

## Theo 3 – End of Days – Eschatology Notes

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These notes originated from a class at Western Seminary taught by Dr. Gary Tuck. These are my notes of the curriculum he provided, and don't necessarily reflect all the content he discussed nor does it necessarily capture completely his thoughts on the topics. I have taken the liberty to add commentary and insight where I felt it was reasonable and warranted.

- 1. Introduction – This section is about the end of times – including the prophecies and analysis of Scriptural basis on the millennial and tribulation concepts debated by theologians. It is an attempt to better understand the strengths or weaknesses of the Scriptural record as it pertains to these concepts as they play out throughout redemptive history. These concepts are such that they cannot be unilaterally resolved because there are so many ways to look at and interpret them. However, Scripture has provided information from which we can draw a reasoned faith approach. The End of Days [eschatology] is not just about judgment and punishment of humanity, but rather it is all about God Himself concluding the saga of redemptive history. This is demonstrated in the prominence of predictive prophecy throughout OT and NT which is essential to the thought of Isa 40—48: see 41:22; 44:7; 45:11; 46:10); and especially about Messiah in both His 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> comings and most especially ultimate conclusion or last things.**
  - a. Concept: Consummation of Creation and History is demonstrated in “Radical dispositions” – there is a growing and exponential polarizing of both good and evil; with dire consequences for evil and amazingly wonderful consequences for the righteous. These prophecies portray:**
    - i. The ultimate destruction of wickedness – evil has usurped the kingdom of earth and had held it hostage, this is the message of the Fall played out throughout redemptive history. However, the Kingdom of God remains undaunted... God is not threatened by Satan’s rebellious plans. God’s patience with sinful humanity I believe flows out of His mercy and grace, which balance His justice and personal accountability. Satan rebelled first, and made creation the battlefield and humanity is held hostage, but ultimately humanity must chose who they will serve – God, or the power behind the Fallen broken world order... the Spiritual conflict of Satan against God’s sovereignty.**
    - ii. Fulness of righteousness – Jesus is the ultimate antidote to evil being God’s Righteousness who entered history to bring redemptive history to its zenith. As the Church age winds down, Jesus remains the focus and locus of God’s redemptive work to rescue humanity and correct the Fallen condition of creation.**
    - iii. Triumph of Messiah in the advancement of the Kingdom of God – is totally secure. God is tollerating the imperfect situation, but His Plan is sure and will come to fruition at the fulness of time.**
  - b. Overview of the End Times has Temporal-Eternal, Personal-Cosmic, and Spiritual-Material**

### aspects:

i. **Eternal end – creation has been subverted... God’s designed perfection has been compromised by evil. The end of creation and the restoration of God’s order is a great thing. The sin cursed 1<sup>st</sup> creation must be destroyed. The great news about the New Creation is that it is impervious to evil – it is a creation of a greater order... very similar to the greater nature of Grace over Law.**

1. **Personal end of holy and unholy people and angels results in the final segregation of heaven & hell, with rewards & punishment... separation of sheep and goats is an apt metaphor for what will transpire.**
2. **End of supernatural and natural evil in the destruction of first creation; New creation which is impervious to evil... where Heaven and earth not only intersect as was the case in the Garden, but instead converge in a totally New Heaven and earth. The old creation has the two realms of light and dark co-existing, the new order will be segregated.**

ii. **Antecedents of eternal state in human identity – humanity is naturally creative because God is creative... this is one of many attributes we demonstrate now only imperfectly because of the Fallen order.**

1. **Because of the sin-curse, we’re now also naturally destructive. Imagine the new order where the creative attribute is unlimited, and the destructive nature is removed completely.**
2. **In talking about an infinite God... we should expect an infinite Kingdom of God in an infinite universe full of infinite creativity. We now have 5 physical senses and 5 spiritual senses – imagine them completely redeemed and perfected. See the Spiritual Formation section for more on these concepts.**

c. **End time concluding events – timing will be discussed later in this section:**

- i. **Great White Throne, Millennium, and Tribulation**
- ii. **Church (Rapture), and national Israel in judgment**
- iii. **Rapture of the Faithful, Antichrist revealed and judged, Second Coming of Jesus**

## 2. The King and his Kingdom

### a. Redemptive Concepts:

- i. **The King and his Kingdom: the concept... King [Sovereign Ruler] is the most important aspect of His identity.**

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- ii. **God [Father, YAWEH] is King of all; Jesus is revealed as king of creation, and the Spirit as the sustainer of creation and the perfecter of the Church.**
  - 1. **God is One, He is a “Complex One” as revealed in the Trinity, but He is not three different gods as some faiths would argue.**
  - 2. **God will win; He will make all things right; He will reign forever over a perfect universe. In order to get to that place and condition, He will destroy all His enemies and all sin which opposes His rule. This is actually Grace in action, not merely judgment conveyed.**
  - 3. **God will make all things new, He will create a magnificent new heaven and earth.**
- iii. **God has chosen that He will work in and through His people, and will accomplish His Plan for ultimate redemption in partnership with His people.**
- iv. **The violence of the Tribulation is not mere hyperbole, and it shows how evil sin really is. The horrific nature of this conflict gives us an insight of how God views evil... and its total destruction is a good thing.**
- v. **The beneficiaries of Grace are an identifiable group of people – where unity and identity are fused in the concept of “seed,” and there is a fundamental connection we enjoy as God’s Children... that is being His seed. Nationality and tribe are too small an understanding... it is closer to family and spouse – hence the marriage/family imagery Scripture employs to describe our relationship with God.**
- vi. **God’s Kingdom implies a homeland... this is the “Land” part of the seed/land blessing God promised to Abraham. The Kingdom of God includes everything... everywhere. It is literally universal. The Kingdom has been initiated by Messiah at His 1st coming, but it is not yet fulfilled. Fulfillment awaits Messiah’s 2nd coming. The Abrahamic covenant anticipates God’s Kingdom... where is continuity and fundamental change.**
- vii. **Messiah is the best Champion... He emerges as benevolent defender-leader-benefactor ... which is completely on his terms, and not subject to a constitution. It will be implemented with no presence of evil, where goodness and righteousness are so much greater than any existing president. This is not merely the absence of sin, but rather wonder and grace to the power of infinity. Another way of thinking is that it is Eden not merely the best place of a good earth, it’s the absolute best place in the Presence of God in heaven.**
- viii. **Implies that we who labor in hope for the Kingdom advancement will have enemies**

- and also a durable blessing – all kingdoms have an inclusive and an exclusive element. Those who are excluded will suffer loss. Those who are included will be blessed immeasurably. Grace will be amazing, but justice will be brutal. As God’s people we should not pray for justice... instead we should pray for repentance and grace to be extended. Ultimately however, those who refuse will have no one else to blame... God will effectively allow people the eternity they choose.
- ix. Kingdom minded Spirituality need not preclude materiality – contrary to what many Amillennialists avow. As Future (Matt 6:10; Rev 11:15) need not preclude Presence (Matt 4:17; Luke 17:21)! And Heavenly need not preclude Earthly (John 19:36)... the Spirit preceeded and is not contingent upon matter, though matter is not necessarily excluded from Spiritual. Thus a material/Spiritual renewal and con-joining is not impossible... instead is is likely.
  - x. A King reigning in absentia is an untenable situation, contrary to the Postmillennial position. God in absentia from creation is in essence the “Agnostic Philosophical Concept” that God began creation and then just left it alone... leaving unanswered the question of whether God lost interest or just doesn’t care. This picture of God is distant, powerful but impersonal, unengaged and non-responsive. Alternatively the picture the Christian world view presents is one where the King is actively engaged with the worldly events impacting His people and desirous of bringing about the redemption and restoration of relationship with humanity in a new creation/entity eternity.
  - xi. The Kingdom calling of Christian discipleship in this context displays the high perspective of being more like knights and ladies of the Realm... or ambassadors of the Kingdom of God. This is a much more wonderous life befitting the world view of Christian Anthropology. In contrast to an agnostic worldly view where humanity is seen as a happy mistake of an improbable confluence of chance and chaos of the evolutionary process. Instead, Christian Anropology declares humanity is the pinnacle of God’s creative process... the object of His deliberate creative joy.
  - xii. Even in our Fallen state humanity has the capacity to experience strong and wonderous physiacl sensations, and emotional and Spiritual experiences without necessarily losing ourselves or our self control. As a reflection of being created in the image of God we have the will to choose and direct or sensations and experiences in the context of the higher purposeful functions of love, kindness, intimacy, self-sacrifice, etc... the qualities that rise us above the creaturely worldly life. These qualities are personal relational restraints that with the Spirit’s restorative help pulls

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us into a low trajectory toward the Kingdom of God much like a moth is drawn toward the flame.

- xiii. Dualities obviously exist in our Fallen imperfect reality – Heaven/earth; Spirit/flesh; nobel/ignoble; eternal/temporal; Spiritual/material-political; etc. As presented Scripturally, Heaven is the Spirit realm, and earth is the material realm. Eden was the place where the two realms met or at least came close and intersected. The new order is infinitely superior – fundamentally con-joined... it is an entirely new creation.
1. Psalm 2 proclaims the coming King of Heaven & king of earth amid joy and expectation.
  2. The initiation of the Gospel of the Kindgom is Jesus “Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew chapters 5-7. It presents the striking difference between the Kingdom of God and the fallen kingdom of earth.
  3. Acts – begins and ends with teachings about the Kingdom of God... thus Acts is a book about the Kingdom of God – which is the Gospel. The Gospel news is that the Messiah has come, the Kingdom of God has been initiated!
    - a. Acts1:1-4 are Jesus teaching about the Kingdom of God over a 40 day period. You have to believe that after witnessing Jesus’ death and ressurection that the disciples were now maximumly receptive! We can only imagine some of the substance of those discussions, but the transformation of the disciples speak to the reality and wonder – see the new “upper room dialogue in 1:12ff and Peter’s sermon in 2:14ff.
    - b. Acts 1:6-8 Jesus teaches that the Kingdom will be reestablished, but you won’t know when. This is a convincing evidence they were suggesting a pre-millennium perspective.
      - i. This includes that the kingdom of Israel will be restored (Ez 37:1-18).
      - ii. This discounts the A-millennium possition, but doesn’t dismiss Post-millinnium... although there are other reasons for that.
  4. Life-death; light-dark; faith-works; love-hate are these all aspects of the discintion of Kingdom of God from the Fallen desecrated creation. It the transformed and resplendant Kingdom Messiah will bring about at His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, the new Creation will be filled with Life, Light, Faith, and Love... their antithesis will be regulated to Hell.
- b. Old Testament Foundation of Eschatology – the OT and NT perspectives are very different,

but not disharmonious. The OT looked forward to the coming “Day of the Lord” when God’s perfect rule would be instituted on earth under His “Anointed One” the Messiah. The error of the Jewish leaders was that they did not recognize or submit to their Messiah when He came. From a NT perspective, we look back and see the Coming of Messiah and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God on earth in the atonement of Jesus on the Cross, hope born resplendent on Easter in the resurrection, and the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost. We NT disciples now look forward in faith for the “Day of the Lord” when Messiah will return and institute His reign on earth, when the fallen old order will be judged and destroyed, and the new order established in peace and righteousness under Messiah Jesus. This is a key understanding that critically differentiates between the OT and NT world view. This is very similar to the revelation of God as Trinity, from the NT perspective, we can see the Triune nature of God written throughout the Scripture, however this was veiled from the OT writers and saints.

