



The Sword & The Plow

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Was the Eschaton Local?

by

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A new book is being published in Preterist circles whose author and implications argue that the Genesis creation account and flood were merely *local* events and that Adam of Genesis was *not* the first man God created.

Yes, startling to say the least. Imagine Paul's surprise to learn that the *one man* to whom he attributes the fall of the *whole human race* was not the first man at all!

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: Rom. 5:12

Paul here teaches that sin entered the world through the one man, Adam; because of Adam's transgression, all men were constituted sinners. That is, they inherited Adam's *fallen nature* and cannot rise above their carnality; the motions of sin in their flesh bring them into bondage to the law of sin and death. All who attain to an age and condition of accountability come under condemnation for sins committed in the flesh. Elsewhere, Paul says that in Adam all die. (I Cor. 15:22) Sin and death in the world are thus attributed to the first man, Adam.

But this book, which denies the literal creation account of Genesis, teaches by implication that Adam was *not* the first man. Its author is on record stating “*Why preterists would insist on a biological reading of ‘Eve the mother of all living’ in Genesis 3 baffles me. Eve is prophetic of the Church, just as Adam is prophetic of Christ. Genesis 3 is about covenant not biology.*” Elsewhere he states: “*So long as preterists*

are committed to a covenantal rather than cosmological reading of ‘heavens and earth’ in biblical redemptive history the idea of a covenantal, rather than cosmological reading of the original creation of the ‘heavens and earth’ in Genesis 1:1 is a legitimate possibility.” Eve not the mother of all living? Genesis 1:1 a “covenantal creation”? This is where people end up who take the journey down the road of Old Earth Creationism and the “day-age” theory.” By these statements their author thus denies Adam the first man and one of Christianity's most fundamental tenants! What could behoove someone to propose a doctrine so novel?

The reason this book argues for a local flood and local creation is that the authors have bought into the fundamental error that the eschaton (second coming) was local. They reason that if the “heavens and earth” of II Pet. 3 were local and described events confined to Palestine, the heavens and earth of Genesis must be interpreted the same way. This is the worst sort of reasoning! By this approach, *every instance* where the words heaven and earth occur must be understood in reference merely to Palestine, or some other localized place upon earth. What an astonishing notion! All reference to the universal canopy of heaven and the circle of the earth is now removed from the Bible and we are to adopt a new hermeneutic understanding these terms figuratively for Palestine!

Wow! But what could be further from the truth than the idea that the eschaton was local? The Bible plainly states that the coming of Christ in judgment would be *world wide*. (See below) Thus, the *entire*

premise of the book is false! That's right! The entire premise of the book, arguing a local flood and creation are based upon the false premise of an eschaton confined to Palestine. Moreover, the premise is doubly false in that even if it were granted that the eschaton was local and the heavens and earth of II Pet. 3 had only Palestine in view, it does not logically follow that all other occurrences of these terms must be understood this way! II Pet. 3 is prophetic; it is of a totally *different genre* than Genesis and other books of history. We do not read Revelation the same way we read Ruth or Judges, why would we read Genesis the same way we read II Peter or the prophets? The very suggestion that Genesis is of the same genre as Revelation is frivolous upon its face. This sort of apologetic attempt to reconcile the Bible with the errors of modern science have been rejected long ago. Former, regius professor of Hebrew at Oxford, James Barr, notes:

Probably, so far as I know, there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Gen. 1-11 intended to convey to their readers the ideas that (a) creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provided by simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world up to later stages in the biblical story (c) Noah's flood was understood to be world-wide and extinguish all human and animal life except for those in the ark. Or, to put it negatively, the apologetic arguments which suppose the 'days' of creation to be long eras of time, the figures of years not to be chronological, and the flood to be a merely local Mesopotamian flood, are not taken seriously by any such professors, as far as I know.¹

Examples of Universal Judgment at the Eschaton

As the following passages show, the eschaton was plainly world-wide.

Dan. 2:28-45 – Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

This is one of the most important prophecies of the Bible and it does not even mention the Jews or

¹ The letter is posted at <http://www.geocities.com/ilgwamh/day.html>

Jerusalem. The famous dream of Nebuchadnezzar depicts four **world empires** until the coming of the kingdom and Messiah; it portrays Christ's coming in terms of the **world government and inhabited earth** being reduced to rubble *in the days of the fourth world empire* and the mountain of the Lord's kingdom growing up in its place. The rubble to which the image is reduced answer the "elements" of II Pet. 3 and point to the socio-political fabric of the pre-parousia world.

Ps.2:8, 9 – Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

This Psalm is about the resurrected, glorified Christ and the kingdom given him of the Father. Christ's kingdom is more than just the church; it includes all earth's nations, which he rules with a rod of iron, dashing to pieces those that disobey. The dashing here corresponds to the dashing of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and is **eschatological**. It is also **world-wide**.

Ps. 110:5, 6 – The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

This Psalm, like the one before, speaks to the eschatological day of wrath of Christ upon the heathen; the eschaton would entail the devastation of **many countries**.

Hag. 2:6, 7; 3:21, 22 – For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts...I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen."

