

# *Scripture and Prophecy*

Understanding, Error, and Its Effect on the Church



We remain on the cusp of His imminent next Act,  
without any further signs indicated prior to commencement.

[Maranatha!](#)

Cover Illustration: Daniel's Answer to the King, Briton Rivière, 1890

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And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in full knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and without fault until the day of Christ, having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

**Philippians 1:9-11**

But according to His promise we are looking for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are looking for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and consider the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest you, having been carried away by the error of unprincipled men, fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

**2 Peter 3:13-18**

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

**2 Timothy 4:1-4**

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

**1 Corinthians 16:13-14**

## Preface

I am a layman student of God and have had the privilege to study with many other [Bereans](#) over 25 years. Our weekly Men's study has seen about 50 followers of Jesus come through. Over this time we have sought to carefully consider a variety of thoughts from God's Word, Pastors, Theologians and Authors as we've asked: "What does God have to say about us, and how would we see life as Jesus does?" My fellow students are from various Churches and backgrounds, and each contributes through his own gifts as we consider each author as another one of us at the table.

A few years ago, our studies led us to [Dr. Paul Benware](#), a professor of Eschatology. We found his text, [Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach](#) to be fair and thorough as he walked us through a survey of the differing eschatological viewpoints accompanied by supporting Scripture. Dr. Benware's approach allowed the student to come to his own conclusions, and our careful study of Scripture brought us to see many of the truths and errors across the spectrum of End Times perspectives.

We would later become aware of [Reverend Clarence Larkin](#), a Baptist Pastor active during the turn of the 20th century whose writings and illustrated works influenced countless Pastors. Larkin was a contemporary of Moody who promoted Larkin's works through the Moody Bible Institute. A trained mechanical Draftsman before coming to Jesus, he produced [an extensive set of illustrations](#) to help students understand many important details of Scripture. Larkin's book, [The Book of Revelation: A Study of the Last Prophetic Book of Holy Scripture](#) shows the understanding of a classically educated theologian and brings incredible new perspective to contemporary Christians. Larkin wasn't a magical source of hidden Bible truths, but was a Bible student, Pastor and Teacher whose depth of Scriptural awareness was expressed through his writings and beautiful illustrations.

My concern as a Christ follower has always been a reverence for God and His Word, and for the health of the local Church. I care very much about soundness of teaching and the Church fulfilling Her function though fellow followers of Christ.

The topic of Eschatology has raised up as important to me as well. It isn't a burning need to know what will happen next, but instead drives my faith and reverence further as we marvel at the clarity and complexity of God's Works. I believe that aside from the Gospel accounts of Jesus' precious Work, prophecy and particularly its crescendo, as described in Jesus' Revelation to John, is paramount. Following the reports of Jesus, there are more activities of God in Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week than any other time in history. All of His Work comes to a head as He brings closure to all His stated intent and goals. It swells pride, awe and reverence towards God in me as I consider it all.

It also motivates me to understand so as to be able to discuss this most overlooked topic with people both Saved and Lost. The implications for both groups are the most significant issues in our collective existence. And amazingly, the topic seems to be the most maligned and misunderstood out of pretty much all the Bible. I attribute this to the efforts of our Enemy and the of the accommodation of the Church to varying degrees.

Fellow Scriptural purists and zealots throughout the Church also grieve about this, and much work has been done to understand, explain and teach the topic. The loss of our comfort and awe because of this malignment is incalculable. Churches continue to repeat and teach the errors of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, if even teach Prophecy at all. The problem feeds itself with lax and poor stewardship of the Word, turning people away as they conclude it is either false or cannot be understood. Worse yet, if mistaught, it is a rudder to the Church's ship that can steer Her into mindset and activity contrary to what Jesus told us to do.

I don't believe fellow lovers of Jesus and His Word are intentionally teaching in error. But, because it is a thick topic that requires earnest study, not to mention the poor instruction unfortunately given at many of our Seminaries, it has been an easy trap to fall into. I also believe this is exactly what the Enemy has endeavored. But we don't have to be victims of this. The Teacher and the Word continue to stand ready to generously offer help, if we would only engage it. I encourage the reader to ask Him for His help and consider anew what He has told us.

While under the care of the Holy Ghost, Who is the ever 'restraining hand' against evil, Mankind has been able to continue on – even flourish if we belong to Him. But it is clear experientially and more importantly Scripturally that Mankind cannot and will not overcome the sin of the World, and the expectation that the Church will repair the World is simply not true. The Salvation of all Creation will come through Jesus' prophesized Work alone, and He has revealed why and how in His Word. The Church needs to understand and teach this, and rest in His care as God works out the culmination of His Kingdom.

This is humbly written for the consideration of students and for teachers who are to instruct and edify the Body. It is a brief text, not exhaustive but a primer to help alert us to issues driving truth and error, that we could better revere and cooperate with our King. Other resources and the current running sum of our studies can be found at <https://mikeschefferblog.com/index.php/2024/09/08/berean-prophecy-study-larkin-benware/>

<sup>7</sup> “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”  
**Revelation 22:7**

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## Introduction

Biblical Apologetics are different than Christian Apologetics. Both are important and necessary and they each ultimately serve the same purpose (the Glory of God), yet they address different audiences.

Christian Apologetics is the defense of the Faith to those who do not possess a Saving faith in Jesus or even fail to acknowledge the existence of God. Biblical Apologetics is turned toward the Church seeking to correct, strengthen, and refine our understanding of God and everything this would impact.

This manuscript is a Biblical Apologetic to the Church, Her leaders and Her disciples. Striving to understand God is a marathon without end, and fortunately, this run never fails to benefit. In a miniscule way akin to pondering the workings of a fine pocket watch, the complexity and purpose God has shared with us is breathtaking. The boundless and Eternal Mind has graciously undertaken the task of helping the comparatively simple and rebellious see His and our realities in an endeavor to bid us to come back to Him. He beckons us not in a beggarly way but in a Kingly way, perfect and Holy, ever the Standard – He is ***El Elyon***, the Supreme, the God Most High. And, He has graciously explained what to expect of Him.

Contrast this with a naturally fallen view of God, self, and the World, coupled with an unimaginable complacency and even denial by those He chose to retrieve from our pitiful, fallen rebellion. The first Adam was deceived, leaving us in a worse state. The thief, the Enemy, turned from smooth talk to a campaign of open and violent deception in an effort to thwart Eve's seed (**Gen 3:15**) and drag Mankind (cooperatively!) to Hell. These deceptions still prevail upon us, the pitiful and fallen. Yet it is the truth of God's Word alone that might combat this deception and lead us to a Saving understanding and faith.

In the end, the most valuable thing Mankind has is the Truth. The Truth about God, about ourselves, about His expectations, about our failure, about the consequences, and about our Salvific Remedy, Jesus. Without God's Truth there is nowhere to begin, and all would be lost. But by God's Grace, "the truth will make you free." (**John 8:32b**)

Because of this, it is imperative to strive to study and be conformed in the Truth (**Rom 12:2**). The Church exists to know it, teach it and live under it. For this reason, Biblical Apologetics are an essential. And therefore, it is crucial that Church leaders and teachers make careful and diligent effort to get it right.

Unfortunately, this isn't done in the safety of a Spiritual vacuum. Our Enemy is an expert of the Bible and of Human behavior, and his rage continues to swell as his end approaches. In his wicked and hateful efforts to thwart God and deceive Man, he employs countless avenues – and one of the most effective places he strikes is at the foundation of Truth, the teaching Church. Pastors, Elders, leaders, teachers; All are, whether we acknowledge or not, prime targets of misdirection, and so, the saints they shepherd.

This misdirection is seldom an insistent, naked evil but is instead shades of mistruth, seeds that can grow into Biblically unrecognizable teachings that can even make sense to the complacent. Only part of what was spoken to Eve didn't agree with what God had told Adam, yet it was sufficient to result in Adam's change of allegiance and the surrender of his inheritance. Truth is pure, and mixed even with seemingly innocuous alterations, can seem reasonable. The results however can be most substantial.

This is not to say that all Scriptural error is intentional, nor damning. Jesus' Saving Gospel is so clear that a child may understand and be Rescued. Yet, God clearly cares about being correctly represented (**Job 42:7**), and Jesus warned those who would cause others to stumble by teaching incorrectly (**Matt 18:7**). The flock of the Church are rightfully influenced by the people they trust to teach and lead them. Unfortunately, errors in understanding held by the leader can become embraced as erroneous beliefs of the taught. The consequences should cause us to take serious pause.

Therefore, it is in a love for God, His Word, Our Lord, His Church, Her leaders, and the flock I put forward these thoughts as we each strive to understand and closely follow our Lord.

*"May the dust of your Rabbi's feet cover your clothing."*

## 1. Why Address Scripture and Prophecy?

At first glance, whatever doctrine of eschatology – a studied view of the meaning of End Times prophetic Scripture – one holds (if at all) doesn't seem to be a big issue. After all, prophecy is difficult to understand, and with so many expert opinions unable to agree, how could we possibly know for sure? Certainly, these differing opinions can coexist until we see how it plays out, right?

The issue is an inverted forest and the trees problem. To follow the saying, in most cases we can fail to see the forest because we focus on the trees. However, it is our focus on the enormity of the forest of eschatological doctrines that can hold our attention at the expense of the details of the trees of prophetic Scripture. To have a sound doctrinal summary, we have no choice but to carefully sort through the details.

The answer obviously depends on what God has told us and how true to His Word we are able to understand. I believe the prevailing End Times doctrines taught by the majority of Churches are contrary to the Lord's and Apostles' teachings; Have their beginnings in anti-Jewish intentions; Are not reverent of Scripture; Have misled the Church to a terrible degree in a number of important areas; Have been used as a tool of persecution of the Jews since their dispersion; And, are even a danger for the Shepherd and the flock. Conclusions other than what God conveys to us are harmful to the Church.

This is not to say that the only people who will see Salvation are those who get all doctrine and understanding right. Fortunately, these aren't the terms of our Salvation. But an incorrect doctrine – beliefs contrary to what God has said – can only result in harm and loss. Therefore, striving for correct understanding towards obedience is always far better.

How did the Church arrive here? The Early Church began with a clear directive concerning End Times prophesy. The long-held understanding of the Scriptures was naturally expected of Her leaders, but by the time of the Council of Nicene the co-opt of the Church to the pagan State was well underway. This set the Church off on a tangent of doctrine that undermines the prophetic Words of God stating He would conclude history with the fulfillment of His covenants with Israel and also see the world Saved through His Jewish Messiah. This doctrinal diversion led to countless misapplications of Scripture, often so naked in error it led to widespread misunderstanding and distrust of prophesy in whole. This leaves the Church without the direction and comfort God intends. The only answer is to go back to the Scriptures with doctrines held by Jesus and the Apostles.

Can someone hold a wrong belief (with the exception of the most core doctrine of Salvation through faith in Christ alone) and still expect to be Saved? I believe the answer is yes. Yet all of the rest of what God has given us in His Word are meant to fortify our view of Him, bring sobriety to our view of self, to afford comfort and assurance as we await our blessed hope (**Titus 2:13**), to strengthen the basis of our faith, and to cause a swell of reverent obedience in love for Him.

My main goal is to address the contributing foundations behind these doctrines, explain why I believe they're not true to what God has said to us, and illustrate some of the consequences of embracing them. In doing so I hope what God plainly intends us to understand will become more evident, that we in the Church would repent.

## 2. Clarifying the Role of the Church

The role of the Church is a foundational issue affecting our Biblical worldview of life and Israel. Why does the Church exist, and what is Her purpose?