- i. **Mat 13:52 – end of the 8 parables... every Scribe [teacher/transmitter of the OT Law] who has become a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven [a NT disciple of Jesus] is like the head of a household who brings out his treasure... things old and new. NT builds upon the OT, but fulfills it rather than destroying it.**
- ii. **OT prophecy does not clearly teach of Jesus’ two comings, but instead mingles all Messiah’s “work” together. Thus, their Christology includes suffering plus conquering the world order... where the Savior of Israel is coming ... to defeat/destroy God’s/Israel’s wicked enemies, and rescue/bleed the righteous.**
- iii. **“Day of Yahweh” is seen as Judgment/condemnation and destruction of the wicked, followed by deliverance of godly. When reading these passages casually, it is easy to miss the crucial distinctions and applications:**
  1. **“In that day” and “Day of the Lord” are terms that both indicate judgment.**
  2. **Amos 1:3-2:16 – this prophecy refers to judgments on the nations – this is Noahic covenant language against the Gentiles [Is 63:1-6; Joel 3:1-6].**
  3. **Amos 3:1-5:17 – this prophecy refers to judgment on Israel – this is Sinai covenant... pertaining only on Jews.**
  4. **Judgment of wicked – includes both Jews [Isaiah 65:11-12] and Gentiles [Isaiah 63:1-6; Joel 3]. Note the emphasis placed upon Israel in Isaiah 24-27, which is commonly interpreted as referring to the entire earth. Is there any evidence that any unbelievers survive this judgment? That is, at the Second Coming (whether Pre-millennial, A-millennial or Post-Millennial), all indications are**

that the Lord's judgment catches and sweeps away every unbeliever. Of course in Post-millennial and A-Millennial where the Second Coming ushers immediately the eternal New Heaven/Earth. However, in the Pre-millennial position the Second Coming ushers in the Millennium with the final judgment and destruction of the wicked occurring at the conclusion of the millennium.

- iv. **Glory of Messiah is revealed in the many titles and conceptual terms used to identify Him – Isaiah 11; 65; Joel 3:18-21; Amos 9:13-15. Jesus is identified as The “earthly King” [Pslm 2]. Jesus is also identified as the “King of Heaven-earth” (Gen 1:1) whose authority the Father installs in His Righteous Son as ruler of Heaven and Earth (cf., Rev 4—5; 21:1). Important terms include:**
1. **“Son of David” – 2 Sam 7; Ezek 37:24-27; Jer 23:5-6; 33:14-26; Isaiah 9:6ff; Amos 9:11; Micah 5:2; Jer 30:9; Ps 89:3. This deals specifically with the King of (national) Israel.**
  2. **“Remnant” – Gen 45:7; 2 Kings 19:30ff; Isaiah 37:31ff; Ezra 9:8-15; Isaiah 10:20-22; Romans 9:27; 11:11, 16; 28:5; Jer 23:3; 31:7; 50:18-20; Ezek 6:8; Micah 4:7; 5:7-8; 7:18; Zeph 2:7, 9; 3:13; Zech 8:6-12.**
    - a. **God sees to it that true faith never completely dies out in Israel, though it is subverted and often corrupted and ignored, God providentially ensures there is always a remnant of the faithful who endure.**
    - b. **They are always a minority however. The majority of the people who consider themselves aligned with God fail to love Him, submit to Him, or serve Him. Instead they are identified as the rebellious sons of Satan... the original rebel.**
    - c. **The remnant will ultimately be all that remains of the old order, but they will then be the majority in the new order. Then ‘national’ Israel will also be ‘Spiritual’ Israel... Spirit and Truth will ultimately win out... and Messiah Jesus will lead them.**
  3. **“Son of God” – this term refers to Yahweh's vassal [2 Sam 7; Ps 2; 110] – He will be identified as King of earth and King of Heaven – Ez 37:25. This is in reference to a pre-millennium world view... there is here the convergence of Heaven [Perfection] and fallen earth under Messiah's rule awaiting the final rebellion and end, judgment, and recreation.**
  4. **“Son of man” – Dan 7:13-14 & Mat 24:30; John 12:34 – speaks to the rulers of earth in successive eras who are the beasts running the earth in apostasy and**

rebellion. Restoration speaks of man ruling as steward as originally intended in the Garden... here the emphasis is on Messiah's Kingship, not His humanity.

5. "Emanuel" – is the Personal Presence of Yahweh on earth [Isaiah 66:15-16; Zech 8:3, 8; 14:3-5, 9, 16-18] – Messiah is One with the Father... meaning the Kingdom of God has come to earth.
6. The "Re-establishment of the Davidic kingdom, or re-gathering and unification of Judah and Israel" [Ezek 37; Isaiah 11:13; 66:7-9; Jer 3:18; 23:6; 50:4-5; Hos 1:11; Amos 9:14-15]. The question on this notion has to do with which Israel got scattered? Was it "Spiritual Israel"... or was it "national Israel"? The answer is national Israel of course! How can the regathering of the northern and southern kingdom of Israel and Judah refer to a different [Spiritual] Israel? It cannot, this refers to national Israel and displays a significant error in many "Zionist Christians."
7. The return of the "International preeminence of Jerusalem and Israel (Zionist Theology)" – this notion is based upon the Abrahamic Covenant couched in in Messianic eschatological contexts - Isaiah 2:2-4; 54; 60;62; 66:18-23; Hag 2:7; Zech 8:14; Ezek 11:15ff; 37:25; Rev 21:3; Jer 30-33.
  - a. New Jerusalem is still Jerusalem... the new heaven and earth is a real and has continuity with the old order. Isaiah 60:19-21 is a picture repeated in Revelation. The extension is that our New Bodies will also be real but radically different... they will be physical and Spiritual. In this new order we will still be ourselves – that which is fundamentally us will remain, though we'll be glorified... that which was imperfect will be perfected. In this perfected nature we will be both Spiritual and physical.
  - b. Temple is still a prominent aspect of Jerusalem... but instead of an amazing building of stone and mortar, it will be the wondrous assembly of the righteous where God is enthroned in their hearts. Hebrews 10:16 speaks of "That Day" when God's Word will be placed in the disciples' heart and mind. Scripture also teaches that the Throne of God will be the hearts of men and women.
    - i. The human heart replacing the Jewish Temple is a powerful image and concept. This begs the question – are the Christian Zionists right in supporting the rebuilding of the Temple and the re-establishment of Temple sacrificial worship?

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- ii. If Jesus death and resurrection replaced Temple worship, then to return to the OT ways is essentially saying that Jesus' needen't have come. How will God respond to this? The Father who loves the Son and puts everything under His authority surely won't be happy with some wanting to return to the past methodology. This will be interesting and require wisdom.
- 8. The "relationship of the nations [Gentiles] and Israel [Jews]" – Dan 9:26f; Ezek 40ff; Isa 60:7; Zec 8... these end time things are relevent as God keeping His promise... that Abraham would be a blessing to all the nations. National Israel failed to do that, but Jesus fulfilled it.
- 9. It is critical to remember that all revelation is God revealing something about Himself... it has to do with His nature, His character, His values, His program.
- v. Perfection Reality – these past but fallen OT concepts will be revitalized with stunning new Spiritual vitality:
  - 1. Peace and Prosperity will be perfected – both Material and Spiritual Shalom ("Peace and well being") will occur – Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:6ff; 11:6-9; 26; Ezek 36-37; Zech 14:14. The two realms will be conjoined in such perfection and wonder.
  - 2. Righteousness will be perfected – evil will be uterly destroyed – Isaiah 11:1-4; Zeph 3:12-13. Evil will be completely eradicated from the hearts of humanity, and it will be impossible to even conceptualize such thoughts or tendencies.
  - 3. The glory of the people of God will reflect the Glory of their God... it will be realized and it blows away the glory days of David and Solomon that the Jews looked forward to returning to. This is a totally new order of everything – Isaiah 11; 60; 65. In Rev 21:21 the text speaks of streets paved with Gold – the notion being that the most valuable and precious metal known to humanity will be so common and unworthy as to be used for the utilitarian purpose of walking upon.
  - 4. Eternality is perfected – history will have no end... the story goes on and on and gets better and better forever!
- vi. Gentiles who respond to God are attached [grafted into] to Israel as the People of God – Isaiah 2:2-3; 19:19-25; 56:3-8; 66:18-21; Zech 14:16; Rom 11:17-24. The new community of faith will be a blended family and they will come to Jerusalem with great joy and wealth and decorate the Temple with extravagence – this is a "Love Offering" in response to Grace, not the tribute of OT tithing. In the New order, the

Temple is where God will be Himself, it is not just His footstool as in the OT historic temple... this is a different order.