This verse is important because it is quoted by the Hebrew writer as about to be fulfilled in his day. (Heb. 12:26) Its first application is to the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple under Zerubbabel; its second and ultimate application was to the kingdom and church of Christ. Haggai foretold a time when the wealth and power of the nations would accrue to the benefit of the Jerusalem temple, by the fall of worldly

powers. This became a type of the victory of the church at the eschaton. As Preterists, we have interpreted this passage as quoted by the Hebrew writer in terms of Jerusalem's fall, but, as we see, its *actual, original, and intended* scope was universal – the eschaton would be a time when *all nations* were shaken and the throne of *heathen kingdoms* overthrown. We should also note that the *heavens and earth* in this context point to higher powers and earth's governments; they have no covenantal significance themselves.

Rev. 1:7 – Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

This last passage can be translated in more narrow terms to say “*all the tribes of the land shall wail because of him.*” But no translation in print does this, nor would it fit within the imagery of Revelation, which portrays the eschaton in universal terms, far surpassing Judaea and Jerusalem. Moreover, the word “also” – *they also which pierced him* – meaning the Jews, signifies that they *too* would see him in *addition* to earth's other peoples.

II Tim. 4:1 - I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom

The time for the appearing of Christ and his kingdom was within the lives of the apostles. (Matt. 16:27, 28) I confess that I do not know everything that is involved with judging the quick, but I do know that the living includes more than those residing in Palestine. The eschaton was a time when *all men* came under judgment.

Acts 17:30, 31 – And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he is about to judge (melle krinein) the world in righteousness.

Paul spoke these words in Athens. The time of judgment that was about to overtake the world (*Gk. kosmos*) entailed more than Jews; *all men everywhere* were about to feel the rod of Christ's correction for rejecting his gospel and persecuting his church.

These are just a few of the passages holding out a universal coming. The Catalogue of World Disasters at the end of this newsletter demonstrates the actual

events the above verses point to. As Preterists, we are going to have a hard time meeting opponents in debate and persuading people of an AD 70 fulfillment if we make the argument the eschaton was purely localized in Judea, while ignoring passages showing Christ's coming was world-wide in breadth and sweep. I would suggest that, not only do these and similar passages point to a world-wide coming of Christ, but that *cosmic language* used by the prophets carries a similar meaning and import.

The New Heavens and Earth

Introduction

There are many misconceptions about the new heavens and new earth mentioned in the Bible. Some believe that the eternal state is alluded to; others that a future paradise on earth is in view; still others that the New Testament is symbolized. However, none of these views enjoys support of the scriptures. The following is a verse-by-verse exposition of the promised new heavens and earth. We will conclude that the new heavens and earth were symbols for the prevailing conditions and changed fortunes of God's people in the world under the reigning Christ following the tribulation of the last days; they look to New Testament times, but are not the New Testament itself.

Isaiah: The Source of the Imagery

The promise of the new heavens and earth occurs in Isaiah, where the prophet uses it to describe the happy circumstance of God's people after the time of tribulation and persecution is past, and their enemies are destroyed. The prophecy moves alternately between the coming destruction of the rebellious among the Jews and the blessing of salvation upon those that obey. The historical context may look in the first instance to the nation's captivity under the Assyrians and Babylonians and the return of the captivity under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, but, unquestionably, the prophecy looks beyond these events unto the eschatological judgments and blessing of the Messiah.

Jews Refuse the Gospel

First, the prophet describes the Jews' obstinate rebellion and unwillingness to obey God's word, and the resultant wrath they would suffer:

I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts...Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom...I will measure their former work into their bosom." Isa. 65:1, 2, 6, 7

St. Paul applies these verses to the time of the Messiah, when the Jewish nation was resisting the gospel and persecuting the church, but the Gentiles were flowing into the kingdom like flocks of sheep. (Rom. 10:20) Those that had not formerly sought God now suddenly found him; but those whom God had eagerly sought after and entreated, refused his offer of grace. The like *scenario* played out in the days of the Assyrians and Babylonians, in which the prophets warned and entreated only to be persecuted and slain, yet strangers from among the Gentiles, like Nebuchadnezzar, obeyed the living God.

A Remnant of Jews Would Believe and Obey

The prophet next describes God's salvation for the remnant of those that obey:

Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. Isa. 65: 8, 9

The prophet then alternates between the two in a series of verses (vv. 11-13), which conclude with the destruction of the wicked among the Jews, who leave their name (Israel) as it were a curse for God's people (so hated were they among the nations), but God would call his faithful by a new name: *Christian*.

Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name. Isa. 65:14, 15

In the beginning of the gospel, the Roman world did not distinguish between Jews and Christians, for they seemed to be but sects of the same religion. Thus, the confusion caused the Jews' name to be applied with disadvantage to the Christians in hatred and reproach. However, by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, this was no longer true, and the world came to distinguish distinctly between the two. The Lord would thus slay the Jews, but assign a new name to his people. The term Christian is the divinely appointed name for God's people. It was given first at Antioch of Syria. (Acts 11:26) Peter says if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but to glorify God in this behalf. (I Pet. 4:16)

The Promised New Heavens and Earth after the Time of Trouble

Isaiah next describes the happy estate of his servants when the time of tribulation and persecution is past:

The former troubles are past forgotten...they are hid from mine eyes. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Isa. 65:16-19

The new heavens and earth describe the changed circumstances of God's people, in which the former troubles were now forgotten. Whereas they had been under oppression and persecution by their fellow countrymen who refused to heed God's word, they would see happier times. The time of national and personal sorrow under the Assyrians and Babylonians (in the first instance, but in the Messianic context, under the Jews and Romans,) would give way to a time when the faithful of God's people would enjoy security and peace. The Jerusalem that had suffered siege and famine would give way to a Jerusalem that enjoyed an abundance of peace. The inhabitants of the new Jerusalem would "dwell every man under his vine and under his fig tree." (Isa. 65:21) We should not mistake the poetic description of the new Jerusalem for the new heavens and earth. The prophet's language saying "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock" refers only to "the holy mountain" of the Lord (Isa. 65:25), not the world at large. Only in the church do the conditions described prevail. Millennialists commonly make this very mistake by

applying language intended only for the church to the whole world, supposing a time of universal peace is foretold.

