



The Sword & The Plow

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Christ's Coming: Jewish or Universal?

Kurt Simmons

In the 30 years I have been a Preterist, my understanding of the eschaton has grown and changed. In the early years, it was natural to view Christ's eschatological coming almost exclusively in terms of God's judgment upon the Jews and the end of the temple service and Mosaic law. With time, I began to widen my study to take account of troublesome passages that seemed outside the scope of Jerusalem's fall – for example, passages that spoke of a time of judgment upon the whole world and epistles to Gentile churches admonishing them to "watch" and "wait." Although difficult to fit into the picture as I then saw it, I felt sure such passages could not contradict the basic premise that Christ's coming occurred in the events culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem. I am happy to report that that conviction remains firm and is

now more certain than ever. However, bringing those passages within the scope of my understanding *has* forced me to broaden my view of the eschaton, so that while I still see it as being fulfilled by A.D. 70, I now see it as world-wide, and not merely Jewish in scope.

The Latter Days of What?

The term "eschaton" means "last things" and speaks to the time when God would bring to completion his great work of redemption. In the Holy Scriptures, this period is often designated by the phrase "last" or "latter" days. Because of their place in the divine economy as God's chosen people through whom to bring the Saviour into the world, the Jewish nation figures prominently in prophetic passages concerning the latter days. However, the national election of the Jews was

merely provisional – a temporary arrangement to accomplish a particular purpose. When that purpose was fulfilled, the Jews' special place in the plan of redemption terminated. Moreover, because they were the murderers of Christ, and obstinately rejected the gospel and persecuted the church, their nation was destroyed. As might therefore be expected, this destruction figures prominently in the prophets' writing about the latter days, and has caused many to see the eschaton exclusively in terms of its Jewish aspect: For example, Eusebius explained Jacob's prophecy (Gen. 49:1ff) of what would befall the tribes of the Jews in the last days thus:

“For we must understand by ‘the end of the days’ (viz., “*the last days*,” LXX) the end of the national existence of the Jews. What, then, did he say they must look for? The cessation of the rule of Judah, the destruction of their whole race, the failing and ceasing of their governors, and the abolition of the dominant kingly position of the tribe of Judah, and the rule and kingdom of Christ, not over Israel but over all nations, according to the word, ‘This is the expectation of the nations.’”¹

In defining the latter days exclusively in terms of the destruction of the Jewish polity, Eusebius makes a mistake common among Preterists, one that until recently I made myself. The error in this approach is that it fails to see that more lines intersected in the eschaton than the fall of Jerusalem; other enemies had to be put beneath Christ's feet than merely the Jews. Paul makes this clear when he says, “For he must reign, till he hath put *all enemies* under his feet” (I Cor. 15: 25; *emphasis added*). The universal nature of Christ's rule is also affirmed by the Psalmist when he says “thou hast put *all things* under his feet” (Ps. 8:6, *emphasis added*; cf. Heb. 2:8). In another place, the Psalmist extends Christ's rule to *all nations*:

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

These passages are essentially eschatological and speak to Christ's kingdom coming in power against his enemies. Psalm two in particular is about the murder of Christ, his ascension, and vengeance upon both Jews and Romans. Psalm one hundred ten is to the same effect:

¹ Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica*, VIII, ccclxxv; Ferrar ed.

“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 would the heads over *many countries*.” Ps. 110:5, 6

These passages clearly contemplate more than the fall of Jerusalem; *all nations* are spoken of as coming within the sweep of Christ's eschatological judgment. Nor are these are not the only verses that affirm Christ's universal coming. There should be added to these Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the latter days, in which the Stone smote the *inhabited world* embodied in the Roman empire, reducing to shivers the world of man. (Dan. 2:28-45) I challenge anyone to make Daniel two fit within the compass of the destruction of Jerusalem. And what of Daniel chapter seven? The Jews are not so much as even mentioned. Yet, Christ is depicted coming in vengeance upon the fourth world empire (Rome), symbolized by the beast, and upon Nero, the little horn that made war upon the saints. (Dan. 7:22-27) These and other verses, by their express terms, bring within Christ's eschatological judgment nations far removed from Jerusalem.

These are just a few of the Old Testament passages showing the eschaton was world-wide. The New Testament also abounds with passages showing the universal nature of Christ's eschatological coming. For example, in Acts 17:3 Paul addressed the Athenians, saying, “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which, he is about to *judge the world* in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” The term rendered “world” here is *oikoumenen*, and is defined as the *inhabitable world, or Roman empire*. Clearly, Paul was warning the Athenians about something more than the destruction of Jerusalem. Another example is seen II Thessalonians 2:8 - the companion text to Daniel 7:22-27 and the destruction of the little horn – which plainly states that Jesus would destroy the man of sin (Nero) with the breath of his mouth and the “*brightness of his coming*.” Hence, Nero's death in A.D. 68 is attributed by Paul to Christ's eschatological coming in vengeance upon the persecutors of his church. Need it be pointed out that Nero did not live in Jerusalem?

These and other passages all prove that the eschaton was worldwide and not merely Jewish or covenantal. This leads to an important point. When Preterists encounter phrases such as “the end of the *aenon*” (world or age) (Matt. 24:3) or this “evil *aenon*” (Gal. 1:4), we typically have interpreted this to mean the end of the *Mosaic age*. We do this same thing with the phrase “last” or “latter” days, which we interpret to mean latter days of the Mosaic age or national Israel.

But, just as the latter days spoke to more than the fall of Jerusalem, so the world that passed at the eschaton was more than merely Mosaic. Paul told the Corinthians “the fashion of this world (*Gk. kosmos*) passeth away.” (I Cor. 7:31). The world of the Corinthians – like the rest of ancient man, including the Jews – was not fashioned or defined by the Mosaic law. The temple ritual and Mosaic law were indicative of a larger, all-pervading reality; a reality the law and temple ritual were created in response to, but did not themselves make. Rather, the one thing that defined the world condition more than anything else was *the universal reign of sin and death*. This was the enemy Christ ultimately came to destroy, not the Jews or Romans. The Jews and Romans came under wrath only because they took the part of sin and death by opposing the gospel. Otherwise, Christ had no inherent account to settle with them. Thus, when Paul said that the fashion of the world was passing away, it was to a world languishing under the dominion of sin and death he alluded to, not the Mosaic age. The latter days described, not the end of the Mosaic age, but the end of the universal epoch marked by the reign of sin and death, the world order that had obtained from the time of mankind’s fall. The destruction of Jerusalem coincided with this event, but did not define it.