- vii. Judgment of wicked: Isaiah 63 – will be complete and perfect. No one will be able to claim that God was unfair. My own thought is that we'll judge ourselves as we look onto the Perfection that is God much like Isaiah did [Is 6:1-7]. God didn't judge Isaiah, Isaiah judged himself, and interestingly God agreed and provided the proper remedy needed to restore Isaiah. This represents a different order of Grace than what many have been taught. It is not about "cheap grace" or simplifying sin, but rather allowing humanity to take responsibility before God and accept His provision.
  - c. Conclusion – When you walk through these facts and understand the context of what was transpiring, in evaluating the three millennial positions we're considering, it is pretty compelling that the OT authors could not have been other than Pre-millennial in their theology. This conclusion is based on the hermeneutical approach of discovering the "Sender's Intended Meaning" (SIM)... i.e., they must surely have conceived of a literal earthly kingdom (contrary to A-millennial) with the ultimate Son of David physically present in earthly Jerusalem (contrary to Post-millennial).
3. NT Spirit Life – the Church Age living in between the "Already" of Messiah's Spiritual redemption and new birth and waiting the "Not Yet" of the material redemption of creation:
- a. With Messiah Jesus' 1st advent, the Spiritual barrier between humanity and God has been removed with the indwelling of the Spirit in the hearts of disciples. Life in the Spirit has been inaugurated with Jesus' death, resurrection, and Pentecost. However, we still live in a Fallen world that longs for redemption. The redemption of creation will not occur until the end of the age with Jesus' 2nd advent.
  - b. The NT portrays a strong and clear emphasis on spiritual – Luke 17:20ff; John 18:36; 2 Cor 4:18; Col 3:1-2. The Kingdom of God is a new kingdom of David ruled by David's son [ancestor and heir to David's throne], only way better, and the Holy Spirit is the gift of the New Covenant in Jesus... "Pneumatology" is the study of the Spirit of God (see Theo 3.2).
  - c. The Christian's life is thus inherently Spiritual – we are constantly reminded not to set our hearts and minds upon earthly [worldly/material] things (Matt 6:19ff). Rather, we are encouraged to seek the things from above – the Heavenly things. This is an intentional reminder that faith is all about our thoughts and our focus.
  - d. In the NT there is an apparent diminution of the material life – Matt 5:3; 6:19-33; John 18:36. We understand that the material or physical is there, but we are taught that it needs to be subordinate to the Spiritual life. This is the life of discipleship.

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- i. Jesus maintains “My Kingdom is not of this world” – John 18:36. God loves the ‘cosmos’ [world], but the cosmos hates Jesus... John 18:37 – so You are a King? The world hates Jesus and will hate His followers because the Presence of the Spirit convicts the world of it’s failures and shortcomings [sin]. When disciples are salt and light, we polarize things into the kingdom of the world and the Kingdom of God.
  - ii. To interpret NT as anti-material is to require reinterpretation [de-materializing] of OT. Humanity was purposefully created as a Spiritual being living out a physical life. God pronounced this creation “Good” and “Very Good.” In the New Age, the Fallen physical will be destroyed and the new physical without the limitations we now know will be established. Where the old was Good, the new will be Amazing.
  - iii. It is better to understand the NT means for us to focus on the Spirit as our priority. The Spirit was not absent from OT, but it wasn’t as pervasive and available. Thus, we need to concentrate on the Spiritual without de-materializing the physical. The Material world is also part of the NT perspective – 2 Cor 5:1-5; 1 Cor 15:40-44, 53 – this refers to “Glorified Matter.”
  - iv. De-materializing is more dualistic in nature... it would indicate that Spiritual and physical are incompatible. That is not what the NT teaches, and it is definitely not what Jesus demonstrated. What emerges in the NT is a vision of a new reality with both combined in a perfect, Godly, Good fashion.
- e. The NT makes a strong and clear statement of false [national] Israel’s severance from God (Rom 9-11; Matt 21:33-22:14). and true Israel’s ultimate restoration (Rom 11:23; Acts 7:12ff, 35).
- i. Acts 7:12-13 – Luke writes of Joseph as Governor under Pharaoh... Joseph is hidden from his family at their 1<sup>st</sup> visit, then initially hidden & then made known at their 2<sup>nd</sup> visit. The story of Genesis 42-45 is the point that Luke is referring to... this is again demonstrative of National Israel. They will be restored, but not all of them... just the righteous remnant [true Israel].
  - ii. Acts 7:23, 35 – Luke writes of Moses... 1<sup>st</sup> visit of Moses to the Israelites he was refused; at his 2<sup>nd</sup> when he’s accepted as their savior... this is another reference to national Israel.
  - iii. How does this work in the 3 millennium approaches?
    1. These two presentations of “True Israel” speak strongly for a a two step Messianic redemptive journey and a pre-millennium understanding of the text regarding national Israel.

2. An A-millennial Luke doesn't write this or use this analogy. It is important from a hermeneutical perspective that we need to interpret the text Biblically on its own witness, and not filtered through our theology. These and Acts 1:6 are devastating to A-millennialists who claim that Jesus is "Spiritual Israel" and has replaced national Israel. This is in error, it is not what the text would indicate.

f. "Already and Not Yet" – Parting Point:

- i. Which does OT provide more – precedents [precursors] or antecedents [results] of Messiah's glory coming? The OT is decidedly weighed toward the results of the Glory of the Lord, in other OT prophecy looks toward the antecedent results of God's coming Kingdom. The "in those days" statements reflect the perfection to expect when the perfect new age is here... the results of God's perfect reign. The only real exception in this OT rule is the book of Daniel. In Daniel, chapt 2 is about the statue detailing the various kings/kingdoms that will rise and fall; and chapt 9 is about the 70 "sevens" or weeks – with the anti-Christ revealed at the end. These speak to precedents for Messiah. Chapter 11 of Daniel is about the tribulation – all three are predictive elements of things that will occur prior to the perfect Messianic Kingdom.
- ii. The NT is more about the precedents [precursors] of Messiah's 2nd coming. Rev 6-9 are all antecedents. Most of Jesus teachings have to do with how to recognize the things setting up the end... with the proviso that we will not know the time so be ready.
- iii. As a result of this dynamic, is NT spirituality intended to provide a lens for interpreting OT glory of God teaching? Or is NT spirituality intended to describe the Kingdom before the glory coming? Again, it is critical to understand that both OT & NT focus more on how good it will be when/after Messiah comes. We tend to want to see a map revealed on how/when the events will unfold. Though the NT is more before than the OT, both want us to look forward to the eternal good God will bring. Prediction alone is not the purpose of the Revelation.
  1. Ultimate – last things.
  2. Penultimate – next to last things.
  3. Eternal – the perfect beyond it all.
- iv. A-millennial approach encourages using NT theology to interpret OT prophecy. This does a disservice to the OT messengers. A better approach is to hear the OT message and understand their theology is about waiting hopefully for the coming of Messiah...

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which is what the NT is about. Recognize that there is a natural continuity of the old with the new that is the heart of the pre-millennial position.

- g. Second Coming (see below, 3.4) – note the sequence...the king, currently in exile, finally returning in vengeance against evil and wickedness, victory over the forces of evil in earth and the Spirit realm, and glory and wonder totally beyond anything we could have imagined – Matt 22:1-14; 25:14-30; Rev 19:11-16; Acts 3:21.**
  - i. When Christ entered Jerusalem as King, He was welcomed by the people but rejected by Israel’s rulers. This is what the parable of the wedding banquet is about... the Jews refused God’s offer.**
  - ii. Acts speaks to Jesus remaining in Heaven until the time for the restoration of the Kingdom... this is at the end of the church age, not the millenium.**
  - iii. At the end of the Church age Jesus will return and the millennium will begin on Fallen earth. This is the glorious temporal kingdom.**
  - iv. Summation – Earth is not redeemed until the end at the entry to eternity. The millennium will be a contrast of the dichotomy from Satan’s imperfect rule culminating in the tribulation, and Messiah’s perfect rule inagurated at the Sermon of the Mount but realized now in the Millennium. But recognize that earth is still Fallen during the millennium, that new babies will be born during it and not all of them will follow Messiah. At the end of the millennium will be the final judgment of those last rebellious people, and then after the judgement will follow the new Heaven and earth.**
- h. The Millennium is the Glorious Temporal Kingdom – though the Millennium refers to a 1,000 year period that follows the tribulation, this number/reference only occurs in Rev 20.**
  - i. Rev 19:11-16 speaks to Jesus’ glorious return.**
  - ii. Rev 19:17-21 speaks to the end of Satan’s rule and deception.**
  - iii. 1,000 years (Rev 20:1-6; cf., 22:5) – this is Satan’s temporay incarceration (1-3), while the martyrs rein with Jesus in the millenium (4-6).**
  - iv. This is an era of great peace and prosperity... but it is still within the context of a sin-cursed earth. It is not until the end of the millenium and that creation is remade incorruptable and eternity begins as God intended.**
  - v. Messiah’s (Yahweh’s) personal presence (Zech 14; Ac 1:11; 3:19-21)**
    - 1. Zec 14:4 – speaks about Messiah at the mount of olives... this is a vision of the**

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2nd coming when Messiah comes back to Jerusalem.

2. Zec 14:5 shows that the land will be changed dramatically – geographically the valley runs north-south, but here it is portrayed as running east-west. Whether geography will change or this is literary means of saying the place will be unrecognizable is unknown.
  3. Zec 14:6-8 sees living water running from the Throne of God... this is what is portrayed in Rev 7:17; cr Jer 2:13; 7:13; John 4:11; 7:38). It is the Life of the Spirit.
  4. The theme and imagery are compelling from both the OT through NT, and they are harmonious... these views aren't in conflict.
- vi. Unprecedented prosperity in the Millennium (Amos 9:11-15)
1. 9:11 – in that day... the Davidic Monarchy will be restored under Messiah.
  2. 9:13 – the plowman overtaking the reaper indicates the harvest will be so great they can't bring it in before the plowman catches up with the reapers. This is an era of robust material blessing.
  3. 9:14-15 is Israel will be restored in the land, but it will be the remnant faithful not the faithless nation. The common thought for many Jews was that they would be blessed just because they were Jews, not because of their love of God or their faithful service to Him.
- vii. Even Gentiles voluntarily acknowledge him (Isa 2:2-4; Hag 2:7)
1. In the last days – Gentiles will stream to Jerusalem... prophecy about the Church age and millenium.
  2. This is in fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant where God promised Abraham his offspring would comprise a great antion and would be a blessing to the nations of the world.
  3. Compares with the NT prophecy – every knee will bow, every toungue confess... for those who love God and serve Him this confession will be made gladly, lovingly and willingly for those who donot and refused to be obedient to God it will be forced and compelled upon them.
- viii. The “Sin Curse” still be in afflict through out history, including the tribulation and even through the millennium (Rev 22:3).
1. Where the Pretender-king (Satan) aggravated the curse, the rightful King will

suppress it, triumph over it. Satan's reign of terror will be ended.