The Second Coming

The preceding portion of the prophecy makes no direct reference to the coming of Christ; we are told the rebellious would be destroyed, but not how. The prophecy continues in chapter sixty-six; this time, however, the prophet makes unmistakable reference to the destruction of the Jewish nation by the second coming of Christ. First, the prophet describes God's anger for the Jews' idolatrous devotion to the temple:

Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. Isa. 66: 1, 2

Stephen quoted this verse before the Sanhedrin when accused of saying that Christ would come and destroy the city and temple. (Acts 6:14, 15; 7:48-50) His point in quoting the prophet is to show that he was affirming nothing that had not been foretold centuries before and therefore could not be accused of impiety toward the temple and service of God. However, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, the Sanhedrin would not listen, and stoned Stephen. The Jews' obstinate refusal to accept the gospel even while clinging to the empty temple ritual was foreseen by Isaiah, who thus foretold the coming destruction in the prophecy here. Hence, the prophet next describes God's disdain for the temple cultus:

He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. (Isa. 66:3, 4)

The offerings of the temple are likened to unclean and abominable things; they were no longer acceptable because Christ had carried his blood within the Holy of Holies. The continuing temple ritual was an implicit denial of Christ's sacrifice.

Jewish Persecution of Christians Foretold

Next, Isaiah speaks to the persecution of Christians by unbelieving Jews and the promise of Christ's coming:

Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. Isa. 66: 5

Christ "Appears" to Save His People, and Destroy the Jews

The "appearance" of Christ is referred to by the writer of Hebrews, who says Christ as our High Priest would appear a second time to put his enemies beneath his feet. (Heb. 9:27) The apostle John seems to have this verse in mind when he exhorted his readers to persevere under persecution that they "be not ashamed before him at his coming." (I Jno. 2:28) The appearance of Christ would be providential, not physical or visible, and would mark the destruction of Jerusalem and the relief of the church. This is clear from what Isaiah says next, describing Christ coming in wrath upon the nation:

*A voice of noise from **the city**, a voice from **the temple**, as voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to his enemies...For, behold, **the Lord will come with fire**, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. Isa. 66: 5, 15*

Here is explicit reference to the coming of the Lord to destroy his enemies in the events culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, predictions repeated by Christ in his Olivet discourse. (Matt. 24, 25; Mk. 13; Lk. 21) We can know that the second coming is being described because the prophet portrays the new heavens and earth following the destruction of the city and temple. (Isa. 66:22-24; cf. Matt. 19:28; Rev. 21, 22) The prophet states that those who escaped the siege – *Christians who obeyed Jesus' warning to flee when they saw the city compassed about with armies (Lk. 21:20, 21)* – would declare God's glory (preach the gospel) among the Gentiles. (Isa. 66:19) Isaiah states that these would become the spiritual "priests and Levites" (cf. I Pet. 2:5) of the New Testament in the new heavens and earth:

*"And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the **new heavens and the new earth**, which I make, shall remain before me,*

*saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall **all flesh** come and worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” (Isa. 66:21-24)*

“All flesh” is equivalent to “every creature” and “all nations” of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15, 16). “Worshipping before the Lord” points to the assimilation of the Gentiles into the kingdom (church). Those whose carcasses were eaten of fire and worms refers to the bodies of the Jews who perished in the ravages of war, famine, and pestilence during the siege. Josephus reports that eleven-hundred-thousand Jews (1.1 million) were slain in the siege of Jerusalem.² These were cast out of the city into the valley of Gehenna during the siege, where they lay swollen and putrefied, eaten of maggots and worms.³

This brief survey shows that the new heavens and earth spoke to the time when the church would emerge victorious after a time of persecution. Whereas they had been scorned and rejected, put out of the synagogue and even put to death, the Lord would vindicate his gospel and avenge his servants’ blood. The Jews would be destroyed in the war with Rome, but the church would go on to *inherit the world*.

Other Aspects of the New Heavens and Earth

The above represents the new heavens and earth as portrayed by the prophet Isaiah. John also treats of these in the book of Revelation. He does not change what Isaiah wrote, but adds a few particulars of his own.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven

² Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, VI, ix, 3. This figure does not include that perished in foreign cities or died in battles throughout the rest of the Judah and Galilee.

³ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, V, xii, 3, 4.

saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Rev. 21:1-3

With the defeat of the church’s enemies, John sees a new heaven and earth. It is distinguished from the first heaven and earth only by the absence of the sea, and the presence of God dwelling amidst his people in the church (the new Jerusalem). Under the old economy, God dwelt with man only in shadow and type. The temple merely foreshowed “good things to come.” (Heb. 10:1) From the time of Adam’s fall to the cross, the barrier of sin - portrayed by the veil in the temple - separated man from God. The veil was rent in twain in Christ’s cross (Matt. 27:51), showing man the way back into the presence of God was through Jesus’ blood. John thus sees the consummation of God’s redemptive purpose, when face-to-face communion with his people is restored through Christ in the church. (“And they shall see his face” Rev. 22:4; *cf.* Heb. 10:19, 20) The absence of the sea points to the fact that all men approach God on equal terms. Seas are natural barriers, separating earth’s people. In Revelation, the sea symbolized the Gentiles; the earth or land, the Jews. Under the new economy, those distinctions are removed and all men have access to God equally. The gates of the city (church) are always open in every direction of the compass, showing that men from all over the world are invited to enter and find salvation and communion with God. (Rev. 21:13, 25) Thus, Paul could say to the Gentiles:

*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were **far off** are **made nigh** by the blood of Christ...Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but **fellowcitizens** with the saints, and of the household of God. Eph. 2:13, 19*

Of course, the new heaven and earth are *not* the new covenant. The city (the church) is the covenantal habitation of the saints. Outside the city are the lost; those that have not obeyed the gospel: “For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” (Rev. 22:15)

The new heaven and earth, and troubled sea, having passed away and represented as being no more, indicated the changed conditions within the existing governments and society to make them favorable for the prosperity of the cause of Christ and his church throughout the empire...the vision represented the

*new conditions to surround the church in the changed world.*⁴

Conclusion

The new heavens and earth were symbols for the prevailing conditions and changed fortunes of God's people in the world under the reigning Christ following the tribulation of the last days; they look to New Testament times, but are not the New Testament itself.

8 Compelling Reasons Why: Jesus Is Coming "Very, Very Soon"

Don Preston

Recently someone sent me a newspaper article with the above title. The article begins by saying "The evidence for the soon return of Jesus Christ is overwhelming." I am not sure if the sender was trying to convince me, or if they wanted me to comment on the article. Either way, I will offer a few thoughts.

History is full of such predictions. And every one has been wrong...except the first century when Jesus himself said He was to return before all of His contemporaries died (Matthew 16:27-28; 24:29-34; 26:64). Jesus either kept His word, He lied, or He failed. The choices are limited and inescapable. The failure of Bible students to honor Jesus' prediction has propagated the continuing history of failed predictions. Now to the evidence offered by the article.

Reason #1-The Rebirth of Israel. The article maintains that "Israel was miraculously reborn" in 1948, and this is the #1 sign of Jesus' imminent return.

The view that 1948 was a sign of Christ's coming is based on Matthew 24:32f. Jesus said "Learn the parable of the fig tree, when its branch has already become tender and shoots forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these

thing know that it is near, at the very door." It is contended that the fig tree is Israel, thus, per this view, Jesus was saying "When you see Israel putting forth its leaves (restored) then know that it (Christ's coming) is near." In verse 34 Jesus said "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." So the view is that the generation that would witness the restoration of Israel would be the generation to see Christ's parousia (coming).

First, it must be realized that Israel was not restored in 1948. Modern "Israel" is not the Israel that existed before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D.70. The Israel of the Bible has disappeared forever. Even the *Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem* (1971, Vol. 3, p. 50) acknowledges that there is no longer such a thing as the Jewish race. The events of 1948 have nothing whatsoever to do with Biblical prophecy and the coming of Jesus.

Second, if the fig tree represents the restoration of Israel then "all the trees" (see Luke 21:29) must mean that in 1948 "all the nations" were restored as well! Interestingly, those who insist that the fig tree in Matthew 24 must be Israel, completely ignore the reference to "all the trees" in the parallel text in Luke 21:29. This is inconsistent. If the fig tree represents Israel in 1948 then consistency demands that "all the trees" represents the restoration of all other nations.

Third, if the restoration of "Israel" in 1948 was the sign of Christ's coming, then the clock has already run out. Hal Lindsey (correctly) calculated that a generation in scripture is approximately 40 years. (see Matthew 1; Hebrews 3:7-19). Of course, when he wrote that he was predicting the coming of Christ for 1988!! When that failed he went back to the calculator and invented a new definition for generation, 100-125 years! That is completely false, yet he managed to convince a lot of sincere people nonetheless.

The point is that 1988 has come and gone. The forty year period that should have, according to modern theory, produced the Great Tribulation, the Great Apostasy, the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, the Mark of the Beast, and all of the other horrific events of the last days, did not, in fact, produce a single one of the signs necessary for the coming of Christ. The reason is simple, all of the signs that were predicted to occur prior to Christ's coming appeared in the first century, just like Jesus said.

⁴ Foy E. Wallace, *The Book of Revelation* (1963, Wallace Publications, Ft. Worth), p., 426.

The REAL issue this Election

Most people who sign up for our newsletter are interested in preterism; but more than once recently we have sent along information about the Ron Paul candidacy. Our apologies if this infringes on your privacy. **However, there is no way to overstate the importance of the issues at stake this election.**

David Walker, the chief government accountant in the GAO, recently gave an interview to David Beck, CNN's financial consultant. Walker, sick of Washington politicians ignoring his warnings, decided to take his case directly to the people. The title of the interview is "fiscal tsunami." Walker says America and the federal government are broke. There is a great crisis coming, yet no one in mainstream media is talking about it. David Walker's video is posted on YouTube here. www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjZBOCAgR64 You can also find articles and other videos by Walker by doing a google search. This is a wake up call that something MUST be done. But don't look for the establishment politicians or media to offer any real solution.

