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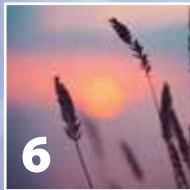
BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME



THE FUNDAMENTALS:
"Even So, Come"



The Fundamentals: "Even So, Come"



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Eschatology

A Necessary and Spiritually Edifying Study

God is not limited by time or space, yet He is the God of history. All of history fulfills God's purposes and will ultimately culminate to bring Him glory. Eschatology (from Gk. *eschatos*, "last") is the branch of theology that studies the doctrines of the Bible concerning future events or last things. Discussions regarding eschatology usually take place either among serious theological scholars or among foolish "Christian" leaders who are marketing outlandish and unreliable predictions. This latter category has done a great disservice to Christians: they have to some extent eclipsed the focus and intent of the eschatological texts of the Bible and have even turned some true believers away from studying them. This does not have to be the case! Eschatology is a necessary and spiritually edifying study. As one theologian said, "If there is one thing that eschatological texts have in common, it is this: living today in light of tomorrow" (Vickers, B. [2010], "What Is a Practical Application of Biblical Eschatology?" [Southern Baptist Journal of Theology vol. 14, 14(1)], 60).

By nature, eschatology is vague and somewhat uncertain because it is dealing with things that are partially (sometimes mostly) veiled in their revelation. This uncertainty seems to generate a significant interest in the study, but it can also pose a danger. Christians can tend to separate the future fulfillment by God from the past and present plan of God. "Too often the teaching of eschatology misses the point for which it was given, devolving into an exercise in imaginative speculation that does not feed the soul" (Miles, T. [2010] "What Ought to Be the Priority in Teaching or Preaching on Eschatology?" [Southern Baptist Journal of Theology vol. 14, 14(1)], 67).

This danger should not prevent Christians from faithfully studying the prophetic texts of Scripture, but it should temper Christians' dogmatism regarding this aspect of theology. A student of eschatology should display a committed boldness concerning those things that are certain while maintaining a sincere humility concerning those things that are uncertain. More than anything else, eschatology should motivate Christians to persevere with the spirit of Titus 2:13: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

It is with this spirit that we present this issue of *FrontLine* magazine. Our intent is that our readers be informed and inspired by what is read. The articles present both the technical and the practical sides of eschatology in order to help connect theology with practice.

The issue begins with two articles to introduce the theme. The first is by Dr. Larry Oats on the importance of eschatology, and the second is by Dr. Steve Love on the Book of Revelation. These are followed by two more technical articles concerning two eschatological texts. Dr. David Saxon discusses Romans 11 in "All Israel Will Be Saved," and Dr. Preston Mayes handles Zechariah 14:12-19, concerning the millennial kingdom. The last two articles by Dr. Bryan Brock and Dr. Andrew Hudson focus on the themes of the Rapture and a Christian's eternal home, inspiring the reader with hope.

People will always pose questions concerning future events, and that is a good thing. These themes generate a special awe and appreciation for the sovereignty of God and a trust in His plan for the future. May each reader yearn ever more intensely for the coming of the Lord. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Mark Herbster



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Thank you so much for this alternative to access *FrontLine* [online] in the COVID-19 Era in which we find ourselves.

*Jeannette Joyner
Kenya, East Africa*

Thank you so much for the opportunity to write an article for the magazine. . . . I thank God for the faithful men of the FBFI and the privilege of being a part of the group.

*Andy Merkle
Hardingville Bible Church
Monroeville, New Jersey*

Iso much enjoy reading all the magazine articles and the local and state fellowship of the FBFI! We are hanging in there during this COVID-19. Thanks for thinking of us!

*Ryan Horkavy
Crossroad Baptist Church of Arizona
Litchfield Park, Arizona*

After more than forty years of serving as a senior pastor in four states **Dr. Rick Arrowood** retired from Crosspointe Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 31, 2020. Upon his retirement Rick was elected to be the president and director of the Slavic Baptist Mission, which was started by the late Evangelist Neil Cadwell. Rick and his wife, Dolly, have two children and seven grandchildren.



On August 13, 2019, **Nathan Mestler** was installed as the fifth president of International Baptist College and Seminary. He is an IBCS graduate, has served as the college pastor for Tri-City Baptist Church, as a classroom teacher, and as the IBCS Dean of Students. Nathan is a sought-after speaker at Christian camps and has a good rapport with pastors and young people across the West. He is also an FBFI chaplain and serves with the 162nd Wing in Tucson, Arizona.



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The Importance of Eschatology

Technology has given rise to a new field of study: futurism. Businesses and governments seek to “tell the future.” Companies want to be ready for what the future holds, even if that future is just months or years away. There is, however, a greater need for knowledge of the future. Each of us has a future—an *eternal* future. And God wants us to know what that future will be.

The vast majority of fundamental Baptists are pretribulational and premillennial in their eschatology. We believe that Jesus will return before the Tribulation (thus *pretribulational*) to rapture living believers and raise the dead in Christ to meet Him in the air; this will be followed by seven years of God pouring His wrath out upon an unbelieving world and bringing the nation of Israel back to Himself. We also believe that Jesus will return to set His feet upon the earth after the Tribulation to establish His Kingdom, a one-thousand-year reign over the entire world (thus *premillennial*). This is the heart of eschatology: the study of things to come.

Not the Least of the Doctrines

In opposition to Eastern cyclical belief, we believe that history is moving purposefully forward toward a divinely ordained goal. In addition, we realize that the totality of theology is ultimately eschatological in orientation: all theology eventually points toward the coming kingdom. Hence the importance of the subject.

The doctrine of eschatology covers more than simply the timing of the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ; it also includes the study of heaven and hell, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Marriage of the Lamb, the Lake of Fire, and the eternal state. The focus of this article is on the Rapture and the Second Coming. For the sake of this article, when we speak of premillennialism, we will include pretribulationism.

If you look at the typical systematic theology book, eschatology is routinely at the very end of the book. This should not be taken to mean that eschatology is the least of the doctrines. Prophecy is a significant part of Scripture. In Genesis 3:15 God pronounced judgment against the serpent, man, woman, and the earth after the Fall. Yet in the midst of these judgments God promised a coming Redeemer, the “seed of a woman.” The Major Prophets and Minor Prophets in the Old Testament are filled with prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming and His still-future Second Coming. Jesus taught His disciples (and thus us as well) to be future-oriented. In Mark 10:29–30 He assures those who may lose property or family members for the sake of the gospel that they will be rewarded in this life and in the age to come. In Matthew 24:44 Jesus encourages us to be ready because the Son of Man is coming at some point in the future. Jesus concluded the Great Commission with the promise that He will be with us until the end of this age (Matt. 28:20). Paul rejoiced that our conversation (our “citizenship”) is future—it is in heaven, not on earth. Finally, John spent the majority of the Book of Revelation dealing with end-times events. Eschatology is important! It is important for a variety of reasons.

Five Reasons

One reason for the importance of premillennialism and pretribulationism is that it is Christocentric. There are some who are preoccupied with looking for signs of Christ’s return; some even try to set the date for His return. They are watching for the wrong thing. We are instead to watch for Christ and

His return. All that we do should center on Christ. On the other hand, postmillennialists believe that Christians will create a world so godly that Christ will return to accept a nearly wholly Christianized kingdom—a task done by man rather than by Christ. Premillennialists believe that it is Christ who will establish His kingdom, not man. He, and He alone, will receive the glory for His kingdom.

Another reason for the importance of premillennialism is that it represents a logical and consistent system of interpretation. Those who reject premillennialism argue for either postmillennialism (Christ will return after Christians establish the kingdom) or amillennialism (the “kingdom” is merely a spiritual reality today in the hearts of believers). These positions are often combined with “replacement” theology, the idea that when Israel rejected its Messiah, God “replaced” Israel with the Church. This means that Old Testament prophecies concerning the future of Israel are actually apply to the Church, usually in some allegorical form. To hold to either postmillennialism or amillennialism requires a person to reject the clear teaching in both the Old and New Testaments of a coming rule of Christ on earth, the Millennium. A conservative amillennialist’s or postmillennialist’s interpretation of the Bible may be in nearly complete agreement with us until it comes to prophecy. And it is especially the case that while that same person may agree with us that the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ’s birth, life, and death were fulfilled literally (Christ was born in Bethlehem, He was born of a virgin, He would suffer, etc.), he will argue that the Old Testament prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled will *not* be fulfilled literally. Some adherents today argue that Old Testament prophecies should be reinterpreted based on the New Testament. The following is from George Ladd, a leader in this reinterpretation of the Bible.

Let us take first a very simple illustration. Matthew 2:15 quotes from Hosea 11:1 to prove from Scripture that Jesus must come from Egypt. This, however, is not what the prophecy means in the Old Testament. Hosea says, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” In Hosea this was not a prophecy at all but a historical affirmation that God had called Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus. However, Matthew recognizes Jesus to be God’s greater son and deliberately turns a historical statement into a prophecy. This is a principle which runs throughout biblical prophecy. *The Old Testament is reinterpreted* in light of the Christ event.¹

Instead of all this, we argue for a *consistent* hermeneutic: if the prophecies for the first coming were fulfilled literally, then the prophecies for the Second Coming will be fulfilled in the same way. We believe that what the Scriptures say, even if they are Old Testament Scriptures, is what the Scriptures mean.

A third reason for the importance of premillennialism and especially pretribulationism is that it protects the doctrine of the Church. Premillennialists argue that when the New Testament speaks of

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Israel, it should be assumed that the writer is talking about the nation of Israel. Those who reject premillennialism frequently consider “Israel” in the New Testament to be a reference to the Church; in other words, the Church is a continuation of the nation Israel, not a new entity. Although Scripture indicates that the Tribulation is the time of “Jacob’s” trouble, they argue that since Israel is the Church, the Church will go through the Tribulation. Premillennialists reject this; we believe that “church” is not simply another word for “Israel.” Promises made to Israel in the Old Testament (possession of all the land promised to Abraham, the Messiah reigning from David’s throne in Jerusalem, etc.) will be fulfilled to Israel, not allegorically to the church. The Tribulation is a time specifically for the nation of Israel. Daniel 9:24 declares, “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy [Daniel’s] people.” Jeremiah 30:7 states that the tribulation will be a time of “Jacob’s trouble.” If the Bible means what it says, then New Testament believers will be raptured before the Tribulation and will be saved from the wrath of God.

A fourth reason for the importance of premillennialism is that it demonstrates the grace and greatness of God. Mankind dreams of a future of peace, prosperity, security, and happiness—just listen to the latest politician’s promises! Premillennialism promises fulfillment of that dream. “Why then should there not be an age where all wars will be stopped, all diseases cured, all the injustices of government rooted out, and a full measure of years added to human life? Why should there not be an age in which all such unrealized and worthwhile dreams of humanity will at last come true on earth? If there be a God in heaven, if the life which He created on the earth is worthwhile, and not something evil per se, then there ought to be in history some worthy consummation of its long and arduous course.”²

A final reason for the importance of premillennialism is that a faithful interpretation of prophecy brings to the believer several benefits. In 1 Thessalonians 4:18 Paul declares that prophecy comforts. After speaking of coming events, he states, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” Prophecy also calms. In 2 Timothy 3:1 Paul states, “This know also,” and then speaks of the difficulties that believers will face. Prophecy converts. In Acts 17:31–32 Paul speaks to the Athenians of the coming judgment; while some mocked, “others said, ‘We will hear thee again of this matter.’” Prophecy cleanses. John, speaking of our glorification, states that “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). Prophecy clarifies.³ The apostles’ confusion concerning the future was evident before the death of the Lord; the resurrection brought clarity to their understanding. Finally, prophecy compels. At the end of Paul’s arguments for the reality of the resurrection, he concludes, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Eschatology is important!

Dr. Larry Oats serves as professor of Systematic Theology at Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin.



¹ George E. Ladd, “Historic Premillennialism,” in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove: IVP, 1977), 20–21, 27.

² Alva McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1968).

³ This writer would like to acknowledge the source of this list, but it was in a set of inherited class notes with no attribution.

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THE REVELATION TO JOHN

Revelation An Open Book

Don't you enjoy a good happily-ever-after story? The hero has persevered against all odds, truth and justice have prevailed, and all conflicts are resolved. Going forward, life can progress in peaceful bliss. At least that's how we would like to imagine it.

There is one "story," though, with an authentic happily-ever-after ending, a story in which the ending is merely the beginning. It is the true and ultimate account with perfect resolution as well as a guaranteed blessing for all who read and heed it—the Book of Revelation. Revelation 1:3 says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." This state of blessedness is the same divine gift mentioned for the meek, the merciful, the pure-hearted, and the peacemakers in Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

Beyond being an account with a rapturous ending and a promised blessing, it opens by declaring it is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1). Imagine the "revelation" of Jesus Christ, or, as Henry Morris says, literally the "'unveiling' or 'taking off the cover'" (*The Revelation Record*, 34). This unveiling of Christ is more complete than anything which was shown throughout His earthly sojourn. During His ministry, many people wondered who He truly was. However, during this coming revelation, there will be no doubt as to His identity. Revelation 5:12–13 attests that this disclosure will be so complete that every creature will hear the adulation: "Worthy is the Lamb . . . that sitteth upon the throne."

There is another way to interpret the phrase "the revelation of Jesus Christ." It could also mean He issued the revelation, as in the revealing of His completed plan. Certainly, both are included in this book. John MacArthur succinctly states, "Far

from *hiding* the truth, the book of Revelation *reveals* it" (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Revelation 1–11*, 14). There is nothing covert, shrouded, or obscured here. This is crystalline truth about Christ and the future; it's an open book.

With these enticing benefits, why, then, does there appear to be a general lack of desire, even a reluctance or avoidance of studying the Book of Revelation? Why do few pastors preach from this wonderful book? It seems the book has been set aside by our present generation of believers.

The Bible Conference Movement

There was a day in America when Bible conferences proliferated. These were formative opportunities to teach in-depth and to strengthen areas of belief that were largely misunderstood. The topic of prophecy or Revelation was a prominent focus and certain to draw crowds. Believers devoted weeks of their vacations to attend.

In an article in the *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* (vol. 15, 2010), Mark Sidwell chronicles the scope of this movement, which sprouted after the Civil War and became instrumental in the development of the fundamentalist movement. Well-known men backed the conferences, men such as W. B. Riley, A. C. Gaebelien, and A. T. Pierson, and Sidwell lists significant conferences from coast to coast.

Though there still are churches now that might organize an occasional conference, the movement is gone, and so also the topic of prophecy is no longer being preached with any prevalence from evangelical pulpits. What has happened? Has Revelation become a neglected book? And if so, why?

A Simple Outline

One common reason is that many people view prophecy as difficult to interpret, yet Revelation is an open book with a

clearly stated simple outline found in 1:19. John was instructed to write three things:

- “The things which thou hast seen.”
- “The things which are.”
- “The things which shall be hereafter.”