2. Another reason for a literal millennium: Jesus shows himself superior by effecting peace and prosperity in spite of the sin curse to earth. The devil not only is defeated on earth, but also in eternity and in time.
  3. A-millennialist position says in effect that Jesus loses earth in history, only to win it in eternity. They go so far as to argue that is OK. However, this is too small a vision of the triumph of Christ. Jesus reigns supreme unilaterally, and Satan is defeated and allowed to remain until such time as the world is remade... without sin or blemish or any possibility of either for all time.
- i. Glorious Eternal Kingdom: New Creation is popularly called "heaven," but better identified as the "New Heaven & Earth" – where there is some link to or continuation of the old expression, but the new expression is amazingly better, thus it will be way different in character and nature.
- i. Eternity (Rev 22:5; cf. 20:6)
    1. Is 65:17 & 2 Pet 3 – Eden was very good. It was the best place on old earth. However, the new creation is far superior, and is incorruptable and impenetrable to sin.
    2. In the New order, the innerman will survive and the outerman will be remade – 2 Cor 4:16. The new creation cannot sin... saints in heaven cannot fall.
    3. This is way better than the millennium where the sin-curse yet remains. Though the saints who enter the millennium with Jesus cannot fall, their offspring are raised in a wonderful peaceful Messianic millennium, but they may yet sin. Some will not choose Christ, this is the point of the final battle... these who reject Jesus during the Millennium will fall subject to Satan and both will be cleansed at the end.
  - ii. Out with the old ... Newness achieved (Isa 65:17; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1ff); the curse eradicated (Rev 22:3) ... These are treated in Scripture as already written into eternity (2 Cor 5:17).
    1. The context of history is time in creation, which is not linked in any direct way with eternity. Time in creation has a past, present, and future; while time in Eternity is a prevailing Present. The Apostle Peter put it this way: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day" (2 Pet 3:8). Time somehow works

differently in Heaven than on earth.

2. The logical consequence of this is that those who are sealed by the Spirit into eternity, are somehow both in eternity and the present. The logical conclusion of this is that when God sees us who are sealed by His Spirit though we remain on sin-cursed earth and remain with an unredeemed physical nature that tends to draw us toward a weakness to sin, we have a perfected nature formed in the inner-man that draws us to God. This nature longs for the completion of physical redemption when we are made whole as perfected spiritual/physical beings – the image of Christ Jesus [Imago Christi].
3. Thus we are already perfected in the Spirit, and when God looks upon us He sees the son or daughter He loves as the perfected creation we will become/have become in heaven.
4. Our theology about eternity is important as it opens up the radical nature of Grace expressed in the love of our Lord.

#### 4. Chronological features of the “Eschaton” [end things] in reverse order:

##### a. Eternity – the Separation of Heaven & Hell:

- i. Eternity – People will enter eternity one way or another... either when Jesus returns at the end, or upon our physical death before He comes. Those who enter by their death enter into what is known as the “Intermediate State.” This intermediate state is a consequence of the sin-curse, and will also be destroyed at the end. Although Scripture says we all must die, because of Messiah’s death and resurrection death has lost its sting – Hos 13:14; 1 Cor 15:55.

1. Luke 16:19-31 – the story of Lazarus and the rich man reveals much about the intermediate state:
  - a. In this state we are cognizant of ourselves and our past, and we can recognize and remember people and events.
  - b. There are different places reserved for the righteous and the unrighteous... the former being good and beneficent, the latter bad and brutal.
  - c. There is a gulf set between the two places, where we can recognize others and even interact with them... but neither may cross over to the other.
  - d. In this state there are sensations – on the good side there is pleasure represented by in eating and drinking, on the bad side there is pain and torment of suffering represented by extreme thirst... all of which suggest

some sort of physicality, meaning we're not merely spiritual beings.

- e. When telling this story the Bible does not try to solve the problem of eternity for us, only to call attention that we can choose to go one of two ways, and that there are consequences both good and bad for the life we have lived first on earth and then in eternity. The meaning is simple... you should choose the way to life.

### 2. 2 Cor 5: Separation of body and spirit (Acs 7:59)

- a. In Acts 7:59 Luke writes that as Stephen was dying, he committed his spirit to God. This is a reflection of Luke 23:46 where Jesus commits His Spirit to God. Luke captures in his Gospel and Acts Pauline theology of humanity having a physical and spiritual nature.
  - b. Paul had a "bifurcated" or 2-part understanding of humanity and the world in general... the 2 parts he argued for were matter and spirit. This is not inconsistent with both Jewish and Greek philosophical thought.
  - c. Matter – body... was from the ground, it is dirt and returns to the earth. It is common.
  - d. Spirit – Breath of God... is what is valuable and is eternal. It is uncommon.
  - e. When the body dies, the spirit continues to live and goes to God.
  - f. Although there is a physicality in this intermediate state as shown in the Lazarus account, whether this is our perfected body or something else is not known. We know we have our perfected body when the New Heaven and earth are revealed. It may be we receive our perfected body and remain in the Spiritual state as does Jesus until the New Creation is revealed.
- ii. Hell – Scriptural Terms used – "Sheol" means "the grave." In this Hebrew term there are not two compartments here, as with many of the ancients, the Jews saw all the dead going to the same place... thus Sheol was the "place of the dead." "Hades" is the Greek word much like Sheol. In Greco-Roman thought, Hades was the underworld where all the dead would go. "Gehenna" is the NT term that was the place where the wicked and unrighteous go and where they suffer loss and desolation.
- 1. Sheol and Hades were considered the "Shadowlands" – they were the place all the dead people went. The prevalent thought of the ancients was that at death you entered into a shadow like state where you pretty much continued what you were doing before. If you had a good life in your previous earthly life, you would have a good life in the shadow world afterlife.

2. Gehenna is something different – it was the place of fire and destruction and torment, the place where bad people went. In this state you're in endless torment.
  3. While alive, humanity lives in the tension of the degenerative forces of sickness, old age, and death; and of the regenerative forces of physical healing, recuperation, and wellness. At physical death body life ceases... the body becomes a corpse – it is just flesh, meat. However, the spirit or innerman continues into the Spiritual state.
  4. The Luke 16:19-31 story of Lazarus sounds more like the hades sort of place for Lazarus and a Genenna sort of place for the rich man... though this is clearly thought of as an intermediate place and not the final place of eternal reward or desolation.
  5. Notice that the rich man wanted Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his family... meaning the end of the world had not yet come and there was still time to respond to God and change the course on one's life. This intermediate state is the "First Death" while the "Second Death" is the judgment and consummation of the age (Rev 2:11; 20:14; 21:8).
- iii. Metaphors – there are many colorful conceptions used in Scripture – but the tendency to read too much into any concept may be stretching the facts too far. What we do know is that Heaven will be Great! Hell not so much. The metaphors of hell used in Scripture include the place of:
1. Outer darkness (Matt 25:30; Jude 6).
  2. Weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 25:30).
  3. Bottomless pit (abyss; Rev 19:1).
  4. Undying worm (Isa 66:24; Mark 9:48).
  5. Fire, lake of; brimstone/sulfur (Jude 7; Rev 19:20; 20:15).
- iv. Views of Hell in Eternity – through redemptive history it was reasoned by theologians that there were different ways to look upon Hell. Each at one time or another was considered correct doctrine at the time, thus it is wise not to presume we now understand something our predecessors in faith didn't. It's best to remain humble and open to God, rather than dogmatic and exclusive in our thinking. These views included:
1. Literal and Metaphorical views – say there will be eternal punishment for the

- wicked. The dead will be resurrected and the wicked suffer endlessly.
2. **Annihilationist view** – says there will be the cessation of existence at the end. They reason that it would make no sense for God to give a damned soul an eternal body just so they could suffer forever. More likely they just get sent to the lake and are utterly destroyed... this is how they view the “Second Death” of Rev 20:14 & 21:8.
  3. **Bible doesn’t resolve the problem, but it also doesn’t soft pedal Hell:**
    - a. It says there will be a new body and a glorious place for believers.
    - b. It doesn’t elaborate on the eternally condemned... it is not where you want to be regardless as to whether they have a new body or not.
    - c. It may be that the condemned retain only a spiritual state and are cognizant of their separation from God, while the truly evil like Satan & demons go to a more severe place... the lake of fire.
    - d. The intertestament writings speak of and Paul alludes to different levels of heaven and hell... the best for the best and the worst for the worst.
  4. **Literal thought approach** – Heaven will be a great place and Hell a really bad place. There is no hope for those who have not received Jesus before death.
  5. **Metaphorical thought approach** – Heaven is just being in the Presence of God for the righteous, and Hell for the condemned is being separated from God.
  6. **Annihilation thought approach** – the evil burn up in the lake and are no more. Based on Mat 25:41-46 this wouldn’t seem so. But this is the position John Stott and some other notable evangelicals are now taking. Pushing a “kinder-gentler” God may be an easier sell for modern evangelism, but this is not necessarily what the Scripture presents.
  7. **A few problems:**
    - a. Satan and the rebellious wicked – Rev 20:10 “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever”... Means they “die like a dog.” They get the nastiest and worst place because they earned it.
    - b. Some theologians argue there is no biblical case of necessary eternity of man, but rather it is contingent based on their life. In this view the good go on, the bad are destroyed. This may solve our problem in viewing the “fairness of eternity” but it is not what Scripture teaches.
    - c. If hell/lake of fire were reserved for Satan and demons only, would we still see scripture saying endless torture and misery... is “annihilation” too good

for them?

- d. Is this traditional hell excessive even for Satan? Ultimately, it is not our call. God can be trusted to be fair and true... no one will be able to say to God that He was not fair in His judgment.
- e. Do the dead have physical bodies? Do they suffer real physical torment? Do they have a beating heart? Do they suffer thirst and starvation? Are they Old Creation/mortal? Or something else?
- f. Do we need to eat and drink to support our bodies there, or do they operate on another principle?
- g. Scripture doesn't complete the picture... but gives enough insight to cause people not to want to go to Hell.
- h. One problem modern evangelism has embraced is the fear of hell leading to "making a decision to accept Christ" solely as a means to avoid hell. This is not the evangelism the Apostles preached... discipleship involves life change in a holistic way, entering a community of fellowship where we exhibit Kingdom of God life and priorities. There is no evidence that supports Heaven as a place filled by any other than those who love and serve God. The only exceptions being those who die as children before the "age of accountability" or those who are mentally handicapped or dysfunctional and cannot be held accountable by God's grace.