Jesus' last instruction before Ascending (**Matt 28:19-20**), and the report of the early Acts 2 Church activities (**Acts 2:37-42**) give us clear insight. The Church solely exists to preserve and teach the truth; To be a forum of Worship to the Triune God; To provide a community of Grace for Her members; And to equip those members to proclaim that Truth to all, seeking the Elect to make disciples, teaching them to obey all Jesus has given in the whole of His Word that these new disciples would join them in the Church. Anything involving the Church contrary to these points is a diversion and a misuse of the Church as intended by our Lord.

**Matt 28:18-20** – <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.



<sup>19</sup> **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,**

<sup>20</sup> **teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."**

**Matt 13:51-52** – <sup>51</sup> "Have you understood all these things?" They \*said to Him, "Yes."

<sup>52</sup> And He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, **who brings out of his treasure things new and old."**

**Acts 1:8** – <sup>8</sup> but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to THE END OF THE EARTH."**

**Acts 14:21-23** – <sup>21</sup> And **after they had proclaimed the gospel to that city and had made many disciples**, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

<sup>22</sup> **strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith**, and saying, "Through many afflictions we must enter the kingdom of God."

<sup>23</sup> And when they had **appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.**

**Luke 24:45-48** – <sup>45</sup> **Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,**

<sup>46</sup> and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

<sup>47</sup> and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.**

<sup>48</sup> **You are witnesses of these things."**

**Acts 2:37-42** – <sup>37</sup> **Now when they heard this**, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men, brothers, what should we do?"

<sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, "**Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

<sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

<sup>40</sup> And with many other words **he solemnly bore witness and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this crooked generation!"**

<sup>41</sup> So then, **those who had received his word were baptized;** and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

<sup>42</sup> And they were **continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.**

To do this, the Church is to be the central locus of God's truth. This truth must be understood by Her leaders, taught to Her members, and proclaimed to the unsaved in purity and clarity. The protection of this truth is tantamount, for if the well is poisoned the partakers will suffer loss, even of the hope of Salvation.

If there is an effective point of insertion for the lies of the Enemy, it is the Church – and the Church must recognize this to be constantly on guard. Satan's success in planting even slight lies contrary to God's truth blunts the effectiveness of the Gospel while misleading Mankind's understanding of God's Salvation plan for Israel and the world.

A Church successful in Her role will nurture members to embrace God's truth as supreme and see all forms of human wisdom as subordinate while seeking to reconcile the two in their right order. The Christian's great tool in navigating the endless moral minefield is their Biblical worldview. Every human has a worldview. The question is, how well is one's worldview reconciled to the truth God has revealed?

Consider, how do your thoughts agree with God's on controversial topics such as marriage, parenting, gender, family, abortion, ethnicity, inequities, riot and rebellion, scientific claims, wealth, poverty, political participation, leadership, evolution, immigration, spirits and the Underworld, Biblical authority and accuracy, even prophetic Scripture? Do you find your thoughts at odds with His? Do you reliably and actually know what to expect His thoughts to be? A robust worldview is rooted in the tenets of God's Word, dividing the truth and understanding God's character and intent. A Biblical worldview provides a firm footing as an inoculant to the endless assault of grey area topics, imparting God's wisdom to the disciple who would "be

transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect." (**Romans 12:2**)

### 3. Why did God Give us Scripture?

Many are familiar with **2 Timothy 3:16-17**:

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness,

<sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Elihu declared God's instruction in **Job 36:10-12**:

<sup>10</sup> He opens their ear to discipline, And says that they return from wickedness.

<sup>11</sup> If they hear and serve Him, They will end their days in prosperity And their years in pleasures.

<sup>12</sup> But if they do not hear, they shall pass away by a weapon And they will breathe their last without knowledge.

Israel heard and lived under the vast instruction God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai in **Exodus 19-31**; Father God declared at Jesus' Transfiguration in **Luke 9:35b**: <sup>35b</sup> "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"; Jesus told John in **Revelation 1:19**: <sup>19</sup> Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

In all cases throughout the Bible, the Creator condescends to convey His thoughts to the lowly created that they might understand Him and the consequences of interaction with a Holy, Loving, Terrible God. Without this charity any real, interactive relationship would be impossible.

He has explained where all Creation came from; How Mankind fell into sin; What He would do about it; His choice in a People who would live closely under Him, receiving/recording/preserving His Words to them; Those same People as the focus of His intentions towards them and to the benefit of the world until the eventuality of Creation reborn; His expectations, punishment and reward; And finally the centrality of His Chosen to bring this about to His Glory.

He has given us Scripture so we might understand Him and ourselves, His expectations, What He will accomplish, and the consequences for the Wheat, the Tares, for Satan, the Anti-Christ, his False Prophet, angels, and Creation.

### 4. Scripture's Miraculous Preservation and Protection

Is the Bible you have today an exact copy of the original writings, or more so, is It true to the Spirit's intent? Perhaps a good answer is that while not a flawless reproduction, it is by God's Volition, sufficient towards Salvation and edification.

There are scholars not satisfied with that answer who hold that the Scripture (specifically the New Testament), in order to be quickening and effective (even unto Salvation), must be the exact same words delivered by the Holy Spirit to the human author without addition, omission, or error. I expect if they are right, everyone once or more removed from the original NT author's script is in danger.

Every New Testament available today is a translation from a Hebrew, Greek or Latin manuscript that is at best a next generation copy of the original report by the human author as he was "...carried along by the Holy Spirit." (**2 Pet 1:21**) The truth is we don't realistically seem to have any of the "original" documents that comprise the Canon of the Bible. The oldest duplicates of the New Testament we have were compiled 300 years after the originals were written. A second major group of manuscripts used by Bible translators dates from compilations of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

All native language Bible translations are derived from these base manuscripts. Further, there are demonstrable clerical errors in their reproduction when compared to each other, yet not errors of substance. So, scholars insisting that God's inspiration of an inerrant Bible requires His preservation of the exact text lack a square foundation to rest upon. The original manuscripts simply do not exist.

Translators render the words and meaning of the base manuscripts into the destination language of the reader. The nature of translation doesn't mean every translator arrives at the same exact word and sentence structure conclusions. They work to bring across the base manuscripts' intended ideas, but the existence of so many English translations demonstrate how many ways the ideas can be presented. Translations run a spectrum of function and outcome – A literal translation like the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB) strives to present the manuscript with as little variation from the words' meaning as possible, while an amplified or conversational translation like The Message (MSG) takes liberties to convey the meaning of the sentences.

These two approaches show the fundamentally different intents of the translators. A Literalist seeks to give the words as written, leaving the understanding of their meaning to the teacher or reader, while an Amplifier seeks to provide the meaning to the reader. In between these two extents fall the other translations to one degree or another. For example, consider **Gal 4:4-7**:

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,  
<sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.  
<sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"  
<sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. **Gal 4:4-7 (LSB)**

<sup>4</sup> But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,  
<sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.  
<sup>6</sup> Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."  
<sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. **Gal 4:4-7 (NIV)**

<sup>4-7</sup> But when the time arrived that was set by God the Father, God sent his Son, born among us of a woman, born under the conditions of the law so that he might redeem those of us who have been kidnapped by the law. Thus, we have been set free to experience our rightful heritage. You can tell for sure that you are now fully adopted as his own children because God sent the Spirit of his Son into our lives crying out, "Papa! Father!" Doesn't that privilege of intimate conversation with God make it plain that you are not a slave, but a child? And if you are a child, you're also an heir, with complete access to the inheritance. **Gal 4:4-7 (MSG)**

Any translation, be it into English or Kenyan Swahili, requires translational bridges from the original writings to the base manuscripts to the destination language. Even if the originals were available, would not the translators need be inspired by the Spirit as well to maintain this inspired cohesion? It seems clear another factor must be in play to explain a verse like **Isaiah 40:8** that says God's Word will be preserved – " <sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

**Isaiah 55:10-11** says that Scriptural quickening and effectiveness is God's Work, not of the human messenger who is 'given the seed' and 'given the bread':

<sup>10</sup> For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what pleases Me, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Also consider the event of Peter addressing the crowd gathered at Pentecost. The Apostles and Peter were overcome with the Holy Spirit and spoke "the mighty deeds of God" (**Acts 2:11**) in several languages represented by people present who were from 15 geographic locations. This was clearly beyond their abilities and the was the work of the Holy Spirit through them.

<sup>1</sup> And when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all together in one place.  
<sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.  
<sup>3</sup> And there appeared to them tongues like fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.  
<sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.  
<sup>6</sup> And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language.

<sup>7</sup> So they were astounded and marveling, saying, “Behold, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?”

<sup>8</sup> And how is it that we each hear them in our own language in which we were born?”

<sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

<sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the district of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

<sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” – **Acts 2:1-11**

Also, as Jesus is credited as performing miracles through His Apostles (**Mark 16:20**), so too it seems apparent that the Holy Spirit be credited with quickening through the words spoken by those who belong to God through Jesus. In both cases, it is not the volition of the person through whom God’s Acts come, but the Acts are of the God Who delivers them through the person cooperating with Him.

If the original words of Scripture’s human authors were the requirement for a quickening and effective outcome, or if translators of the base manuscripts (or even those translators at work today) are not inspired as the original authors, we would be Lost. On the contrary it must be the Volition of God Who authors His Word’s effectiveness, as always, through fallen Humanity.

All of this said, the accuracy and truth of God’s Word continues to be beyond question. These Words of God are essential in understanding and knowing Him, in seeing ourselves as He does, and opening the mind’s path to receiving the Holy Spirit’s quickening even unto Salvation. Clerical alterations cannot equate to the loss of Scripture’s efficacy because the real efficacy resides with the One Who is the Author and Protector of faith (**Heb 12:2**).

The conclusion: God HAS providentially preserved His infallible Word, not only on paper, but more importantly in His Volition. The protected Word rests in God Himself and it continues to effectively be provided to us through faith in the written Word we read today. Choose a translation as close and literal to the original manuscripts as possible, as free of any outlook that would color the translation away from the Character and Intent of God. In study, consider the surrounding context, root word meanings, and their use elsewhere in Scripture to discern the intent of the writer.

## **5. Why does the careful study, interpretation and teaching of Scripture matter?**

It begins with a reverence for God’s Word to us.

Most everyone can understand the importance of a physical or logical foundation. The larger the object over the foundation, the more critical becomes the foundation that supports it. But there is also the fact that the object it supports will be very much shaped by that foundation. A square object isn’t likely to be built over an irregular foundation, and the shape and soundness of the foundation will translate to the shape and soundness of the supported object. Jesus helps us understand the importance of a foundation as He explains in **Matt 7:24-27**:

<sup>24</sup> “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

<sup>25</sup> And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew and fell against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

<sup>26</sup> And everyone hearing these words of Mine and not doing them, may be compared to a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

<sup>27</sup> And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

Also, Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 3:10-15**:

<sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

<sup>11</sup> For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

<sup>13</sup> each man’s work will become evident, for the day will indicate it because it is revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.

<sup>14</sup> If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

<sup>15</sup> If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

More so, these are the Words directed to us by Almighty God. Not just the specific words of Prophets, nor only the heart cries of kings and common people, but even the reports of historic happenings. It's not enough to call these accounts 'Bible stories' because they are the actual real-life reports intended for us by God.

All of this said, God's Word is absolutely worthy of our reverence. And while a Bible is just a pile of paper, and written Scripture shouldn't be worshipped, we mustn't overlook the Holy Spirit, Who is the living report of God, and Jesus as God's Word embodied. The written Word is Holy and precious to anyone who strives to understand his God as He has presented Himself and what He expects of us. It is unthinkable to regard the Scriptures with anything less than reverence.