It is crucial to understand the significance of this verse. Pastor and Bible teacher Donald Grey Barnhouse states, “The key that will unlock many doors in the Book of Revelation is this nineteenth verse of the first chapter. . . . From one point of view, this is the most important verse in the book, since failure to realize its announcement of three divisions will bring confusion in the interpretation of many of the visions that follow” (*Revelation: An Expository Commentary*, 32).

There are actually two wonderful blessings given within this verse. The first we have already mentioned—the tools with which to interpret the book. These fall into three categories: things seen, things that are, and those that will be. The second is the awesome blessing that God wanted this prophetic data written. Can you imagine navigating the maze of prophecy without a written map? There would be certain chaos.

John Walvoord affirms the importance of this pivotal verse by saying,

The advantage of this outline is that it deals in a natural way with the material rather than seizing on incidentals as some expositors have done or avoiding the outline at all. . . . This outline is the only one which allows the book to speak for itself without artificial manipulation and which lays guidelines of sufficient importance so that expositors who follow this approach have been able to establish a system of interpretation (*The Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary*, 48).

First of all, John recorded things he had seen. Accurately interpreted, John gives a historical account of those things which happened in his lifetime. This would most likely be the era of the apostles. Surely John was an eyewitness to this wonderful pioneer phase, a tipping point in world history in which “the Word became flesh.”

Next, “the things which are” would be the era of current events for John, which he recorded in chapters 2 and 3, in which he details situations in the churches. They were literal churches in actual cities noted in common historical data of the time.

The third directive—write “the things which shall be hereafter”—encompasses events yet future for John and for us. This comprises the majority of the revelation, that segment of prophecy, the unfolding of the unknown, which can be both intriguing while also intimidating.

Is it possible that the present church of Christ is reticent to study or preach prophecy because of misplaced fears? Did you ever listen to a story, and as it developed, you became apprehensive, even frightened, not sure you wanted to hear any more? Then someone assured you, saying, “Don’t worry. It has a happy ending.” For believers who have not studied prophecy enough to have come to terms with what they believe, this third division of Revelation can be frightening. Doubts drive them to ask, “How much of this might I have to face?”

Even in this interpretive quandary, the Holy Spirit gently aids the reader with the words found in Revelation 4:1:

After this [logically, after the events spoken of in chapters 2 and 3] I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

The reader is not left suspended in the land of the unknown. Chapter 4:1 commences the presentation of the “hereafter” events, which John saw when he was transported to heaven by means of a vision. Could this picture the Rapture of the Church? Its language is like that found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17—“We which are alive and remain shall be caught up.”

The Rapture

Indeed, conservative biblical scholars believe that what is pictured in Revelation 4:1 is the Rapture of the church. Thus, the church is not destined to be part of the terrifying events of end times. I quote again from John MacArthur, who says of this verse,

The scene shifts from matters concerning the church (which is nowhere mentioned in chap. 4–19) on earth to a dramatic scene in heaven. That scene centers on the throne of God and forms the prologue to the future historical events (the Tribulation, millennial kingdom, and the eternal state) that unfold in chapters 6–22. In keeping with the Lord’s promise to spare His church from the hour of testing (the outpouring of wrath before the Lord returns) . . . the church will be raptured (145).

If this is not the case, how does a believer look forward to the events of prophecy including the horror of the Tribulation? If the church is not raptured before the Tribulation, then surely 1 Thessalonians 4:18 is a mockery when it says, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” How is one to find comfort looking forward to God’s wrath?

One of the purposes of the Tribulation is judgment, but there is no condemnation for the believer whose sin-debt was covered on the cross. He is the recipient of grace that incorporates atonement, regeneration and adoption. On the cross, Christ declared, “It is finished”—paid in full. If the cross does not cover all of our sins, can some of our sins actually be paid for by means of living through the Tribulation? That would annul grace.

This prophecy of Revelation is the culmination of God’s plan, which blesses the hearts of believers who read it in true stewardship. This prophecy should not generate panic, but should motivate us to purity in our walk with God. Likewise, its glimpses of God’s wrath should stir us to “redeem the time” by proclaiming salvation to all who will hear, “pulling them out of the fire.”

Revelation is more easily understood than we think it to be. Its truths are approachable. Explore it, and when you reach its last chapters, bask in the glory of an assured heavenly eternity. We can indeed accept Paul’s admonition when he tells his readers, “Comfort one another with these words.” For the believer, the Book of Revelation should not be the burden of a fear factor, but the blessing of a faith factor.

Dr. Steve Love has pastored for over forty years and is currently an associate professor in the Missions Department at Maranatha Baptist University.





All Israel Will Be Saved

Is God through with the nation of Israel? Or is God now saving a remnant of Jews and adding them to the Church throughout this dispensation (His sole remaining purpose for Israel)? Or does God plan to bring revival to the Jews, save a great number of them, and incorporate them into the church before Christ returns? Or does God plan to bring revival to the Jewish people, save the great majority of them, and then reconstitute them as a nation under the rule of Jesus Christ at His return? These are four different views Bible believers have on God's continuing and future plans for Israel. Romans 11 is the key passage for determining which view is correct.

Romans 11 is a challenging chapter, and good and godly expositors have differed about many aspects of its meaning throughout church history.¹ There is general agreement that chapter 11 completes a section that begins in chapter 9 and has as its primary purpose to defend the faithfulness and trustworthiness of God. Relative to the chapter's purpose and structure, Doug Moo makes a compelling case that the chapter continues arguments Paul uses to prove that God is trustworthy and will not fail to keep the Old Testament promises He made to the Jewish people. That is, God will not cast off the people whom He foreknew (11:2), so that His word or promise will not fail (9:6a).²

Are verses 1–32 entirely about the salvation of the remnant, or is there a key division at verse 11? Moo argues that verses 1–10 defend God's faithfulness by affirming that God has not fully or entirely rejected Israel, and verses 11–32 defend it by affirming that God has not finally or permanently rejected Israel. The significance of this exegetical decision is that the former view sees Paul as arguing that God is gradually saving a remnant of Jews, alongside Gentiles, throughout the Church Age. In the end, the salvation of both Gentiles and the remnant of Jews will result in all "Israel" being saved, where "Israel" designates the new people of God, both Jew and Gentile. Moo's view, by contrast, sees a different purpose for verses 11–32. Not only is God saving a remnant throughout this dispensation (vv. 1–10), but He also plans to bring Israel as a people back to Himself at the end of history. Because Moo is not a dispensationalist, he teaches that this Jewish revival will entail a massive influx of Jewish believers into the church right before Christ returns to establish His kingdom.

Paul's logic in verses 11–32 strongly supports Moo's contention that there will be a universal turning to Christ among the Jews at the end of the age. Specifically, Paul lays out a sequence of events that characterizes this dispensation:

1. The Jewish nation has rejected God, and God has rejected them. Paul describes their having "stumbled" (11a), their "fall" (11b, 12a, a different word from that translated "fall" in 11a), their "diminishing" (12b), their "casting away" (15), their being "broken off" (17, 19, 20), and their partial "blindness" (25).
2. As a result of Jewish rejection, Gentiles are now believing, and God is now focusing His saving work on them. Each time Jewish rejection is mentioned, there is a corresponding reference to Gentile acceptance. "Salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (11); the "riches of the world" and "the riches of the Gentiles" (12); "the reconciling of the world" (15); Gentiles "[grafted] in" (17, 19) and "[standing] by

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faith" (20), and "the fulness of Gentiles" coming in (25).

3. The result of Gentiles coming to faith in Israel's Messiah is that the Jews will be "[provoked] to jealousy" (11). The Jews will be received (15) and grafted in again (23, 24) as a result of Gentile salvation. "Through your [Gentile] mercy they [Israel] also may obtain mercy" (31).
4. The result of the final Jewish restoration will be even greater than the benefits accruing from their rejection (12). It will entail "life from the dead" (15), an expression that suggests the eschatological resurrection.

The logic behind Paul's sequence thoroughly explodes the old idea that the church has *replaced* Israel as the new people of God and the idea that God is finished with the Israelites as a literal nation/ethnic group. Similarly deadly to replacement theology is Paul's burden for his "kinsmen according to the flesh" (9:3; cf. 11:1), which underlies the purpose of the entire section. Obviously, ethnic Jews are on Paul's heart, and God's promises to them are on Paul's mind.

Further, if the reader understands Paul's prophetic sequence as expressed above, such an understanding also denies the remnant view proposed by those who see no break at verse 11 and see no major revival for Jews in the future. The remnant view proposes that Jews are being saved and added to the church just as every other ethnicity is, and the OT promises of God to the Jews mark them out in no way as special recipients of divine attention. This is, to say the least, not a natural way to read the sequence. It is hard to see how the Jews have been cut off, the Gentiles grafted in, and the Jews someday are to be grafted in again, if God's plan for Jews entering the church and for Gentiles entering the church is precisely the same for the remainder of this dispensation. Paul seems to have spent considerable energy saying very little. Furthermore, it requires the reader to discern that the "Israel" being saved in verse 26a is different from the "Israel" being blinded in verse 25 and from the "Jacob" being delivered in 26b–27. Finally, verse 28 indicates the Israel of whom Paul is speaking throughout the chapter are "enemies" for the sake of church-age believers at present, but at the same time they are "beloved" because of the promises God made to the patriarchs. How the remnant who are being saved throughout the dispensation can be enemies and beloved simultaneously is unclear. However, if Paul is speaking of national Israel, his logic comes into focus.

Therefore, a final distinction needs to be made. Paul is not only saying that a large number of Jews will turn to Christ

in the end times. Of course he is saying that, but he is saying more. God, throughout the Old Testament, does not merely promise to save his people Israel in the last days. He promises to restore His people, to give them a specific plot of land, to establish His anointed one as king over them, and to give them hearts that will finally turn permanently to Him as their God. Paul alludes to this entire body of prophecy when he invokes the New Covenant in 11:27. Furthermore, Paul roots his argument throughout chapters 9–11 in God’s covenantal obligations to Israel.

1. The privileges granted Israel relate to her status as the chosen people of God: her adoption as God’s children, the Shekinah glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service, the promises, the patriarchs, and the Messiah (9:4–5).
2. The election of Jacob entailed the election of Israel in contrast to the rejection of Esau and Edom (9:13, quoting Mal. 1:2). While the argument of 9:6–29 has important personal implications, it is also about God’s choice of Israel as a nation.
3. Paul further deals with Israel nationally as he explains that she received the gospel message and has no excuse for her rejection of it (10:14–21). This rejection, of course, involves numerous individuals turning away from Christ. Nevertheless, the prophecies Paul cites to explain this rejection are Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1–2, both of which occur in distinctly national contexts.
4. If one reads it in the way suggested above, the remnant teaching in 11:1–10 also points to a bigger plan, involving more than the remnant. Paul’s words “at this present time also there is a remnant” (11:5) coupled with the promise that the partial blindness that has happened to Israel will one day be lifted (11:24) strongly suggest that Paul has God’s plans for the nation in mind.
5. Finally, whom does Paul describe as simultaneously enemies because of the church and beloved because of the patriarchs (28)? By referring to the patriarchs, Paul directs his readers’ attention to the national covenant that underlay Israel’s existence as a nation: the Abrahamic Covenant. Because God made a covenant with Abraham to build a great nation out of his descendants, God still loves Israel, although at present they are largely rejecting their Messiah, are enemies of Messiah’s body the church, and, therefore, are ultimately enemies of the very God they claim to worship. Interpreting verse 28 in terms of national Israel also makes the most sense of verse 29, which speaks of the gifts and calling of God being irrevocable. His gifts are the blessings of Israel listed in 9:4–5, and His calling is His choice of Israel as His people; He has not changed His mind! The whole point of chapters 9–11 is that God *cannot* change His mind about Israel and remain trustworthy.

Finally, what about 9:6? Does this verse undermine my main point here? “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (9:6b). The first thing to note is that Paul is speaking in this verse only of ethnic Israelites. Paul acknowledges that not all ethnic Israelites are truly saved Israelites. Does this verse mean, though, that God is not interested in Israel as an ethnicity, that He is only interested in the real Israel, the remnant of Jews who believe?

On the contrary, the statement in 9:6b should be viewed as one bookend of the argument with 11:26a as the other bookend. Within national Israel, Paul says, there is currently a spiritual, genuine Israel—the remnant. But one day, all Israel will be saved. One day, in other words, *all Israel will be of Israel*. That is the climax of Paul’s argument and will be the climax of salvation history as it regards Israel.

To see *how* God will bring revival and restoration to His chosen people, the nation of Israel, one would have to spend considerable time in the prophets, in the Olivet Discourse, and in the Book of Revelation. But Paul’s meaning in Romans 11 is best understood as promising the following:

1. Not only has God not replaced Israel with the Church;
2. Not only is God saving a remnant of Israelites throughout this dispensation (who are added to the church, where there is “neither Jew nor Gentile”);
3. Not only is God going to bring revival in the last days so that a large number of Jews will turn to the Lord; but
4. God will fulfill all His covenant obligations to Israel. Beginning with the promises to Abraham and including promises throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh will turn the hearts of His people to Himself in the last days so that they will experience Ezekiel 37 and rise up as His chosen nation once again, embrace their Messiah, and inherit the Davidic kingdom. All Israel will be saved!

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¹ See Jared Compton and Andrew David Naselli, eds., *Three Views on Israel and the Church: Perspectives on Romans 9–11* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2019). Benjamin Merkle defends the second view listed above, Fred Zaspel and Jim Hamilton argue for the third, and Michael Vlach advances the view supported in this article. Although this author believes Merkle’s view is a form of replacement theology, all three authors deny that the church replaces Israel, which is welcome language.

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 554. Moo lists four arguments for God’s trustworthiness: (1) “Salvation is never a birthright . . . but always a gift of God’s electing love” (9:6–29); (2) God is rejecting Jews because of their unbelief (9:30–10:21); (3) Israel’s rejection is not total (11:1–10); and (4) Israel’s rejection is not final (11:11–32).

A Real Kingdom or a Figure

The Millennial Kingdom in Zechariah 14:12–19

Old Testament predictions of a messianic kingdom are familiar to most students of Scripture. According to these prophecies, the Messiah (Christ) will return at the end of the Church Age to set up an earthly kingdom lasting one thousand years. The kingdom is centered in Israel, but people of all nations will enjoy agricultural prosperity, a just rule by Christ, and lasting peace during the time when “the wolf . . . shall dwell with the lamb” (Isa. 11:6). The end of this period will come when, after a brief and spectacularly unsuccessful rebellion, the Lord destroys the old creation and replaces it with the New Heaven and New Earth.

This understanding of Old Testament kingdom prophecy, commonly referred to as premillennialism, seems at face value to be a clear description of an actual kingdom. But not all have agreed. Another approach to predictions of a coming kingdom interprets the descriptions of the millennial life as figures of speech. Figurative language ascribes the characteristics of one object to another as a picturesque way of making a statement. Take, for example, the statement “John is thin.” This statement is an abstract and literal description of a man’s build. But using a figure of speech called a simile (a comparison using the terms “like” or “as”), we might say “John is like a string bean.” And sometimes the comparative word is omitted altogether, and the speaker simply states, “John is a string bean” (a figure of speech known as a metaphor). Knowing something about John and beans causes us to think, because boys and beans have little in common. But we know both may be thin, so we conclude the speaker is saying, in a picturesque and humorous way, that John is skinny.