### 8. Concepts of Punishment and Reform:

- a. Punishment goes for those who are beyond hope and change... such as Satan and demons – for they know the Truth of God, and chose to rebel and to hate Him. They did so with their eyes wide open and without deception or confusion. The problem for humanity is not so clear, though it is demonstrated that the wicked will be separated from God and suffer loss. There will also be some who so align with the forces of evil that will be held accountable.
- b. Reform is considered as an option for the not so bad... sort of where the idea for Purgatory came from – the place you work off the remainder of your venial or non-mortal sin before you enter into heaven.
- c. Scripture says that Jesus entered into Hades after His crucifixion and before He was resurrected. Ostensibly, this was to preach to the dead and release the captives in Hades/Sheol before Jesus' advent. Whether this was a one time event or an ongoing process we don't know.
- d. For Christians, Hell used to be a major topic for evangelism, but our

modern sensibilities shy away from the concept of a loving and righteous God who damns people to eternal hell. The problem is that because it is not popular, doesn't mean it isn't true.

- e. The Bible teaches of the reality of Hell – it is a real place where real people go. The question is... do we care enough for others that we are willing to look foolish in an attempt to prevent them from suffering in whatever level of unpleasantness hell is? The other side of this question is not to cheapen Grace by offering salvation as a means to “get out of Hell Free.”
- f. One thing is sure... most Christians don't know enough of these concepts to thoughtfully engage others. Instead, they rely on platitudes and dogma, rather than a personal reasoned faith. Don't be lazy... give it the thought the notion deserves. God can take your questions, and understand your doubt and fear. As Christians, we must chose to trust His Goodness... but we need to know Him Personally to do so. Once you really know God as a Person and not some abstract concept, trusting His Goodness is not a difficult matter.

### 9. Leniency – No biblical prophet leads us to feel sorry for the damned.

- a. On one hand, God is just and no one will accuse Him of being unfair. When we who are imperfect come before PERFECTION – we will immediately know our failures and sin.
- b. God won't have to press the matter about our sin... as Isaiah declared “woe is me” when he saw God in his vision, he condemned himself... and God didn't disagree with him, but provided the necessary remedy... grace.
- c. While it needs to be discussed and occasionally preached in a non-“fire and brimstone” fashion.
- d. No evangelical should be happy about someone being condemned... it should lead us to prayer and intercession.
- e. No evangelical should be so focused on wanting to save another that we make grace so easy and contractual, that we suspend any expectation of personal life transformation. To be a Christian is to be transformed in the innerman by Jesus.
- f. Suffice it to say... no one wants to be in Hell, but it is a choice. A better question may be... “How badly do you want to be in Heaven?”

### v. Heaven

#### 1. New Heaven and New Earth – resolves the problems resultant from the Fall in

**Gen 3: Creation is one of God's best things, and because He is there. We reflect God's Nature and Attributes, though in a diminished and imperfect manner. The Fall was not God's idea... and the choice was not outside of His permissive will, but our free will has surely complicated things. Issues God resolves include:**

- a. **"Reconciliation of heaven and earth" – the locus of Spiritual is Heaven, and the locus of the material is creation. The new earth is about creation at its very best. In Eden, this was the place where Heaven and earth came close... where God and man could directly interact. The new order is way better... it is a fusion of Spiritual and material in some new and profound way. As Grace in Jesus is infinitely superior to the Law of Moses, so will be the new creation over the old creation.**
  - b. **"Glorified matter" – matter is still matter and it is still physical... there must be some continuity between the old order and the new... but the new is on a much higher level. My imagination considers that there will be a new order of physics, and a new order of chemistry. Jesus demonstrated that His resurrection body was able to eat food, to be touched and had physical reality, yet He could appear and disappear at will... this is not normal physics... something new is at play. We know the new order will dispell evil... it will be impervious to evil as God's Goodness always must dispel evil.**
  - c. **"Timelessness" – the notion of time in context with eternity is an interesting one. On one hand, you would expect some continuity with some notion of a past, present, and future... knowing that time has always moved from someplace to somewhere else. It would intuitively seem that there must be some sense of a progression of time in eternity. Perhaps there will be no awareness of time markers, instead it may be a more relative time concept. With a body that doesn't age or die, time may flow differently. We know from Scripture that God knows the end from the beginning... past, present and future are a constant NOW to Him. It may well be that in eternity our sense of time runs on a different perspective.**
  - d. **Jesus didn't answer all these problems... He simply said where I am, you will be also. That works for me.**
2. **Rewards – the concept of personalized rewards for Christians based on their Kingdom minded contribution is interesting and also somewhat troubling. Scripture teaches there are differences in faith and its results, but it doesn't**

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make a big deal out of it. We should not add more into what Scripture says or leaves unsaid.

- a. Arguments for differential reward includes 1Cor 9:24-27 – Paul says he could lose his reward, but not his salvation. He indicates that pastors and evangelists seek their rewards. (Similarly 1Cor 3).
- b. Fairness would seem to argue that those who suffered greater for the Kingdom, should receive a greater reward. And the parable of the talents seems to support this.
- c. Matt 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27 – both show the 1st as getting a greater reward than the 2nd, and the 3rd ends up being judged by their own words... which flows from “as you judge you will be judged.”
- d. In the talent story the 1st and 2nd person don’t seem upset or overly rejoiced that they have a different result... they just accept it. The 3rd person is another matter all together, being lack of faith and fear of loss and responsibility.
- e. The idea of this differential reward whether it be cities ruled or talents managed is more about vice-regency than it is personal gain. This has to do with ruling with the master, and not bragging rights over your brother or sister as to who is greatest.
- f. Problems with personalized rewards theology stem from what may seem to be a matter of sanctification by works and by merit. This is of course counter to what Paul generally taught. We lack the ability to define or defend the nature of the supposed rewards – Scripture alludes to them, but doesn’t solve this problem.
- g. As I think about this, it may be more in line with the “White Stone” Jesus says He’ll give His faithful with a name known only to the receiver. This would seem to advocate something that is personal and special to the receiver, but not necessarily superior to another.
- h. 2 Cor 5:9-10 – we means humanity, and the judgment seat is where the ruler interprets right and wrong and assigns merit, clemency, or punishment. This seems to harken toward the Great White Throne scene. 5:11 – clarifys that the we are the saints.
- i. 1 Cor 3:6 -23 – we = saints... and the builder receives what they earn. This contrasts with Grace where we receive what we don’t deserve... we all deserve condemnation, but are offered Grace as a free gift that costs everything and changes everything.
  - i. This seems to say that grace goes to all saints, and rewards go to

- pastors & missionaries... this could well be ministry reward, or maybe better ministry stewardship.
- ii. In Corinth there evidently was pastor competition happening between Paul and Apollos... with the notion that one was superior to the other. Paul is clarifying that it is all about Christ... each pastor is a servant of God, we're not in competition with each other.
  - iii. The application of "Unity in Christ through the Spirit" pertains to all Christians and all congregations sealed in the Spirit and serving the Gospel of Jesus. Our focus should be the qualitative aspects of Great Commandment and the Great Commission, rather than the quantitative aspects of size, wealth, etc.
- j. Luke 12:4-48; Mat 10:15; 11:24 – suggests there are different levels of hell indicating degrees of punishment in hell. One of Luke's main points is that those who should know better, meaning Israel, will be held to a higher standard than the Gentiles who didn't/couldn't know God's truth.
- i. Jews were given the knowledge of God, and God expected them to teach and respond to it appropriately. They should have recognized and received Jesus as Messiah and Lord.
  - ii. If a non-believer never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel let alone respond to it, would it necessarily mean they are condemned? I'm not so sure. Romans 2:14-16 would indicate that God is both fair and just in judgment... holding people accountable for what they should know and do.
- k. 2 Cor 12:2 – suggests there may be different levels of heaven, which indicates there may be different levels of reward in heaven. It could also mean there are different places to go and explore, that we might be able to move between the different levels rather than be assigned to one of them. Again, we just don't know, and Scripture has not made the matter clear.
- l. Luke 19:11-27: cf., Rev 2—3... As "Overcomers" the faithful will be privileged to:
- i. Eat tree of life (Rev 2:7).
  - ii. Will not experience the second death (Rev 2:11).
  - iii. Will be provided the hidden manna, and white stone, and new name indicating a new identity (Rev 2:17).
  - iv. Will have authority over the nations (Rev 2:26).
  - v. Will be clothed in white

- vi. Names cannot be erased from the Book of Life
  - vii. Those who have confessed allegiance to Jesus will be confessed by Jesus before God (Rev 3:5)... see Romans 10:1-21.
  - viii. Will be made a pillar in the New Temple & given a new name (Rev 3:12).
  - ix. Will share Jesus' throne (Rev 3:21)... this refers to all the saints will share his throne!
  - m. Crowns offered indicate rule – those of royalty wear crowns:
    - i. Crown of exultation (1 Thes 2:19).
    - ii. Crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8).
    - iii. Crown of life (Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10).
    - iv. Crown of glory (1 Pet 5:4).
    - v. Paul's joy and crown (Phil 4:1).
  - n. Regarding Rewards – How are these for one group of heavenly citizens and not the rest? How are all saints segregated into two groups? What about OT saints? Don't these all mean that we shall reign? My heart tells me it will be personal and special, but not necessarily better than another's reward. Whatever it is, we will rejoice with others as they will rejoice with us. The idea that Scripture teaches that we as disciples in Jesus sealed by the Spirit are royalty is mind boggling. If we say that about ourselves it's like we should be committed... but that's what God says about us. Remarkable!
3. Arguments against differential rewards – some theologians have argued against differential rewards for the following reasons:
- a. Feeds pride, and may exaggerate the quality of the best works of the best Christians – will there be competition in heaven? I think not!
  - b. It is a quality of the fallen nature of humanity to believe they deserve more and better than others. In the new order, it is more about getting what one deserves... which actually speaks against grace which is getting what we don't deserve.
  - c. What about the handicapped and those who have physical and/or mental limitations that prevent them from knowing and doing more? God is faithful and true... and can be trusted to do what is right.
  - d. It is often claimed that rewards are motivation for greater faithfulness and greater works. I seriously doubt it... would you stop being faithful if you were convinced there are no special rewards for your sacrificial service?

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How do you explain my faithfulness? We follow and obey... that's what we do.