The Law of Sin and Death

In any discussion of this kind, it is important to take account of the universal nature of the law of sin and death and that mankind’s salvation lay in redemption from it, and not from the Mosaic law, as some Preterists have supposed. The law of sin and death was in force from the time God made man and placed him in the garden. God’s instruction to Adam not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil carried with it the sanction of death for its transgression: “For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. 2:17) There are no fewer than *five* types of death that may be identified in the scriptures: 1) moral and spiritual, 2) legal and juridical, 3) physical, 4) hadean, and 5) eternal death. Moral and spiritual death speaks to mankind’s inherent fallenness, the moral depravity that besets the whole race due to Adam’s transgression. Juridical death speaks to the legal censor and sentence of death pronounced upon all that transgress God’s law. Paul alludes to juridical death when he says, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1) That is, God had acquitted them of their sins and the penalty of death, and made them heirs of life.

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23) This means that sin is tied to man’s moral faculties of faith and conscience, exculpating infants and idiots from guilt. From the time he arrives at the age of

accountability, man lives under the sentence of juridical death for his sins. Unless he is saved from his sins, and receives pardon by obedience to the gospel, at the time of physical death man’s fate is fixed and the sentence of eternal death awaits him. However, prior to the eschaton, man’s spirit was kept in hades; thus, the origin of hadean death. This was necessary so that the souls of the righteous might be kept in safety until Christ could accomplish the work of his cross, making redemption for their sins. It is to the souls of the just in hades paradise that John refers in Revelation when he says he saw the souls of them beheaded for the gospel, living and reigning with Christ. (Rev. 20:3-6) The wicked were also kept in hades tartarus until the judgment of the last day, when they were cast into the lake of fire, which is called the “second death” (eternal death). (Rev. 20:11-15; cf. I Pet. 3:19; II Pet. 4:2)

The point that needs to be made here is that death came into the world independent of Mosaic law. The reign of sin and death was universal; all men were under its power, both Jew and Gentile. Bringing in the Mosaic law did not create mankind’s bondage, nor would taking away the Mosaic law deliver him from it. The Mosaic law was superimposed upon the law of sin and death; its ordinances merely served to demonstrate man’s condition, which obtained from the time of the race’s fall in the garden. Paul said “The law entered that the offence might abound.” (Rom. 5:20) That is, the Mosaic law did not create the offence, it merely magnified it; it served to teach man about his bondage to the law of sin and death, and the hopelessness of his condition apart from the substitutionary death and atoning sacrifice of Christ. Proof of this is seen in the fact that the Mosaic law is no longer in force today, yet all who are not in Christ are under bondage to the law of sin and death. Moreover, the Gentiles were never under the law of Moses, but they *were* under bondage to sin and death, and every bit as much in need of salvation as the Jews. It was to Gentiles Paul wrote when he said “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1) - juridically dead in sin, even though not under the law of Moses. Paul makes express mention of the law of sin and death in his letter to the Romans:

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from ***the law of sin and death***. For what the [Mosaic] law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Rom. 8:2, 3; *emphasis and bracketed matter added*.

Notice that *two* laws occur in this passage: 1) the law of sin and death and 2) the law of Moses. The Jews thought that perfection came by the Mosaic law, but

Paul shows that it could not deliver from the law of sin and death. This is because man can never rise completely above his flesh, but lives under condemnation of the moral and spiritual law he is bound to transgress. Moreover, the law of Moses made no provision for redemption (the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins, Heb. 10:4): “For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh to God.” (Heb. 7:19) A little earlier, Paul identified the law of sin and death with the law of man’s inherent fallenness in this passage:

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see **another law** in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the **law of sin** which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 7:22-24; *emphasis added*.

In this passage, the “law of God” that delights the inward man is the *moral and spiritual law*. Violation of the moral and spiritual law brings man under the law of sin and death. Like the law of sin and death, the moral and spiritual law exists independent of the Mosaic law. Although much of the moral law was codified by the law of Moses, it did not derive its force from it, and it continues to exist today even though the Mosaic law has passed away. The “law of sin in my members” refers to the elemental forces of man’s inherent fallenness. The Spirit and Inspiration that God breathed into our first ancestor that enabled him to live above his flesh, was lost to Adam and his descendants through sin. Man is now “carnal, sold under sin.” (Rom. 7:14) It is impossible that he ever live completely above his flesh, even though he aspires to do so. Hence, Paul’s lament “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.” Paul is not seeking physical death in this verse, for physical death without redemption is eternal damnation. Rather, Paul is expressing the impossibility of ever achieving salvation under the moral and spiritual law. No matter how much man might aspire to the moral and spiritual law, the law of sin in his members brought him into captivity to the law of sin and death. However, Paul expresses his thankfulness for the redemption in Jesus when he says “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Since man’s problem laid in the universal law of sin and death, it should be clear that an exclusively “Jewish” eschaton would avail man nothing; something more had to be taken out of the way than the Mosaic law.

The Veil Spread Over all Nations

Although the main thrust of Paul’s letter to the Romans is to show Jews the futility of the Mosaic law for

soteriological perfection, Gentiles were equally under bondage to the law of sin and death. Paul speaks to this in chapter eight, as follows:

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For **the creature** was made **subject to vanity**, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the **whole creation** groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And **not only they**, but **ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit**, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Rom. 8:19-23

The “creature” is the *whole of humanity*, which was subjected to vanity by its inherent fallenness and the impossibility of obtaining salvation by any means it could devise. “Not only they” refers to the Gentiles; “ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit” refers to the Jews. The Jews were the firstfruits to God and the Lamb. (Rev. 14:4; cf. Jm. 1:18; Eph. 1:12, 13) Sin and death reigned from Adam to Moses (Rom. 5:14); the whole creation - both Jew and Gentile - groaned and travailed in pain together under the bondage of corruption (our mortal frame), looking for the glorious liberty of the sons of God (resurrection) promised our first ancestor in the garden - the promised Kinsman Redeemer that would bruise the head of sin and death through the power of his cross and resurrection and bring the adoption of sonship (resurrection) to those who obey his gospel.

What this means in terms of the eschaton is that mankind’s deliverance from bondage to sin and death could never be accomplished by merely removing the Mosaic law. Hence, the age that concluded at the eschaton was not the Mosaic age - a phrase that never occurs in the Bible, but which Preterists have imposed upon it due largely to Matt. 24:3 and the apparent connection between the end of the “*aenon*” and the destruction of Jerusalem - *not* the end of the Mosaic age, I say, but the *world-age (ton aiona tou kosmoutoutou*, Eph. 2:1) marked by the reign of sin and death. Isaiah speaks to this when he says

“And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over **all people**, and the veil that is spread over **all nations**. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off **all the earth**: for the Lord hath spoken it.” Isa. 25:6-8; *emphasis added*

The “veil spread over all nations” was not the Mosaic law, but the sentence of death that transgression of the moral law brings. This was the veil that separated man from God. The time for the promised deliverance was the cross - when the veil of the temple was rent in twain - but finally accrued to the saints’ benefit at the resurrection, when the last enemy was destroyed. We might ask at this point if the fall of Jerusalem could accomplish all this? Not at all. The temple and veil stood in testimony to mankind’s universal banishment from the presence of God (Gentiles worshipped there too) and the need of an Intercessor to make peace through the sprinkling of blood. In terms of God’s promise to bring salvation to all mankind, its destruction did not mark the end of anything uniquely Jewish. Rather, it spoke to the end of the veil cast over all nations from the time of Adam’s fall.