Of course, the Bible contains many figurative expressions which must be interpreted as something other than a description of something in the real world. None would argue that David’s statement that his “soul thirst[ed] for God” (Ps. 42:2) or Job’s lament that his losses were like “sorrowful meat” (Job 6:7) should be taken literally. They

simply use the image of extreme thirst and repulsive food to represent the experiences of the speaker. But neither would one argue that such statements are always figures of speech, since the Old Testament speaks of literal water and literal food on many occasions. So, when encountering descriptive language, the interpreter should ask, “Is the text metaphorically comparing two objects or just describing something?”

Though premillennialism interprets the millennial predictions as a description, many take the descriptions of a millennial kingdom and turn them into a metaphor for something else. This alternate understanding (known as amillennialism) concludes that the descriptions of the messianic kingdom are word pictures referring to the blessings provided by Christ during the Church Age, the New Heaven and New Earth, or both. These poetic metaphors provide

a glimpse of heaven in symbols that fall far short of reality. . . . It is as though we are observing a stained glass window depicting a person or event. The images of colored glass represent objective reality, and while they pulsate with brilliant light, they *forever remain symbols*.*

Both amillennial and premillennial interpreters recognize that the Old Testament uses figurative language. So the question is this: how should kingdom predictions be interpreted? Are the descriptions of actual events or metaphors for something else?

Though Zechariah 14:12–19 may not be a familiar text, it makes a significant contribution to the overall understanding of millennial prophecies. The events described in this text seem ill-suited to metaphorically describe either the Church Age or the eternal state. But they are exactly what we would expect if the Messiah does one day reign politically over a kingdom belonging to this world before the New Heaven and New Earth.



of Speech?

What Does Zechariah 14 Predict?

Zechariah 14:12–19 discusses the way the Messiah will deal with the nations while establishing and governing His kingdom. Verses 12–15 outline the fate of those who make war against Jerusalem during the tribulation. Some will meet with a rapid and grotesque death as the Lord sends a plague to rot away their flesh. (Even their animals are so destroyed.) Others will massacre each other during the final battle at Jerusalem as a result of divinely orchestrated confusion.

The second section—verses 16–19—addresses the Lord’s dealings with those who survive the battle and enter the kingdom because they acknowledged the Messiah. These remaining people (and the children born to them) will journey to Jerusalem each year to worship the messianic king and keep the Feast of Booths. Those who do not go will fall under a plague of drought. Even Egypt, which presently has little rain and receives its water from the Nile River, will be subject to this plague, which is why it was singled out.

The “Mixed Kingdom” in Zechariah 14

Zechariah 14 indicates that the kingdom will be of this earth by portraying it as a kingdom consisting of people (whether believers or unbelievers) who can sin and are therefore subject to possible chastening as the Messiah works to secure their repentance. It leads the reader to this conclusion by describing the establishment of the messianic kingdom in Zechariah in terms similar to those used to narrate the Exodus from Egypt. The comparison leads us to expect a wonderful kingdom, but one which is nonetheless incompletely purged of rebellion.

Zechariah 14:12 predicts that the Lord will strike the nations warring against Jerusalem with a plague using the exact terms employed in Exodus 8:2; 9:14; 12:23, 27. Many of the plagues of Egypt were also directed toward animals,

which is likewise a characteristic of the battle in Zechariah 14:15. As the Israelites were given gifts by the Egyptians when they departed for Mt. Sinai, so the wealth of the nations will flow to Jerusalem once Messiah establishes His kingdom. Zechariah 14 indicates that many people besides Israelites will follow the Lord just as they did during the Exodus when a “mixed multitude” (i.e., people of different races) left Egypt.

The plagues in Egypt had systematically demonstrated the control of the Lord over every realm of nature and over Pharaoh himself. They also marked the beginning of the process of establishing Israel as a nation ruled directly by the Lord. The battle in Zechariah 14 has the same function. The Lord will demonstrate His sovereignty over every realm of nature (largely through Tribulation plagues) and over all the nations, not just Egypt. Christ will use the events to establish His kingdom, and many unbelievers (Jews and Gentiles alike) will be convinced to follow the Messiah during the Tribulation.

Zechariah 14:16–19 also associates the Lord’s victory over the nations with His previous victory over Pharaoh by reinstituting the Feast of Booths. This feast, celebrated at the end of the harvest season (Exod. 23:16; Lev. 23:39), taught future generations about God’s liberation of Israel from Egypt (Lev. 23:43). So the Lord will reinstitute this celebration of His deliverance of the nation, though in the kingdom it will include all the surviving nations of the world. Those who do not attend will have rain withheld.

The comparison between the Lord’s victories in Zechariah 14 and the Exodus indicates that the citizens in this kingdom may not always respond obediently to their new King. They will be believers, but they will also need growth. In addition, these people will have children, some of whom will truly embrace the messianic king and some of whom will offer

Continued on page 29

Towards a Distinctly Biblical Understanding of the Pretribulational Rapture

Are you ready for the Rapture? Does this question sound antiquated or passé to you? Antiquated, because Rapture-readiness was much more in the forefront a few decades ago? Passé, because you now realize that much of the evangelical world views the pretribulational Rapture with the same legitimacy as the Oscar committee viewed Kirk Cameron's portrayal of Buck Williams in the *Left Behind* movies?

Each semester I have the privilege of teaching a unit on eschatology, and with each class I take an informal poll: How many believe in the pretrib Rapture and how often have you heard preaching on it? You can probably guess the results. From a predominantly conservative Baptist or Bible church background, most of the students believe the pretrib Rapture, but most of them have not heard much—or any—preaching on it.

Why has Rapture preaching and teaching diminished in recent decades? I would suggest two primary reasons, both of which I will attempt to address in this brief treatment. First, eschatology is a complex and epic doctrine. It requires an understanding of God's progressive revelation, from Old Testament prophets through New Testament epistles, where Paul's teaching is a newly revealed "mystery" (1 Cor. 15:51; 2 Thess. 2:7).

Pastors and Bible professors alike struggle to sufficiently comprehend and adequately condense the vast and difficult biblical data on the topic. The second reason is because non-pretrib Rapture adherents seem so dismissive. My intention is not to use the word "dismissive" derogatively, but rather to reflect that much of what we hear as non-pretrib arguments are more rhetorical than exegetical.

Exegetical, Not Merely Rhetorical

Allow me first to deal with the rhetorical case against the pretrib Rapture. In 2009 Baker Academic published a book aptly titled *A Case for Historic Premillennialism*, in which various authors articulated their position that the millennial reign of Christ is a future, literal kingdom but that the Church will also go through the Tribulation.¹

This view is essentially posttribulational. Although their stated goal is to present an alternative to both amillennialism and dispensational premillennialism, they primarily focus on the latter, mainly arguing against the pretribulation Rapture. I will address four common arguments this book articulates:

1. The pretrib Rapture is the product of pop-culture Christianity. This charge is commonly leveled by connecting the pretrib position with a

sensational prophetic TV program or book, such as Hal Lindsey's *The Late, Great Planet Earth*. In fact, the editors of *A Case for Historic Premillennialism* make this guilt-by-association tactic plain by using it in their subtitle—*An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology*. My response is that the proper question is not whether it is popular but whether it is true.

2. The pretrib Rapture is new/novel. Craig Blomberg, an author in the book makes this point. After giving a brief but dismissive nod to historical research that identifies pretribulational interpretations as early as the second century,² he traces a simplistic history from J. Nelson Darby (1830) to C. I. Scofield to Lewis Sperry Chafer to Hal Lindsey and finally to Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.³ The problem with this reasoning is that it may not be historically accurate. Furthermore, if apparent newness were used consistently as a test of doctrine, Christianity's historical development would be greatly undermined. Would the truths clarified and codified at various early church councils become invalid if not similarly articulated in earlier centuries? Should the doctrine of believer's baptism be dismissed because of the organized church's long-standing adherence to the sacrament of infant baptism? Again, our main concern is not whether the Rapture has always been believed, but rather, is it biblical?
3. The pretrib Rapture is escapist. Blomberg writes, "I actually think the doctrine of the tribulation is more important than the doctrine of the millennium. What might happen if millions of Christians in the twenty-first century count on pretribulationalism being true, only to have to live through this awful period?"⁴ I have personally heard this line of reasoning a number of times. My response is twofold. First, I don't know anyone who has chosen their tribulation position based upon what will benefit them the most. Doctrine doesn't work that way. God doesn't bend His truth to our desires. Truth is truth regardless of how we feel about it. And secondly, every believer should be ready to face any degree of tribulation with faithfulness unto death. No one has yet convinced me that a posttribulationist is better equipped to handle the direst of persecution and trial than the pretribulationist.
4. The final argument is that the pretrib Rapture comes from shallow proof-texting. Timothy P. Weber brings this charge in his chapter by quoting Lewis Sperry Chafer, a prominent dispensationalist theologian, who described his nonprescriptive theological training as a reason that he was able to approach eschatology with "an unprejudiced mind . . . concerned only with what the Bible actually teaches." Weber replies, "Such a populist statement plays well among common folks but not among academic elites."⁵ Weber leaves no doubt as to his perception of the

Our amillennial or postmillennial brothers reject a literal future Rapture, Tribulation, and Millennium.

lack of scholarship behind pretribulational eschatology. In contrast to most dispensationalist writing, he clarifies, "Most writing on historical premillennialism is not intended for the masses; most of it is written by scholars for scholars."⁶ While this argument seems condescending, I actually appreciate it for one reason. It puts the Rapture discussion in its proper arena—biblical exegesis. The only question that really matters on the timing of the Rapture is, what does the Bible say? Is pretribulationalism shallow eisegesis or simple yet sound biblical exegesis? I advocate for the latter.

A Daunting Doctrine

And that brings us to the final reason for the diminished place of the Rapture in our hearts and minds—the fact that eschatology is a daunting doctrine. My goal in this section is to be briefly exegetical. I believe that two of the best arguments for the pretribulational Rapture are its promised imminency and the necessity of populating the Millennium with nonglorified believers, but because of space constraints I will not be able to be comprehensive on the topic. Instead I will attempt to make two simple and helpful biblical arguments towards the veracity of the pretrib view of the Rapture. The Rapture is biblical, and the Second Coming is a two-stage event.

Let me assure you the Rapture is a biblical concept. Our amillennial or postmillennial brothers reject a literal future Rapture, Tribulation, and Millennium,⁷ reasoning that the Rapture isn't even in the Bible. This, however, is demonstrably false. The term Rapture is simply the Latin form (*rapiō*)⁸ of the Greek word *harpazō* which means "to grab or seize suddenly so as to remove."⁹ This is the term that is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 when the church is promised that "we which are alive and remain shall be *caught up* together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." This same word for being raptured/caught up is used in Acts 8:39 when "the Spirit of the Lord *caught away* Philip," in 2 Corinthians 12:2 when Paul was "*caught up* to the third heaven," and in Revelation 12:5 when Christ "*was caught up* unto God" at his ascension. Rapture is the biblical truth that the church will be caught up to meet Christ in the air.

But when will this happen? Today all stripes of true Christians expect Christ to return, but is this return a singular or multipart event? Old Testament Jews expected their Messiah to come once (because the mystery of the Church Age had not yet been revealed, Col. 1:25–27), and yet today we understand that there is a first coming (the cross) and a second coming (the crown). Likewise, some believers today fail to understand that the NT reveals another mystery (1 Cor. 15:51; 2 Thess. 2:7), that Jesus' Second Coming actually has two parts: the Rapture and the Revelation—or alternately as the Rapture and Second Coming. Each of the non-pretrib groups we've examined thus far see the *catching up* of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 as essentially synonymous with the Second Coming of Christ. And while there are various

biblical arguments for the pretribulational Rapture, of central significance is the distinguishing of these two events. If the Rapture is distinct from Christ's Second Coming, then the pretribulation position is upheld, but if they are one event, pretribulationism cannot be correct.

Four primary texts that describe the Rapture are 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (The church will *be caught up* to Christ); 1 Corinthians 15:51–54 (The church will *all be changed, in a moment*); John 14:1–3 (Jesus *will come again, and receive the church unto Himself*); and 2 Thessalonians 2:1 (Jesus will gather the church *together unto him*). Those that see these texts as representing the Second Coming (i.e., Revelation) can be disproven by showing discontinuity between these and clear Second Coming texts. The following are some primary, clarifying differences:

1. At the Rapture, the church will be caught up with Christ in the air (1 Thess. 4:17) and taken to the Father's house (John 14:2–3), whereas at the Second Coming we will accompany Christ as He returns to stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4; Rev. 19:11–21).
2. At the Rapture, the church is taken and unbelievers are left (1 Thess. 4:13–18), whereas at the Second Coming unbelievers are taken to judgment and believers are left (Matt. 13:28–30; cf. Jude 14–15; Rev. 19:11–21; Zech. 14:3–4).
3. The Rapture happens in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:52), a nearly imperceptible eye movement as an idiom for an extremely short duration of time—"quickly, suddenly."¹⁰ With the Second Coming, however, Christ will return slowly and obviously enough for every eye to behold and every heart to mourn (Zech. 12:10; Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7).
4. At the Rapture a resurrection takes place which must precede the giving of white robes (1 Thess. 4:13–18; 1 Cor. 15:51–54; Rev. 19:7–8), whereas at the Second Coming the church has already been resurrected and is already clothed in white robes (Rev. 19:11–21).
5. The Rapture must come before the man of sin (i.e., the Antichrist) is revealed (2 Thess. 2:1–4), but the Second Coming is after the revealing of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:8). In this passage the word "coming" is used twice of Jesus and perfectly fits with our understanding of the two-part Second Coming. At the first part (the Rapture—v. 1) Jesus comes and gathers the church to Himself so that they will not be present for the day-of-the-Lord events. These events include the falling away (global apostasy), the revealing of the Antichrist, and the removal of God's restraint of sin on the earth (vv. 2–3, 7). The second part of the Second Coming (the Revelation—v. 8) will be the end of the Antichrist's reign as Christ destroys him "with the brightness of his coming" at the end of the Tribulation (v. 8).

In conclusion, we must note that although the proper arena for this discussion is biblical exegesis, not all parties interpret Scripture the same way. Amillennialists and postmillennialists use a nonliteral, spiritualized hermeneutic; likewise, post-tribulationists also use a somewhat spiritualized approach

that blurs the clear distinction between national Israel and the Church.¹¹ Conversely, the premillennial, pretribulational position flows from a normal-literal method of Bible interpretation. According to this method, I find the Rapture (the catching up) to be biblical, and I find manifest, clear biblical evidence that there are indeed two aspects of Christ's Second Coming—the Rapture at the beginning of the Tribulation and the Revelation at the end of the Tribulation.