For most of our life-times, we had only one real source of information about government and politics - the *mainstream media*. As long as there were only four or five major network channels, the choice between candidates was almost irrelevant. The media told us our options and we dutifully chose between establishment politician "A" or establishment politician "B." In the end, it didn't really matter because both major parties are controlled by the same interests and their candidates belong to the same club. Remember when it was revealed that George W. and John Kerry - supposedly bitter political enemies - were both members of Yale secret society Skull & Bones? Indeed, almost all of our presidents for the last 50 years have all been members of the Council on Foreign Relations, whose primary objective is world government! That's right. Check it out from yourself. A simple search of the internet will produce an abundance of evidence of this groups stranglehold on American government and media.

The lack of genuine choice for change is nowhere more true than at the presidential level. No matter who was elected we got same thing: more government, higher taxes, intrusion into reserved state's rights, anti-Christian decisions from the courts,

etc. In fact, it has been pointed out many times that more damage has been done to the cause of Constitutional government and conservatism by Republicans than by so-called liberals. We fight against the liberals, but the party spirit makes us support "our" guy even when he is selling American down the river! George W. signed an agreement with Mexico's President Fox targeting 2010 for a North American Union like the European Union. Funny, I don't remember the American people being asked. Again, do a search of the internet and get the facts for yourself.

This cycle in which we have been locked has now been broken for the *first time*. The internet has changed everything. We now can do an end-run around the mainstream media and get the facts for ourselves. Most of us 'old timers' still rely on the boob tube for our information, but not the younger crowd. And it shows! They are learning what has been hidden from us for decades! And it is shocking!

The Real Issue This Election

The comments under the caption "America and its Money" were found on the internet. They discuss the mathematical realities of a fiat paper money system, like the one we have at present. Please take a moment to read them after my prefatory notes. After reading them, I think you will agree that there is a lot more at stake in this election than Hilary. Even if you don't like Ron Paul, we must insist that the other candidates speak to these issues, and speak to them honestly.

What is a Dollar?

By definition, the "dollar" is a unit measure of weight of silver or gold; it is like an "ounce" or "pound" - it is a unit of measure of precious metal, not a piece of paper. Once removed from its precious metal backing, it is no longer truly a "dollar" any more than an empty milk carton is a gallon of milk. It is just a name.

All money now in circulation is created by debt. We borrow money into circulation from a private banking cartel known as the Federal Reserve. Although the word "federal" occurs in its name, it is not part of the government any more than Federal Express. It is a private corporation whose stock is held by member

banks, chief of which is Chase Manhattan (Rockefeller).

Under this system, money is created only by creating debt. Unless the government and people incur debt, the money in circulation shrinks and a recession/depression sets in. This is why the government has no real interest in reducing spending. If it did, we would experience a decrease of money in circulation and a depression/recession would set in. Thus, we must have ever increasing budgets, social programs, and wars to keep us in debt so we have adequate money to put off a recession/depression and the politicians in Washington can stay in office.

The other side of the coin, however, is that if we borrow and expand the amount of money in circulation we depreciate the value of our "dollars" and prices go up, reflecting the weaker purchasing value of our depreciated notes. This is a type of "inflation tax" - we pay a tax indirectly in the form of depreciated notes due to government spending. There is no free lunch. Moreover, as the comments below show, there is a point at which the economy must mathematically crash because it is unable to service the interest and principle on the debt.

This is the REAL issue facing America at election time, yet no one is talking about it. No one that is, except Ron Paul. It is easy to understand why. The federal government's debt is 2.7 trillion alone. Private sector debt is several times that amount. The present course must be changed; we must return to real, honest money sooner or later. Please read and educate yourself. An uninformed electorate is no electorate at all!

Kurt - P.S. Pass it along!

America and its Money

We neglect one cardinal point that apparently few people recognize or understand and that is the entire fiat monetary system is completely collateralized by debt making debt the asset upon which the complete monetary and economic system rests. Every single dollar in circulation, whether digital or physical, has been borrowed into existence. All growth within the economy is totally sustained by the expansion [inflation] of the money supply and the money supply is totally dependent upon the equal expansion of debt. The debt is irreversible and because on top of the principle debt an interest obligation is attached, the debt must continually be multiplied exponentially.

Now, I could provide the equations to show that under such a system there is a mathematical termination point, but I will simply explain what is happening with the system at the present. Since Nixon cut all ties between our fiat currency and the underlying commodity specie, the system must totally rely upon the creation of credit/debt for its viability and economic sustainability. The problem arises when the system begins, as it has, to reach its practical possible lifespan where the debt becomes so huge that it begins to require more service than the economy can actually produce in growth. Due to the multiplication of the debt, which includes the periodic principle and periodic interest, the debt, as we are now seeing is expanding far faster than the rate of economic growth. Eventually, the entire system will reach what can be called its maximum possible lifespan or terminal point where it reaches the point that all profitability within the economy begins to be siphoned off by the service requirements of the debt [principle and interest] and the economy will no longer be able to tolerate even minor disruptions, such, as we have seen, small interest rate increases. At one time, the economy could sustain much higher disruptions and keep growing; that is no longer the case and it now struggles to maintain itself.