The Little Apocalypse and Elements of the World

In the *usus loquendi* of the prophets, cataclysmic language in which the elements of nature are dissolved spoke to God’s judgment upon nations, not the dissolution of the earth and its elements. The language is hyperbolic and poetically exaggerated to emphasize the universal destruction coming upon the nations of the earth, but not the earth itself. Isaiah’s prophecy of Edom’s fall to the Babylonians makes the point:

“Come near, *ye nations*, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let *the earth* hear, and all this is therein; *the world*, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon *all nations*, and his fury upon *all their armies*: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of the carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.” Isa. 34:1-4

Identical language to this occurs in the New Testament regarding the eschaton. (Matt. 24:29; Lk. 21:25; 24: II Pet. 3:7-12) Hence, there is much we can learn from it. Foremost for present purposes, this passage is not confined to Idumea as Preterists sometimes assert. Although obviously the elements that would be dissolved were *not* the chemical or atomic elements of the earth, it is equally clear that more than Idumea was involved. *All nations* would come within the sweep of judgment that God was bringing upon the world through the Assyrians and Babylonians; the Idumeans were merely one nation involved in a time of *universal wrath* upon the world of man. The “little apocalypse” of Isa. 24-29, which Preterists are sometimes guilty of

applying only to Judah and Israel, describes this same judgment. It is often overlooked that in the nine preceding chapters, the prophet describes God’s judgment upon Moab (Isa. 15, 16), Syria and Israel (Isa. 17), Ethiopia (Isa. 18), Egypt (Isa. 19, 20), Babylon, Dumah and Arabia (Isa. 21), Judah (Isa. 22), and Tyre. (Isa. 23) Thus, the judgment spoken of in the little apocalypse was *world-wide*; chapter twenty-four merely summarizes the judgments that overtook the ancient world in the preceding chapters.

God’s judgment in carrying the Jewish nation into captivity under the Assyrians and Babylonians was typical of the eschatological judgment under Rome when the nation would suffer ultimate and irrevocable destruction. Hence, prophecies of the coming salvation and wrath under the Messiah are interwoven throughout the little apocalypse, showing it has a secondary meaning or fuller sense (*plenior sensus* in the terminology of theologians), which looked to the days of Christ. (Cf. Isa. 25:8; 26:19; 28:16-22) Like Isaiah, the apostle Peter wrote of the coming eschatological judgment under the Messiah. II Pet. 3:7-13 speaks of the dissolution of the heavens and earth, but, as we have seen, this language *never* contemplates the chemical components of the universe. The hermeneutic established by the prophets governs our interpretation; we cannot depart from it without clear evidence of God’s intent that we are so to do. Indeed, Peter’s reference to Isaiah’s promise of a “new heavens and earth” makes *certain* that the physical elements are not view. (See discussion, below.) However, just as more was involved in the little apocalypse than the Jews, so more is involved in II Peter than Jerusalem. As the judgment of the little apocalypse by Assyria brought within its sweep the *whole world* of ancient man, so Christ’s eschatological judgment would not be limited to Jerusalem and Palestine. All men would feel the rod of Christ’s correction as he meted out judgment and prepared to remake the world in greater conformity with his kingdom and gospel.

The New Heavens and Earth: Not the New Testament

After the desolations of the world by the Assyrians and Babylonians, God promised a time of renewal. The cities that lay waste would be rebuilt and the desert blossom like the rose as men again filled the earth and Israel returned to their land and brought it under cultivation. (Cf. Amos 9:9-15) The return from captivity was a type of the “restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21) that would be accomplished in Christ. The new heavens and earth promised by Isaiah (Isa. 65:17; 66:22) and mentioned by Peter and John (II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21, 22) however, are *not* the New Testament as

Preterists have sometimes supposed. The new Jerusalem is the covenantal habitation of the saints, not the new heavens and earth. Foy E. Wallace Jr., who, perhaps more than any other man, deserves the title as the “father” of modern Preterism for his work in the early twentieth century, refuting Premillennialism in the churches of Christ, says this about the new heavens and earth:

“The new heaven and earth, and trouble[d] 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.”²

Thus, according to Wallace, the new heavens and earth simply spoke to the world after the eschatological judgments and persecutions had ceased, in which the church emerged victorious with Christ. There can be no clearer proof that this is so, and that the new heavens and earth are *not* the New Testament, than the fact that the wicked inhabit them outside *the city*:

“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” Rev. 22:15

The new heavens and earth speak to the world after the eschatological judgments of the last days were past, when the saints reign with Christ through the gospel. Like leaven folded within dough, the gospel message would breed and grow until it filled the world and every institution of man bore its imprint. However, the point we want to make at present is that, as the new heavens and earth are not the new covenant, so *the old heavens and earth that passed at the eschaton spoke to more than Jerusalem and Jewry*. The elements that would burn with fervent heat were not the furniture of the temple cultus or the law of Moses, but the elements of the social and political environment making up the pre-parousia world. The picture of Revelation twenty-one and twenty-two is the church in the world victorious, not the church in the world minus merely the Jews or the law of Moses. The elements consumed at the eschaton included the Jewish polity and nation, yes; but were by no means limited to them.

Conclusion

The early days of the modern Preterist movement confronted us with themes that were unfamiliar. We

² Foy E. Wallace, *The Book of Revelation* (1963, Wallace Publications, Ft. Worth), p., 426.

correctly assessed that the eschaton was an event of the past, which occurred within the lives of the apostles. However, we tended to interpret it in overly narrow, purely Judaistic terms. Hopefully, we are beginning to see that its judgments were worldwide and not at all limited to Palestine.

Questions from our Readers

Q: In the second newsletter you attached, I noticed a reader who expressed doubt about scripture teaching endless torment. Your answer indicates your agreement with the reader and a short affirmation of conditional immortality. I was very happy to see this. Within two years of becoming a preterist in 1988, I began to have doubts about endless torment based on the hyperbolic nature of the Bible's judgment language. In 1993 I wrote a defense of conditional immortality as an MA thesis for California State University, which I reformatted and printed in book form for use in my congregation. I would love to send you a copy of this book. It is called, *Damning Assumptions: What Advocates of Endless Torment Take for Granted*. It is a thorough refutation of the doctrine of endless conscious torment. I was actually surprised that Cal State allowed me to submit a thesis like this for an MA, but it was enthusiastically accepted by my committee. If you send me your address, I will send you a copy. If your address is included with the books you are shipping to me will suffice, I can use that too.