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¹ Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung, eds., *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

² See James F. Stitzinger, "The Rapture in Twenty Centuries of Biblical Interpretation," *Master's Seminary Journal* 13 (2002): 149–71.

³ Craig L. Blomberg, "The Posttribulationism of the New Testament," in *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 62–63.

⁴ Blomberg, 69–70.

⁵ Timothy P. Weber, "Dispensational and Historic Premillennialism as Popular Millennialist Movements," in *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 21.

⁶ Ibid, 20.

⁷ Amillennialists believe that the church is today living in a spiritual kingdom with no future for ethnic Israel and nothing in our future except the Second Coming of Christ and a quick transition to heaven. Postmillennialists believe similarly, except that the kingdom will be literally apprehended by the church in this age through fulfilment of its spiritual and physical mission of liberation.

⁸ *Rapio*, to seize, Acts 6:12; 19:29; to snatch away, Acts 8:39; 1 Thess. 4:17, from J. M. Harden, *Dictionary of the Vulgate New Testament* (London; New York: Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge; The Macmillan Co., 1921), 99.

⁹ William Arndt, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 134.

¹⁰ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 211, 643.

¹¹ By blurring the clear distinction between Israel and the church, I am not suggesting complete replacement. Some posttribulationists view the Tribulation as a time of Israelite revival as Jews are saved and added to the church. This, however, diminishes the impact of the promises to Israel as a national entity (Don J. Payne, "The Theological Method of Premillennialism," in *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009], 93). Payne admits this interpretive tension: "Having chosen a basic posture of literal interpretation yet recognizing that in some spiritual sense the church does fulfill the role of Old Testament Israel, historic premillennialists live with tension and are criticized by both dispensationalists and amillennialists for their apparently selective approach" (97).

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Ye have heard of the patience of Job (James 5:11). But have you heard of the patience of Joseph Caryl? With the exception of the Book of Job's anonymous author, Caryl may have been its foremost authority ever. He ought to have been. His series on the book, ending in 1666, spanned a stretch of over twenty-four years!

Whether Caryl or his listeners exercised the most patience is debatable. The 424 messages evidently drew hearers, however, for in the final years of the series his church so much increased, that at his death he left 136 communicants (a large attendance in days of persecution). Surprisingly, even reading the sermons has not proven necessarily exhausting. Under his signature, C. H. Spurgeon wrote on the flyleaf of the third volume from his own set, *Caryl is not a line too long for me*. And in his *Commenting and Commentaries* Spurgeon testified, *He gives us much, but none too much*.

Unfortunately, Joseph Caryl's series is seldom sampled today due to its size and exceeding rarity. I heard once of a twelve-volume set available from a London bookseller for about \$3000, but being at that time notably short of \$3000, I regretfully left the good man with both his books and his price.

Were I a wealthy man, however, I might underwrite some publisher's putting Caryl back in print. Few could read it all, of course, but many earnest men might profitably consult its unique help on almost any conceivable biblical theme for, as Spurgeon noted, *in the course of his expounding he has illustrated a very large portion of the whole Bible with great clearness and power*. The twelve

volumes could be comfortably reset (not abridged, please!) into five or six, and, provided that the topical indexes with which Caryl concluded each volume were carefully collated, his rich remarks on any subject would be affordably and handily accessible.

But one of my chief interests would be to provide the people of God with what Spurgeon again called a *deeply devotional and spiritual* interpretation of both their personal and national trials from one who spoke about such things out of profound experience for over twenty years. Consider that Joseph Caryl was eyewitness to a civil war sparked by the arrogance of a tyrannical king. He was also one of the distinguished divines chosen for the Westminster Assembly that produced the Westminster Catechisms. Following Charles I's execution for high treason against the nation, Caryl played an influential part in Oliver Cromwell's Commonwealth. (He and John Owen were Oliver Cromwell's personal choices for chaplains to accompany him during his campaign to subdue the Scots.) Finally, following Cromwell's death and the nation's vehement reaction against the Commonwealth's righteous policies, Caryl was ejected from his ministry (along with two thousand other English pastors) for refusing to sign the Act of Uniformity.

Joseph Caryl's twenty-four years in Job, then, was not due to the imbalance of a man obsessed with a quirk. It was the result of a tumultuous life of a shepherd of souls who felt deeply his responsibility to lead his people through troubled times. Job was truly a fitting guide, not for a day nor for a single trial, but for a lifetime of tribulation.

Through the kind courtesy of William Jewell College, it was my privilege to spend several days in the Spurgeon Collection housed there in the Charles F. Curry Library. Among the over six thousand volumes in that collection is Spurgeon's twelve-volume set of Caryl's patient preaching through Job. Perhaps the story

"The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits"
(2 Tim. 2:6)

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behind it is for such a time as this. I want to tell it, as much as possible, in Caryl's own words.

Why Job?

Born into London gentility in 1602 and *reared with manners polished by good breeding*, Joseph Caryl began his ministry near Exeter at age twenty-five. He aligned himself with the Puritan party within the Church of England. Over a long lifetime of ministry he attained such stature among nonconformists that in the summer after his death the church chose the famous theologian and Oxford educator John Owen for its next pastor.

The times to which Caryl was referring were not unlike our own. The Church of England, like modern evangelicalism, was notoriously worldly. *Our provocations have been many, and our backslidings have been multiplied*, he lamented. At the same time, seventeenth-century Englishmen, like twenty-first-century Americans, writhed under unjust civil government which turned a blind eye to rulers living arrogantly above the law.

When Caryl began his sermons on Job in 1642, the English Civil War was beginning. He was, at the time, *Preacher to the Honorable Society of Lincolnes-Inne* and felt heavily his responsibility to encourage a people wracked daily with calamity. Meditating on the three conditions of Job—his prosperity, troubles, and restoration—Caryl saw a striking parallel to his nation's history. *The Book of Job*, he wrote in the preface to his first volume, *bears the image of these times, and presents us with a resemblance of the past, present, and (much hoped for) future condition of this nation. . . . We are the greatest, and lately were the most flourishing nation of all the nations. . . . But we (herein unlike to Job) have ill-requited the Lord. . . . And God in justice, hath put a sword into the hands of unjust men, men skillful to destroy. . . . Yet there is hope . . . concerning this thing, yea I believe there is mercy in and from all these evils.*

This Book, he proceeded to point out, *was purposely written that we through patience and comfort of this Scripture might have hope. And then in conclusion he testified, Nor do I doubt, but that the Providence of God (without which a sparrow falls not to the ground) directed my thoughts to this Book, as (not only profitable for all times, but) specially seasonable for these times.*

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he lamented. At the same time, seventeenth-century Englishmen, like twenty-first-century Americans, writhed under unjust civil government which turned a blind eye to rulers living arrogantly above the law. Caryl interpreted this to be the Lord's chastening: *Our sins have put a sword into the hand of God, and God in justice, hath put a sword into the hands of unjust men, men skillful to destroy.*

What's the Point?

Although drawing this parallel between Job and England's history, Caryl studiously avoided "spiritualizing" Job's experiences in order to force national applications. In fact, what he desired was something far more pastoral.

Caryl's congregation resembled conservative assemblies today in that its membership consisted largely of men and women dedicated to scripturally purifying every aspect of English life. Such people were called Puritans. But even such circumspect people are never entirely untouched when God chastens an entire society at once. So Caryl was burdened that his suffering people not react bitterly by murmuring against or charging the Lord foolishly.

The concerned pastor chose James 5:10–11 as his theme verses for the series: *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job. It was Caryl's prayer that this emphasis would be a help to our patience, in bearing these afflictions upon the land, a help to our faith in believing, and to our hope in waiting for the salvation of the Lord. As he explained, The main and principle subject of the Book is contained in one verse of the 34th Psalm, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all."*

Rightly Dividing the Word of God

Those not well acquainted with Puritan preaching may assume that it sacrificed exegetical accuracy for the sake of practical application. This was certainly not true of Caryl's preaching. His work is marked by a thoroughly literal, historical-grammatical exegesis of the text. For instance, though many before him interpreted Job as an extended parable, he held that the book recorded actual history because of its use of proper names for people and places. And Caryl excelled when it came to using the biblical languages. In fact, he actually contributed to an English-Greek lexicon. In the Hebrew text he appears equally at home, as evidenced by his frequent, insightful explanations of its words and grammar.

This historical-grammatical exegesis restrained dogmatizing upon uncertain points. For instance, after a thorough investigation into Job's authorship, he wrote *It is very uncertain who was the writer of this Book . . . and whatsoever can be said concerning it, is grounded but upon very light conjecture. And therefore, where the Scripture is silent, it can be of no great use for us to speak, especially seeing there is so much spoken as will find us work, and be of*

use for us. One wishes today's expositors would practice such caution when they encounter matters on which Scripture is silent.

Another instructive example is his handling of the notoriously difficult question of the identity of Leviathan. After over four pages of discussing learned opinions he cautiously postured himself with those who held the mysterious creature to be a whale. The example is in his rigid refusal to doubt the scientific accuracy of the account merely because he could not explain it. My heart leaps to his unshakable confidence in God's Word. The only thing *questionable*, he wrote, is *what that creature is*. But it is an *unquestionable truth*, he asserted, *and to be received, and to be as the matter of an historical faith, because God hath said it, that there is a living creature in the compass of nature, exactly answering every particular in the following description of Leviathan.*

Exemplary as his exegesis is, Caryl's greatest pattern for preachers is in his insistence that those who handle the Word must be Spirit-instructed. An especially valuable section of some twenty pages can only be briefly encapsulated in a few statements here. He speaks of Job's words about *an interpreter sent from God (33:23)* and solemnly issues the caution that so unfortunately seems to be learned only from bitter experience: *Natural parts and human learning, arts and languages may give us an understanding of the tenor and literal meaning of the law of God; but none of these can open our eyes to behold the wonders of the Law, much less the wonders and mysteries of the Gospel. The opening of our eyes to behold these spiritual wonders is the Lord's work.* And then, dividing asunder the joints and marrow of Bible teachers, he thrusts to the heart of the issue: *'Tis possible for one to have learning in divine things, and not to be divinely taught. Selah.*

Beyond this, Caryl's most pressing burden was that his people not be content to merely hear his expositions. *I had rather know five words of Scripture by my own practice and experience than ten thousand words of Scripture, yea than the whole Scripture, by the bare exposition of another. . . . And therefore let the words of Christ by these verbal explications, dwell richly in your understandings in all wisdom.* He further exhorted, *Add the comment of works to this comment of words and an exposition by your lives to this exposition by our labours. Surely if you do not, these exercises will be costly indeed, and will come to a deep account against you before the Lord.*

The Sufferings of Saints

By Caryl's analysis, the Book of Job consists of a dialogue between eight speakers making thirty-two speeches (God speaking four times, Satan twice, Job's wife once, Job thirteen times, Eliphaz three, Bildad three, Zophar twice, and Elihu four times). They are made during three periods in Job's life; the time of his happy condition (externally and internally), then during his calamity, and lastly, during his restitution.

Most importantly, the speeches pose and debate two deeply troubling questions. The first Caryl raised in his church by asking *whether it doth consist with the*

Justice and goodness of God to afflict a righteous and sincere person, to strip him naked, to take away all his outward comforts . . . and that it should go well with those that are evil? This issue Caryl viewed as the *one great debate, the main question throughout the Book.*

Why does God seem to ignore the cries of His suffering saints? Is this *just or good*? When his preaching reached Job 19:7, *Behold I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard*, Caryl offered several answers.

God often waits to deliver His people, *that they may be more fit to receive deliverance. Many cry out of wrong, who are not yet fit to be righted. Deliverances may be our undoing if we are not prepared to receive deliverance.*

Sometimes the Lord doth not deliver presently from the wrong and oppression of the wicked, because some wicked men have not yet done wrong nor oppressed enough, and are therefore suffered to do more wrong to others, that themselves may be more fit for ruin. They must fill up the measure of their sin.

Caryl insightfully pointed out that not all graces are eternal. Some can only be exercised here, now, and in trials. These he called *suffering graces*. Among them he named *the grace of faith, of meekness, of self-denial, and of patience*. Before growing impatient, suffering saints ought also to remember and repent of *how oft He hath cried, and they have not minded Him.*

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The Greatest Trial

The first ten volumes of Caryl's sermons introduce him on their title pages as "Preacher to the Honorable Society of Lincolnes-Inne." But volumes XI and XII refer to him simply as "Joseph Caryl, Minister of the Gospel." And whereas previously the sermons had been

sold openly “at the sign of the Guilded Horshoe in the Old Bayly,” or “by Thomas Parkhurst at his Shope at the three Crownes against the great Conduit at the lower end of Cheap-side,” or “at the Gold Lyon in Duck-lane near Smithfield,” the eleventh volume seems to have been available only privately from one “M. Simmons . . . at her house in Aldersgate-Street.”

It was not Caryl’s habit to rail upon his adversaries, but while expounding God’s answer to Job out of the whirlwind (38:1), he encouraged his people with the suggestion as to why the Lord chose to speak out of such a medium. Surely, Caryl said, it was that Job might see that he was but as a feather, even like a rolling thing, or thistle-down, before the Whirl-wind.

These changes reflect Caryl’s loss of his church in October of 1662. Two thousand English ministers, including Joseph Caryl (now age sixty), refused to sign the notorious Act of Uniformity. By so doing these godly pastors lost their pulpits, their congregations, and their livelihoods. Richard Baxter, another ejected minister, recorded, “Many hundreds of them with their wives and children had neither house nor bread. Though they were as frugal as possible they could hardly live. In many cases their income scarcely provided bread and cheese.”

The ejected pastor gathered what few would risk fines or imprisonment to meet in a house church and pointed them to their solemn duty. *Let us also be sure to stick to the commandments of God, he exhorted from Job 35:14, for we may rest assured, God will stick to his promises. To keep commandments is our work. To keep promises is God’s work. We fail much in our work. God will not fail at all in his work: to believe this, is the highest and truest work of faith.*

It was not Caryl’s habit to rail upon his adversaries, but while expounding God’s answer to Job out of the whirlwind (38:1), he encouraged his people with the suggestion as to why the Lord chose to speak out of such a medium. *Surely, Caryl said, it was that Job might see that he was but as a feather, even like a rolling thing, or thistle-down, before the Whirl-wind. And questionless, all the wicked in the world, who condemn the Word of God preached by his Ministers, will be blown away by it as thistle-down or a rolling thing before the Whirl-wind of the Lord’s fierce anger and displeasure.*

Ironically (perhaps prophetically?), these words were probably written within just a year of the Great Fire of

London that burned over 13,000 houses and eighty-seven churches (including St. Paul’s Cathedral), at an estimated cost of 10 million British pounds at a time when the City of London’s entire annual income was barely 12,000 pounds. Caryl had once referred to Amos 3:6, *Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?*, and assured his people, *Every evil or affliction or trouble is said to be the Lord’s doing, because it cannot be done without the Lord.* There is no question, then, to whom Caryl and his people attributed the devastation of the Great Fire.