- e. Who gets credit for a convert? How does the one plants, one waters, and one reaps play into rewards? John 4:34-38 indicates we each have a role to play in advancing the Kingdom... fulfilling the will of God.
  - f. Equal pay for dissimilar work is supported by God's generosity - Matt 20:1-16; Luke 17:1-10; Matt. 25:14-30 (cf. Luke 19).
  - g. Many passages that speak of eternal life with no mention of varying rewards (e.g., Matt 25:1-13; 31-46). The 10 virgins and the sheep & goats passages don't reveal anything but judgment in belief and not believing. We believe because we know it is true and the grace of forgiveness we've been given (Luke 7:36-50).
  - h. John 4:35-38 – demonstrates that there is no conflict of competition in working to advance the Kingdom of God.
4. Problems with 'same-reward' theology
- a. 1 Cor 3:8,12-15 – which probably doesn't mean eternal rewards for anyone; but even if it does, it is only the 'farmers' and 'builders', not the crop or building.
  - b. 2 Cor 5:10
  - c. Luke 19:11-27 (cf., Matt. 25:14-30)
  - d. 1 John 2:28
  - e. Language of 'least' and 'greatest in the Kingdom'
  - f. Degrees of punishment in hell (Luke 12:47-48; Matt. 10:15; 11:22,24)
5. Strengths of 'same-reward' theology – we believe and obey because we love Jesus... because we've been saved by grace – heaven will be enough.
- a. Rev 2–3 "overcomers" – must all be the same
  - b. Matt 20:1-16
  - c. Luke 17:1-10 – millstone passage –
    - i. Vs 4... "if he sins against you seven times in a day" – the point of forgiving is not holding on to the memory of the wrong... if you are always forgetting then you never get past the 1st sin... this is how grace works. The disciples knew this took faith to accomplish... so they ask for more faith, a reasonable request. Jesus redirects their thinking... if your faith is as small as a mustard seed and you exercise it... it will grow.

- ii. Vs 7... Jesus changes the perspective to something they could relate to... if you are the slave, you do what you're told. You don't deserve any special praise or reward for doing what you're expected to do.
- iii. Hence, the best we can do is to believe and obey.
- d. What about the handicapped? No pride evidenced in grace.

6. Conclusion about rewards – it really comes down to Justification and sanctification:

- a. Gal 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
- b. The same faith by which we're justified is the same faith by which we're sanctified. However, some cooperate more freely and consistently with the sanctifying efforts of the Spirit.
- c. Personal rewards has both exegetical and theological issues – and we shouldn't get hung up on this notion. It is definitely a smaller thing and shouldn't become our focus.

5. Final rebellion, judgment: Rev 20:7-15

- a. Purpose – to prove the point of the Lord's reign over real sin; and to prove the incorrigibility of non-elect... Satan and those who have refused Messiah rule.
- b. Why a final rebellion? – When raptured all saints from all time will join the Lord in the air in their new bodies. The millennium will consist of redeemed bodies remaining on a sin-cursed world. During the millennium, children will be produced – some of which will refuse Messiah though they have been born and raised under His millennial reign. The final rebellion is to weed out those final individuals who don't belong to the Lord... then the end will come.
- c. Background of Rev 19; Ezek 38—39 “Gog and Magog” – see also Gen 10:2. 1 Chron 1:5 indicates that Magog, Tubal, and Meshach were grandsons of Noah and sons of Japheth. Noah's sons are Shem – father of near-east peoples, Ham – father of African peoples, and Japheth – father of the northern lands above Israel. Although the precise meaning has been lost to antiquity, there may be something going on with the theme of selection/rejection and the resultant blessing/cursing that follows from the examples of Isaac and Ishmael, as well as Jacob and Esau. The Semites [Semitic peoples] are the Jews as descendants of Shem, who have inherited the gift of the Abrahamic Covenant.
- d. Interesting quote from Charles Krauthammer –“I recently told an assembly at my son's high

school,” I wrote in 1997, “That they were living through a time so blessed they would tell their grandchildren about it. They looked at me uncomprehendingly ... because it is hard for anyone to apprehend the sheer felicity of one’s own time until it is gone.” ... from RealClearPolitics, Dec 18, 2009 editorial “An Anniversary of Sorts”. The idea is, while it may seem unthinkable that any would harbor open rebellion in that day, some will be unappreciative of the unique bliss of that age, demonstrating the incorrigibility of sin.

- e. This passage and its ramifications seem to make the case much more difficult for the positions of the A-millennialists and Post-millennialists who both advocate improvement of the world order preceding Messiah’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. Things are not improving, instead they are deteriorating and this is what the Pre-millennialists position argues for.

### 6. Millennium: Rev 20:1-6

#### a. Historical Background of Millennium Theology:

- i. There was no known advocacy of the A-millennialist or Post-millennialist position before Origen/Augustine, who both avowed an allegorist approach to hermeneutics. The OT is seen to be primarily Pre-millennialist, as were early church fathers. Augustine was offended by the excessive materialism he observed in his day of what were called the gross ‘Chiliasts.’ The momentum he fostered in that direction was accelerated by 1<sup>st</sup> by Montanus, then Origen, and Constantine.
- ii. Montanism predicted a new spiritualism, which actually Origen originated or rather championed, based on his more allegorical interpretation of Scripture; and Constantine agreed with such historical optimism. All these forces conspired against Pre-millennialism. Later, together with Augustine’s extraordinary mind, this produced the notions we now know as A-millennialism and Post-millennialism.
- iii. This early era is known as the Patristic age which for the larger part, Christian eschatology through the 2nd and 3rd centuries was chiliastic [millennialistic]. Many early Christian interpreters applied the earlier Jewish apocalyptic idea of a temporary Messianic kingdom to their interpretation of chapter 20 of John's apocalypse. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian all made explicit references to the concept of a thousand year earthly kingdom at Christ’s coming.
- iv. Pre-millennialism in Christian end-times theology is the belief that Jesus will literally and physically be on the earth for his millennial reign, initiated at his second coming. The doctrine is called pre-millennialism because it holds that Jesus’ physical return to earth will occur prior to the inauguration of the millennium. It is distinct from the

- other forms of Christian eschatology such as Post-millennialism or A-millennialism, which view the millennial rule as occurring either before the second coming, or as being figurative and non-temporal.
- v. Pre-millennialism is largely based upon a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6 in the New Testament which describes Jesus' coming to the earth and subsequent reign at the end of an apocalyptic period of tribulation. It views this future age as a time of fulfillment for the prophetic hope of God's people as given in the Old Testament and developed through the New Testament.
  - vi. Others such as the Eastern Orthodox claim that this passage of Revelation describes the present time, when Christ reigns in Heaven with the departed saints; such an interpretation views the symbolism of Revelation as referring to an invisible spiritual battle rather than a visible battle on earth. This mode of allegorizing Biblical prophecies is also popular among the proponents of A-millennialism, which is another millennial theory that interprets the Millennium as being only a symbolic period of time, occasionally representing God's absolute rulership over his creation or the Church.
  - vii. Pre-millennialism is often used to refer specifically to those who adhere to the beliefs in an earthly millennial reign of Christ as well as a rapture of the faithful coming before (dispensational) or after (historic) the tribulation preceding the millennium.
  - viii. Post-millennialism, for example, agrees with Pre-millennialism about the future earthly reign of Christ, but disagrees on the concept of a rapture and tribulation before the Millennium begins. Post-millennialists hold to the view that the second coming will happen after the Millennium.
  - ix. A-millennialism is seen by conservatives as an over-reaction using spiritual/allegorical hermeneutic to the growing emphasis of early Christianity on materialism.
  - x. "Despite the frequent appearance of prophetic statements in the writings of the early church fathers, an intriguing phenomenon presents itself to us – No ancient creed affirms a millennial view... Not one of the millennial views, though, is expressly affirmed by any early creed as the doctrinal standard or orthodox position. This is not surprising in that, as Erickson explains, "all three millennial positions have been held virtually throughout church history." – Kenneth L. Gentry, "Postmillennialism," in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 14-15.
  - xi. Roman Catholicism ultimately adopted Augustine's view, and the reformers

challenged and changed Roman Soteriology (salvation theology – “salvation by Grace”), but they didn’t change the Roman Ecclesiology (theology of the church) or eschatology (theology of the end times). The result is somewhat clouding the vigorous debate that occurred in that time.

- xii. The Reformation Reformers did not challenge Rome’s eschatology; neither did they study and emphasize eschatology... it is almost as though they felt they should not press for too much too fast, and a new perspective was something that would develop over time.
- b. Revival of Eschatology occurred in the “Modern Church Age”
- i. Dispensationalists developed or maybe more correctly rediscovered the Pre-millennial position. Popularized by J.N. Darby, Niagara Bible Conference, and the Scofield Reference Bible, which was the 1<sup>st</sup> study Bible.
  - ii. 1930s–40s Debate with Covenant theology A-millennial position (Allis v Walvoord) – they began to criticize and debate the dispensationalists, which was not in itself a bad thing... they just did it in a very unkind, disrespectful, and even arrogant manner.
  - iii. 1950s–70s saw a rise of ‘Historic’ Pre-millennialism (Ladd), along with an anti-Pretribulation perspective (including Gundry). Historic was a poor choice of descriptive terms, but it stuck. They held to a post-tribulation perspective with a weak role for national Israel... this differentiated them from the dispensationalists who held to a esteemed role for national Israel.
  - iv. 1980s–90s renewed the debate with Westminster and the rise of ‘Progressive’ Dispensationalism – this ushered in a new and more respectful dialogue and debate, with Dallas Seminary rising to a prominent voice in the dialogue.
- c. Explanation of Millennial positions:
- i. Pre-millennials believe in the Personal presence of Jesus on earth, in sin-cursed time. They hold that national Israel had its day of prominence, and now the role as God’s people is for the Church. However, God’s covenant with Israel is a permanent covenant and there would always be a remnant that God would bless... because of God’s faithfulness and in spite of Israel’s unfaithfulness. This is a “qualified Zionism” that differs much from those who take the literal approach of God blessing those who bless Israel, and cursing those who curse Israel. Be careful not to overlook that Jesus judged Israel and condemned the false spiritual nation it had become.
  - ii. A-millennials believe the millennium brings an end to history and then eternity begins.

In their view, National Israel has no place in the new order. Instead it is “Spiritual Israel” which is the Church that are the successors of Biblical Prophecy as the people of God.