I have given this book to many friends, some of whom are seminary trained, and I have yet to have one of them even attempt to refute it. In fact, once you understand the biblical judgment language, the traditional defense of hell as endless torment appears very weak indeed. One of my closest friends, who has a Th.M. in OT from Westminster Seminary, was convinced and remains a conditionalist to this day. In my view, conditional immortality is the preterist position on final judgment. Preterists who continue to defend the traditional view are, I think, clearly inconsistent with themselves.

Max, Denver Colo

A: Great to hear back again. Yes, I find the idea of eternal conscious torment but weakly attested in Scripture. I suspect the probable majority of Preterists

have been forced to visit this issue and probably agree that the spirit of the lost is ultimately annihilated. I'd love a copy of your book. If you care to provide me with an article-length piece on the topic, I'd also be very happy to publish it in my newsletter.

Q: Kurt, I read the article on your site and the section on the millennium in Revelation Explained. This solution is actually quite profound, and your drawing the parallel with John's use of the Stoic term, *logos*, is--I think--rock solid. Even more compelling to me with this association is something that had bothered me for a very long time: Peter's use of the term "Tartarus" for *hades*. Why, I thought, would Peter use a term for the intermediate state of the lost that is so obviously associated with pagan mythological conceptions of the afterlife? Your explanation makes that clear. Like the term *logos*, the Bible picks up the parallel term from the culture to show how the truth is both formally similar and yet different as well. John's *logos* is personal in Christ, not impersonal, like the Stoics; Peter's Tartarus eventually leads to the destroying fires of hell, not the cleansing fires of purgatory and eventual reincarnation. You have cleared up a major problem here.

Thanks for all your great work, brother. You're really helping to clear up my remaining issues with preterism. You have spent the time clarifying these issues that I have had to devote to other matters over the last several years, and I am grateful for your help on these issues.
Max, Colo

A: Max, thanks for the kind words. I guess in using Greek for the NT certain "baggage" invariably came with it. How could God use a word like "Hades" and Greek and Roman peoples not have certain cultural associations? God apparently used the nearest approximation as a starting point to teach them, without endorsing all that historically was associated with the word. I think there are other areas similar to this that show up in the scripture, like demons and unclean spirits, for example. The Greeks conquered Palestine under Alexander and ruled Galilee during the Lord's ministry. What we call epilepsy today seems to have been called by the Jews and Greeks of Jesus' day an "unclean spirit" (the Jews adopting/learning this usage from the Greeks). There is a footnote in my commentary on Daniel four about Nebuchadnezzar's madness where I quote Bishop Lightfoot. He in turn quotes several rabbinic sources to show that various physical maladies were by common colloquialism called "unclean spirits."

Angels is another area where there is considerable culture baggage. Our idea of angels always invokes heavenly spiritual beings. But the Biblical term just means a messenger and it is used of men all the time. Thus, when Peter talks about "angels" that sinned being bound in Tartarus, we think of demonic beings, but probably he is just referring to the "sons of God" (descendants of Seth) who sinned by marrying unbelieving women (Gen. 6). If you read Josephus on the flood, you'll find that he said the children of Seth obeyed God for seven generations, but in the eighth generation they apostatized by making unlawful marriages. Josephus shifts from referring to the descendants of Seth, and begins calling them "angels" at one point. Doubtless this was his substitute phrase for the "sons of God" of Gen. 6. But since he already called them "sons of Seth" we have to assume that he understood "sons of God" and "angels" in terms different than normal English usage would normally suggest, or that he was himself unclear in his understanding of the passage. Both may be true. But the bottom line is that Josephus says it was the sons of Seth that apostatized, not fallen angels, and this seems to explain II Pet. 2:4.

Q: Hi Kurt, I have read the Preterist creed and am trouble you still practice communion. We are told in scripture to continue in the traditions of the apostles yet later, the apostle Paul says clearly to practice communion "till he comes again." He has come again! Continuing communion would not only be anachronistic but against the wishes of the Holy Spirit (God). To continue it sounds like the Diadasche and not the closed canon of The NT. please let me know what you think.

A: Paul's statement in I Cor. 11:26 that in observing the Lord's Supper the Corinthians showed the Lord's death "till he come" does not imply a cessation of the Lord's Supper following AD 70. In observing the Lord's Supper, they showed Christ's death, and the REASON for his coming; *viz.*, to avenge his murder upon his enemies and vindicate his gospel. This in no way meant they were to stop observing it after he was come. Christ's death is still declared by the church as the means of our salvation; this aspect of communion will never cease. Also, Paul's statement in I Cor. 11:26 does not take precedence over Matt. 26:29, which indicates the Lord's Supper would be observed "in the kingdom", which points either to heaven or to the present era of the church. There is no clear indication that we are to abandon this important testimony to the Lord's substitutionary death and atoning sacrifice as part of the church's regular assembly.

End of Heaven and Earth?

Randall Hunt

(Editor's note: Preterists sometimes affirm that the earth is eternal. But only God is eternal. A Reader provided his comments on various passages showing the earth is not eternal, but will pass away some day. We are happy to share a few of them with you here.)

When interpreting the Bible one must always recognize when and to whom the passages were initially written, and the perspective of the author. The interpretation also needs to be in line with other Scripture passages. One should seek the Holy Spirit's guidance before applying Bible passages to a situation, or to whom, it is not clearly directed.

These are a number of Bible passages that, on the initial reading, may appear to deal with the outcome of the physical earth and the physical universe. A more in-depth examination of the passages is needed to determine if their wording is to be taken literally or figuratively based on the type and literary style of each individual passage.

Based on the below listed Bible verses, I believe the following statements can be made about the physical earth and physical universe.

- They were created by God.
- They will exist for an indefinitely long period of time.
- They will exist and function within the established laws of nature/universe.
- They will exist at least until the completion of everything mentioned in the Bible.
- Their "end" will occur at a time appointed by God.
- No clear indication is given as to when or how their "end" will occur.
- Their existence will not be remembered by those having died and entered the spiritual realm.

Genesis 8:21-22 – ²¹The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. ²² As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

(Comments: Taking a literal interpretation, this passage indicates that as long as the physical earth exists, it will not experience the end of the daily and seasonal cycles.)

Psalms 78:69 – ⁶⁹"He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that he established forever."

(Comments: This passage deals with God's interaction with the nation of Israel. Here there is mention of the establishing of the temple, and its existence is compared to both the mountains of Jerusalem and to the earth that God had made. A review of the original Hebrew text does not indicate that the earth was to exist "forever", but for an "eon", or indefinitely long period of time; an age.)

Psalms 93:1-2 -¹"The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure. ²Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity."

(Comments: This passage deals with statements of God's attributes and praise to Him. The mention of the "world" is only in relation to a feat of God's creation, and not as to the earth's final outcome.)

Psalms 102:25-26 – ²⁵"In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded."

(Comment: A clear statement that God created the earth and the universe. Indication given that God created them to operate within the laws of nature by evidence of a "life-cycle", where at some point they will "perish". Acknowledgement given that it will be God who will decide when they will be "discarded".)