But to Joseph Caryl, ejected nonconformist minister, the greatest hope was not the destruction of his enemies. It was the vindication of his preaching. The preface to volume XII is dated May 10, 1666 (just four months before the Great Fire). His thoughts dwell on the final chapter of Job, especially God’s words to Job’s antagonists, *Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

To hear this gracious determination from the mouth of the supreme and infallible moderator of all controversies, Caryl wrote, was (without controversy) a thousand times more pleasing and satisfactory to Job’s spirit, not only than the double cattle, which the Lord gave him, but, than if the Lord had given him all the cattle upon a thousand hills. The Lord shews himself very pitiful and of tender mercy, when he puts an end to the controversies of his servants, by vindicating their credit, and making it appear, that they have spoken of him, and of his ways, the thing that is right, or more rightly than their opposers and reproachers. Every preacher waits for just such a tender vindication from the Lord.

The End

Joseph Caryl did not live to see his preaching vindicated. God willed that he die as he had lived, in the *patience of hope*. Caryl accepted the mission. An eyewitness wrote of his last illness, “His sickness, though painful [was] borne with patience and joy in believing. He lived his sermons.”

He lived his sermons. What higher commendation could people give their preacher? They beheld twenty-four years of preaching climax in a few days of dying and testified that right to the end, crossing the last deep river, *he lived his sermons!*

The patient Puritan died in 1673, in his own home, with a company of sorrowing friends gathered round the bed. One of them, recalling the scene, wrote, “He did at last desire his friends to forbear speaking to him, that so he might retire in himself.” These last minutes “he spent in prayer; oftentimes lifting up his hands a little; and at last, his friends finding his hands not to move, drew near and perceived he was silently departing from them.”

You have heard of the patience of Joseph Caryl. His patient preaching, living, and dying ring with the same admonition he gave his people through twenty-four years of preaching: *Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.* ☞

*This article was originally published in *FrontLine* in 1999.

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Bring . . . the Books

Biographies of a Preaching Family

Relatively few individuals have their biographies written. Even fewer have biographies of multiple members of the same family. One of the most fascinating and delightful little collections I own is a trilogy—a biography of a pastor father (W. H. Burns) by a pastor son (*The Pastor of Kilsyth*, by Islay Burns). Islay also wrote a biography of his more famous brother, William Chalmers Burns (1815–68), entitled *Memoirs of the Rev. William C. Burns*, M.A. Islay's own *Select Remains* were later compiled by another family member, James C. Burns.

The spiritual influence of these men from the small country town of Kilsyth, Scotland, extended worldwide and continues today. The town is still small, numbering fewer than 10,000. In the late eighteenth century, William Hamilton Burns (1779–1859) pastored in this small community that had shared in the First Great Awakening (1740s) and was blessed to have God visit the town again during his lifetime in the later stages of the Second Great Awakening (1830–40s).

W. H. Burns's greatest legacy may have been the two sons he reared for the Lord. Unusually, both of them succeeded Robert Murry M'Cheyne (1813–43) at St. Peter's in Dundee. M'Cheyne is the well-known young pastor whose sermons are still read and whose own biography is still an inspiration. W. C. Burns succeeded him first, doing so temporarily while M'Cheyne toured the Middle East, convalescing from poor health and exploring the possibility of missions to both Jews and Muslims. During M'Cheyne's absence, God sent revival to Dundee and to Scotland, using W. C., who was then only in his twenties. Later, after M'Cheyne's death before the age of thirty, Islay (1817–72) succeeded him in the pastorate.

At the age of thirty-two, W. C. left the enthusiastic work of revival in the summer of 1847 for comparative obscurity in China. There, in 1855/56, his path would intersect with that of a young missionary named Hudson Taylor, at that time in his early twenties. The two men sharpened each other and fueled each other's vision to reach the interior of China. The young Taylor greatly admired Burns for his prayer life. Burns, for his part, greatly admired Taylor for his vision and emulated his practice of adopting the Chinese dress. God had gifted Burns with an appetite and facility for new languages, adding Chinese to his linguistic skills in English, French, Hebrew, Greek, and his native Scottish Gaelic.

The biography of W. C. Burns extends for nearly six hundred pages and is full of inspirational anecdotes. Some exhibit Burns's spirituality, some display his ministerial growth, but most simply recount his plodding faithfulness, similar to that of his country-parson father.

His young adult years gave indication of a deep walk with the Lord: "The great fundamental error then, as far as I can see, in the economy of the Christian life, which many,

and alas! I for one commit, is that of having too few and too short periods of solemn retirement with our gracious Father and his adorable Son Jesus Christ" (44, original emphasis).

At twenty-two his deep and growing burden for the lost inclined him to offer himself as a missionary to Hindustan. His journey would have brought him to America and Canada, but the Lord redirected him by the mission agency's refusal to accept his timing. Within a year he found himself preaching from M'Cheyne's pulpit, greatly surprised at the results with which God blessed his preaching. For nine years, he ministered in the context of a revival throughout Scotland. Nine years of his life were spent in this revival context—a period (his brother testifies) that demonstrated a profound "consciousness of insufficiency, and consequent utter abnegation of all trust in himself, that made him strong" (60). Contemporaries likened the Spirit's use of his ministry to that of Whitfield and Wesley, even comparing his pulpit influence favorably to the young Charles Spurgeon.

To rush ahead, we find Burns equally fervent in evangelizing on the backroads of China as he had been to crowds of hundreds in the pulpits of Scotland. His labors brought trials that he endured cheerfully. At one point in 1856, after nearly ten years in China, Burns was arrested and commanded to appear before the chief magistrate of Chaon-chow.

When he was arrested in August, 1856, . . . the magistrate required him to go down on both knees to be examined, as is the custom in China. Mr. B very firmly but respectfully refused, saying that he would go down on one knee, as he would do for his sovereign, Queen Victoria; but that he would only go down on both knees to the King of kings. The magistrate was struck by this answer, solemnly and respectfully uttered, and allowed the missionary to be examined on one knee (461).

In the life of Burns one finds a man who relished serving his God, in private or public, in fertile fields and barren. He was a man blessed with rich friendships—his brother, Islay, M'Cheyne, Hudson Taylor, and many others with whom he enjoyed mutually sharpening relationships. He often repeated the maxim taught by the apostle Peter, "Always be ready!" (1 Pet. 3:15). Jesus spoke of John the Baptist as a "burning and a shining light" (John 5:35). Burns, too, was a "burning lamp" for the Lord whose light can still be an inspiration to us! ☞

"... when
thou comest,
bring with thee
... the books"
(2 Tim. 4:13)

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In Romans 15:3 Paul makes an ostensibly odd statement: “For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” Paul applied this Old Testament prophecy to Christ in order to illustrate the point that Christ didn’t please Himself. But does the quotation from Psalm 69:9b support Paul’s assertion? Does bearing undeserved and unjust insults truly exemplify not pleasing Himself?

In Romans 15:1–2 Paul sums up chapter 14’s social and spiritual message for both the “weak” and the “strong.” The “strong” grasp biblical truth to a greater degree. They manage to put their former values in the new perspective of life in Christ. In this context it applied specifically to eating or not eating meat. The mature disciple is now strong (or “enabled,” as *dunatos* implies) to conscientiously partake of certain foods that would have been formerly considered unclean. They, as Paul, learned that “there is nothing unclean of itself” (14:14). Nevertheless, those brothers who are before the Lord scrupled (or “unenabled,” as *adunatos* implies) against eating meat are not to be dismissed or disrespected by the *enabled* who may know better. *Knowing* is not enough. Paul had reminded the Corinthians that knowledge alone puffs up or inflates pride. But knowledge coupled with love builds up or edifies. Learning and knowing (EDUCATION) combined with Christ-like living (sanctIFICATION) produces EDIFICATION. Christian maturity is an outcome that carries both privilege and responsibility.

In Romans 15:1–2 Paul obligated the “strong” or *enabled* disciples to bear the weaknesses of their less mature brethren. The “strong” are to focus on their spiritual *responsibilities* rather than their *rights*, *liberties*, or doing their *pleasure*. How is that accomplished? First, by not judging the weak person’s opinions (14:1) or despising (treating with contempt) him (14:3), or placing a stumbling block in his way. In other words, the strong do not injure a brother’s conscience. Consciences are brittle, and often only light pressure can shatter them (14:15). Mature brothers *are* their brothers’ keepers.

Paul’s instruction and admonition lead to the summary in 15:1–3. An *enabled* brother assumes responsibility for his less able brothers (15:1). Moreover, he looks on every social and spiritual interaction not as an occasion to please himself, but rather as an opportunity of gracious and intentional discipleship. He endeavors to “please his neighbour for his good to edification.” His immediate goal is ministering to the brother’s “good” with the ultimate goal contributing to his “edification.”

In verse 3 Paul offers Christ as the quintessential

example that caps his instruction to the *enabled*. Paul asserts that “Christ pleased not himself.” How does Paul’s quotation of Psalm 69:9 support his assertion? Both halves of Psalm 69:9 are applied to the Messiah in two separate New Testament settings. The first half (“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up”) is fulfilled at Christ’s cleansing of the Temple (John 2:17), the second half (“and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me”) here in Romans 15:3.

Now the question remains, what mention of self-pleasing occurs in Romans 15:3 and Psalm 69:9? Paul is not a sloppy theologian, logician, or rhetorician. Paul could have simply shared a narrative or discourse from Christ’s life. Instead he resorts to an Old Testament messianic prophecy. In Psalm 69 David’s faithfulness to and love for God drives him to zealously contend for the house of God, which resulted in his being ostracized by his family and targeted by insults. But David’s zeal for God’s house would not allow him to excuse himself from the ostracizing or the insults. He so identified with God and his cause that he eschewed pleasing himself. When unjust insults were hurled at him, David *could* have protested; but because of the spiritual connection and love that he had for God, he accepted the insults. David yielded his rights, his pleasure, for the glory of God.

The fulfillment of this prophecy in Christ is found in His accepting the insults that were directed toward God. This was not just a pattern of revelation (C. K. Barrett, *Romans*, 249), but a pattern of Christ’s ministry. Christ focused on pleasing His Father rather than Himself. He said, “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29; cf. Phil. 2:1–11).

Now we can see that Paul’s employment of the messianic prophecy of Psalm 69:9b, though superficially incongruous, makes perfect sense. Jesus accepted the harsh treatment for the good of sinners and for our edification. Christ did not please Himself but accepted the abuse for the immediate good sinners and the ultimate example to believers in ministering to others—even weak brothers. Jesus’ knowledge and rights were not a means of shunning responsibility but engaging in fulfilling it. He was intentional in his dealing with the *unable* disciples, bearing with them because He loved the Father supremely and us (Matt. 22:37–40). With the same motives and motions the strong or *able* are obligated to forgo their own pleasure and interact with the *unable* for their food and edification. Thus Christ is the perfect example of not pleasing Himself, but Him that sent Him, and making Him the perfect fulfillment of Psalm 69:9. ☞

“Rightly
dividing
the Word
of Truth”
(2 Tim. 2:15)

Windows

Whence This Success?

With the colonization of the Americas came a scourge that would continue until the American Civil War—slavery. Prior to the arrival of European settlers on the mainland of North America there was already traffic in Africans forced into slavery in the West Indies. African slaves came with the first three ships of settlers of the Charles Town colony in 1670. From this point in time the traffic in humans would grow to incredible numbers, particularly in the Southern Colonies. Charleston, South Carolina, would be at the center of this evil as the major entry place for ships loaded with Africans to be sold as slaves. The facts are widely recognized that Southern agriculture in rice, cotton, and indigo succeeded only because of the slave labor. The South had many wealthy plantation owners whose attainments were due to the forced labor of Africans and their descendants.

Slave owners intentionally kept their human property in subjection by every means possible. Since the population of slaves outnumbered the whites by a wide margin, slave owners always lived in fear of a violent rebellion. Keeping slaves illiterate, impoverished, and under absolute authority were some of the means of maintaining control.

George Whitefield

George Whitefield began his visits to America in 1738, landing in Savannah, Georgia, and he traveled extensively and ministered up and down the Colonies until his death in 1770. Provoked by what he saw of the treatment of slaves, he wrote a letter to slave owners on his second visit to America.

As I lately passed through your provinces, I was touched with a fellow-feeling of the miseries of the poor negroes. . . . I have no other way to discharge the concern that lies upon my heart, than by sending you this letter. How you will receive it I know not; but whatever be the event, I must inform you in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, that God has a quarrel with you for your cruelty to the poor negroes. Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy slaves, I shall not take it upon me to determine, but sure I am that it is sinful, when bought, to use them worse than brutes. And I fear the generality of you, who own negroes, are liable to such a charge, for slaves, I believe, work as hard as the horses whereon you ride.

However, Whitefield was apparently not opposed to slavery as a whole, since he would later wield his influence in Georgia to legalize slavery. He then used slaves to work the Bethesda orphanage plantation. But he was strongly opposed to the abuse and especially the spiritual neglect of the negroes. Many masters were

afraid for their slaves to become Christians and especially to be baptized for fear that “elevating” them this way would make them want to rebel.

George Whitefield acted upon his concern for the slaves, seeking to minister the gospel to them at every opportunity. His preaching was effectual in African slaves’ coming to saving faith, and they regarded Whitefield as a true friend.

Hugh and Jonathan Bryan

Whitefield’s burden was transmitted to others as well. Brothers Hugh and Jonathan Bryan were plantation owners in the Port Royal area of the Carolinas. They were important in the history of both the Carolina and Georgia colonies. The Bryans were with James Oglethorpe on his first visit to Yamacraw Bluff on the Savannah River, where he built the Savannah colony. Jonathan was later influential in governing Savannah. He was a leader in the American Revolution and spent two years in captivity on a British prison ship for his efforts. The Bryan brothers became close friends and supporters of Whitefield, and his influence was instrumental in their salvation.

In 1752 Jonathan moved to Savannah and purchased several plantations. In 1765 he bought Brampton Plantation on the Savannah River, about four miles west of historic Savannah. Like all other plantations, Brampton Plantation was worked by slaves, but there the slaves were well-treated. Jonathan Bryan provided gospel ministry for his people. Services were held in a big barn converted for the purpose, and both black and white preachers ministered to those who gathered.

Until the Civil War most slaves worshiped in the white churches. (In fact, laws were enacted to confine them only to the white churches.) Slaves would sit in the gallery or on the back pews. They were generally allowed to be members but not allowed to vote on church matters. The *Fundamental Constitutions*, written by Lord Ashley Cooper and John Locke, was the charter of the Carolina Colony, which included this provision: “It shall be lawful for Slaves as all others, to enter themselves, and be of what Church or Profession any of them shall think best, and thereof be as fully Members as any Freeman.” Slave owners wanted to keep the blacks in the white churches as another means of keeping them under control. Owners who permitted their slaves to gather for preaching and worship, as Jonathan Bryan did at Brampton Plantation, were moving in the direction of autonomous black congregations. The first steps

“To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, ‘A window shalt thou make in the ark.’”