We are in a classic Catch 22 because we must expand the money supply to keep the economy going, but by expanding it we hasten the day when the debt demands much more service from the economy than the economy can provide. Everything that is built upon this system will suffer the same fate as the system itself. We tend to hear politicians state that we are yoking our children and grand children with a massive debt; unfortunately it is not that simple or pretty. The truth is that our children and grand children will only be left with the broken pieces of a society crushed by system that will break down everything we now know and recognize as society. Everything we know, everything we now trust in is built upon a system with an inherent terminal point where the entire system collapses under the weight of the debt that it relies on for its existence. All investments, currencies, pensions, insurances, government programs, IRAs, 401ks, mortgage securities, etc., everything we know that makes our society what it is today will follow the fate of this monetary system.

Under such a fiat system the outcome is completely unavoidable; its continued existence is an athenatical impossibility. It would require a complete reversal of mathematical law in order for it to continue perpetually and that is impossible.

Is Tithing Required by the New Testament?

Michael Fenemore

Tithing is the practice of deducting 10% from one's income to give "to God." Does the New Covenant require this?

Before the Old Covenant

The first mention of tithing is in Genesis 14. After four Mesopotamian kings had attacked Sodom and taken Lot captive, Abraham pursued them and recovered all they had stolen. When he returned, the kings of Sodom and Salem came out to meet him. Melchizedek, the king of Salem, was a priest of God. Abraham "gave him a tenth of all" (Gen. 14:20, NASB throughout). The text provides no indication of where Abraham got the idea to "tithing." Genesis contains no command to tithe, nor is there even an indication that Abraham felt *required* to do so. The text does not tell us whether Abraham had ever tithed before, or ever tithed again after that special day. This episode is usually portrayed as Abraham giving a tenth of the increase in his possessions. However, it wasn't that way at all. He plainly said that he didn't own any of it (it had been taken from Sodom) *and* he ended up giving it *all* away, not just a tenth.

²²Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, ²³that *I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything* that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.' (Gen. 14:22f)

This is often used to bind tithing upon Christians since it took place before the Old Covenant was given and could not have been nullified by the passing of the Law. However, the text is woefully inadequate for declaring tithing as some sort of eternal law and is certainly not a model for tithing as it is taught to Christians today. It would be quite a stretch to claim that the sketchy details of this story from an ancient era we know little about prove that Christians should tithe to a church.

The next mention of tithing is in Genesis 28:20-22. Jacob was the grandson of Abraham:

²⁰Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, ²¹and I return to my father's house in safety, then the

Lord will be my God. ²²"This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." (Gen. 28:20-22)

It is probably now safe to assume that tithing was somewhat more habitual in the family (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) than we could establish by limited details provided in the account Abraham's military victory and presentation to Melchizedek since we find the "tenth" repeated here. Obviously, Jacob was not unaware of tithing. It would be unreasonable to suggest that Jacob independently got the same idea Abraham did. Apparently, Jacob was imitating Abraham's act. It is not clear whether Jacob intended to tithe on everything God provided for the rest of his life or only on the goods provided for his return trip. Also, we are not told how Jacob intended to carry out his promise. Would he give his tithe to Melchizedek? Was Melchizedek available to receive offerings? We are not told. And once again, we see no command to tithe; Jacob did it voluntarily without indicating that it was required or that he had been remiss in the past for *not* tithing.

This short and sketchy account is also inadequate for establishing tithing as binding upon Christians.

The Old Covenant

Under the Old Covenant, God established an elaborate system of sacrifices and other services that was to be administered by priests. In fact, one whole tribe, the Levites, was devoted to this service. This rather large group of men and their families needed support since they had no other income and no inheritance in the land (Num. 18:23f):

³⁰Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord. ³¹If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it. ³²For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord. (Lev. 27:30-32)

At the end of the Old Testament, God condemned his people for robbing him, i.e., not tithing:

⁸"Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and

offerings. ⁹“You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! (Mal. 3:8f)

There are difficulties with this issue. For instance, what if a peasant farmer had only nine animals? Was he excused from tithing? If he sold his animals, was he required to tithe the money? Again, we are not told. However, it *is* absolutely clear that a form of tithing was required under the Old Covenant.

The New Covenant

Since neither the episode with Abraham nor the one with Jacob can be considered support for New Testament tithing, we are left with only the requirement to tithe under the Old Covenant. However, the Old Covenant has been replaced by the New Covenant, and nowhere in the New Testament do we find Christians being commanded to tithe. So where do they get the idea that they must do it?

It is argued that since there has been a “change in the law” (Hebrews 7), the tithe now goes to the church. Without quoting the entire chapter, suffice to say that Hebrews 7 shows that Christ has replaced the Levitical priesthood. So, the argument goes, we should now pay tithes to Christ, or the church. That argument seems to be supported by Jesus himself:

¹³Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? ¹⁴So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. (1 Cor. 9:13f)

On the surface, the argument seems to be valid. Those who preach the gospel are in effect doing the work the Levites did in the temple. However, there is no mention of tithing. Since the Old Covenant was obsolete in its entirety, we should expect some kind of restatement or clarification if tithing was to be a doctrine of the New Testament church. However, as Paul taught Gentile churches how to be Christians, why is it we never see anything about tithing? If he was introducing tithing, we should expect to see all kinds of issues being raised. Many of the people were Roman slaves with little if any income. Surely, there would have been some protest and struggling over the issue, especially from people who had never tithed before and lived in a Roman world that was not geared to tithing. There would have been questions about what to tithe and what not to tithe. If God expected Christians to tithe and to be able to answer such questions, why are there no guidelines? This is hardly strong support for an ironclad 10% rule. If this issue is so important why didn't Jesus mention that Christians should tithe? Why is there no record of

people tithing to Jesus? When Paul defended his right to support, why did he not bring up the alleged tithing law? The answer is he depended on freewill offerings, not tithes.