Psalms 104:5 - ⁵"He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved."

(Comments: An acknowledgement that God established the earth within the workings of the universe, and that nothing, outside of God, can alter that relationship.)

Psalms 148:1-6 – ¹“Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. ² Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. ³ Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created, ⁶ and he established them for ever and ever—he issued a decree that will never pass away.”

(Comment: Clear indication that the Lord created the spiritual and physical universe, and that they are to praise Him. A review of the original Hebrew text does not indicate that they are to exist "forever and ever", but for an "eon", or indefinitely long period of time; an age.)

Ecclesiastes 1:4 – ⁴“Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.”

(Comments: As the majority of Ecclesiastes is written from mankind's perspective, this passage is just making the point that there will be a seemingly endless cycle of generations/people. A review of the original Hebrew text does not indicate that the earth will remain "forever", but that it will remain for an "eon", or indefinitely long period of time; an age.)

Isaiah 51:6 – ⁶“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.”

(Comments: Indication given that the universe, to include the earth and its inhabitants, will at some point come to an end, but God's salvation will last forever.)

Isaiah 65:17 - ¹⁷“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”

(Comment: This passage deals with a listing of blessings that are to come on God's people, being "descendants from Jacob and from Judah"- verse 9. These blessings are in contrast to what they experienced at the hands of surrounding nations, as result of the judgment of God for their rejection of Him. This expectation of an earthly restoration of Israel also led the Jews to wrongly believe that Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, would lead to an earthly restoration. This passage is also a foreshadowing of the "new heavens and a new earth", which is the heavenly kingdom reserved for those that are God's chosen, as seen in Revelation 21. Some Christians view the old to new heaven/earth terminology as referring to the change from the Mosaic Covenant to the Messianic Covenant.)

Matthew 5:17-18 - ¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

(Comments: Jesus Christ's very words stating that He is the fulfillment of the entire OT – the "Law" & the "Prophets". Everything found in the Law will be fulfilled before the passing of the physical universe and earth.)

Matthew 24:34-35 - ³⁴“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

(Comments: Jesus Christ had just listed a series of events that He said would occur before that present generation of people died. He then emphasizes the fact that His words would prove true by comparing them with the known, but seemingly unfathomable truth that the heaven and earth would at some point pass away.)

BRIEF HISTORY OF CLOUDS.



Jesus' Coming in Clouds in Scripture

By M. Lee

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TERM *CLOUDS* in the Old Testament shows there are many different *uses*. *Usage* makes meaning, therefore clouds has many different *meanings*. Jesus always connects His second coming (Greek; *parousia*) to *clouds*. Why does He connect His second coming to clouds? And what does the term '*clouds*' signify? What is the relation between clouds and Jesus' second coming?

Firstly, all of scripture is one book, one interconnected set of prophetic ideas. There is no difference in prophetic usage between testaments. Isaac Newton describes the unity of OT and NT scripture in his theological manuscript '*On the Language of the Prophets*.' In it he affirms that all biblical writers spoke in the *same mystical language*, and this *mystical* (prophetic) language because *John did not write in one language, Daniel in another, Isaiah in a third, and the others in a language peculiar to themselves, but they all write in one and the same mystical language...and this language, as far as I can find, was as certain and definite in its significations as is the vulgar [ie. common] language of any nation.*

Newton, *On the Language of the Prophets*. p.119
The point Newton makes here is about meanings. He says biblical language has its own set of ideas and meanings, because bible writers all wrote in the same '*mystical*' language, (cf. *spiritual words*. 1 Cor 2:12-13) which Jesus calls '*figurative*' in John 16:25-29. Biblical words share the same meanings, and these meanings are just as certain and reliable as the meanings of any *common* language, " he says. Hence when the bible authors, (Daniel, Isaiah, John et al) use a term (eg. *clouds*) the meanings of the word are to be found the same way as modern, dictionary-writers find meanings, by usage. We compare each passage and find out how the term is used. In

scripture the OT is the dictionary of the later NT terms. The Old testament gives us a history of the usage of the term. What does '*clouds*' signify in the Old testament? Here are a few examples.

A cloud as sign Gen 9:13

Egyptians destroyed in clouds Ex 14:24

Baptized in a cloud Ex 14:20 /1 Cor 10:2

His glory seen in clouds /meat Ex 16:10

Law given in clouds Ex 19:9

Calls out of clouds Ex 24:16

Meets Moses face to face in clouds Ex 40:34

Change brought by clouds 1 Kgs 18:24; Lk 12:54

Temporality: fleeting as clouds Job 30:15; Hos 6:4

High as clouds Job 35:5

Innumerable as clouds Job 37:7; Heb 12:1

Clothing in cloud Job 38:9

His strength in the clouds Ps 68:34

He has covered Zion with a cloud in His anger. Lam 2:1

Obscurity: hides in clouds Lam 3:44

God rides on clouds Is 19:1

Protection /shade from sun in clouds Is 25:5; 44:2

Confusion /scattering as a clouds Ezek 34:12

Presence; Clouds are the dust of his feet Nah 1:3

Glory of Jesus /God's Voice out of cloud Mt 17:5

Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." Mt 26:64

Here we see that Jehovah is always connected to clouds. Following is a chart outlining eight uses of the term '*clouds*' in scripture, when the term '*clouds*' occurs, the context, and to whom it refers.

Understanding a Brief History of Clouds: Eight Historical Uses of 'Clouds' in Scripture

Example #1.

Ex 14:24. In Egypt at the Red Sea in power.

*At the morning watch, the LORD looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of **fire and cloud** and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion.*

Here God looks down through fire and cloud – His presence.

Example #2.

Ex 16:10. In the Wilderness meat given in clouds.

*It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the **glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.***

Here the glory of God appears in a cloud of blessing in a wilderness.

Example #3.

Ex 19:9. JHWH dwelt in clouds in Sinai.

*The LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will **come to you in a thick cloud**, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.” Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.*

God’s presence is here found in clouds as evidence for belief to the people of God.

Example #4.

Ex 40:34-35. JHWH dwelt in the tabernacle in clouds in Sinai.

*Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses was not able to enter the **tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.***

In example #4 the cloud is evidence of God’s presence in the tent of meeting –He met His people there. On this dwelling in clouds Jamieson, Faucett, and Brown comment thus.

A cloud--literally, "The cloud," the mystic cloud which was the well-known symbol of the Divine Presence.... The entire and universal concealment of the tabernacle within the folds of an impervious cloud was not without a deep and instructive

meaning; it was a protection to the sacred edifice from the burning heats of the Arabian climate; it was a token of the Divine Presence; and it was also an emblem of the Mosaic dispensation, which, though it was a revelation from heaven, yet left many things hid in obscurity; for it was a dark cloud compared with the bright cloud, which betokened the clearer and fuller discoveries of the divine character and glory in the gospel. ([Matthew 17:5](#) Jamieson, Faucett, Brown Commentary.)