Charles Spurgeon

of a genuinely black church started prior to the War for Independence.

George Leile

In the years leading up to the American Revolution God moved among the slaves in the Savannah River basin in an amazing way. His working resulted in many slaves' coming to salvation, in the rise of effective black preachers, in the formation of autonomous black churches, and in black missionaries carrying the gospel to other countries. At the Kiokee Baptist Church in Burke County, Georgia (a white church), a slave named George Leile heard Pastor David Moore preach the gospel. After a long struggle, Leile yielded to Christ and soon began to preach. His owner, Henry Sharp, a deacon of the Kiokee Baptist Church, recognized Leile's effective ministry to the slaves because of his ability to "splanify" the Scriptures. Deacon Sharp encouraged Leile to join the Kiokee Church. After preaching a trial sermon to a gathering of white Baptist preachers, Leile was licensed to preach. In 1775 he was ordained as a Baptist minister. Henry Sharp allowed Leile to go about preaching to the slaves on the plantations. Because of the approach of the Revolution, Sharp moved to Savannah. In Savannah Leile began to preach at Jonathan Bryan's Brampton Plantation. This meeting was the beginnings of a church.

Leile is regarded as the first ordained black Baptist minister and the founder of the first African Baptist Church in America. Sharp soon gave Leile his freedom so that he could give himself fully to the gospel ministry. When the British left Savannah near the end of the American Revolution, Leile took the opportunity to indenture himself to a British Colonel Kirkland, who took Leile to Jamaica. There he worked to pay off his indenture while continuing to preach. Leile's preaching among the slaves and the free blacks was very fruitful, and a church was organized. Because any attempt to improve the circumstances of the slaves was opposed, the work was heavily and violently persecuted—yet it continued and grew. Eventually Leile would have a hand in the salvation of thousands of Jamaican slaves and in the establishing of an enduring Baptist church. George Leile went to Jamaica in 1782, which makes him the first American foreign missionary, preceding Adoniram Judson by thirty years.

Andrew Bryan

George Leile ministered at Brampton Plantation near Savannah. Jonathan Bryan, who owned the plantation, encouraged and enabled the ministries of Leile and others at gatherings there. Andrew Bryan was one of Jonathan's servants at Brampton. Andrew was born in Goose Creek, South Carolina, in 1737. Andrew heard Leile preach from John 3 about the new birth and was saved. When Leile was about to leave for Jamaica, he baptized Andrew. Soon after Leile's departure from Savannah, Andrew began to preach. His owner, Jonathan Bryan gave Andrew great liberty to travel and to preach.

Edward Davis allowed Andrew Bryan and his

congregation to build a meeting place on property he owned in Yamacraw (now part of Savannah). The location was soon taken from them in the midst of severe persecution from various white antagonists. Andrew was imprisoned twice but refused to quit preaching. Andrew and some of his congregation were publicly beaten, Andrew to the point that his blood flowed freely. Nonetheless he proclaimed his willingness to suffer and to die for the cause of Jesus Christ. Jonathan Bryan was extremely disturbed by these events and defended the group before the city officials. Andrew and his congregation were released and in time were permitted to resume their church. In the meantime they were invited back to Brampton Plantation.

Andrew and his church conducted themselves so honorably that they won over the people of Savannah, many of whom had opposed them. In 1788 Abraham Marshall (an important leader among the white Baptists in Georgia) visited Savannah and baptized a large group of Andrew's flock. Marshall then gave the congregation official recognition among the Georgia Baptists making this the first black Baptist church. He also ordained Andrew Bryan as a minister of the gospel. In 1792 a church building was constructed on land donated by the city.

All who spoke about Andrew Bryan gave him high praise as a man of God and minister of the gospel. By the time of his death in 1812 the church had about 1500 members. After the death of Jonathan Bryan, Andrew was able to purchase his freedom and that of his wife.

The success of these preachers is amazing, especially considering that they had no formal education. They could read but had little else in the way of training or mentorship to qualify them. Yet God powerfully used them to reap a large harvest of souls among the slaves of the Savannah River basin. The influence of George Whitefield upon Jonathan Bryan and through Jonathan upon George Leile and Andrew Bryan is a wonderful work of providence. It would be interesting to know if either Leile or Andrew ever heard Whitefield preach. It is a real possibility that they did. There is no explaining why God worked in that area at that time and through such unlikely men, but He did work and His name was glorified. ☞

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Our Eternal Home

If you asked the average church saint where he would spend eternity, the answer would likely be “heaven.” This notion is reinforced in several ways in the church. First, many of the hymns and choruses we sing teach this thought. For example, the hymn “Glory Hallelujah” says, “I’m on my way to heaven to live eternally.” The hymn “There Is a Way” says, “There is a place that Jesus is preparing; There is a place where sin will be no more. There is a place of promise we’ll be sharing; That place is heav’n, eternity’s fair shore.” The chorus of the hymn “A New Name in Glory” says,

There’s a new name written down in glory,
And it’s mine, O yes it’s mine!
And the white-robed angels sing the story,
A sinner has come home.
For there’s a new name written down in glory,
And it’s mine O yes it’s mine!
With my sins forgiven I am bound for heaven,
Never more to roam.

Others are more subtle in teaching this thought. The hymn “O That Will Be Glory” says, “When by the gift of his infinite grace, I am accorded in heaven a place, Just to be there and to look on his face, Will thru the ages be glory for me.” The chorus “I’m Going to Heaven Someday” asks, “Are you going to heaven someday, Are you going to heaven to stay?”

Second, this notion is reinforced through our evangelism. Many tracts promise an eternal home in heaven to those who place their faith in Christ. This promise even creeps into an occasional invitation. Third, this notion is reinforced through preaching and conversation in the Christian community. We refer to the pearly gates, streets of gold, mansions, etc., as if they were a description of heaven. We comfort each other through the difficulties in this earthly life with the hope of a future eternal life in heaven. Fourth, this notion is reinforced through direct statements in systematic theology works. Millard Erickson says, “As God’s abode, heaven is obviously where believers will be for all eternity.”¹

With all of this “informal” and formal theology in mind, one would expect to find a verse in the Bible to support what church saints sing in hymns, hear in sermons, and read in theology texts. But there is not a single verse in the Bible that explicitly states that we will live in heaven forever. Quite the opposite seems to be true. Scripture seems to place church saints in heaven for only a brief time. Eternity is spent on the new earth.

These differing ideas concerning church saints’ eternal home raise a question. Where does Scripture say church saints will reside in the future? This article will attempt to

demonstrate that church saints will not live in heaven forever. Instead, they will live forever on the new earth. First, the general teaching of the New Testament will be presented. Second, the location of church saints in the future will be surveyed. Third, attempts to change the meaning of the word “heaven” will be analyzed. Finally, several implications will be presented for those who will live forever on the new earth.


The General NT Teaching about Our Eternal Home

The overall theme of Scripture is that church saints will be with Christ forever. The focus in the New Testament is not on a place but on a person—Jesus Christ. This theme is communicated in several New Testament verses: for example, 2 Corinthians 5:6–8 teaches that church saints who die will be present with the Lord (see also Phil. 1:23). Obviously, prior to the Rapture, the body is in the grave, but the soul/spirit of man will be with the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 Paul explains that believers who are raptured (i.e., church saints) will meet the Lord in the air “and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Note that Paul adds the “ever” or “always” time indication to our presence with the Lord. Paul also alludes to this truth in Colossians 3:4. There he says that when Christ appears in the future, church saints will appear with Him in glory. The promise in these verses is not a place in heaven. Church saints are promised that wherever Christ is, that is where church saints will be—forever!

Jesus taught this same truth to His disciples. After announcing His betrayal, death, resurrection, and return to His Father in heaven, Jesus comforted His disciples. As they mourned the thought of Jesus’ departure, Jesus promised that they would be reunited with Him. In John 14:1–3 Jesus told the disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them so that where He was, they would be also. Certainly, the place that Jesus went to prepare these “mansions” or “dwellings” was heaven. But these verses do not say that these “dwellings” stay in heaven. In fact, the New Jerusalem comes “out of” heaven to the new earth (Rev. 21:2). The streets of gold and pearly gates will be on the new earth, not in heaven. In the same way, church saints go to heaven when they die (at least their soul/spirit does). But Scripture never says that they will stay there forever. Church saints will always be where Christ is.

Where Will NT Saints Reside in the Future?

If we accept the biblical teaching that church saints will live forever with Christ, we can identify our place of residence by



noting where Jesus is. Since Jesus' location does not stay the same, neither will church saints' location. Jesus is currently in heaven at the right hand of God. From physical death to the Rapture the bodies of church saints are in the grave (not in heaven). Their spirit/soul is "with the Lord" in heaven (2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23). From the Rapture to the Millennium, Christ is in heaven (presupposing a pretribulational Rapture). The spirit/soul of church saints is united with the resurrected glorified body at the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:51–58). The glorified church saint resides in heaven with Christ for seven years (1 Thess. 4:17). This is the only time that the body of a church saint resides in heaven. Saints who are alive at the time of the Rapture reside in heaven in their glorified bodies to escape the horrors of the Tribulation.

Christ returns to earth at the beginning of the Millennium to rule over Israel as the Davidic King. Church saints return to earth with Christ (Rev. 19:11–14). Church saints will live on earth during the Millennium. Church apostles will be on earth ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28; Luke. 22:30). Jesus promised His disciples that He would eat bread and drink wine with them in the kingdom (Matt. 26:29). Church saints are heirs of the kingdom (James 2:5). Church saints will inherit the kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5). Church saints will enter the kingdom (Acts 14:22). Church saints will have some "ruling" function during the kingdom (1 Cor. 6:2).²

After the Millennium, Christ will rule on the new earth for all eternity as Davidic King over national Israel in fulfillment of the promises in the OT covenants. Church saints will live on the new earth forever as well as the "bride" of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7–10, 21–22). The focus of the Book of Revelation is making things right on earth, resulting in its restoration to Eden-like conditions. God gives man a glorified body suited for inhabiting the new earth and enjoying its blessings and fellowship with God (1 Cor. 15:50; Rev. 21–22).

The New Earth as Our Eternal Home

What does the Bible say about the new earth? First, *the new earth remains distinct from heaven*. Scripture uses the word "heaven" in four ways.³ First, the Bible uses "heaven" to refer to the atmosphere surrounding the earth (Deut. 11:11; Luke 4:25; Acts 4:12). Second, the Bible uses "heaven" to refer to the stratosphere containing the sun, moon, stars, planets, etc. (Gen. 1:14; Deut. 28:62). Third, the Bible uses "heaven" to refer to the place where God resides (Ps. 11:4; Matt. 5:16, 45, 48; 6:9; John 6:38). Fourth, the Bible uses "heaven" to refer to God Himself (Matt. 21:25; 23:2). When "heaven and

earth" are used together, they refer to the physical universe. The Bible never uses the word "heaven" for the new earth.

The phrase "out of heaven" in Revelation 21:2 implies that heaven and the new earth remain distinct places. If the New Jerusalem comes out of heaven to the new earth, how can the new earth still be "in heaven"? In addition, the fact that God dwells with man is insufficient evidence to postulate that heaven and earth are no longer distinct places (Rev. 21:3). Very similar language is used of God dwelling with man in the Old Testament Temple (Exod. 25:8; 40:34). No one suggests that the old heaven and earth were not distinct places.

Second, *the new earth is renovated*. The new heaven and earth refer to a renewed physical universe. The same universe that was corrupted by sin and is now held captive by sin will be released from the curse of sin and renewed to Eden-like conditions (Rom. 8: 22–23; Rev. 21:1). This renewal of the physical universe does not change the "abode of God" heaven (since that heaven is not held captive by sin). Smith concludes,

One must not avoid facing the question: Do these passages regarding a new heaven and a new earth refer to heaven as the abode of God? I cannot help but believe firmly that the old heaven and the old earth will pass away or be transformed because they are marred by the effects of sin, by corruption and violence. Certainly this is not true of the abode of God. God is not living in some imperfect environment awaiting the consummation of His redemptive program on earth.⁴

There is debate regarding the relationship between the old earth and the new earth. There are generally two lines of thought regarding this issue. Grudem (following Berkof) summarizes that Lutheran scholars generally teach that the old earth is completely annihilated, while Reformed scholars teach that the old earth is transformed into something new.⁵ Several thoughts suggest that the old earth will be transformed into the new earth. First, the land God promised to Israel in her covenants was the heaven and earth of Genesis 1–2. In addition, the new earth seems to be the ultimate fulfillment of the kingdom/land promise in those OT covenants. It seems logical that God would not substitute a completely new land that was not in view in the OT promises. If He did, God would give Israel something other than the land He promised. Second, Romans 8 presents a releasing of the current heaven and earth from its bondage rather than totally destroying them. This is also consistent with OT teaching about the earth. Psalm 104:5 says that God laid the foundation of the earth so that it would never be removed. At the same time, the face of the earth will be renewed (Ps. 104:30).

This renewal of the face of the earth is pictured as putting on a new garment because the old one wore out (Ps. 102:25–26). Third, there seems to be some parallel between the renovation of the new heaven and earth and the glorifying of the believer's new body (Rom. 8:18–25). Our old body is not annihilated and replaced. It is transformed into a new one.

Church saints will live forever on a distinct renovated new earth. Eternal life on the new earth will be glorious. Church saints will fulfill the purpose for which they were created: imaging God on earth! Why, then, do we prefer “forever in heaven” terminology over “forever on the new earth” terminology (as though it is not quite as good)?

Implications for an Eternity on the New Earth

1. We need to take care in our selection and use of hymns in our church. We should sing only correct theology. We do go to heaven; but we do not stay there forever. Granted, we allow a good deal of poetic license in our hymnology. But we should be careful that the hymns we sing do not imply something not taught in Scripture.
2. We need to refine our speech regarding the future reality of the believer. We must no longer refer to living forever in heaven. Instead, we should emphasize what the Gospel of John does: eternal life. This also means that we must be precise when referring to the streets of gold, pearly gates, etc.—that we clearly place them on earth for eternity, not in heaven.
3. We must refocus our attention to the new earth for our future. We will live on an Eden-like new earth for all of eternity. This suggests that there will be some type of human governance in an earthly society (Jesus will be King, apostles will be sitting on thrones, kings will walk into the New Jerusalem). We will serve God in whatever capacity He deems best (Rev. 22:3). There will be human relationships and interaction. There may even be animals like there were on the old earth, over which man can express dominion.
4. Our eternal hope should not be on leaving this place. In our glorified bodies, we will be gone from here only for the seven years of the Tribulation. Our hope should be on Christ's coming and His fixing this place so that we can live a glorified existence here that will image God just as He created us to do. And just as He redeemed us to do.

Andrew Hudson serves as professor of New Testament at Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin.