- iii. Post-millennials believe that Christ comes after the millennium, and they argue there is no place for national Israel, only for the Church.
  - iv. “Historic” dispensationals hold to a Post-tribulation hope – that the Church is raptured after the tribulation.
  - v. Modern Dispensationals hold to a Pre-tribulation hope – that the Church is raptured before the tribulation.
  - vi. Mid-tribulation is a hybrid position that argues The Church endures part of the Tribulation, but not the worst of it. Essentially a Pre-wrath of God rapture – this group differentiates between the church having to endure the wrath of Satan – the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the Tribulation, but then is raptured prior to the wrath of God – the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Tribulation.
- d. Purpose of the Millennium – the millennial era demonstrates several ideals:
- i. The supremacy of God: Satan is repeatedly defeated in a way that allows Grace to increase in ushering in the Kingdom of God both in history and eternity. The A-millennial position seem to accept that God to loses ground in advancing His Kingdom in history (the temporal era), since he wins conclusively in eternity. In the Pre-millennial approach, God wins both history and eternity. The former is too small a view of the greatness of God.
  - ii. The Supremacy of Messiah: Whereas Satan in several millennia of his mis-rule and mismanagement nearly destroyed earth, Jesus in 1 millen (+/-) will make it a Paradise ... even with the sin curse in effect (Rev 22:3; Zech 14:11; miracles of first coming). During this period there will be peace and prosperity of great dimensions, and humanity will have no illness. Imagine people still being vigorous to age 200, 500. Mozart and Gershwin died before 40. How much greater could human progress be if human minds could continue productivity for not just decades but centuries!
  - iii. The fulfillment of prophecy: The Davidic Covenant will be restored with the Messianic rule of earth (Acts 1:6f; Romans 11). The Apostles will rule over the Nation of Israel (Matt19:28; Rev 19-22). Isaiah 65:17-25 speaks gladly of the glorious reign of Messiah in the Millennial kingdom... people will live long, happy productive lives enjoying the bounty of the earth. Instead of living a few score of years, they will live centuries. Life in the Messianic Millennium will be amazing!

iv. **Problems:** The OT prophesy calls for the rebuilding of the Temple and the nations coming to worship God there. NT prophesy says the human heart will be the Temple of God. Will there be a rebuilding of a Literal Temple? If so, will Messiah be there to meet with His people, or will ritual sacrifices be resumed? Or will the sacrifices being brought resemble those of Acts 4:32-33 where people bring gifts out of the joy of their hearts to be a blessing to others? I would think the latter, I can't imagine God be happy that Temple sacrifice would be resumed as it would be tantamount to saying Jesus sacrifice on the Cross was somehow deficient. How does this play into the Spiritual Temple (1Cor 6:20)?

### 7. Summary and Concluding Thoughts on Millennialism:

a. **A-millennial:** Personal presence of Messiah on post-curse earth. Essentially they interpret OT prophecy as being primarily Christological, thus they argue that Jesus is the new Israel. This doesn't work Diachronically (throughout the process of redemptive history). They also argue that National Israel is no longer valid... Jesus fulfills Israel's role in redemptive history. There are 2 versions of A-millennial thought:

- i. Millennium = Church age, the Spirit is present in the saints who are ruling now on sin cleansed earth with Christ absent in heaven. This doesn't really work in either hermeneutic exegesis or in our experience as Church history on earth remains a mess.
- ii. Millennium = eternal heaven, there is no millennial age on earth. This doesn't really work as it spiritualizes and relegates all promises to eternity; and minimizes the importance of the material (earth) and national Israel (Sinai Covenant & Davidic Covenant).
- iii. Satan being bound during the millennium, and then loosed after Jesus had come doesn't work if there is no millennium.
- iv. The hermeneutic problem is that "Sender's Intended Meaning" [SIM] shows that the nation would be blessed by God, and would be a blessing to the nations... there is no good reason to deviate from this interpretation. Instead, A-millennialists set up a sort of "bait and switch theology"... saying the millennium is now and ruled by "Spiritual Israel" (the Church) rather than national Israel, which Scripture indicates as God's chosen instrument. This doesn't agree with the order of events in Rev 19-20... instead to make their point work they have to rearrange things. They are stretching the interpretation of the text to meet their requirements. On the other hand, the Pre-millennial position follows the order as called in authoritative Scripture.

b. **Post-millennial:** Focuses especially on the gospel statements about the presence of the Kingdom on earth, and Jesus' personal absence in curse-time.

- i. Spiritualizes Messiah's victory and rule in time from a safe distance. Presumably stating that God's Purity would preclude His being involved in the unsettling and unsavory nature of ruling a Fallen and sin-cursed earth. This doesn't make sense as Messiah entered history as a baby and suffered abuse and crucifixion, how could He not also be engaged in sin-cursed earth?
  - ii. They say the Millennium began in Acts 2 at Pentecost. They argue that the early expansion of the Church is extrapolated to Church-world domination in Christ's Name and then the end will come. So things are being advanced but perhaps not yet completely, but at some future undefined time the earth will be presented as cleansed and saved to Messiah. Though all Christians agree we need to advance the Kingdom of God, Pre-millennials understand the world will not improve or be cleansed until Christ returns and forcibly cleanses it. Pre-millennials would say our advancing the Gospel is an act of obedience to our Lord, and that He is ultimately responsible for the results.
  - iii. Post-millennial and A-millennial have some similar views Pre-millennial, except the spiritualizing of the former effectively keeps Jesus at a safe distance from the mess on earth claiming the 1,000 years is not literal but instead is merely allegorical.
  - iv. Post-millennials also hold to a "Theonomic (God/Law) Reconstruction" which imposes OT Law for the whole world as the standard of life rather than Grace as part of advancing the Kingdom of God in preparation for Messiah. They thus argue that salvation is works [Law] and faith [Grace] – this is not what the apostles taught in the epistles.
- c. OT prophecies concerning Messiah's coming:
- i. Some were fulfilled in first coming; and some evidently relate to second. OT author's did not have a clear view of the Messiah or eternity. This was why Jesus had to come to demonstrate the Kingdom of God as Spirit and Truth (John 4:23-24).
  - ii. Those prophecies that refer to Messiah's first coming were fulfilled literally... born of a virgin, of the lineage of David, in a Manger, in Bethlehem, would enter Jerusalem on a donkey's colt, would suffer and die (Isaiah's suffering servant songs), would die on a cross, etc. These were also the spiritually focused coming. How likely is it that the prophecies relating to the second coming and the material redemption of creation, with many in the same immediate context with first coming prophecies, were not intended similarly to be understood literally? On which position lies a burden of proof? Post-millennial says its spiritual, while pre-millennial says its more literal... but also cloaked.

- iii. Since Jesus did not attempt to fulfill first coming ‘Spiritual redemption ministry’ from heaven, why would we expect he would fulfill the second coming ‘ruling’ prophecies from heaven? God has veiled these things, but He has not attempted to make them so obscure that His people could not find the truth and follow Him. As a result, Jesus’ world ministry and millennium really is contrary to the post-millennial position.
- iv. Sender’s Intended Meaning: Jer 30—33; Ezek 37:25 – “They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons’ sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever.” How is this merely spiritual? It cannot be, it is intended to be a cloaked literal.
- v. Diachronic Revelation – God’s revelation is made in waves throughout redemptive history. The NT teachings and theology derive from lineal OT roots... the Bible starts in the Garden with God and ends in Heaven with God. In between redemptive history plays out. Prophecy was fulfilled literally... evidenced by Isaiah’s ‘suffering servant songs’, that the ‘virgin would be found with child,’ that their Messiah would ‘ride into Jerusalem on a donkey,’ and that they would ‘look upon he whom they pierced,’ etc. These were all literally fulfilled. All these prophecies were to call our attention to Messiah’s coming. As the Old Covenant believer’s looked to their anticipated future, so we New Covenant believer’s look forward to ours. I wouldn’t expect we’ll do much better in being alert than they were, especially since Jesus warned we would not know the time of His coming. However, we ought to be more prepared regarding the requirements of the Kingdom and what Messiah desires from His disciples.

### 8. Gospel Conclusion – The Second Coming of the King is the main event! The Day of Yahweh is coming!

#### a. The Apostles recorded Jesus thoughts about eternity:

- i. **John 14:1-3** - “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”
- ii. **Acts 1:7-11** - He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After he said this, he was

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taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

- iii. **Acts 3:17-21** - “Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

### b. Jesus return will be emphatic... so be ready!

- i. **Prophetic prediction – Psalm 68:4** - Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds his name is the LORD and rejoice before him.
- ii. **Abrupt sign – Matt 24:30** - “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.
- iii. **Jesus is ruler of Heaven and earth – Matt 25:64** - “Yes, it is as you say, “Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”
- iv. **Jesus self profession before the High Priest – Mark 14:51-52** - But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” – **Jesus return will be emphatic! Be ready!**

### c. OT and NT prophecy on the end of time:

- i. **Zech 14:1-9** - The day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.

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Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light. On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter. The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.