Example #5.

1 Kgs 8:10-11. JHWH dwelt in Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem in clouds

*It happened that when the priests came from the **holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.***

Here #5 is a recurrence of JHWH’s appearance in clouds of Ex.40 replayed at the inauguration of Solomon’s temple some 500 years later.

1 Kgs 8:12-13 12

*Then Solomon said, “The **LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud.** 13 “I have surely built You a lofty house, A place for Your dwelling forever.”*

At this time Solomon explained God’s presence would dwell in the Jerusalem temple.

Example #6.

Is 19:1 The Lord rides on a thick cloud in judgment on nation of Egypt

*The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, **the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt**; The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them*

What does it mean that JHWH would ‘ride’ on a cloud? Maimonides the great medieval Jewish scholar explains the Old Testament term for ‘ride’ as follows.

The term rakab, “To ride.” Is a synonym. In its primary signification it is applied to riding on an animal, in the usual way. (eg. rokeb riding an ass. Num 22:22) It has then been figuratively used to denote “dominion over a thing.”; because the rider

governs and rules the animal he rides upon. "He made him to ride (yarkibehu) on the high places of the earth." (Duet 32:13); "and I will cause thee to ride (ve-hirkabika) upon the high places of the earth." (Is 58:14); that is that you will have dominion over the highest (people) on earth; "I will make Ephraim ride (arkib)." (Hos 10:11) (Maimonides. Guide. Part I LXX p.105)

Thus 'ride on a cloud', 'come on a cloud' means a ruler elevated above a morally inferior people.

Example #7.

Mtt 17:5 God presence speaks out of cloud

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

Old Testament usage always connects *Coming in Clouds* to the personal and present activity of God. Jesus nearly always links His second coming to clouds.

Example #8. Mtt 26:64. The Son of Man coming on clouds. (quoted from Daniel 7:13)

Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

Here Jesus quotes a 'Son of man' passage from Daniel 7:13. **"And behold, with the clouds of heaven, one like the son of man was coming."**

In the New Testament Jesus uses 'coming in clouds' thirteen times (of twenty seven) in apocalyptic or messianic use in the context of presence, power, and judgment.

coming in the clouds of heaven with power Mt 26:64

coming in the clouds with great power Mk 13:26

coming in the clouds of heaven Mk 14:62

Son of man coming in a cloud with power Lk 21:27

Son of man returning in clouds/same manner Acts 1:9-11

up together with them in clouds I Thess 4:17

Behold He is coming with the clouds Rev 1:7

from heaven clothed with a cloud Rev. 10:1

they ascended up to heaven in a cloud Rev 11:12

And I looked and behold a white cloud Rev 14:14

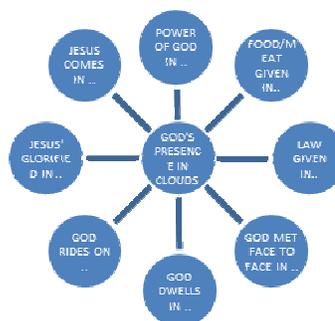
upon the cloud sat one like unto the Rev 14:14

him who sat on the cloud Rev 14:15

then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle 14:16

Thus the central organizing idea that explains these uses of 'clouds' is the idea of *God's presence in*

power and/or judgment whether visible or invisible. This is intuitive. (The Chinese character for *cloud* is the same as 'power. ') This central generalization may be found in all particular uses. (See radial below)



The central organizing idea behind Jesus' use of clouds in the New Testaments is the 'presence of God in judgment' Greek παρουσία God's just anger is seen in clouds as in the first destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC.

He has covered Zion with a cloud in His anger. Lam 2:1

The Presence of God Himself is in clouds:

The Lord said he would dwell in thick cloud. 1 Kgs 8:12 Job 22:13-14

Can He judge in clouds? Clouds are His hiding place. Job 22:13-14

Before Him passed His thick clouds, hailstones and fire. Ps 18:9-12

Behold the Lord rides on a thick cloud Is 19:1

Thus Jesus' saying to the high priest *"You will see the Son of Man coming in power in clouds"* may be understood as dominion or rule over the high priest. (Mt 26:64.) This saying may be explained as Jesus' parousia coming in judgment, as JHWH came on the Egyptians in Moses' day.

Here then is an example of Jesus' power to unify two thousand years of Hebrew prophecy: Jesus as: a *Sign to Destroy the wicked, to Baptize* them in a cloud, to demonstrate His *Glory* in clouds, to give them *Meat*, to confirm His *Law* to them, to *Call* them out of clouds, to *Meet them Face to Face* in clouds, to *Change* the old order in Jerusalem, to come to them *Quickly* in clouds, with *Clouds* (numberless) of witnesses, to *Clothe them* in a cloud, *Riding* on a cloud, to *Protect the righteous* and *scatter* the wicked

as clouds to demonstrate His (παρουσία) *Presence*; in the *Glory of God Himself* – the *Son of Man*, the *judicial power of God* seen in clouds; in His own generation. (Mtt 24:30,34)

In these passages *coming in clouds* signifies a judicial event, a judgment by God Himself in which He exercises justice to restore the balance caused by humanity's destructive tendencies. This judgmental act demonstrates the divine nature in such a way that the justice is seen in clouds intuitively. This figurative use of the term 'clouds' also explains how God, 'whom no man has seen nor can see.' (1 Tim 6:16) may be seen 'face to face.'

In the OT God was 'seen face-to-face' in clouds on no less than six occasions by five individuals: (Jacob, Moses, Manoah, Gideon and Job)

Gen 32:30 Jacob spoke to God face to face in clouds
Ex 33:11 Moses spoke to God face to face in clouds
Duet 34:10 Moses knew God face to face
Judges 6:22 Gideon saw God's angel face to face
Judges 13:22 Manoah saw God face to face (His angel)
Job 42:5 Job saw God after hearing Him, his eye saw Him

And also collectively *face to face* by the *entire nation* of Israel!