How we understand God directly shapes our beliefs and actions. God is perfect and very exacting, and so He has expressed Himself as such in His Word to us. Jesus said "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the Law, until all is accomplished!" While it is true that Salvation is freely available in a straightforward way, we can miss the incredible and exacting details that were and are necessarily foundational to His offer to us. God hasn't just winked at anyone who says he wants Salvation. A Messiah and Sacrifice was provided Who – in flawless adherence to the exacting Law – fulfilled hundreds of prophecies in arriving, living, suffering, dying, resurrecting, ascending and ministering to make our Salvation possible – and His perfect work still isn't even close to being finished.

If Jesus somehow failed to follow a single expectation of Father, everything would have been for naught. If He was ever found unacceptable in perfection by God's immense standards, there would be no basis of atonement, propitiation, forgiveness or Salvation. This is addressed by Paul in a larger context in **1 Cor 15:16-19**:

<sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

<sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

<sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

<sup>19</sup> If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Therefore, if we understand that Scripture is a precious gift that has been brought painstakingly to us as given by a Graceful, complex, and exacting God; and if from Scripture we might strive to understand His thoughts and thus have our faith, beliefs and actions shaped; and if without Scripture we would not know our need in sin nor His offer of reconciliation; and if Scripture is the essence of the thoughts of the Holy Spirit and the basis of Scripture's embodiment in Jesus – is it rational to fail to hold Scripture in highest reverence and handle it accordingly?

## **6. Was Scripture given to condemn, comfort, or confuse?**

Scripture, always true, answers yes to all three:

### The Charity to condemn – **Romans 7:7**

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

### The Grace to comfort – **Psalms 118:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> From my distress I called upon Yah; Yah answered me and set me in a large place.

<sup>6</sup> Yahweh is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?

### The Sovereignty to confuse – **Mark 4:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> And when He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.

<sup>11</sup> And He was saying to them, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those who are outside, everything comes in parables,

<sup>12</sup> so that WHILE SEEING, THEY MAY SEE AND NOT PERCEIVE, AND WHILE HEARING, THEY MAY HEAR AND NOT UNDERSTAND, LEST THEY RETURN AND BE FORGIVEN.”

If any of these offend our sensibilities, what then? Are we comfortable with the first two, but find the third disagreeable? Shall we disagree with God and avoid or reassign the meaning He plainly intends for us to understand? Consider **Isaiah 55:8-9**:

<sup>8</sup> “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares Yahweh.

<sup>9</sup> “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Deciding first how we will approach Scripture, our hermeneutic approach, we need to see the heart behind God’s gift of Scripture. Does He intend to confuse His children in Christ who are possessed by His Spirit? Why would He do such a thing? **James 1:5** actually assures us the opposite is the case:

<sup>5</sup> But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Also including **2 Timothy 3:16-17** we can see that Scripture is meant to be understood in the plain and natural language by which it is given. This isn’t to say that all Scripture is easily understood, but that to understand it we must begin with a few guidelines.

## 7. Basics of Biblical Interpretation

Most of what divides the opinions of students of the Bible and the doctrines they embrace revolve around how they read Scripture. As Scripture has been given in a variety of formats, IE: From a prophet directly from God; Prophecy from Jesus; As an internal discussion as a person reasons with himself in light of His Word; Wisdom Books like Proverbs and Psalms; The directives of God to Israel through Moses in the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament; and Historic interactions and reports.

Most everyone can agree to distinguish promises specific to the people addressed versus the promises as wider affirmations of God’s intent to all who belong to Him through faith in His Messiah. We recognize the importance of understanding the historic context to the original listeners and seek reasonable parallels to us today. There is no objection to parsing out the original Hebrew or Greek to discern the meaning of the Words. The problem hinges on whether a literal reading versus spiritualized (allegorical) understanding of the Scripture is warranted.

This is a critical question to answer because an inferior approach can wrest God’s intended meaning and put it in the hands of us as fallible sinners. If He is the Giver of the Words, should we hazard injecting our own meaning into His Message?

Scholars through the ages have recognized guidelines and methods for studying the Bible that cooperate with God’s intent and help us understand what He’s said. These aren’t iron clad but are important principles to protect us from straying in our interpretation of ‘regular’ and prophetic Scripture.

### A. Interpret Scripture Literally

This principle is first and key to understanding Scripture, just as we would understand any other literature or regular conversation. God, through His Spirit, speaks His higher thoughts to us plainly because He wants us to understand.

*The literal method of interpretation is that method that gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage. ... It is called the grammatical-historical method to emphasize... that the meaning is to be determined by both grammatical and historical considerations. **J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come***

Each word is understood per it’s basic and customary meaning, determined by its grammatical and historical use, accepting the rules of grammar and rhetoric in light of the cultural and historical environment of the time it was written. This includes figures

of speech like we use today such as “There were a million people in the house.” Obviously not literal but it is a literal-idea figure of speech conveying there were many people.

**Elliott E. Johnson, "Premillennialism Introduced: Hermeneutics"** explains:

*“As an example, "serpent" as a word normally means "animal" and only an animal. But this normal usage and sense does not legislate that "serpent" in Genesis 3:14 must mean merely an animal. On the other hand, a literal system begins with recognizing "serpent" as an animal. Then it looks to the immediate or extended contexts for other clues to the meaning. This serpent speaks (3:1–5), and speaks as the enemy of God. Thus, in the literal system, this serpent is more than an animal; it is God's enemy...”*

Without beginning with a literal mindset, we risk the interpreter taking the position of final authority. Allegory or spiritualizing the text is not positioned to be grounded in the closest proximity to fact and the text is at the whim and imagination of the interpreter.

*“The literal system is necessary because of the nature of Scripture. First, Scripture is sufficiently clear in context to express what God promised to do. Second, Scripture is sufficiently complete in context to establish valid expectations of the future acts of God.” (Johnson)*

Further, human spiritualization and allegory beyond Scripture can be an unholy guise unto which to alter the statements and intents of Scripture supporting a false doctrine. The essence of the method is reassigning God’s intended meaning to suit the spiritualizer’s narrative as he holds authority in the hearer’s eyes, speaking in terms that appear to make sense. Spiritualizers redirecting God’s Word can dupe listeners who lack sufficient Biblical literacy and discernment to fend off their fabrications. These teachers risk introducing half-truths in the way the Enemy did in the beginning, at the Fall.

If this seems a hard stance, consider God’s command regarding false prophets responsible for delivering His Words verbatim (**Jeremiah 23:16**). Bible teachers, while not under direct revelation from God, are responsible much the same to faithfully convey His Scripture. False prophets faced death (**Deut 18:20**), while false teachers today risk a harsher Bema Judgement (**James 3:1**) or might even be found to not belong to Him. (**Matt 7:19–23**)

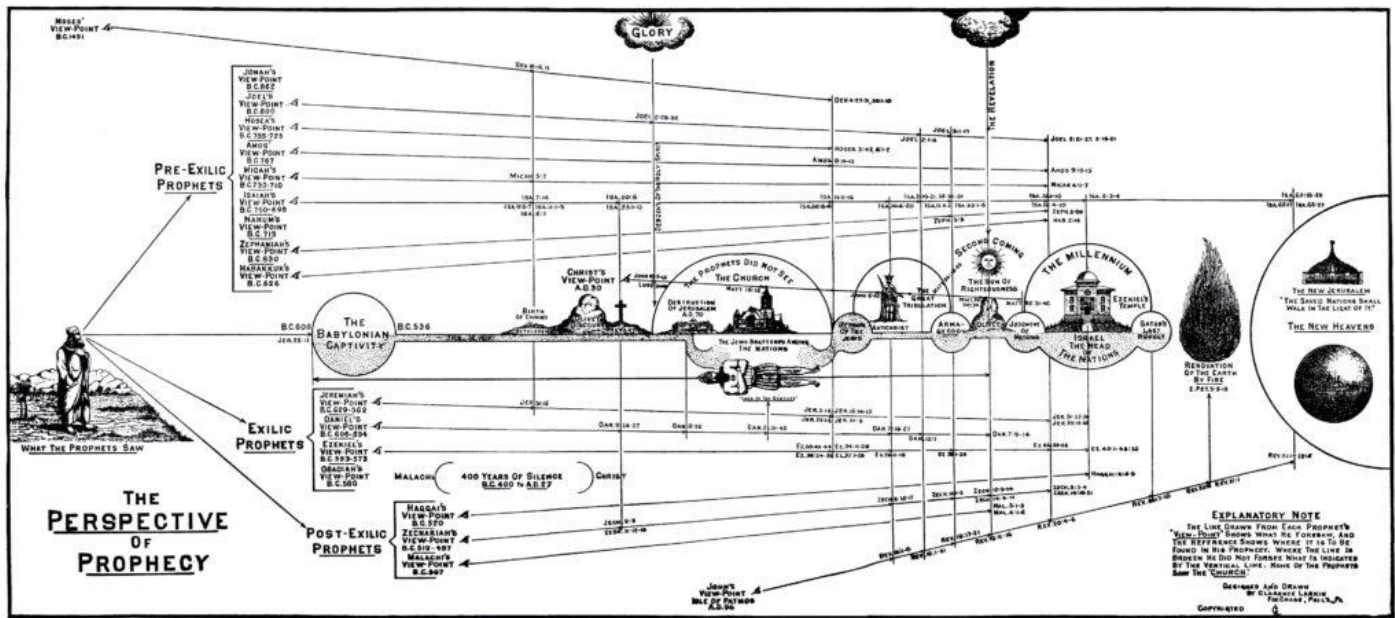
## **B. Interpret Scripture in comparison to other Scripture**

This follows the Reformer’s central principle of [\*Analogia Scriptura\*](#), or the Analogy of Faith. The Westminster Confession states: “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.”

As Scripture is the Word of One Author, of one mind as well as Divine, His Scripture cannot contradict itself and so is qualified for proof and clarification of the rest of Scripture. This includes the interconnection of the Old and New Testaments. While the OT provides the lion’s share of the basis for our understanding, the NT provides both further details and new information and the New Covenant. Neither is inferior to the other and both must be employed in reference as literally told. Spiritualizing OT passages to reassign the related NT information is not how God intends us to read Scripture.

## **C. Interpret allowing for time intervals**

Prophetic Scripture only assures us of one aspect of the future declared by God, that something will happen. He doesn’t always tell us how He will do something nor usually when on the calendar. Prophets, with the general exceptions of Daniel and the Apostle John, were usually told only the terminus point. This essentially means prophecy is often without reference to depth of time. For example, the earliest Scripture foretelling of the Messiah is **Gen 3:15** followed by at least **Deut 16:18**, **Deut 18:15**, **Isa 11:1-3**, **Isa 7:14**, **Isa 9:6-7**, **Dan 9:24-25** and **Micah 5:2**. Except in Daniel 9, the prophet only sees a linear one-dimensional reference point. They can’t triangulate to a specific date, and the duration of intervals between points in a prophecy – sometimes separated by a comma in a sentence – were unknown.



These are often milestones that confirm the next juncture has passed. We might be told there is a next milestone, but not when it will happen. The establishment of national Israel is an example. Spoken of in **Isa 11:11-16**, **Jer 16:14-15**, **Jer 23:3-8**, **Jer 23:7-8**, **Jer 3:18**, **Ezek 20:40-44** and **Amos 9:11-12**, the earliest is about 2700 years before the fact. Yet, the time remained veiled until consummated in AD 1948.