1. **1 – “Your plunder” these are the ill-gotten gains the faithless leaders lusted after... this gives rise to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Tribulation when the wrath of God is poured out on Israel. Though this is the worst of times give way to the best as wickedness is purged violently by God.**
  2. **4 – “On that day His Feet” – speaks to Messiah’s personal presence in Jerusalem at the end of days.**
  3. **9 – “The Lord will be King” speaks to the Davidic monarchy... this is the Millennium following the final battle of the Tribulation.**
- ii. **Heb 9:28; Rev 19:11ff – 2nd coming is also about ‘saving’... 1st coming finished spiritual redemption, 2nd finishes material redemption.**
1. **Heb 9:27-28 - Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.**
  2. **Rev 19:11 – the “White Horse Rider” is Jesus returning as Lord of Lords and King of Kings... and destruction results from “The Word” issuing from His mouth. As God spoke creation into existence, He will also bring about the end of days through the spoken word. This is Power and Authority issued in Righteousness... a different order from Jihad.**
- iii. **Messiah ushers in all of the end time culminative events including eternity, but not all necessarily simultaneously or instantaneously – 1 Cor 15:21-26 - For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.**
1. **The Parousia[2<sup>nd</sup> Coming] (23) ushers in the end (24).**
  2. **But there is a process: he reigns (25) and brings all competing powers to heel (24), his enemies are under his feet [destroyed] (25).**

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- 3. Then he conquers death (26), then he hands the kingdom to the father (24).**
- i. **“Blessed Hope”** this is hope that is characterized by blessing – Titus 2:11-14 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
  - ii. **The reality of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming is certain... He will come, but it could be at any time. Thus the notion of imminency and uncertain timing... He will come as a thief in night – Matt 24-25; Luke 12:39; 1 Thes 5:2,4; 2 Pet 3:19; Rev 3:3; 16:15. This means He could come at any moment, so there are no necessary additional precursors remaining. You will not know when... be ready!**
  - iii. **Armagedon (Rev 16:16):** translation is “Har Magedon meaning “End of Millennium”. The imagery of the lion and the lamb laying down together is compelling, as Jesus is both. He already came as the lamb of God, the next coming will be as the lion of Judah. In Rev 5 the King [Father] is holding a scroll ready to give the go ahead to Jesus to bring the end all about.
- 9. Daniel Prophecy of the Tribulation is the background for Matt 24: ... the book of Daniel is the other apocalyptic work in Scripture, and is necessary to understand Revelation.**
- a. **Daniel is commonly thought to be sequenced 1-6 and 7-12, but rather it should be sequenced as 1 / 2-7 / 8-12 ... the reason is structural:**
    - i. **Chapters 1 and 8-12 are written in Hebrew; while chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic. This denotes the Author’s intended meaning was to structurally link these together.**
    - ii. **This has chronological import – 2 & 7 both have 4 empires... the 4<sup>th</sup> being Rome. Jesus 1<sup>st</sup> coming is as the Rock that smashes the feet of the great statue.**
    - iii. **Chapters 8-12 are also chiastic:**

8

9

10-12

**Focus here is on the ‘penultimate’ – the course of history prior to the end. 8 & 11 are about the anti-Christ = the penultimate; while Christ = the ultimate.**
    - iv. **4 kingdoms are depicted by Daniel:**
      1. **Babylon = Gold**
      2. **Medes/Persian = Silver** Dan 9:1 identifies Darius the Mede king
      3. **Greek = Bronze**

4. Rome = Iron
- b. Dan's 70th week: Dan 9:24-27 – follows Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years as Israel's term of exile. This also deals with the 70 years that the Temple is in ruins... Daniel's prayer is an Old Covenant prayer of restoration.
  - i. Chronology language – Daniel writes about 70-sevens that gets us to the 6 things that lead up to the penultimate... which is the launch of the ultimate.
    1. "Terminus ad quem" (26a) , 'ending'
    2. "Terminus a quo" (27a) – 'end from which' or beginning.
  - ii. Ending with week 69 the Messiah is cut off.
  - iii. Week 70 has the Anti-Christ making a 'firm covenant' with Israel. This is the beginning leading to the tribulation.
  - iv. Period between 69 and 70 is indeterminant.
  - v. Dan 9:27 is the Church age... ending with the tribulation, the final 7 year period.
- c. Rev 6-19: Seals/Trumpets – this is the recovery of the land; Bowls – this is the judgment of the counterfeit messiah [antiChrist] and counterfeit bride [Babylon]; these are OC themes that correspond to the Abrahamic Covenant of "Land [inheritance] and Seed [offspring]."
  - i. Jesus is on the White horse in Chap 6 & 19 – this is the Messiah.
  - ii. This section hems in the tribulation... with the dates derived from Daniel.
  - iii. 6-11 = seals/trumpets where Messiah is coming to reclaim the land.
  - iv. 12-18 = the arch-villians [Anti-Christ and Babylon] are finally dealt with.
- d. Purpose: is to complete the judgment of national Israel begun in first 69 weeks:
  - i. As Messiah marries His bride [Church]; anti-Christ jumps in bed with the anti-Bride [Babylon].
  - ii. Anti-Christ is linked with old Jerusalem that is destroyed.
  - iii. Christ is linked with New Jerusalem that is coming down from Heaven.
- e. Matt 24:3—25:30 = Israel's readiness for Kingdom (Millen); 25:31-46 = Gentiles' admission to Kingdom - the disciples question is "when," but Jesus answer is "Who."
  - i. Commonly styled as "the final judgment" – But since the final judgment is such a key part of the preceding parables and may be traced back as far as the Noah comparison (24:37-39), we must ask, what is really new here? What is new is not that there is final judgment with the righteous being approved and the wicked judged, these have been reiterated several times already. What is new is the basis of final judgment – demonstrating care for certain suffering ones abused by indifferent powers of authority.
  - ii. In a conventional interpretation of this text, certain points are commonly recognized while certain other ones are commonly overlooked. One rarely discussed question is "how are the 'sheep' different from my 'brothers'?" The

sheep are under the authority of caretakers and are judged accordingly on their competence and diligence. The brothers are family... this is now personal and relational.

- iii. When Jesus asks them, “do you not see these things?” He is really asking, “Surely you see this!”

### 10. Rapture –

- a. From “*rapiemur*” = “shall be caught up.” Thus the Rapture – stated in 1 Thes 4:17.
- b. 1 Cor 15:51-53 – some Christians won’t die, but all will be changed... transformed.
  - i. Matt 24:40-41 “Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left; two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left” – the verb for “take” normally has a positive sense of personal accompaniment (Matt 1:20,24; 2:13,14,20,21; 17:1; 18:16; 20:17; but see also 4:5,8; 12:45); the verb for leave has a negative connotation, such as destitution or abandonment (4:11,20,22; 13:36; 18:12; 19:27,29; 22:22,25; 26:44,56).
  - ii. So the statements most likely mean the righteous one is received by God, and the unrighteous one is rejected.
  - iii. This need not, however, refer to the rapture; especially since the discourse from 24:2 to 25:30 has Israel only in view. It could still refer to the Second Coming, and the respective groups’ invitation or disinvasion to enter the Kingdom glory.
- c. 2 Thes 2:1 – this is our gathering to Messiah [rapture], followed by 2:3 – the ‘day’ will come after apostasy leading up to the anti-Christ.
- d. When is the “man of lawlessness” [anti-Christ] revealed? When he makes peace with Israel. When peace is signed and approved, Israel will accept him as their messiah. In effect they trade their peace in the land for God’s rest in eternity. The apostasy is Israel’s rejecting their rightful Covenant Hope in God and placing it instead in covenant with an evil man of lawlessness.
- e. Mat 24:15 is the half-way point of the tribulation... the man of lawlessness now reveals his rebellion against God.
- f. Rev 3:9-10 – vs 9 shows the synagogue of Satan... the faithless under condemnation; while vs 10 shows the faithful remnant who God will protect.

### 11. Views on Premillennialism:

- a. Pre-tribulation (Dispensational) – this is the most compelling position with the greatest Scriptural support:
  - i. Tribulation is Israel’s punishment from the White Horse to White Horse – Rev 6:2-19:11). The whole tribulation event is Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.
  - ii. Rev 6:1 is the marker for the rapture and the inauguration of the 7 year tribulation preceding Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

- iii. **70<sup>th</sup> week is the resumption of Israel’s redemption program, after the completion of her judgment and purging of wickedness. The remnant remains and is triumphant with under their acknowledged Lord and Messiah Jesus. The remnant includes those who were not believers in Jesus and thus missed the Rapture, but many will come to faith after the Rapture and during the Tribulation.**
- iv. **1 Thes 4:13 – the uninformed (ignorant) will have the opportunity to respond to Jesus during the Tribulation. Many of them will be killed, but we are advised not grieve for those who died as they will all be included in the millennium in their glorified bodies, with Messiah on a sin-cursed earth. More children will be born to the the survivors of the Tribulation during this time, and some of those will refuse Messiah. At the completion of time, all who refuse Grace will be judged.**
- v. **What about “the last trumpet” in 1 Cor 15:50-54 - I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”**
- b. **Post-tribulation – 2 Thes 2:8 seems to argue against a simple Triulation position... the simple is not as compelling and answer. Who will be left in the mortal state to repopulate the Millennial period? These are the non-believers who remained on earth after the Rapture and come to faith. During the Millennium, some have mortal kids who will refuse Grace and will be judged at the conclusion of the Millennium before the New Heaven and Earth are created. There will be converts during the Tribulation, some who had heard the Gospel and believe when they observe that the Biblical events come to pass. They too will have kids, some who will believe and others not (Zech 14:12-19; Luke 17:29). The problem with the Post-Tribulation position is that the Millennial seems to have no real purpose. Another problem is what about imminency? Scripture continues to advise us to be alert so we’ll recognize the times leading up to the Tribulation so we don’t miss the Rapture. If the Rapture is not until the end of the Tribulation, what’s the point?**
- c. **Mid-tribulation: divided 70<sup>th</sup> week – during the 3 ½ year mid-point when the persecution becomes the most fierce and brutal, the church is raptured and misses the brunt of it. This makes sense in light of Jesus’ warning about the Tribulation in Matt 24:21-22 - “For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one**

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would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

It would seem that this speaks to those living through the Tribulation, but it could also refer to those who came to faith during the Tribulation. The point of the Mid-Tribulation perspective is how the faithful endure wrath - 1 Thes 1:10 – The church endures Satan’s wrath in the first half of the Tribulation, but is removed prior to the commencement of God’s wrath at the mid-point. Another point is that since God didn’t prevent His Son from suffering Satan’s wrath on earth enduring the cross, it makes sense He would not necessarily alleviate suffering of the faithful. This certainly parallels the wrath the Church endured at the birth of the Church in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

### 12. Questions remain:

- a. **1 Thess 5:1-6** – Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. **Is this saying that all unbelievers die? Or is he arguing that most left behind will be destroyed during the Tribulation. The latter makes sense, but it isn’t clear.**
- b. **2 Thess 2:5-10** – there is mystery attached to antichrist's appearance and lawlessness; we know he is the lawless one, and we know that **Spiritual warfare continues until Messiah ends it**: Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. **The Lord will destroy the antichrist with the Spirit of his mouth at the epiphany of his Parousia (2 Thes 2:8)... does that suggest a multifaceted or multiphase Parousia? It is not clear.**
- c. **God has evidently tolerated confusion through the centuries, which He certainly could clear up. That seems to suggest His preference on His people relying on faith, rather than dependence on the correctness of our doctrine. It would seem that He is primarily concerned that we debate with one another within a context of love and respect. It’s OK to wrestle with issues while agreeing on the main point – that Jesus is coming back!**

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**There seems to be no prize for eschatological correctness... only for being alert and prepared... and doing the things the Master desires before His coming.**

**All revelation is the work of God revealing Himself... the Gospel is after all, the Good News! And the Good News is a happy ending... that never ends.**