Num 14:14 Israel saw God face to face in pillar of cloud

In these passages "see" is not used literally. Jacob spoke to God 'face to face,' as did Moses, Gideon, Manoah, (who equated seeing the angel-messenger to seeing God) and Job after hearing. In Ezek 20:35 **God enters into judgment face to face.** The Old Testament use of the term 'face to face' has to do with the enlightenment of *the eyes of the heart* by knowing. Biblically, *seeing equals knowing.* This use of 'see' equates to 'judging.' God's justice is 'seen - known' directly (face to face), or intuitively. Jesus used it in precisely this sense in John 9:40-41;

"For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." And those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" Jesus said to them. "If you were blind you would have no sin; but since you say 'we see,' your sin remains." Jn 9:39-40

In these passages Jesus is speaking to the sons and grandsons and great grandsons of Jewish scholars who studied the scriptures all their lives **literally** – "The Torah speaks in the language of man." – but

missed the spiritual (supernatural) meaning. The curtain of literalism and prejudice darkened their kinds as a curtain drawn down. The Pharisees witnessed Jesus' and the apostle's miraculous ability to heal. (Jn 9; Acts 4:16) They saw it, knew it, confessed it... but denied it from stubbornness, or moral hardness. They could not "see" God. Paul comments on their inability to perceive in his letter to the Corinthians;

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. 2 Cor 3:14

Thus seeing or knowing goodness is enlightenment. The Greek term for *seeing physically* (Βλεπο) is also defined as; 'to see with the mind's eye; to have the power of understanding.' (Thayer) Its opposites: sinfulness, denial, stubbornness are related to ignorance and blindness. 'Seeing' is done the eyes of the heart. Paul refers directly to this inner-sight in Ephesians 1:18, where the inner, spiritual eye of the intellect receives the light of enlightened knowledge, thus 'knowing' is the outcome of seeing.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling.. Eph 1:18

It was in this biblical sense of *knowing equals seeing* that Jesus quoted Dan 7:13 to another 'blind' Pharisee, Caiaphas, in relation to His coming in clouds.

You will see the son of man... coming in the clouds of heaven with power. Mt 26:64

Jesus' claim to be the Messiah was so clear the high priest's first instinct was to shred his own clothes at this blasphemous claim to divinity – the prisoner had was made Himself equal to God. Clouds are **God's** chariots: He has authority and rule over clouds. Here is a man saying He would ride on clouds. Only a divine-Jesus could claim to *come in clouds* and foretell this would occur in the high priest's lifetime.

CONCLUSION

THE NEW TESTAMENT always connects Jesus' second coming (Greek; *parousia*) to *clouds*. Why does He connect His second coming to *clouds*? The term 'clouds' signifies *the presence of God*. What is the relation between clouds and Jesus' second coming and the *Last day Judgment* foretold by all of the prophets?

Jesus' ideas connect and fulfill the ancient Hebrew prophets. There is no difference in prophetic usage between Daniel and Isaiah and John and Jesus as Newton notes.

John did not write in one language, Daniel in another, Isaiah in a third, and the others in a language peculiar to themselves, but they all write in one and the same mystical language...and this language, as far as I can find, was as certain and definite in its significations as is the vulgar [ie. common] language of any nation. Theological MSS

A close study of usage discovers the common meaning hidden beneath prophetic language. The meaning refers to a prophetic *coming in clouds* in Jesus' own generation forty years after His death.

O Jerusalem Jerusalem. This generation shall not pass until all things take place. Mtt 23:35-36

End of the temple and end of the age prophesied. Mtt 24:1-3

This generation shall not pass until all things take place. Mtt 24:34

You will see the son of man in clouds. Mtt 26:64

Some of you standing here shall not taste of death until you see the son of man. Mk 9:1

And Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies. Lk 21:20

And Jerusalem shall trampled underfoot by the Gentiles. Lk 21:24

And they will tread underfoot the holy city for 42 months. Rev 11:1-2

Jesus said this in a time of relative peace and security. How did He know? Four options are possible; Accident, lucky guess, historical manipulation, or prophetic justice?

By AD 66 the *Holy City* of great reputation had become depraved by (what eye-witness Josephus 5:13:6) called *The madness of those were for innovations*. By AD 70 Mosaic Jerusalem and the Mosaic temple were smoldering wreck. The madness of the people brought their own end upon themselves. Later when the conquering general Titus again revisited the city on his departure for Egypt, he looked at the blackened ruins and

compared the melancholy condition he saw in it then with the ancient glory of the city and called to mind the greatness of its present ruin as well as its ancient splendor, he could not but pity the destruction of the

city - so far was he from boasting that so great and goodly a city as that had been taken by him by force; nay, he frequently cursed those who had been the authors of the revolt, and had brought such a punishment upon the city. Wars 7:5:3

The city that killed the prophets and crucified an innocent Messiah had sown the wind of vanity. God's east wind brought change in the form of a cloud of Romans, the Vth Xth XIIth and XVth legions. This cloud of warriors surrounded the city as locusts before leaving it desolate, naked, and trampled underfoot - as Egypt after the east wind brought locusts which destroyed it. What disobedient Pharaoh saw might have been what Titus saw 1,500 years later;

and nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt. Ex 10:15

Forty years before in the green tree of relative civic peace, a young Hebrew carpenter prophesied He'd come in clouds, warning

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies then recognize her desolation is near. Those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains...because these are the days of vengeance when all things written will be fulfilled...and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles. Truly I say to you this generation shall not pass away until all these things come to pass."Lk 21:20,22,32

Eusebius' history records Christians that heeded His warning fled to the mountains of Pella, escaping before the Romans surrounded the city. Hebrew history rules out accident and lucky guess. Historical manipulation cannot explain parallels between very ancient historical cause-effect states of affairs and the divine justice. Prophetic semantics is the fabric is a woof and weave of; logical coherence, justice, purpose, human folly and historical precognition. As Jaques Futrille (1875-1912) once said: *"Logic can only fail where units of meaning fail. " No biblical unit has failed yet. The result is prophetic justice.*

Historical manipulation, yes, sure, but by whom? Man or God? Sherlock Holmes' maxim has relevance to this question:

"Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

-ooOoo-

Pastor, Please Help Us!

By Chuck Baldwin
January 31, 2013

(Editor's note: We have added our voice to those that refuse to surrender their arms or submit for further encroachment of federal tyranny. We encourage all readers to stand with the founding fathers against the federal leviathan swallowing up our liberties)

All over America, county sheriffs are standing up and promising to protect their citizens' right to keep and bear arms. They are pledging that, not only will they not participate in any federal gun ban, but that they will aggressively oppose any federal agencies that attempt to confiscate the semi-automatic rifles from the people of their counties. Many are even saying that they will arrest any federal agent who attempts to confiscate guns in their counties--any federal law requiring it notwithstanding. To see a sample list of the hundreds of sheriffs who are boldly putting themselves on the front lines of protecting the Second Amendment, go to:

CSPOA

Now, it is time for pastors to take a stand!

Let me ask readers a question. Those of you who listen to TV and radio pastors, how many have you heard mention even one time the current effort underway in Washington, D.C., to outlaw semi-automatic rifles? How many? One? Two? How many? I dare say that the vast majority of preachers across America have not said one word about it from their pulpits. Not one word!

When the epitaph is written on the tombstone of America, it will read, "Here lies the United States of America: killed by the apathy and indifference of its pastors and churches."

Think about it: what did the pastors and churches do in 1962 and 1963 when prayer and Bible reading were expelled from America's public schools? The vast majority did nothing. What did the pastors and churches do in 1973 when abortion-on-demand was legalized in this country? The vast majority did nothing. What did the pastors and churches do in 2001 and forward when the federal government began turning America into a giant police state? The vast majority did, and continues to do, nothing.