## D. Interpret Figurative Language Scripturally

Just as Scripture is used to interpret Scripture (B), prophetic symbols and figurative language given to convey an idea of God should be viewed in three contexts: The Immediate, the Larger, and the Historical. A literal mindset and contextual cross ties to other Scripture give a reliable basis of interpretation, guarding against allegory and spiritualization which are the ideas of the reader overlaying the thoughts of God.

Spiritualization is a risky approach as there is less factual basis and it opens the door to distortions of God's message. More concerning is it removes the basis of validity in that each allegorical interpretation is as valid as the next. Also, in mixing literal and allegory, where is one approach used over the other, and who is to choose? The interpreter, seeking to assign his own framework of past events and extrapolate Scripture into the future, is the arbiter of meaning who has cut the moorings of plain reading of contextual Scripture.

In Jesus' Revelation to John, the contextual method relies heavily upon the interpreter's Old Testament knowledge. The Jews of John's day were well grounded in their Scripture and would have clearly understood many of the Old Testament Scriptures Jesus refers to in the vision. **Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*** notes:

*...a count of the significant allusions which are traceable both by verbal resemblance and by contextual connection to the Hebrew canon number three hundred and forty-eight. Of these approximately ninety-five are repeated, so that the actual number of different Old Testament passages that are mentioned are nearly two hundred and fifty, or an average of more than ten for each chapter in Revelation.*

Without clear and reliable interpretive principles, we cannot expect to arrive at an accurate understanding. Even if the literal contextual method fails to give a clear understanding of the Passage, would we agree that it is a far better outcome than an answer contrary to God's intent? And being subjective to the interpreter, isn't the truth at risk of being maligned by the fallible human imagining it? Could there be a more dreadful outcome?

For a more thorough discussion typical of the Literal approach, see Chapter 1 of Benware's [Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach](#).



## 8. For now, we see in a glass dimly

Aside from the Grace of the Holy Spirit, we could never hope to understand anything profitable in Scripture. Even with perfect 'sight' it isn't possible that we will see the Whole of God, as He is vast beyond our comprehension, and what He has told us is a fractional summary of what He would reveal. And of what He has revealed, even someone as informed as Paul – as a trained, top-tier Pharisee, an Apostle schooled by Jesus, and subject to Heavenly visions – still said “We see in a glass dimly” (**1 Cor 13:12**).

Add to that our Human condition of [Noetic Sin](#), affecting our ability to soundly reason. Jesus told us the Scriptures were Spiritual, foolishness to the unsaved, a stumbling block in front of the Saving truth. Without the quickening of the Holy Ghost, the power of the Word that will not return void falls on ears that will not hear.

The sum of it is we have no hope of correctly understanding His Words to us except for His Grace and Help to us. The big problem for us as we strive to understand is that even without him, we are prone to conjure our own understanding and even conclude it is correct.

The interference of the flesh cannot be underestimated and must be guarded against at every step. Assuming a posture of counterfeit righteousness, our resulting belief and assertions will sound right while possibly being horribly wrong. Consider a terrific example of this in **Matt 16:13-23**. In verses 16-17 we read:

<sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Yet five verses later, the same Peter rebukes Jesus' telling of His pending death, where we read:

<sup>22</sup> And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.”

<sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.”

Peter, like any of us, is subject to the trap of believing and speaking both through the Spirit's promptings as well as in Satan's temptation in concert with the flesh. In the case of speaking God's Word, Peter cooperated with God without interference. Peter also spoke words inspired by the Enemy of God, allowing his fleshly presupposition of a Messiah now Who would immediately free Israel from Her Roman oppressors and begin His conquest of the rest of the world. Peter was inadvertently cooperating with the flesh, but also with Satan in opposing “God's interests” (**Matt 16:23**) and so the Victory of the Cross.

Until liberated from this flesh, we cannot be fully trusted (**Jer 17:9**) – save yielding in surrender to the Spirit given to us in Salvation (**Eph 1:13-14**)

## 9. “Woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!”

Failure to have reverence for God and His Word has terrible consequences for the individual. But what about teachers, even Elders and Preachers in the Church who are held to a higher responsibility for the care of their flock? At least two Scriptures we shouldn't forget are **Matthew 18:6b-7**:

“... <sup>6</sup> but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea.

<sup>7</sup> “Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; nevertheless, woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!

and, **James 3:1-2**:

<sup>1</sup> Do not, many of you, become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment.

<sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the entire body as well.

A too-large-percentage of members in general of the contemporary Church often seem lacking in their discipline of study and are arguably weak in their understanding of Scripture. Yes, it is upon each individual to build and guard their theology under Christ's care. But if the listening flock strived also to know the Word taught to them, how much teaching in the Church would be questioned and not simply accepted as given? The obligations on today's teachers are disproportionately dangerous without a Berean audience.

<sup>10</sup> The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

<sup>11</sup> Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. **(Acts 17:10-11)**

All of us, leaders and followers, need to understand the foundational truths of Scripture as it shapes our beliefs and actions. If our understanding fails to be captured by what God has said to us, our foundations will be faulty. The building will be misshapen and weak, failing to do what He intended it to do. Yes, by His Grace, our frail work contributes to the Goal He orchestrates. But what happens if our understanding is so askew that the Church could even fail the basics of His mandates? What the Church and Her leaders understand, the flock would understand. Our understanding of Scripture has far-reaching consequences in what we and our Church believes and acts on.

## 10. Prophetic Scripture informs, confirms and comforts

In the upper room, Jesus said before departing to meet His Passion:

<sup>28</sup> You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

<sup>29</sup> And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.

Scripture's words of comfort and wisdom are precious. The living Word of God is peculiar in that it is spiritual, and so requires the help of the Holy Spirit to perceive and understand **(Mark 4:10-12)** and 'not return void':

<sup>11</sup> So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what pleases Me, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. **(Isa 55:11)**

One-line wisdom or even succinct passages are precious truth as is all Scripture, quickly and easily making a point that is understandable and powerful:

**John 3:16** – "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**John 14:6** – Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.

**Luke 9:35** – Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"

Prophetic Scripture is for a different purpose and requires careful study to understand. Confusion in the Church abounds for a number of reasons, but the root of the problem is different than people usually suggest. "There are so many ways to interpret prophetic Scripture" is the most common opinion. Actually, this doesn't reconcile at all with God's clear objectives for His Word to us. Nowhere else is the rest of Scripture accused of existing to confuse us as believers endowed with the Teacher, the Holy Spirit. And who would argue against the prophetic Scriptures foretelling Christ's arrival? There seems to be little argument there are so many ways to interpret those straightforward Scriptures, now after the fact.

The living Word is unique in that it reflects God's one truth in countless facets, but this singular source of truth has a miraculously flexible ability to address billions of individuals in their unique life experience. Believers will even relate that the same passage of Scriptural truth that addressed their need in the past now addresses another need. They find they have experienced another application of the same truth to them by the Holy Spirit.

So, if we are confused by prophetic Scripture and say 'there are so many ways to interpret it', who's fault is that? Is it fallible Man and his sin-clouded way of thinking, or his presuppositions of what the Scripture has to mean though it isn't what God has revealed, or an excuse for poor study, even attempted without the help of the Holy Spirit? As God is perfect, gracious and intentional in giving His Word to instruct us and prove Himself, how can we accuse Him of providing Scripture that is meant to cause such great confusion to His children possessed by His Spirit? No, the problem must lay with us.

## 11. Doctrines – How they can help and why they matter

Doctrines are constructs of Man, an understanding of an arrangement of Scripture seen from a higher orbit, built on the truths more widely dispersed through the Bible. Doctrines are still built on the individual truths but they are recognized in a greater collective goal, in a more encompassing truth God expresses to us. Great buildings are arrangements of individual bricks, as doctrines are rational understandings of individual Scriptures. They help us see the forest for the trees, to see what the overarching narrative is as represented in the truth.

A doctrine's worth can be weighed in its adherence to the truth God has given us, using three metrics: A plain and natural reading of the contributing Scriptures; Inclusion of, and cohesion with, the rest of related Scripture addressing the topic; Agreement with God's stated and observed overall intent throughout the Bible while accepting He has not revealed all mysteries to us.

The literal student will take Scripture at face value, understanding that God might be couching a corresponding (and scripturally cohesive) thought with it. For instance, consider King Nebuchadnezzar and his dream of the Colossus, the giant statue, in Daniel 2. Daniel told the King of the dream that the King himself had not revealed to Daniel, yet God revealed the dream to Daniel. Daniel described the Colossus back to the King:

**Daniel 2:32-35:** <sup>32</sup> The head of that image was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

<sup>34</sup> You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.

<sup>35</sup> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel would go on in **Dan 2:36-45** to relate God's explanation of the statue's sections as correlating to successive kingdoms from his (Babylon, Gold) to Medo-Persia (Silver) and Greece (Bronze), then to the first Rome (Iron), then what we would later understand to be Rome revived (Feet and toes of iron and clay), to be destroyed by the Stone (The Kingdom of the Christ).

The literal student will understand that the statue was presented and seen exactly as described and as God intended it to be received – a Colossus of gold/silver/bronze/iron/iron and clay. The literal student will also see the very plain explanation God gave Daniel and the subsequent kingdoms that history would later reveal but Daniel didn't know the details of yet. The same can be said of John's vision of Jesus in the opening of His **Revelation 1:12-16**:

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

<sup>13</sup> and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

<sup>14</sup> And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

<sup>15</sup> His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters,

<sup>16</sup> and having in His right hand seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword which comes out of His mouth, and His face was like the sun shining in its power.

Jesus presents Himself to John, and John reports exactly what he sees because Jesus specifically said to him in **Rev 1:11a** – “Write in a book what you see...” John was a literal student, reporting exactly what he saw without adding any commentary or interpretation not given by God. Did Jesus show Himself with a sword protruding from His mouth? Absolutely, as reported by John. Did it represent a truth conveyed by God in showing a sword? It is reasonable to understand that it corresponds to what John later reports in **Rev 19:11-15**:

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

<sup>12</sup> His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; having a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself,

<sup>13</sup> and being clothed with a garment dipped in blood, His name is also called The Word of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.

<sup>15</sup> And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may STRIKE DOWN THE NATIONS, and He will RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; and HE TREADS THE WINE PRESS OF THE WRATH OF THE RAGE OF GOD, the Almighty.

Both type of students will also be in agreement on Scripture prophesying the first Advent of Christ. Now after the fact, we see Scripture is replete with the promises of Jesus’ birth. The prophetic Scriptures are understood to be clear and the details hidden prior to His Appearance are today recognized as understandable, not confusing. Prophetic Scripture that has been fulfilled is almost universally understood in the literal because we can now see the outcome.

The real question is, will the Church continue to view prophetic Scripture in the same way? If God has been consistent in His presentation of prophecy, in informing and comforting, why would we now expect He seeks to confuse us? And more so, what rational reason could exist that we would reach beyond His literal or corresponding Words and resort to allegory and spiritualization? Unless, of course, we are trying to explain Scripture to meet an predisposed understanding we have of a doctrine. But what if that doctrine, a construct of Man, isn’t what God has actually conveyed to us?

## **12. Doctrines – Powerful, yet potentially dangerous if wrong**

Doctrines aren’t limited to the Church’s understanding of the Bible. Doctrines are an amalgam of underlying beliefs that serve to give a general rally point and direction for adherents. They can be military (Monroe Doctrine), monetary (Keynesian economics), social (take your pick), personal (Stoicism), or other religions (Hindu/Karma). As mentioned earlier, the legitimacy of a Biblical doctrine should be weighed in its adherence to the truth God has given us.