¹ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985): 1227.

² Herman Hoyt, *The End Times* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969): 180–81.

³ Rene Pache, *The Future Life* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962): 339; D. A. deSilva, “Heaven, New Heavens,” *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997): 439; Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985): 1226.

⁴ Wilbur Smith, *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968): 235. Smith also cites John Gill presenting the same conclusion. Cf. Gen. 1:1; 3:17–18; Isa. 65:17ff; Rom. 8:18–25; 2 Pet. 3:10–13; Rev. 21.

⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994): 1160–61.



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Regional Reports

2020 FBFI Board Meeting

The Foundations Baptist Fellowship International summer board meeting was one of the best attended we have ever had. Nearly fifty members of the board of directors met on Tuesday, June 16, 2020. The difference from most previous board meetings is one we are all used to by now: it was conducted via Zoom. The usual process is for our board meetings to coincide with the annual meeting. The annual meeting this year was a special one, since it is the one-hundredth year, and was to take place at Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Indianapolis. The early decision to cancel the June meeting proved insightful.

Dave Shumate, the outgoing chairman, welcomed the board members, and Bud Steadman did a roll call, allowing each member to affirm the statement of faith and purpose of the fellowship. Following the approval of minutes from the previous year, the most significant business was to approve the nominations by the board for the Governance Committee. The constitution establishes term limits for the officers, and, in order to bring ourselves in line with the constitution, the Governance Committee members have rotated off. Gordon Dickson is now serving as the chairman, Taigen Joos as the vice



chairman, Bud Steadman as the secretary, and Michael Privett will continue to serve as the treasurer.

Kevin Schaal spoke briefly concerning the state of our nation and the importance of churches conducting the biblical ministries of evangelism, discipleship, mentoring, and church planting. Following his comments were various addendums to the reports given in the board packet. He also noted that the 2021 annual meeting location was under review, but that it would either be at Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Indianapolis or at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. The 2021 Winter Board Meeting will be at Northwest Valley Baptist Church in Glendale, Arizona on February 8-9.



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A Real Kingdom or a Figure of Speech?

Continued from page 15

mere outward conformity. One way in which they will rebel is to refuse to commemorate the Feast of Booths and worship the universal King at the appointed time each year. So in this kingdom Christ is the only ruler, and there will be large numbers of saved people, but there is no prediction that all will be saved or will consistently submit to His authority.

How the Theocratic King Addresses Rebellion

The Lord's chastening on those who refuse to keep the Feast of Booths is reminiscent of the way God revealed His pleasure or displeasure with Israel under the Mosaic Covenant. When Israel entered Canaan under Joshua, they received the land God had promised to the patriarchs. Their continued enjoyment of blessings in the land, however, was tied to their obedience. An important part of this blessing would be abundant rain, thus enabling agricultural prosperity (Deut. 28:12). Conversely, if the people disobeyed, they were warned that "the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust" (Deut. 28:23–24a).

The use of weather under the Mosaic economy is recorded at several points during Old Testament history. To indicate the wickedness of Israel in requesting a king during the time of Samuel, the Lord sent a thunderstorm, a very unusual event during the wheat harvest (1 Sam. 12:16–19). Another example of the Lord withholding rain occurs in 1 Kings 17–18 during the ministry of Elijah. To reassert that the Lord was Israel's God, the drought was broken only after Elijah's victory over the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel and only in response to his prayer. Zechariah 14 states that this type of direct rule will occur again, albeit on a larger scale—worldwide. The question, of course, is to which time period the prediction refers: the Church Age, the millennial kingdom, or the eternal state?

During Which Dispensation Does Zechariah 14:16–19 Occur?

It is difficult to see how the prediction of drought could refer to the Church Age either literally or metaphorically. The literal application would require us to conclude that the Lord currently communicates His displeasure with nations by withholding rain from them. While the Lord does exhibit the negative effects of sin on earth in a general sense through natural disasters, including drought, they are not tied to His displeasure with one specific location or people group in this dispensation. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 did not communicate God was displeased with Louisiana any more than Hurricane Hugo in 1989 communicated He was displeased with South Carolina. All the two storms communicated was that life in a fallen world is generally difficult, and it is particularly difficult in coastal areas in the southeastern United States because they are susceptible to hurricanes.

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Nor could the threatened withholding of rain refer metaphorically to the chastening of Christians for their sins during the Church Age. Because Israel collectively was God's people and they lived in one location, this means of communicating His displeasure with them was particularly effective. Today's churches, however, are local bodies scattered throughout the world. We are "strangers and aliens" in the world, living under the political jurisdiction of men who are frequently unbelievers (1 Pet. 2:11–20). We do not live under the direct political authority of Christ, and though He chastens believers in any number of ways for their sins, withholding rain is not one of them. People may suffer the obvious consequences of sinful choices on an individual level. Corporately, entire churches may even cease to exist as a result of their disobedience to the Lord. Both of those outcomes, however, occur under different circumstances and with different results than withholding rain on a national level.

When considering the eternal state, it is equally difficult to see how the withholding of rain could picture events in that realm. When the New Heaven and New Earth arrive, every human being will either be permanently with the Lord or permanently condemned in the Lake of Fire. This condemnation in hell is full and irrevocable. The withholding of rain, however, is remedial. Under the Mosaic Covenant the Lord desired to use such events to expose His people's sinfulness and lead them to repentance. The same goal would be necessary if, as Zechariah 14 leads us to expect, Messiah will rule over a kingdom consisting of unbelievers and unglorified saints. In the eternal state, however, everyone's destiny will be sealed, and such corrective measures would have no purpose.

Conclusion

Zechariah 14:12–19 is best interpreted as a description of an actual millennial kingdom because it pictures the Messiah ruling over an earthy kingdom of people who are capable of sinning. When they refuse to observe the Feast of Booths and worship the King, He will withhold rain from them. This picture does not function as an adequate metaphor for either the Church Age or the eternal state. During the Church Age the Messiah is not ruling directly over any nation, and He does not chasten His church by withholding the rain. With the arrival of the eternal state His works of saving some and judging others are complete. In the New Heaven and New Earth, remedial action is unnecessary, for "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth" (Rev. 21:27).

Preston Mayes is currently professor of Old Testament at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Plymouth, Minnesota. Formerly, he was professor of Old Testament at Maranatha Baptist University in Watertown, Wisconsin. He and his wife, Traci, have four children. They celebrated their thirtieth anniversary this summer.



*Thomas McComiskey, "Zechariah," *The Minor Prophets*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992–1998), 3:1234. Emphasis added.

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ON LANGUAGE & SCRIPTURE

Language has redundancy built into it, so that if a part of the message gets garbled or lost, the overall message will still get from person to person.

That's the lesson, and you can probably quit this column now if you already got it. There's better stuff to read out there than this nerdy and obsessive column. Go read Jonathan Edwards.

No, wait. He was nerdy and obsessive too. To greater degrees than me. So you should probably actually just stay here and let's finish this.

It was late at night. I stumbled across a live video sermon in Spanish from missionary and linguistics professor David Bell, son of legendary BJU seminary professor Bob Bell. My Spanish is not perfectly fluent, but I can understand 95% of what I hear in a sermon (and 0% of jokes—Spanish jokes all go over my *cabeza*). Bell was speaking of shepherds who fleece the sheep, and he talked about the type who can see only “how he can benefit himself.” This is the way he said it: “*como puede beneficiarle a el.*”

Here's what I noticed about this: that redundancy thing. Quite literally, the Spanish here reads, “How he is able to benefit himself to him.” That's the Spanish way to say it.

I could complain. I could say to the Royal Spanish Academy, the institution that (supposedly) controls Spanish, “This is so inefficient! You don't have to have the extra ‘him’! Do it like English!” And they would just laugh at me in Spanish and say something clever that went over my head.

Language doesn't follow a logic of efficiency. English doesn't. Greek and Hebrew don't. That's often the point of this column: Greek and Hebrew are human languages like English. And Spanish. And Urdu. We Bible readers and teachers err when we expect the biblical languages (and we do this especially with Greek) to be perfectly concise and precise conveyors of truth. We should be thankful that redundancies of many kinds exist in Scripture.

Here's a simple example: “the church of God **which** is at Corinth.” The “which is” is the Greek way to say things, but the sentence would mean exactly the same thing with or without these redundant words. Here's another: “We speak not . . . in the words which man's wisdom teacheth” (1 Cor. 2:13). Boil this down and you get redundancy: “We speak . . . in . . . words.” And that's just what the Greek says.

I could complain. I could say to Hermes, “This is so inefficient! What else would someone speak in other than words? Why say ‘words’ at all?!”

I could say that. But if Spanish jokes are that hard for me, then I'm sure Greek ones would be utterly impossible.



Dr. Mark Ward is an academic editor at Lexham Press.

Layton Talbert

The New Testament's eschatological roots run far and deep back into the soil of the Old Testament. A recurring core of Old Testament eschatology is the concept of "the day of the Lord." That exact phrase occurs about 25 times in the Bible (including five in the New Testament). Specific references to this phenomenon, however, appear far more frequently than that once you factor in all the contextually relevant occurrences of parallel phrases ("that day," "that time," etc.).

Definition

Understanding the "day of the Lord" (DOL) is not just a matter of counting the frequency of such phrases and looking up the references. Once you begin reading those passages where the language occurs, it becomes apparent that this important time reference has different referents. Sometimes it clearly refers to a future period that has not yet come to pass, but sometimes it refers specifically to a historical period or incident that is now in the past and not prophetic in any proper sense. Nevertheless, both the historical and the eschatological uses of this phrase have significant similarities. In either case, it is always a period of divine intervention on a national or international scope that involves either divine judgment, blessing, or both. The historical expressions of this divine intervention in the past, of course, foreshadow certain aspects of the future, eschatological day of the Lord. But our concern in this column is with the latter.

The "day of the Lord" is a period of sovereign and spectacular divine intervention in human history to accomplish God's prophesied purposes of judgment (on His enemies), blessing (on His people), and dominion (over the earth). Its duration is never precisely specified, but it is never conceived as merely a single twenty-four-hour period; the term "day" is used in this phrase with reference to a period of time characterized by prophesied divine evaluation and activity. (Even though "day" usually has reference to a twenty-four-hour period, the same word is sometimes used—just as it is in English—of a chronologically unspecified time period.)

Chronological Features

Some DOL details are short-term prophecies of immediate relevance to the original historical audience (Joel 1:15ff.). Again, however, the details of this historical dimension of the DOL foreshadow the ultimate eschatological DOL. Some DOL details are clearly eschatological, describing the climax of God's decisive intervention into human history which consistently has explicit relevance for Israel as well as Gentile nations.

Purposes

A comparison of all the eschatological DOL passages suggest multiple purposes for this ultimate divine intervention:

- a period of universal divine testing (cf. Rev. 3:10) with a twofold result and an ultimate consequence.
- catastrophic judgment of all the wicked (first result).
- gracious purification and blessing of believing Jews and Gentiles (second result).
- establishment of God's universal reign and unrivaled worship (ultimate consequence).

Major OT Passages

The DOL is the subject of about 20 OT passages in about 10 prophets spanning 4 centuries, and further filled out in about 75 additional passages that refer to aspects of the same complex of events under abbreviated or alternative designations (e.g., *[in] that day, the days are coming, in those days, etc.*). In this regard it is similar to the New Covenant, which is properly *named* in only one passage, but described (sometimes under other terms) in many other passages. Major passages include Isaiah 2, 13, 19; Joel 1–3; Amos 5, 8, 9; Obadiah; Zephaniah 1–3; Zechariah 9, 12–14; and Malachi 3–4.

Major NT Passages

The genres in which NT references to the DOL appear differ from the OT; OT references are always in prophetic contexts, whereas NT references appear primarily in gospel and epistolary contexts. But the differences in genre do not signify, since the gospel usages recount Jesus' prophetic teaching, and the epistolary genre is the NT equivalent of the OT prophetic genre (though in the form of letters instead of oracles or sermons).

The NT language for the DOL varies somewhat (*day of the Lord, that day, day of (our Lord Jesus) Christ, day of God*). The OT teaching on the DOL validates these NT passages as references to the same eschatological complex of events. The DOL concept in the NT is explicitly wrapped up in what we identify (in retrospect) as the second coming of Christ. Most of these NT passages focus on the negative implications of that event for unbelievers, while some focus on the positive implications of that event for believers.

Major NT references include the following.

- Matthew 7:22
 - Character: judgment
 - Event: premillennium judgment or Great White Throne
- Luke 10:12
 - Character: judgment
 - Event: Great White Throne
- Luke 17:31
 - Character: judgment
 - Event: Second Coming

Day of the Lord”?

- Acts 2:20
 - Character: quotation of Joel, with the assertion that the passage has begun to be fulfilled (and the implication that the rest *will* follow, but not when)
 - Event: Second Coming
- 1 Thessalonians 5:2
 - Character: emphasis on judgment, after description of Rapture
 - Event: day of God’s wrath (Tribulation)
- 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10
 - Character: judgment
 - Event: Tribulation and Second Coming
- 2 Thessalonians 2:2
 - Character: judgment
 - Event: Second Coming
- 1 Corinthians 1:7–8
 - Character: positive; anticipation of evaluation
 - Event: Rapture/return
- 1 Corinthians 5:5
 - Character: negative/positive; assessment/salvation
 - Event: Rapture/return
- Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16
 - Character: positive; evaluation and reward
 - Event: Rapture/return
- 2 Timothy 1:12, 18; 4:8
 - Character: positive; reward
 - Event: Rapture/return
- 2 Peter 3:10–12
 - Character: judgment; extends to the consummation of present creation
 - Event: postmillennium destruction of heavens and earth
- Revelation 6:17
 - Character: judgment (“the great day of his wrath is come”)
 - Event: Tribulation
- Revelation 16:14
 - Character: judgment
 - Event: Second Coming (Armageddon)

As in the OT, other passages describe events that fall under the DOL designation but without explicit reference to that terminology.

We tend to read and conceive most of these NT passages in vague, generic terms of “heaven” or “afterlife.” But these passages were penned by men who were consciously and profoundly influenced by the OT background on the DOL, and directed by the masterminding, superintending influence of the Divine Author of both

testaments. Reading these NT passages in light of that OT background that shaped the apostles’ thinking and expression casts them in a more holistic eschatological light. In short, it recaptures some of the revelatory continuity that is often lost when the testaments are viewed too much in isolation from one another. The Bible is one book of one story and one final “day of the Lord” that will precede what the NT describes as the “eternal day” (2 Pet. 3:18 in Greek; cf. NASB, NET).

Characteristics of the Day of the Lord

Negative Elements

This is the aspect most emphasized in the NT, especially Revelation, since it has universal ramifications.

