray Ministry, Lakeland, Fla: 1983.

Bray, John. *Matthew 24 Fulfilled*, John Bray Ministry, Lakeland, Fla: 1995.

Chilton, David. *Days of Vengeance*, Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987.

Chilton, David. *The Great Tribulation*, Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987.

Edwards, Jonathon. *The History of Redemption*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Publications, 1059.

Fee, Gordon. *How To Read the Bible for All It's Worth*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1082.

Gentry, Kenneth L. Jr. *Before Jerusalem Fell*, Tyler, TX: Institute For Christian Economics 1989.

Gentry, Kenneth L. Jr. *He Shall Have Dominion*, Tyler, TX: Institute For Christian Economics 1992.

Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1714.

Perrine, Laurence. *Sound and Sense*, An Introduction to Poetry, New Your: Harcourt, Bruce and Company, 1956.

Sutton, Rev. Ray R. *That You May Prosper*, Tyler, TX: Institute For Christian Economics, 1987.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers*, Chicago, ILL: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Wilhellmus á Brakel. *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995.

Woodrow, Ralph. *Great Prophecies of the Bible*, Riverside, CA: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, 1977.

Woodrow, Ralph. *His Truth Is Marching On*, Riverside, CA: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, 1977.