It would seem obvious that the Bible, carefully and literally understood, would be the beginning of a reliable doctrine. But what happens if the foundation of a doctrine is an ideal that is extra-Biblical? What happens if human misunderstanding, or bias, or men deceived by the Enemy conclude that ‘since I know (this) must be true, then Scripture must mean this’?

The leaders of the very early Church are often referred to as the Church Fathers. These were sincere and learned men, often the next or one generation removed from the teachings under the Apostles. As the Apostles were the foundation of Christ’s Church, their understanding and doctrines as given to them by God are embraced as infallible. So important were their part in Christ’s Church, we read in **Rev 4:10** that as Elders they hold the twelve of the twenty-four seats over Israel itself, and the twelve foundation stones of the New Jerusalem are named for them in **Rev 21:10-14**.

The early Church also had a lot to work out theologically. While particularly Paul, Peter and Jude revealed much of the mysteries and consequences of what had happened, other questions still had to be answered. And, the early Church was [already under assault](#) in the beginning from Satan and Men.

## 13. Competing Doctrines of God's Kingdom and the End Times

A foundational problem exists for anyone considering the theological framework and doctrines of God. Without a careful consideration of the underlying details, most Kingdom and End Times consequences of the competing doctrines can seem to come to logical conclusions at first blush. This leads to tremendous problems in understanding God, what He intends, and what to expect from Him. Further, once someone has landed on their chosen doctrine it can seem to be a safe place to avoid more exhaustive investigation into Scripture to weigh other doctrines, so changing positions is uncommon.

This is not to say that one perfect doctrine exists among well intentioned scholars. Aside from what God has conveyed in seemingly plain language there still reside mysteries yet to be understood, most likely when we are one day made like Jesus in body and mind. **(Phil 3:20-21)** However, it is clear that there are superior methods of interpretation that avoid reshaping Scripture into meanings void of or contrary to what is affirmed elsewhere in the Bible, or that discount the clear intentions of God and the people He has turned His attention to.

At first look, the main difference among the competing understandings might seem to simply be “When will Jesus return?” While a key question, many other very important questions emerge:

- Who will face or who are currently facing the Wrath of God? Currently, during the future Tribulation, or not at all?
- Will there be or when will a resurrection of the dead happen? Before, during, after the Tribulation, after the Millennial Kingdom?
- Will God’s covenants with the Jews still be fulfilled or has Israel been replaced by the Church?
- Will the redemption of all Creation and Mankind come through the efforts of Christ’s Church or by Christ Himself, alone?
- Is the eternal Lake of Fire the literal destination of sinners or is Hell a figurative term? Will anyone actually face Damnation? Who will be Saved from it?
- Are other prophetic Scriptures contributing to End Times, including Jesus’ Revelation to John, allegorical or literal?
- Is Jesus’ Revelation to John given chronologically or allegorically in overlapping scenes? Is the Revelation prophetically descriptive of things to actually come, or a capstone explanation of what is already happening to Mankind?

Instead of picking our favored outcome off of the menu of choices, we obviously need to strive to understand what God has told us and follow the Scriptures to their answer. Logic would tell us a homogenous and literal approach to understanding Scripture would lead to a general consensus with a variety of opinions of the fine points. However, the departure from the [literal method](#) has produced wildly differing outcomes. This confusion is a hallmark of the Enemy’s work, and the only remedy is to stay close to the Teacher and the explanation He has given us, denying any efforts or desires to manipulate it.

A more detailed summary of this is Dr. Paul Benware’s [Views Concerning The End Times](#).

## 14. The Dispensations of God’s Covenants

As our approach to interpreting Scripture is foundational (see [Basics of Biblical Interpretation](#)), so too is how we understand God’s Dispensations and Covenants. And as with the consequences of a literal vs allegorical approach to prophetic Scripture arrives at very different conclusions, so too are Dispensations and Covenants a great rudder to the eschatological ship.

*The word Dispensation is used in the New Testament (Luke 16:1–4; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4) and conveys the picture of responsibilities delegated to a steward by the owner (God), with positive and negative consequences following the execution of the owner’s expectations. Ryrie explains a Dispensation is "a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose." Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 28*

### Dispensations

Dispensations stand individually yet are continuations of the prior stated purposes of God, the Salvation of Mankind and all Creation. They can have features overlapping prior Dispensations because the Word of God always stands in continuity and He will not rescind or change. Some examples of earlier Dispensational statements continuing on would include not to again destroy the Earth by flood, the continuation of His expectations related through Mosaic Law to the Church (though Christians

will not be condemned by the Law, we would still be expected to live as that Law is written on soft hearts), and the blessings and curses for those relating to treatment of Israel. Not one jot or tittle will pass away from the Law until all is accomplished. **(Matt 5:17-18)**

As with Prophetic Scripture, a framework to interpret Dispensations are necessary. Efforts to interpret and understand God's Words to us is a sincere work, yet not a science. God has offered insight and understanding to those who will seek Him, and He encourages it. We are to seek Him **(Psa 34:8)**; To obey in repentance through understanding **(Rom 8:29)**; To be transformed by the renewing of our minds **(Rom 12:2)**; To avoid foolishness **(Psa 92:4-6)**; And to receive the Word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things (are) so **(Acts 17:10-11)**.

Three foundational objectives are employed in any understanding of Dispensations from God:

1. God's Glory in history is His primary goal
2. A literal reading of the text as with all Scripture
3. A clear distinction and preservation of the separate entities of Israel and the Church.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> point is the hill on which Literalists and Spiritualizers choose to die. This is explained later below (See [Origins of Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Replacement \(of Israel\) Theology](#)). For the Covenants to read naturally and in the order God gave them, it is impossible to exclude or replace Israel as a central aspect in Jesus' Revelation to John without spiritualizing and changing the clear and literal meanings. The ramifications to the rest of our understanding are significant.

Dispensations are summary names or categories given by theologians to the resultant changes following a Covenant. For example, following God's Covenant with Noah after the Ark landed when the waters of the flood receded ([The Noahic Covenant, Gen 9:11-16](#)) the Dispensation including Human government is commonly called [Post-Diluvian](#). While a Covenant was spoken by God at a particular time, Dispensations are periods of time that follow. They are continuations following but not negating prior Dispensations, and they can also carry specific aspects of the priors. They are alluded to but not named in Scripture, and are a tool for understanding the Works of God. Theologians generally agree on the number but the names and level of detail can vary. The [illustration](#) below divides the Dispensations between the Covenants.

## **Summary of the Major Dispensations**

### **1. Edenic (Gen 1:28-30) (From Man's creation to the Fall)**

- 1<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth."  
2<sup>9</sup> Then God said, "Behold, I have given to you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has the fruit of the tree yielding seed; it shall be food for you; <sup>30</sup> and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that creeps on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so.

*The Dispensation of "Innocence": God initially instructed Adam and Eve of their dominion and its use*

### **2. Ante-Diluvian (Gen 6:11-22) (From Ejection from Eden to the Flood)**

- 6<sup>11</sup> Now the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.  
1<sup>2</sup> And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.  
1<sup>3</sup> Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.  
1<sup>4</sup> Make for yourself an Ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and you shall cover it inside and out with pitch.  
1<sup>5</sup> Now this is how you shall make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits.  
1<sup>6</sup> You shall make a window for the ark, and complete it to one cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.

- <sup>17</sup> As for Me, behold I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall breathe its last.
- <sup>18</sup> But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.
- <sup>19</sup> And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.
- <sup>20</sup> Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.
- <sup>21</sup> As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them."
- <sup>22</sup> Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

***The Dispensation of "Conscience": Following the Fall and consciousness of good and evil, God gave the [Adamic Covenant](#) (Gen 3:15), and Adam's descendants multiplied both in number and of the evil of their hearts. Even fallen angels laid with the sons of Men (Gen 4:1-6) producing the giant Nephilim. God decided to destroy them all except 8, and instructed Noah to build the Ark***

### **3. Post-Diluvian (Gen 11:1-9) (From Post-Flood to the Calling of Abram)**

- <sup>11</sup> <sup>1</sup> Now the whole earth had the same language and the same words.
- <sup>2</sup> And it happened as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.
- <sup>3</sup> Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and they had tar for mortar.
- <sup>4</sup> And they said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth."
- <sup>5</sup> Then Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.
- <sup>6</sup> And Yahweh said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they have begun to do. So now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.
- <sup>7</sup> Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's language."
- <sup>8</sup> So Yahweh scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.
- <sup>9</sup> Therefore its name was called Babel, because there Yahweh confused the language of the whole earth; and from there Yahweh scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

***The Dispensation of "Human Government": Following the Flood, God gave [The Noahic Covenant](#), (Gen 9:11-16). The dispersion at Babel would soon follow, sending government and language across the world***

### **4. Patriarchal (From the calling of Abram to the Exodus)**

- <sup>15</sup> <sup>13</sup> Then God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your seed will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.
- <sup>14</sup> But I will also judge the nation to whom they are enslaved, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.
- <sup>15</sup> As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age.

***The Dispensation of "The Family": Following the dispersion at Babel God gave [The Abrahamic Covenant](#), (Gen 12:1-3, Gen 15:4-7, 12-16, 17-21). God called out Abram and over the course of 430 years eventually swelled the host of Israel while in captivity in Egypt, then delivered them through Moses in the Exodus.***

### **5. Legal (Gen 19:3-6) (From the Exodus to the Tearing of the Temple Veil, resuming at Christ's Millennial Reign)**

- <sup>19</sup> <sup>3</sup> Now Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel:
- <sup>4</sup> 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I lifted you up on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.



<sup>5</sup> So now then, if you will indeed listen to My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

<sup>6</sup> and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

*The Dispensation of "The Law": After Moses led Israel in the Exodus from captivity in Egypt, God gave the Law in [The Mosaic Covenant](#), (Exod 19:5-6, 24:1-8, 30:1-10). Following Mankind's demonstrated failure to self-govern, God would next would introduce Israel to life under Him and His Theocratic rule through Moses, including the Ten Commandments, the Tabernacle and its accessories, Priests and Sacrifices. This was active through the coming of Christ until the tearing of the curtain in the Temple (Matt 27:50-51) and will resume at Christ's Millennial Reign. (Deut 30:1-10)*

## 6. Ecclesiastical (2 Sam 7:16-17, Luke 1:30-33) (From Christ's Birth to His Second Coming)

7 <sup>16</sup> And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.'""

<sup>17</sup> According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

1 <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

<sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

<sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David,

<sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of His kingdom."

*The Dispensation of "Grace": The Conception of Christ enacted [The Davidic Covenant](#) (2 Sam 7:8-17) with the arrival of the promised One to sit on David's Throne. In the hours before His Sacrifice, Jesus announced [The New Covenant](#) (Luke 22:20). This marks the beginning of His Church for Jew and Gentile prior to the Jewish Dispersion after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, through the current regathering to National Israel, until the Church is taken in the Rapture. His New Covenant of Grace will continue to be available through the Tribulation to all until death or His Return (Zech 14:1-4)*

## 7. Messianic (Psalms 2:9-12, Isa 2:2-4, Jer 30:7; Dan 9:24; Zech 8:3-8, Zech 14:16-17, Micah 4:1-7, Hag 2:8-9, Matt 24:45-47, Rev 20:1-3, Rev 20:4-5) (Prophesized, 1000 years + unknown months)

Dan 9 <sup>24</sup> "Seventy weeks have been determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.