1. *Celestial Cataclysm*—usually in terms of darkening of sun, moon, and stars
 - Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:1–3, 30–31, 3:14–15; Amos 5:18, 20, 8:9; Zeph. 1:15; Zech. 14:6–7
 - Cf. Matt. 24:29; Acts 2; 2 Pet. 3; Rev. 6:12–17; 8:12
2. *Terrestrial Disturbances*
 - Isa. 2:19, 21; 13:13; 29:5–7; Hag. 2:6–7, 21–23; Ezek. 38:18–20
 - Cf. Acts 2; 2 Pet. 3; Rev. 6:12–17; 8:5; 11:13, 18; 16:18
3. *Decisive Battle*
 - Zech. 12:3–4, 8–9, 14:1–3
 - Cf. Rev. 16:14–16, 19:11–21
4. *Divine Wrath*
 - Isa. 2:19–21; 13:9, 13; Zeph. 1:18, 2:2–3, 3:8
 - Cf. 1 Thess. 5; 2 Thess. 1; Rev. 6:16–17; 11:18; 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 19:15
5. *Inescapable Punishment and Human Dismay*
 - Isa. 2:10, 19, 21; 13:6–8; Joel 2:11; Amos 5:18–20; Zeph. 1:18; Zech. 12:4; Mal. 2:17–3:2, 4:1
 - Cf. 1 Thess. 5; 2 Thess. 1; Rev. 6:19
6. *Universal judgment*
 - Isa. 13:9, 11; Obad. 15; Joel 3:2; Zeph. 1:18
 - Cf. 2 Thess. 1; Rev. 3:10; 16:14

Positive Elements

The details of this aspect remain largely confined to the OT; there they were given to Israel and there they stand as God’s testimony of what He will do for them. Since the NT is primarily a document to and for the Church (as the OT was primarily a document to and for Israel), those details that pertain particularly to Israel are not repeated to the Church.

1. *Deliverance from wrath for those who trust in the Lord*
 - Joel 2:30–32; Zeph. 2:3
 - 1 Thess. 5; 2 Thess. 1; Rev. 16

Continued on page 34

Editor's Note: We are thrilled to have Dr. Jim Tillotson write a regular column for us on evangelism and discipleship. He led a ministry in Canada that provided a model for what we all should be doing in reaching our communities. His passion and wisdom will be extremely helpful. Dr. Tillotson currently serves as president of Faith Baptist Bible College in Ankeny, Iowa.

Witnessing—the very word strikes fear or guilt into many Christians. We are thankful someone shared the gospel with us, and we don't want to see anyone go to hell, but we just aren't convinced we need to be involved personally—or we are convinced, but we don't know what to do about it. Here are some key things we need to know about witnessing.

1. All of us are to be doing something to tell people about who Jesus is and what He has done for us. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20 is a command. For many, the Great Commandment has become “The Great Suggestion.” Some feel that it is the pastor's job because “that's what we pay him for.” I am convinced a thorough reading of the New Testament will lead to the understanding that every Christian must be personally involved in witnessing.
2. Talk about what you love. This is instinctive and natural for all of us. We talk about our families, hobbies, and sports teams; we just do not talk about God. I love the Minnesota Vikings and married a girl from Wisconsin. I am happy to wear my purple Brett Favre jersey to the family gatherings. I love to hunt. Some have asked why I would get up so early to sit and freeze just so I could shoot something. Interestingly, I will see those same people getting

up early on Black Friday to sit and freeze to get a good deal. It would be very unnatural for either the hunter or the shopper not to talk about the hunt or the deals. What grandparents never talk about their grandchildren? It seems God is the one exception for so many who claim to love Him. If we naturally talk about what we love, but not about God, could it be our love for God has grown cold? Maybe we need to pause and remember what Christ did for us on the cross. Where would we be today without Jesus Christ? Revelation 2:5 gives us the remedy if our love has grown cold. I remember leading a couple in their sixties to Christ. The husband had been a tough oil-patch worker his whole life. After they got saved, they began attending church faithfully. After about a year we happened to sing “Amazing Grace” on a Sunday morning. As I looked across the auditorium, I saw him standing there with tears streaming down his face. Amazing grace was still amazing to him. When it stops being amazing to us, we will stop talking about it.

How long has it been since you told anyone how great your God is? There are some more keys you need on your witnessing key ring, and I will share them in a future issue.

Jim Tillotson has served as the president of Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary in Ankeny, Iowa, since June of 2015. He was the senior pastor of Meadowlands Baptist Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, for eighteen years. During his time in Canada he led Meadowlands Baptist in planting three new churches and helped begin a Christian school and a small Bible institute.

What is the Day of the Lord?

Continued from page 33

2. *Defense, regathering, security for converted Israel*
 - Amos. 9:11–15; Obad. 17; Mic. 4:6–7; Zeph. 3:13–20; Zech. 12:3–9, 14:11
3. *Sanctification of Jewish and Gentile believers*
 - Joel 3:17; Obad. 17; Zeph. 3:9–13; Zech. 12:10–13:9; Isa. 19:16ff.
 - Acts 2
4. *Terrestrial alterations*
 - Zech. 14:4–10; Joel 3:18; cf. Ezek. 47
5. *Agricultural abundance*
 - Joel 3:18; Amos 9:11–14
6. *Establishment of universal reign and worship of Yahweh*
 - Joel 3:17; Obad. 17–21; Mic. 4:6–7; Zeph. 3:9–20; Zech. 14:9–21

The list of elements and passages here is not exhaustive. Other more specific characteristics (positive and negative) could be added (e.g., universal justice, universal peace).

Summary

The eschatological “day of the Lord” is the final visitation of God stepping into His creation and the human history that He initiated to consummate all the purposes He has promised to His people, to the nations, and to His own Son.

Considered in its broadest sense, the eschatological “day of the Lord” denotes *a complex of divine interventional events including the Tribulation, the Millennium, the White Throne judgment, and the final destruction of the present heavens and earth* (2 Pet. 3:10).

Its narrowest referent is the literal, physical, visible second coming of Christ; that is the central event that energizes all the others, the complex of events condensed into one micro-historical moment.

Dr. Layton Talbert is professor of Theology and Biblical Exposition at BJU Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina.

The Sign of Silly Women

Girlfriend, lean in close and listen carefully. You are accepted; you are wanted; you are strong; you are enough. Sound familiar? If you've picked up a recent women's book from a pop Christian author, you've probably read something very similar to this. Although there are notable exceptions, this is standard fare for today.

When we consider the signs of the end times, we don't often talk about *the sign of silly women*, but in 2 Timothy 3 Paul warns that women will be specifically targeted by the enemy. In perilous times false teachers will "creep into houses, and lead captive silly women." The word translated "silly" in the original language is a condescending term with "contemptuous meaning" that is "hard to reproduce in English." Although the exact meaning of "silly" is difficult, Paul gives us a clear description.

First, silly women are naïve to the raging spiritual war around them. These women become *captives*—hostages of war. They allow false teachers to weasel into their homes, when as fierce enemies they should have been barred at the door. Second, these women are burdened with sin. Instead of turning to Christ for His rest and easy yoke, they turn to wrong teaching to ease their guilt. This ties closely with the third characteristic: they are enticed by their own desires. Their lusts lead them away from a sincere devotion to Christ. They have itching ears. They open themselves up to teachers that will suit their own passions (2 Tim. 4:3). And as a result, these women are constantly learning, but are not coming to understand the truth.

Friend, I desperately don't want to be a naïve, silly woman. Let's remember that Paul also mentions notable, faithful whom women we *should* emulate—Priscilla, Phebe, Mary, and more! So, in these end days, how do we avoid falling

prey to the false teachers around us? May I suggest a few practical ways?

- Learn to read God's Word for yourself and use basic study tools.
- Be a learner in your local assembly (1 Tim. 2:11). Take advantage of every learning opportunity in your church before looking elsewhere for spiritual instruction.
- Find a Titus 2 woman in your congregation who has a history of walking with God and learn from her!
- Continue in what you learn (2 Tim. 3:14). Be on guard against "new" doctrine or a teacher who makes you rethink everything you've ever been taught. Novel doctrine is enticingly dangerous.
- Beware of getting emotionally attached to a specific author. Your church leadership has been tasked by God to watch for your soul, not any author, speaker, etc. (Heb. 13:17). If your pastor warns you about a teacher, don't bristle; thank him! We are in a spiritual war.
- Ask yourself, "Am I drawn to this teacher because this is what I *want* to hear?" Remember, false teachers are dangerous because of their subtlety. They twist truth or mix truth with error.
- Consider enrolling in an online Bible course from a trusted source.

Girlfriend, don't be silly; be a serious student of the Word!

Rebecca Brock is a gifted women's teacher with a passion for women's ministry. She currently serves as the executive assistant at Maranatha Baptist University. She graduated from MBU with a degree in Communications, has since earned an MEd in English, and is currently working on an MA in Bible.



Why the Chaplain Ministry Is So Important to FBFI

Although FBFI was recognized by the Department of Defense as a chaplain-endorsing agency several years prior to the 1990s, the current chaplain ministry of FBFI began endorsing in earnest at that time. It was John Vaughn who brought it into reality, but it had been the vision of the FBFI leadership since the 1960s. The FBFI Chaplaincy is important to the military and civil communities our chaplains serve. Why? Here are just a few reasons.

Our own young people need *their* chaplains.

Our young people grow up loving our country and wanting to serve our country. Their faith group needs to be represented in the Armed Forces and our community roles (police, fire, etc.) in which they serve. They often serve far away from home and under fire. Pastoral counsel, comfort, and leadership are essential in a time like that. We do not have enough chaplains strategically placed to serve all our young people, but we will work toward that goal.

It is a very effective way of being salt and light.

Our FBFI chaplains are some of the finest in all the military. They serve in positions of high rank, high honor, and great influence. Their voices are heard, and they make a difference in the overall climate of the chaplaincy in all of the military. They function like Daniel in Babylon or Esther in Persia, influencing those around them for the preservation of our freedoms. God has placed them strategically in this uncertain time.

It is a Great Commission opportunity.

One of the great harvest fields for souls is the military. Young people who have been removed from their

homes, friends, and other influences are often open to the gospel. One of the most important ministries of a chaplain is evangelism. We believe in seeking out souls wherever we can.

It is a rich source for future ministry leaders.

In my own local church we have been greatly blessed to have men serve who grew into spiritual leaders while they served in the military. Some of these men served entire careers and are now deacons or on our church staff. Others served a short time and are now in full-time ministry. Many of our next generation of biblical fundamentalist leaders are presently serving as enlisted soldiers, sailors, marines, or airmen.

Our community chaplains get access to their communities that they otherwise would not have.

We have community chaplains too. Often they are pastors serving part-time as volunteers—police, fire, hospital, and other types of chaplains. These are doors of opportunity for pastors to reach into their own communities. Our chaplain-endorsing program helps them expand the influence of the gospel and of their own local ministries.

Our chaplaincy ministry is an essential aspect of our stewardship of the Great Commission in our present environment. Pray for our chaplains, support them, encourage them, and thank God for them.

Dr. Kevin Schaal is the FBFI president and has served as pastor of Northwest Valley Baptist Church since its beginning in 1987. He writes weekly on Proclaim and Defend, the online voice of FBFI.

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CH (LTC) Roger Rodriguez
CH (MAJ) Doug Nab
CH (MAJ) Matthew Sprecher
CH (CPT) Seth Hamilton
CH (CPT) Daniel Roland
CH (CPT) Jonathan Yarbrough

Navy

CDR Robert Johnson, CHC
CDR Tavis J. Long, CHC
LCDR Trenten Long, CHC (USCG)
LCDR Robert Spivey, CHC
LCDR Shawn Turpin, CHC
LT Plais Hoyle, CHC
LT Anthony Pelc, CHC (USMC)

Air Force

Ch, Capt. Alan Findley
Ch, Capt. Ladron Thomas

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Army

CH (MAJ) Joshua Cox
CH (MAJ) Drew Paul
CH (MAJ) Bret Perkuchin
CH (MAJ) Matt Sanders
CH (MAJ) Chris Wyrick
CH (CPT) Matthew Myers
CH (CPT) Christian Torres
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CH (1LT) Vincent Lieb

Navy

LT Jason McDonnell, CHC

Air Force

Ch, Maj. Lukus Counterman
Ch, Capt. Daniel Llorente
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Troy Shoaf

CIVIL AIR PATROL

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Ch, Maj. Wayne Keast
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JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

Randy Kunkleman

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1LT Timothy Zellers
1LT Collin Bond
2LT Trevor Shoemaker
2LT Jeremy Fisher

Sometimes God's Blessings Come in Different Ways

The Word of God states in Psalm 66:12, "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." I find it very interesting that the psalmist mentions going through fire and through water. Fire and water are different in makeup—one is hot, the other cold. So, too, the hardships and trials that all of God's children encounter are different in makeup and degrees of difficulty. However, we must consider the last part of Psalm 66:12, which says, "but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." For a truly born-again individual, regardless of what hardships he experiences, God will bring him out into a wealthy place. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "As sure as ever God puts His children in the furnace, He will be in the furnace with them"—just as God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they were cast into the fiery furnace. In Daniel 3:24 King Nebuchadnezzar asked in astonishment, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king." The king replied in verse 25, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." The Lord is always with His people as they go through various trials and testings. But attached with these times of trouble and distress is God's promise to bring us to the treasure chest of His wealth. There are a couple of different ways God's blessings come to us.

First, God's blessings come in the unusual way that is described in the first part of Psalm 66:12: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads." Just as the children of Israel suffered abuse by the Egyptians and many other enemies, so often God's people undergo mistreatment, not only at the hands of the unsaved but also by fellow believers. I personally know a pastor who went through this ordeal. He was a youth pastor with a godly wife; when his wife was expecting their first child, the senior pastor told them that she could have a six-month break from her secretarial duties at the church when the child was born. After the baby was born,

the pastor told my friend that he wanted his wife back in the office in two weeks. The youth pastor said, "You told us she could have six months off." The pastor said that he changed his mind, and that if they did not follow his leadership they would be fired. The youth pastor left that ministry and went to another church. The pastor there treated him in the most unimaginable way. This happened to him in five different churches! This pastor friend of mine told me he was tempted to quit and get out of full-time ministry, but he said, "No! I know God has called me to preach, and I am going to stick with it." And he did. He has now pastored at the same church for more than twenty years—what a testimony! He can echo Job's words in Job 23:10, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Second, the Lord's blessings come through the latter part of Psalm 66:12: "We went through fire and through water." The fire and water represent a variety of hardships in this life. The fire could be the raging flames of financial loss, personal injury, a consuming disease, broken dreams, or a terminal illness . . . and this is by no means an exhaustive list. The water could represent the chilling waters of death, despair, rejection, and loneliness. But through all the fire and water a believer may experience, the psalmist ends the verse by saying, "But you brought us out into a wealthy place."

God's blessings come in very different ways, so we must trust Him. First Peter 1:7 says, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." If you have been struggling and wondering why you have had so many dark and difficult trials in your life, understand that God is in control and will bring you out into His wealthy place at His proper time.

Evangelist Jerry Sivnksty may be contacted at PO Box 141, Starr, SC 29684 or via e-mail at evangjsivn@aol.com

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