Now here we are in 2013, and the primary attack against the liberties of the American people is the banning and confiscation of our primary defense weapon: the semi-automatic rifle. And what are the pastors and churches doing? The vast majority are doing nothing. They are like Sergeant Schultz of the old Hogan's Heroes TV sitcom: "I hear nothing! I see nothing!"

At this point, the words of the father of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, are in order. He said, "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages there the loyalty of the soldier is proved. And to be steady on all the battlefields besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

In the early 60s, the battlefield was prayer and Bible reading in school. Pastors and church abandoned the battlefield, and the enemy took the field. In the early 70s, abortion-on-demand was the battlefield. Pastors and churches abandoned the battlefield, and the enemy took the field. In the early 2000s, the creation of a police state was the battlefield (which is still raging), and the vast majority of pastors and churches are nowhere to be found. Now, the enemies of liberty are threatening to make outlaws out of millions of God-fearing, law-abiding citizens who believe in the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. This is the point today where "the devil and the world are at the moment attacking." And once again, most pastors and churches are abandoning the battlefield.

Pastor, please help us!

If every pastor who, in his heart, believes in the right to keep and bear arms would publically from the pulpit denounce Barack Obama and Dianne Feinstein's

attempted gun ban plan, it is almost certain that the politicians at both the State and federal levels would hear the message loud and clear. With apologies to Edmund Burke, the only way evil can triumph is when Christian people--especially pastors--do nothing.

Instead of being courageous prophets, as God's men are commissioned to be, so many of them--especially the nationally renowned ones--are busy providing cover for the would-be tyrants in Washington, D.C. Case in point: during a pre-inauguration service for President Obama, nationally-renowned pastor Andy Stanley (son of the famous Charles Stanley) delivered a 12-minute address. During his "sermon," he called Obama "America's Pastor-in-Chief."

Barack Obama is a man who believes in killing innocent unborn babies (How many babies have been murdered in the wombs of their mothers since Obama was first elected back in 2008?); he is a man who, on his own personal orders, has killed nearly 200 children in drone missile attacks (at least two of the children who were killed were Americans). No consent of Congress was ever given. On his word alone, Barack Obama has used drone missiles to kill many times more children than Adam Lanza killed at Sandy Hook.

See Judge Andrew Napolitano's column on this subject at:

Guns And The President

Barack Obama is also the man who is in the process of attempting to take away the American people's right to keep and bear arms and make us slaves of the state. And still, Andy Stanley has the audacity to call Obama "America's Pastor-in-Chief."

With all due respect, Andy, your statement borders on blasphemy!

Pray tell, how is this different from the way the spineless prophets of Old Testament Israel groveled before their wicked kings? And listen to what God inspired His true prophet, Isaiah, to say to these conniving cowards:

"This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because he despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready

to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." (Isaiah 30: 9, 10, 12-14 KJV)

The famed Bible commentator, Albert Barnes, said the following regarding this passage: "The republic of Israel would be completely ruined, so that there should not be found a man of any description who could aid them.

"The prophecy was fulfilled in the invasion of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; it had a more signal and awful fulfillment in its destruction by the Romans."

But the church has repeated the apostasy of ancient Israel numerous times. Over and over again, pathetic pastors have groveled before wicked rulers. In his book, Hitler's Cross, Erwin Lutzer quotes a German pastor by the name of Julius Leutherser saying the following regarding Adolf Hitler: "Christ has come to us through Hitler. [T]hrough his honesty, his faith and his idealism, the Redeemer found us."

And now in 2013, Pastor Andy Stanley calls a man who has the blood of hundreds and thousands of innocents on his hands, "America's Pastor-in-Chief." Gag!

But where are the rest of America's pastors? Will they allow their congregants to be turned into criminals by these would-be tyrants in Washington, D.C., who want to disarm them in the face of their enemies? President Barack Obama and his family have 24-hour armed protection, and he even wants that protection for the rest of his life. Senator Dianne Feinstein has armed protection. Mayor Michael Bloomberg has armed protection. But these same people want to strip you and me of the ability to protect and defend ourselves. And most pastors are content to say nothing?

Pastor, please help us!

I am issuing a clarion call to all pastors, regardless of denomination or theological persuasion, to stand in their pulpits and publicly denounce Obama's gun ban plan and implore their congregations to NOT surrender their semi-automatic rifles LAW OR NO LAW. I am asking America's pastors to join the hundreds of courageous sheriffs across the country who are vowing to refuse to participate with any gun ban. Pastor, will you join these sheriffs in protecting the Second Amendment liberties of the American people?

Accordingly, I have set up a web page where pastors are able to sign themselves up and go on record (as these sheriffs have done) as vowing to publicly repudiate Obama's gun ban and to publicly implore their congregations to refuse to surrender their semi-automatic rifles.

PASTOR, WILL YOU SIGN UP? WILL YOU PUBLICLY STAND FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES OF THE PEOPLE IN YOUR CONGREGATION TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS?

I am providing the link below where pastors can follow the example of these brave sheriffs and go on record as being willing to oppose the unconstitutional banning of semi-automatic rifles. It is my prayer that there will be multiplied hundreds (even thousands) of patriotic, God-fearing, courageous pastors across America who will take a stand--and take it now!

Here is the link where pastors can join the list with their fellow patriot-preachers who are taking a stand

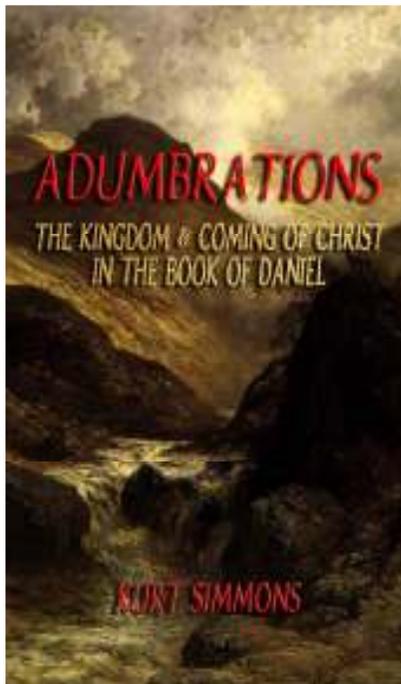
for the Second Amendment and the liberties of their people:[SecondAmendmentPastors](#)

Furthermore, I invite the men and women who attend church to make sure that your pastor knows about the webpage above and to be sure to encourage him to take his stand.

We lost the prayer and Bible reading battle in the early 60s; we lost the abortion battle in the early 70s; we are losing the police state battle of the 2000s; we simply cannot lose the battle to keep and bear arms without signing the death warrant of our country. And we cannot win this battle without the help of America's pastors.

Pastor, please help us!

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