*Part of the Prophecy to Daniel 9 of the 'Seventy Weeks', the 70<sup>th</sup> is still to come. The subject of Jesus' Revelation to John, Daniel was told all prophecies will be concluded with the finish of His Work in history. This time is also known as the Tribulation and the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7)*

Rev 20 <sup>4</sup> Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their witness of Jesus and because of the word of God, and who also had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

<sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were finished.

*The Dispensation of "The Millennium": With Christ's Return and the binding of Satan, [The Everlasting Covenant](#) the 1000-year Reign begins, concluding Revelation with the loosing of Satan, Armageddon (Rev 20:7-10), and the Great White Throne Judgement unto the Lake of Fire (Isa 66:23-24, Dan 12:2, Dan 7:9-14, Mal 3:5-6, Matt 13:41, Matt 13:42, Matt 24:48-51, Matt 25:31-46, Rom 14:10, 1 Cor 6:3, Rev 20:11-15).*



## 8. Fullness of Times (2 Pet 3:11-13) (The New Heavens and the New Earth)

- <sup>3</sup> <sup>11</sup> Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,  
<sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens burning will be destroyed, and the elements will melt with intense heat!  
<sup>13</sup> But according to His promise we are looking for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, in which righteousness dwells.

*The Dispensation of "The Fullness of Times": With the full host of all of Christ's enemies dispatched eternally to the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:11-15), [The Davidic Covenant](#) and [The New Covenant](#) begin the march to completion with the Creation's destruction by fire. With Earth's and the Heavens renovation complete, God brings down the New Jerusalem, the Holy City (Rev 21:10-14), where God Himself will reside with the Saints. (Isa 65:17-25)*

### Covenants

Covenants concerning God are of first-order importance because a covenant rests in the character of the participant as long as they live. Covenants are an enduring commitment that participants commit to do or not do. They are eternal so as to be absolutely binding, unalterable, and are non-transferrable. Only a new or additional addendum covenant can add to the former.

- <sup>15</sup> Brothers, I speak in human terms: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.  
<sup>16</sup> Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And TO YOUR SEED," that is, Christ.  
<sup>17</sup> And what I am saying is this: the Law, which came 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to abolish the promise.  
<sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is by law, it is no longer by promise, but God has granted it to Abraham through promise. **(Gal 3:15-18)**

A covenant is superior to a contract as the latter can be broken, and even the terms of an agreed or forced exit might be outlined in the contract. Contracts are agreements between participating entities with specific terms of performance but tend to be inflexible to terms relating to intent or 'spirit' of the agreement because these are not easily measurable. They are not designed to operate on ambiguity but are instead rigid, seeking to quantify narrowly specific actions and outcomes.

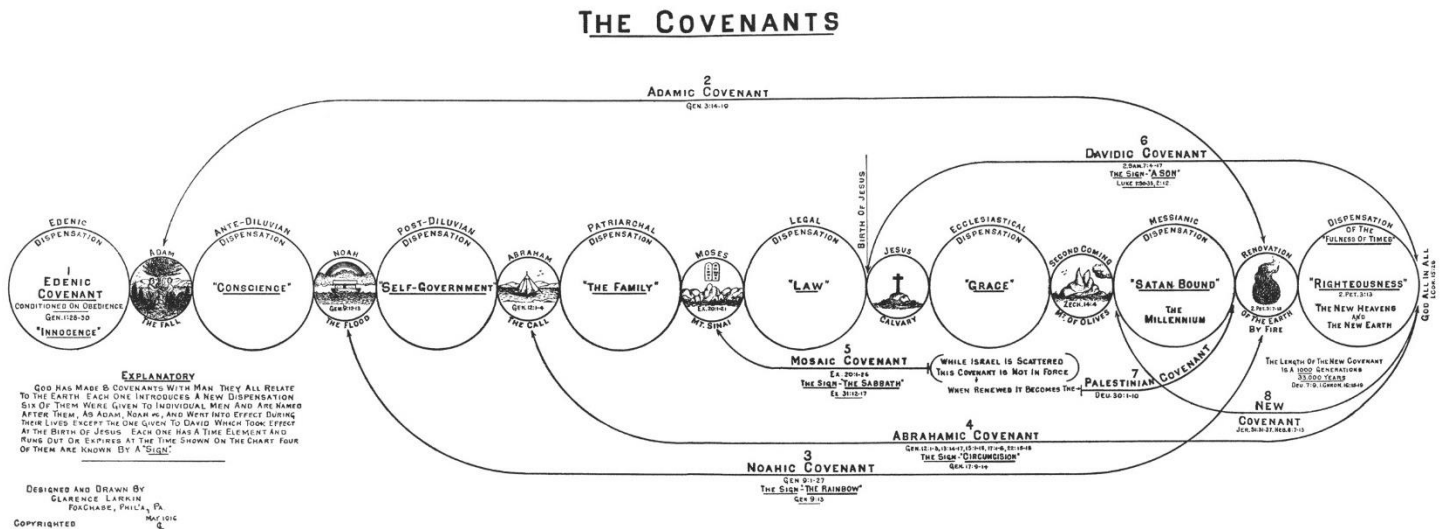
Covenants contain much of the same performance expectations but also employ the character and intent of the participants – they are intentionally more flexible to deal with deviations or infractions while still expecting the stated outcome. A marriage covenant is a good example. Any married person knows the failures they've experienced, but recovery and realignment are still possible. Even in the event of infidelity, forgiveness of a repentant partner can right the course without shattering the covenant. We see proof of this in God through Moses granting a certificate of divorce as a mercy for the offended spouse. Jesus specifies that it is "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives". **(Matt 19:8)**

Covenants between two parties are most common, yet obligation of the second party is not necessary if the covenantor is willing to assume all of the performance responsibilities for both parties involved. In most cases this would be ill advised because of the exhaustive responsibilities of the covenantor despite any positive or negative response from the covenantee. The single covenantor would need considerable patience and resource to see the agreement not fail. This is exactly what God chose to do in His unilateral covenants towards Mankind through Israel.

Because a covenant expects performance relying on character, any covenant relying on Man's fidelity would fail. Of the seven major covenants – the Adamic (**Gen 3:15**), Noahic (**Gen 9:11-16**), Abrahamic (**Gen 12:1-3, Gen 15:4-7, 12-16, 17-21**), Mosaic (**Exod 19:5-6, 30:1-10**), Davidic (**2 Sam 7:8-17**), New (**Luke 22:20**) and Everlasting (**Gen 17:7-8**) – only the Mosaic has bilateral aspects requiring Israel's obedience (resulting in blessing) else disobedience (resulting in punishment). However, it is still kept viable by God, in that despite the pause between the tearing of the Temple curtain and the later destruction of the Temple, making Sacrifice impossible, the 4<sup>th</sup> Temple to be established in the Millennial Kingdom will allow the resumption of Sacrifice. The rest of the major covenants are cumulative advancements upon the prior, ultimately bringing about the redemption of Mankind through Christ from the otherwise irreconcilable result of sin. These same covenants, because fallen Mankind is unable

to perfectly and perpetually fulfill the necessary terms thus keeping the covenant in place, were intentionally unilateral and wholly reliant upon God to uphold.

## Illustration of the Covenants and Dispensations



## Summary of the Major Covenants

### 1. Adamic (Gen 3:15)

**3<sup>15</sup>** “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”

*God indicates Eve’s offspring Jesus will come to defeat Satan*

### 2. Noahic (Gen 9:11-16)

**9<sup>11</sup>** Indeed I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, and there shall never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

**12** Then God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am giving to be between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations;

**13** I put My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

**14** And it will be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud,

**15** and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh.

**16** So the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”

*After giving instructions concerning procreation, meat for food, and capital punishment, God covenants with Noah and all the Earth’s inhabitants never to destroy it again by flood*

### 3. Abrahamic (Gen 12:1-3, Gen 15:4-7, 12-16, 17-21)

**12<sup>1</sup>** And Yahweh said to Abram, “Go forth from your land, and from your kin and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you;

**2** And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

<sup>3</sup> And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

***God initially pronounces His intent to bless and protect a Nation through Abram***

**15** <sup>4</sup> Then behold, the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, “This one will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.”

<sup>5</sup> And He brought him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your seed be.”

<sup>6</sup> Then he believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him as righteousness.

<sup>7</sup> And He said to him, “I am Yahweh who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.”

***God pronounces the vastness of the Nation and announces the Land promise***

**15** <sup>12</sup> Now it happened that when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.

<sup>13</sup> Then God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your seed will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.

<sup>14</sup> But I will also judge the nation to whom they are enslaved, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.

<sup>15</sup> As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

***God foretells the Egyptian captivity during a pause as the Amorites accrue their sin in preparation for the taking of the land***

**15** <sup>17</sup> Now it happened that the sun had set, and it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces.

<sup>18</sup> On that day Yahweh cut a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your seed I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:

<sup>19</sup> the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite

<sup>20</sup> and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim

<sup>21</sup> and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.”

**Abram arranged the birds and animal pieces as instructed (vs 8-10), and God alone consecrated to covenant as Abram slept (v12)**

#### **4. Mosaic (Exod 19:5-6, 24:1-8, 30:1-10)**

**19** <sup>5</sup> So now then, if you will indeed listen to My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

<sup>6</sup> and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

<sup>7</sup> So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words which Yahweh had commanded him.

<sup>8</sup> And all the people answered together and said, “All that Yahweh has spoken we will do!” And Moses brought back the words of the people to Yahweh.

<sup>9</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, “Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.” Then Moses told the words of the people to Yahweh.

***Following their liberation from Egypt, God declares His covenant with Israel who would be required to comply (to His expectations but not as co-responsible in keeping the Covenant intact) by Works of obedience. The Ten Commandments would next be delivered, followed by the Mosaic Law***

**24** <sup>1</sup> Then He said to Moses, "Come up to Yahweh, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you all shall worship at a distance.

<sup>2</sup> Moses alone, however, shall come near to Yahweh, but they shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him."

<sup>3</sup> Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of Yahweh and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which Yahweh has spoken we will do!"

<sup>4</sup> And Moses wrote down all the words of Yahweh. Then he arose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> And he sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to Yahweh.

<sup>6</sup> And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

<sup>7</sup> Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"

<sup>8</sup> So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh has cut with you in accordance with all these words."

**30** <sup>1</sup> "So it will be, when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you cause these things to return to your heart in all the nations where Yahweh your God has banished you,

<sup>2</sup> and you return to Yahweh your God and listen to His voice with all your heart and soul according to all that I am commanding you today, you and your sons,

<sup>3</sup> then Yahweh your God will return you from captivity and return His compassion on you, and He will gather you again from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you.

<sup>4</sup> If those of you who are banished are at the ends of the sky, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there He will take you back.

<sup>5</sup> And Yahweh your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

***An addition to the beginning stated in Exod 19:5-6, God vows to regather the diaspora back to their land, now known as national Israel***

**30** <sup>6</sup> "Moreover Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

<sup>7</sup> And Yahweh your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.

<sup>8</sup> And you shall return and listen to the voice of Yahweh, and you shall do all His commandments which I am commanding you today.

***God continues, referring to the Salvation of Israel during the course of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (Rev 7:4-8)***

<sup>9</sup> Then Yahweh your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for Yahweh will return to rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers,

<sup>10</sup> when you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, when you return to Yahweh your God with all your heart and soul.

***God says He will conclude with the prospering of Israel under the Stone Kingdom (Dan 2:44-45), the 1000-year Millennial Kingdom of Christ (Rev 20:1-6)***

## **5. Davidic (2 Sam 7:8-17)**

**7** <sup>8</sup> So now, thus you shall say to My servant David, "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, "I Myself took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel.