Under the New Covenant, Christians have a new heart (Ezek. 36:26). Motivation to give comes from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit within them, not from some rule about a certain percentage of their incomes. Christians should be generous, and if they are allowing the Holy Spirit to work within them, they *will* be generous. We live by the Spirit, not by rules. But even this teaching has been perverted. Some, understanding the liberating truth we have presented to this point, will say that Christians should give *more* than 10% because they are generous and have greater *spiritual* blessings. This is simply a ploy to get more money out of people and place an even heavier burden upon them. It completely misses the point. The New Covenant is not about percentages or any other kind of detailed rules. Nor is it about trying to outdo the Old Covenant. It is a religion that comes from the heart; the renewed heart wherein the Father and Jesus Christ make their abode through the Holy Spirit (John 14:23). It seems that men cannot resist placing endless burdens upon others. There may be times when a Christian can give *nothing*. There should be no guilt over this; no comparing with other Christians and no competing with the Old Covenant; only deep gratitude to God that our salvation is totally *free of charge*. God has called us to joy, not a life of guilt and shame.

To require tithing of Christians today is downright oppressive. Most reading this article live in socialist welfare states. These monoliths require heavy taxation, and many Christians have a difficult time making ends meet. When the burden of tithing is placed upon the consciences of those who are already struggling, it's difficult to imagine how they manage to stay in a positive frame of mind. Many agonize over questions such as “Should I tithe my gross or net income?” keeping in mind that they may already be paying 30% or far more in income taxes and other hidden taxes. This painful soul searching is totally unnecessary. The question is irrelevant because tithing in the New Testament simply cannot be supported. Was tithing under the *Old* Testament oppressive as well? No. Tithing was obligatory upon *all* Israelites making their national economy an equal playing field for all with plenty of provisions for the poor. Trying to tithe today within our modern secular economies where most are *not* tithing and where government policy makers don't even consider the issue of people who feel they need to tithe creates an inequitable situation that many cannot bear. Of

course, by the time of Jesus, there was an added temple tax, and then the Romans demanded their share. This is precisely the kind of oppression and misery Jesus hated! Tithing was a taxation system intended for a particular nation to be observed on a national scale under ideal circumstances. It was *not* intended for us.

Christian giving

Here is solid guidance on how Christians should give:

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matt. 6:19-21)

Our most precious resources are time and money. Where you spend your time and money is a reflection of where your heart is. It's not that 10% is acceptable and anything less is not. We owe Jesus our lives. We owe him *everything*. Percentages are irrelevant. Ask Jesus to guide you through the Holy Spirit as to how much you can reasonably allot toward the preaching of the gospel and other worthwhile endeavors such as helping those in need. And on the days when you can do nothing or give nothing, relax in the peace of his salvation.

Conclusion

Examples before the Old Covenant cannot be used to prove that tithing is an eternal law. The Old Covenant, including its tithing requirement is obsolete. Although there has been a change in the priesthood from the Levites to Christ, nowhere in the New Testament can we find a command to pay 10% of anything whether farm produce or monetary income. Instead, we find that Christians responding to the Holy Spirit residing in their hearts will give generously toward doing the work of God.

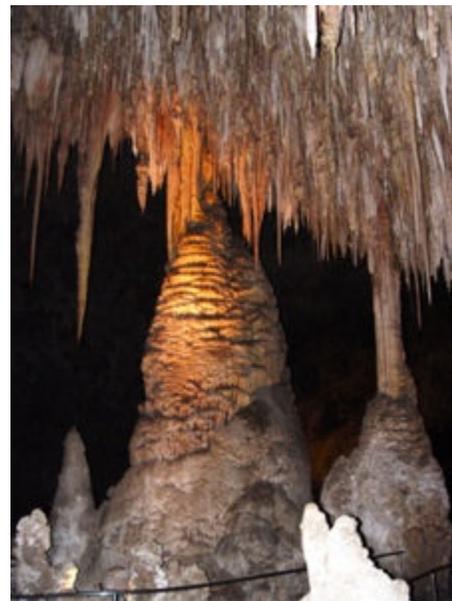
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Catalogue of World Disasters