<sup>9</sup> And I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.

- <sup>10</sup> And I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place and not be disturbed again; and the unrighteous will not afflict them any more as formerly,
- <sup>11</sup> even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Yahweh also declares to you that Yahweh will make a house for you.
- <sup>12</sup> When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up one of your seed after you, who will come forth from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.
- <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
- <sup>14</sup> I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will reprove him with the rod of men and the strikes from the sons of men,
- <sup>15</sup> but My lovingkindness shall not be removed from him, as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.
- <sup>16</sup> And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.””” <sup>17</sup> According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

***God promises peace in David's kingdom for the rest of his life and that his son Solomon would build the Temple desired by David. God also covenants to establish David's throne by bringing the Messiah through David's line, establishing His Throne for perpetuity. Also see Psa 110:1-7***

## **6. New (Luke 22:20)**

- 22** <sup>17</sup> And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves.
- <sup>18</sup> For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.”
- <sup>19</sup> And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.”
- <sup>20</sup> And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”

***Jesus announces the New Covenant we enjoy today, the essential advancement of God's promises to Save Mankind, as well as the precursor to the fulfillment of His promise of the woman's seed Who will defeat Satan***

## **7. Everlasting (Gen 17:7-8)**

- 17** <sup>7</sup> And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your seed after you.
- <sup>8</sup> And I will give to you and to your seed after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

***A capstone covenant to Israel through Abram assuring the perpetual possession of the land under the everlasting possession of God***

The unilateral covenants of God are the means made necessary by God to rescue the people He would choose (the predestined saints) for Jesus, through the people He would choose (Israel) to bring forth His Messiah. Per Jesus: “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.” **(John 4:22)**

One's understanding of covenants with God has far-reaching ramifications. A view that His redemptive covenants are bilateral places performance responsibilities upon fallen Man who cannot possibly deliver and who will have the authority to fall out of the agreement. Instead, a recognition of God's redemptive covenants as His sole work necessary to rescue otherwise irredeemable sinners must acknowledge these are His unilateral responsibility alone. Sinners cannot be a failing party to the requirements of the covenants and still be beneficiaries of His Grace. God is not asking; He is Sovereignly saving rebellious sinners who have no means to save themselves. A bilateral covenant with sinners would not be able to result in Salvation. Only a unilateral covenant upheld by God to the benefit of sinners could succeed. And all of this is part of His larger intent in addressing the Church, Gentiles, Creation, and obedient as well as disobedient angels.

Therefore, if God's Salvific covenants are unilateral, and if God can and will hold true to the stated terms and goals of the covenants, we must agree that the covenants will succeed per His intentions. This then dismisses the false doctrine that with Israel's failure to embrace the Messiah but instead murder Him nullified the unilateral covenants, and that God would sever the covenants and reassign the Church as the recipients of the promises intended for Israel. Not only does this doctrine attempt to invalidate God's salvation of Mankind through the Jewish Messiah, but it would conveniently benefit the increasingly Gentile Church. And most egregiously, this doctrine seeks to displace the Jews as the people central to God's Kingdom, replacing them with the "New Israel", the Church.

## **15. Assaults on truth and its effect on the Church**

A furious interference is underway by the Father of Lies, Satan. If there is one thing our enemy Satan is focused on, it is our confusion to what God has said and expects of us. His dubious efforts plied upon the first Adam are the same used today to incite those inattentive to His Word to believe, choose and act contrary to God, in sin.

He also strives to confuse the Church concerning prophecy in order to attempt to steal the confirmation, comfort and information God intends for us. Why? Because he wants to undermine the confirmation of our faith as we see God do what He has previously said He would do before it happens, depriving us of an essential measure of comfort we'd have in resting in the God Who delivers and that we'd be assured He is still in command.

Satan also wants to steal the comfort we would have in the revelations Jesus and God's prophets have provided, preparing us for what lays ahead, even assuring us of those things we would be exempt from while God's Wrath comes down on the rebellious world. And, our enemy would deny us the vast information, the details of God's careful and thorough workings for His Glory, details that would bring us to reverence and worship of His greatness.

## **16. Satan employs diverse measures to oppose God, His Goals, and His Church**

The Church is an amazing entity. Beginning with the teachings of One to an unlikely group of twelve, in the midst of the strongest (though as He would demonstrate, much mistaken) society of a religious people who zealously strived at any cost to hold to what they believed of God. Into this, the Church of Jesus was born.

Corrupting factors brought by Man and Enemy immediately challenged the pure truth and the very existence of the Church. Judaizing teachers sought to infuse their religious practices into the Covenant of Grace through faith alone. Jesus' intent to bring rescue to the Gentiles was challenged by faithful Jews. Others sought to impart a layered hierarchical order of priests to stand between the believer and his Lord. The Ten great Roman Persecutions of the Church beginning in AD 64 through AD 310 sought to eliminate believers through most grotesque measures.

By the time of the first Council of the western Churches at Nicea at the urging of Constantine in AD 325, the Church entered into the voluntary loss of independence as She donned the yoke of the State through Constantine's use of their greed and bribery. With the Roman Empire failing, Constantine sought stability by using the Church like a cultural splint. Repeating the error of Balaam (**2 Pet 2:13-16**) the young Church would come to embrace a marriage of Church and pagan State. Perhaps the beginning of the most severe departure point of the Church from Christ's teachings and intent, the loss of the Church's independence to Man's and the World's System would bring terrible consequences.

This melding of pagan beliefs into the doctrines and traditions of the Church initiated the adoption of a Satanic priesthood rooted in Babylon's worship. The priesthood brought the inherited title of 'Pontifex Maximus' that began with Nimrod, was later gifted to the Caesars, and ultimately passed to the head of the Roman Catholic Church who is still known today as 'Pontiff'.

This compromise also made way to justifying the liberty of eating things sacrificed to idols as well as committing spiritual fornication, eventually leading to the heathen-rooted doctrines of what would become the Papal Church. These include Baptismal Regeneration, Justification by Works, Image Worship, Celibacy, Mariolatry (the worship of Mary), Confessionals, Purgatory, Transubstantiation (of the Lord's Supper), Indulgences and Penance.

This period also cemented the embrace of End-Time doctrines promoting God's abandonment of His Covenants with the Jews and their replacement by the Church. These errors were all wrought by Men cooperating with Satan to pollute the doctrines of Jesus and His Church, to render Her ineffective, to warp our understanding of God, and to incite erroneous beliefs and actions that robbed God of Worship and us of His comfort.

Who is at fault here? Again, as God is perfect, gracious and intentional in giving His Word to instruct us and prove Himself, how can we accuse Him of providing Scripture that is meant to cause such great confusion? And again, we must find the problem lay with us. All of the errors that have befallen the Church are ultimately because of poor teaching in the Church and the failure of the flock to stand aware as Bereans.

Proof this problem existed showed itself beginning with Wycliffe translating the Bible to English in 1380, resulting in a swell of awareness in its students. This coincided with [The Bohemian Reformation](#) beginning the same year, which also had its roots in the actual (non-Catholic) truth coming to that country via missionaries from the Eastern Orthodox Church, setting into motion what we know as the Reformation including Luther (1517). The rediscovery of God's truth resulted in a rebirth of the Church freed of the fetters of Roman Catholicism. Now, both Shepards and Flock were given the opportunity to hear God's Word and be exposed to our Savior's Spirit.

## **17. Origins of Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Replacement (of Israel) Theology**

The historic Church fathers hold tremendous sway in the Church as they are among a smaller group of influencers so early in the Church, and they are unique in their life's proximity to the Apostles. But they were not infallible.

Origen of Alexandria (AD 185 – 254) was one such person. He was trained in classical Greek philosophy and produced the first instance of what we today call a systematic theology, an attempt to understand and explain Jesus and Christianity, including through doctrines. His work is considered powerful and foundational. Unfortunately, some of his attempts were unorthodox to the point that later scholars asked whether he was a wise saint or a heretic.

Origen was an inexhaustible scholar of terrific intellect who produced deep works in vast number to define and defend the Christian faith. One method the Greek-educated Origen did promote, however, was a non-literal interpretation of Scripture, even dividing Scripture into three levels of meaning – literal, figurative, and moral. This made way for many controversial opinions that we would today see as extra-Biblical, and the saints of that time were 'concerned' as well. (For more, see <https://www.gotquestions.org/Origen-of-Alexandria.html>)

If Origen introduced and promoted allegorical reading of Scripture, Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354 – 430) codified it for the Catholic church. Another Church father of immense importance, Augustine is considered to be one the most premier theologians of the early Church. His thoughts influenced Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and John Calvin. His contributions include doctrines held dear by Calvinists, including the total depravity of man in original sin; The divine sovereignty of God's grace in Salvation; The predestination of sinners to Salvation by God's choice and Grace alone; That Saving grace is irresistible and effectual, and no one can decide to receive Christ without it. Conversely, Augustine was also the root of the Catholic beliefs of infant baptism, the perpetual virginity of Mary, and the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. (For more, see <https://www.gotquestions.org/Saint-Augustine.html>)

With these men as substantial pillars in the early Church, they along with others also helped propel another opinion called Replacement Theology. The doctrine teaches that Israel had destroyed Her relationship with God in the rejection of the Messiah and murdered Him, breaking the Covenants, so that God reassigned the Church in Israel's place in those Covenants.

The first generations of Christianity were primarily Jewish. Severe persecution of followers of Jesus contributed to the dispersal into surrounding Gentile regions. Within a hundred years of the birth of the Church the Apostles were on to Glory, and most Gentile believers considered the Scriptures as wholly authoritative. Yet, further removed in time and teaching from their Jewish roots, the Gentile believers began succumbing to the idea of God reassigning the Church as the replacement for the Jews. The

ferocious persecution by the Jews towards followers of Christ exasperated the issue, and a hatred of the Jews grew, resulting in a parade of early Church theologians to propagate the notion of Jewish replacement.

The damage this unbiblical doctrine causes has crossed the centuries since it was embraced, and the contemporary Christian would be shocked at the names of Church heroes who believed and taught it.

Origen “was responsible for much anti-Semitism, all of which was based on his assertion that the Jews were responsible for killing Jesus”.

Augustine “asserted that the Jews deserved death but were destined to wander the earth to witness the victory of the Church over the synagogue.”

Martin Luther’s 1543 pamphlet “On the Jews and Their Lies” stated they are: “A miserable and accursed people,” “Stupid fools,” “Miserable, blind and senseless,” “Thieves and robbers,” “The great vermin of humanity,” and “Lazy rogues”.

And in 1924 the Christians assembled heard Adolf Hitler proclaim “I believe that today I am acting in accordance with the will of Almighty God as I announce the most important work that Christians could undertake — and that is to be against the Jews and get rid of them once and for all.”

(See <https://baptistbulletin.org/the-baptist-bulletin-magazine/replacement-theology/> and [https://www.khouse.org/personal\\_update/articles/2020/origin-and-outcome-replacement-theology](https://www.khouse.org/personal_update/articles/2020/origin-and-outcome-replacement-theology) for references and more details)

Yet another problem is that Replacement Theology is also foundational to the doctrine of Amillennialism – the End Times doctrine often unknowingly embraced by Catholics and mainstream, even non-denominational, Churches.

## **18. Several theological issues and consequences of Amillennialism**

Amillennialism is a doctrine seeking to explain the interpretation of prophetic and End Times Scripture. It is not the only named doctrine of End Times, but it is the most accepted viewpoint in the Church today. Of course, being the most popular far from ensures it is the most correct.