Year	Event in Roman Empire
AD 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Revolt of Britons under Queen Boudicca; 160,000 Romans and Britons slain. Dio Cassius describes the atrocities the Britons committed thus: <p>“They hung up naked the noblest and most distinguished women and then cut off their breasts and sewed them to their mouths, in order to make the victims appear to be eating them; afterwards they impaled the women on sharp skewers lengthwise through the entire body. All this they did to the accompaniment of sacrifices, banquets and wanton behavior, not only in all their other sacred places, but particularly in the grove of Andate. This was their name for Victory, and they regarded her with most exceptional reverence.” Dio Cassius, LXII, 7.</p> · The Lycus valley and cities of Laodicea and Colosse were destroyed by earthquakes.
AD 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pestilence in Asia and Ephesus
AD 62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The gymnasium in Rome was struck by lightning and burned to the ground, reducing a statue of Nero which it contained to a shapeless lump of bronze. · An earthquake demolished the better part of the populous Campanian town of Pompeii. · A Great famine in Armenia and Palestine
AD 63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Nero’s wife, Poppaea, gives birth to a daughter, which died in less than four months. This child represented the last of Caesarean blood. With the death of Nero, the blood of the Caesars would thus perish from earth. · On the 5th February, 63, the city of Pompeii was nearly engulfed by an earthquake. In 79 it would be completely buried by Vesuvius.
AD 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The burning of Rome and almost the complete destruction of the city. Rome was divided into 14 regions, of which four remained intact, three were leveled to the ground, in the other seven nothing survived by a few dilapidated houses. One writer described it thus: <p>“The most precious antiquities of Rome, the houses of the ancient leaders decorated yet with triumphal spoils, the most sacred objects, the trophies, the <i>ex-voto</i> antiques, the most esteemed temples—all the material of the old worship of the Romans had disappeared. It was like the funeral of the reminiscences and legends of the fatherland.” Renan, <i>Le Antichrist</i>, p. 75</p> · Revolt of the gladiators in the town of Praeneste; followed by a huge navel disaster. Nero ordered the fleet to return to Campania by a given date, with no allowance for hazards of the sea. The helmsmen therefore, in spite of a raging

	<p>storm, put out from port and were destroyed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Conspiracy to assassinate Nero and place Piso upon the throne is discovered; Nero begins a reign of terror – Lucan, Seneca, and most of Rome’s leading citizens will suffer death in a general political purge.
AD 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A fire at Lyons, France, destroyed most of the colony; the disaster was so pronounced, Seneca devoted a letter to the fire, declaiming the fickleness of fortune and the transitory nature of life. · Parthians at war with Rome for control of Armenia. · Pestilence decimates Rome; Suetonius gives the number of those cut down by the plague at 30,000. The pestilence was followed by a hurricane in Campania: <p>“Upon this year, disgraced by so many deeds of shame, Heaven also set its mark by tempest and by disease. Campania was wasted by a whirlwind [hurricane], which far and wide wrecked the farms, the fruit trees, and the crops, and carried its fury to the neighbourhood of the capital, where all classes of men were being decimated by a deadly epidemic. No outward sign of a distempered air was visible. Yet the houses were filled with lifeless bodies, the streets with funerals. Neither sex nor age gave immunity from danger; slaves and the free-born populace alike were summarily cut down, amid the laments of their wives and children, who, themselves infected while tending or mourning the victims, were often thrown upon the same pyre.” Tacitus XVI, xiii.</p>
AD 66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Revolt of Jews; destruction of fifth legion under Cestius. · 50,000 Jews slain in Alexandria; Syria turned into an armed camp and Jews and Greeks slaughter one another, giving vent to long standing hatred between them. Josephus describes Syria as being filled with heaps of dead bodies. · Germans, Gauls, Sythians (Sarmatians) revolt. · Vespasian suppresses revolt in Pontus.
AD 68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · This year saw five emperors in the space of 1 year 22 days – Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian. · Famine in Rome, aggravated by Nero’s use of grain ships to import sand for his arena. · Julius Vindex, governor of Gaul (France), leads revolt against Nero; Vindex offered the imperial throne to Galba, procurator of Spain. Lucius Verginius Rufus, governor of Germany, was sent against him, but the two concluded an agreement to join forces against Nero and back Galba for the throne. Ignorant of their leader’s agreement, Rufus’ forces attack Vindex’s army unawares, resulting in 20,000 deaths. Overcome with grief for his troops and unhappy fate, Vindex committed suicide.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galba declared emperor by Roman senate; Nero decreed a public enemy; commits suicide. Galba sentences thousands of soldiers to death for their part in a mutiny under Nymphidius, who attempted to persuade the praetorians to proclaim him Caesar in place of Galba.
AD 69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Otho declared emperor by praetorian guard; Galba assassinated; troops loot, and plunder city, murdering and killing at will; Otho was described as being carried to the capital over heaps of dead bodies while the forum still reeked with blood. Civil war between Otho and Vitellius. 80,000 die in battle between Vitellius and Otho at Bedraicum. Otho commits suicide; Vitellius declared emperor by Roman senate. The victorious troops of Vitellius plunder Italy: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">“But the distress of Italy was now heavier and more terrible than that inflicted by war. The troops of Vitellius, scattering among the municipalities and colonies, indulged in every kind of robbery, theft, violence and debauchery. Their greed and venality knew no distinction between right and wrong; they respected nothing, whether sacred or profane. There were cases too where, under the disguise of soldiers, men murdered their personal enemies; and the soldiers in their turn, being acquainted with the country, marked out the best-stocked farms and the richest owners for booty or destruction, in case any resistance was made. The generals were subject to their troops and did not dare to forbid them.” Tacitus, <i>Histories</i>, II, lvi; Loeb. Ed</p>
AD 69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiber floods; men swept to death; tenements collapse, killing occupants; famine ensues due to general conditions and inability of grain ships to navigate Tiber. A sudden eruption of the sea inundated Lycia, a port city in Turkey. Pergamum destroyed by earthquake.
AD 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vespasian declared emperor in Syria while making war against Jews. City of Cremona, Italy, burned and 50,000 slain in battle between forces of Vitellius and Vespasian. Civil war reaches city of Rome; 50,000 slain in siege. Jupiter Capitolinus burned. AD 70 thus saw the destruction of the two greatest temples in the world – Jerusalem and Rome. Various uprisings in Germany; Dio Casius mentions one battle where the river was dammed with the bodies of the fallen.