It is one of four principal doctrines employed concerning End Times. The primary assertions are typically the replacement of the Jews with the Church, the denial of the literal Tribulation, the restoration of and ruling responsibilities of the Elect Hebrews, and the 1000-year Kingdom of Revelation 20. These are not the root problem, but are more a symptom brought about by tailoring Scripture to meet a preconceived doctrinal framework. However, the theological consequences are many.

The root of Amillennialism [explained above](#), we see further issues emerge that at best Biblically disqualify it and at worst promotes Satan’s evil against God’s Covenant people. While the early Church knowingly trafficked in this doctrine, the hope is today’s Church has merely misunderstood and passively accepted it.

This is not a Salvific issue but instead an error that has been incredibly successful through either anti-Jewism, slack study of the Scripture, or passive acceptance of the teachings. Without doubt, adherents to extra-biblical teachings and those who have drifted into Replacement Theology can surely be expected to be lovers of Jesus and under His Blood. An honest and literal study of Scripture is the perfect inoculant.

The muddling of clear Scripture has brought so much confusion to the Church as to have the opinion nothing can be truly understood because no one can definitively understand prophetic Scripture. Nothing could be further from the truth, and Satan must relish the confusion and paralysis. A plain reading of the explanation God has provided naturally leads to a Premillennial Tribulation, the restoration of Israel, and the 1000-year Kingdom doctrine confirmed by Jesus, the Apostles and the early Church before doctrines of Israel’s replacement and Amillennialism had appeared.



The Amillennial and sister doctrines emerged because early Church fathers would not accept the Old Testament narratives that Israel was the focus of God's efforts and would continue to be central until the Millennial Kingdom and beyond. Israel was seen as disqualified in breaking faith with God and His Law, and even murdering His Messiah. To satisfy their unbiblical bias, the plain and orthodox reading of Scripture had to be recrafted to deny Israel Her place and replace Her with the Gentile Church.

The whole of this doctrine and the ungodly impact it has on the Church reads contrary to God's eternal intent for His Covenant people and is therefore unacceptable.

## 19. Steps to Learn or Confirm a Biblical Eschatological Understanding

As with any structure, the foundation is critical and essential. To rediscover and establish the Apostolic foundation given to us, we must begin again with the Word, under the tutelage of our Helper, the Holy Spirit. I remind fellow students of all abilities to pray before and during reading His Word. If you read something you don't understand, stop there and ask His help, considering it until satisfied. We are promised wisdom if we would only ask (**James 1:5**).

To confirm one's position on prophetic Scripture and the related doctrines in relation to God's Word, some helpful points include:

- Settle whether you agree Scripture is given and to be understood in a [plain and literal](#) manner.
- Study the [Covenants](#) and search for their growing continuity and evidence of God's continuing Work on Israel's behalf.
- Compile Jesus' Words in the Gospels on the topic. Look to the Epistles of Paul, Peter and Jude as well.
- Study [Romans 11](#) in total to consider what Paul has to say about the Jews and the Church.
- Study the reports of Daniel and Isaiah, essential to understanding how the prophecies given to them come to fruition in Jesus' Revelation to John.
- Consider the Scripture Map we have published, [Clarence Larkin – The Perspective of Prophecy, with Notes](#). It is an ongoing effort to illustrate Scripture at the related periods it was or will be fulfilled:
- Study Revelation in concert with the attached [Outline](#) and [Chart](#) by Larkin and other trustworthy teachers/illustrators.
- In all, surrender any predispositions to His Teaching and reexamine for yourself what God has given us to understand.
- Finally, remember your personal theology is your responsibility to nurture and protect under His teaching and care. Strive to love all, but do not trust with abandon anyone except God to teach you. You are well aware the writings and ponderings of Men are endless, as well as the errors. There are many who are trustworthy – if they are found to be in cooperation with God's Word alone. The best protection from bad teaching is a Biblically informed mind.

I pray you undertake this journey with God's help, and grow in your reverence and love for the mighty Works He yet intends.

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1870	4	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	17	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	21	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	23	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	24	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	25	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	26	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	27	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	28	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	29	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	4	31	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
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1870	5	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
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1870	5	17	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
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1870	5	22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	23	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	24	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	25	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	26	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	27	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	28	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	29	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1870	5	31	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

## Scripture Map – *The Perspective of Prophecy, with Notes*

Download latest at <https://mikeschefferblog.com/index.php/2024/06/28/clarence-larkins-the-perspective-of-prophecy-with-notes/>

# The Book of Revelation, Outline

ADAPTED FROM Larkin, Clarence. Clarence Larkin Collection - 6 Complete Larkin Books [ILLUSTRATED] (p. 1184)

## 1. THE TITLE

Rev 1:1-3

- a) The Salutation
- b) The Announcement
- c) The Testimony of The Almighty

Rev 1:4-6  
Rev 1:7  
Rev 1:8

## 2. "THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN"

- a) The Vision of The Son of Man

Rev 1:9-20

## 3. "THE THINGS WHICH ARE"

- a) The Messages to The Seven Churches

Rev 2:1-3:22

## 4. "THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER"

- a) The Heavenly Door
- b) The Heavenly Throne
- c) The Four and Twenty Elders
- d) The Four Beasts
- e) The Seven Sealed Book

Rev 4:1  
Rev 4:2-3, 5-6  
Rev 4:4  
Rev 4:6-11  
Rev 5:1-14

## 5. DANIEL'S SEVENTIETH WEEK

## 6. THE SEVEN SEALS

- a) **FIRST SEAL** – A White Horse
- b) **SECOND SEAL** – A Red Horse
- c) **THIRD SEAL** – A Black Horse
- d) **FOURTH SEAL** – A Pale Horse
- e) **FIFTH SEAL** – Souls of Martyrs
- f) **SIXTH SEAL** – Physical Changes

Rev 6:1-2  
Rev 6:3-4  
Rev 6:5-6  
Rev 6:7-8  
Rev 6:9-11  
Rev 6:12-17

## 7. INTERVAL

BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH SEALS

- i) Sealing of 144,000
- ii) Blood Washed Multitude
- g) **SEVENTH SEAL** – Silence
  - i) Golden Censer

Rev 7:1-8  
Rev 7:9-17  
Rev 8:1  
Rev 8:3-5

## 8. THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

- a) **FIRST TRUMPET** – Hail--Fire--Blood
- b) **SECOND TRUMPET** – Burning Mountain
- c) **THIRD TRUMPET** – Star Wormwood
- d) **FOURTH TRUMPET** – Sun--Moon--Stars Smitten

Rev 8:7  
Rev 8:8-9  
Rev 8:10-11  
Rev 8:12

- i) The Angel Warning – "Three Woes" Announced Rev 8:13
- e) **FIFTH TRUMPET**
  - i) FIRST WOE – Plague of Locusts Rev 9:1-12
- f) **SIXTH TRUMPET**
  - i) SECOND WOE – Plague of Horseman Rev 9:13-21

## 9. INTERVAL

BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH TRUMPETS

- (1) Little Book Rev 10:1-11
- (2) Two Witnesses Rev 11:1-14
- g) **SEVENTH TRUMPET** – The Mystery of God is Finished (MacArthur) Rev 11:15

## 10. THIRD WOE

COVERS THE REMAINDER OF THE WEEK

INCLUDES THE "SEVEN PERSONAGES", THE "SEVEN VIALS" AND "FOUR DOOMS" Rev 11:15-20:10

## 11. THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK

### 12. THE SEVEN PERSONAGES

- a) **FIRST PERSONAGE** – The Sun-Clothed Woman Rev 12:1-2
- b) **SECOND PERSONAGE** – The Dragon Rev 12:3-4
- c) **THIRD PERSONAGE** – The Man-Child Rev 12:5-6
- d) **FOURTH PERSONAGE** – The Archangel Rev 12:7-12
- e) **FIFTH PERSONAGE** – The Jewish Remnant Rev 12:13-17
- f) **SIXTH PERSONAGE** – The Beast Out of the Sea Rev 13:1-10
- g) **SEVENTH PERSONAGE** – The Beast Out of the Earth Rev 13:11-18

### 13. INTERVAL

BETWEEN THE "SEVEN PERSONAGES" AND THE "SEVEN VIALS"

- i) The Lamb on Mt. Zion Rev 14:1-5
- ii) The Three Angel Messengers Rev 14:6-7
- iii) The Blessed Dead Rev 14:12-13
- iv) The Harvest and Vintage Rev 14:14-20

### 14. THE SEVEN VIALS

- a) Prelude Rev 15:1
  - i) The Sea of Glass Rev 15:2-4
  - ii) The Tabernacle of Testimony Rev 15:5-8
- b) **FIRST VIAL** – Boils Rev 16:1-2
- c) **SECOND VIAL** – Blood on the Sea Rev 16:3
- d) **THIRD VIAL** – Blood on the Rivers Rev 16:4-7
- e) **FOURTH VIAL** – Great Heat Rev 16:8-9

- f) **FIFTH VIAL** – Darkness Rev 16:10-11
- g) **SIXTH VIAL** – Euphrates Dried Up Rev 16:12

## 15. INTERVAL

BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH VIALS

- i) Three Unclean Spirits Rev 16:13-16
- h) **SEVENTH VIAL** – Great Hail Rev 16:17-21

## 16. THE SEVEN DOOMS

- a) **FIRST DOOM** – Ecclesiastical Babylon Rev 17:1-18
- b) **SECOND DOOM** – Commercial Babylon Rev 18:1-24

## 17. INTERVAL

BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THIRD DOOMS

- i) The Hallelujah Chorus Rev 19:1-7
- ii) The Marriage of The Lamb Rev 19:8-10

## 18. CHRIST RETURNS

- iii) The Battle of Armageddon Rev 19:11-21
- c) **THIRD DOOM** – The Antichrist and The False Prophet Rev 19:20
- d) **FOURTH DOOM** – The Antichristian Nations Rev 19:21

## 19. INTERVAL

BETWEEN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH DOOMS

- i) Satan Bound Rev 20:1-3
- ii) First Resurrection Rev 20:4-5
- iii) The Millennium Rev 20:6
- iv) Satan Loosed Rev 20:7
- e) **FIFTH DOOM** – Gog and Magog Rev 20:8-9
- f) **SIXTH DOOM** – Satan Loosed Rev 20:10
- g) **SEVENTH DOOM** – The Wicked Dead Rev 20:11-15

## 20. THE SEVEN NEW THINGS

- a) **FIRST NEW THING** – The New Heaven Rev 21:1
- b) **SECOND NEW THING** – The New Earth Rev 21:2-8
- c) **THIRD NEW THING** – The New City Rev 21:9-23
- d) **FOURTH NEW THING** – The New Nations Rev 21:24-27
- e) **FIFTH NEW THING** – The New River Rev 22:1
- f) **SIXTH NEW THING** – The New Tree Rev 22:2
- g) **SEVENTH NEW THING** – The New Throne Rev 22:3-5

## 21. THE FINAL TESTIMONY AND WARNINGS

Rev 22:6-21



# VIEWS CONCERNING THE END TIMES

*Adapted from Benware, Paul. Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach (pp. 155-158). Moody Publishers*

## CATEGORY ONE: Second Coming of Christ

**AMILLENNIALISM:** Single event; no distinction between Rapture and Second Coming; introduces eternal state

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Single event; no distinction between Rapture and Second Coming; Christ returns after millennium.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Rapture and Second Coming simultaneous; Christ returns to reign on earth.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Second Coming in two phases; Rapture for church; Second Coming to earth seven years later.

## CATEGORY TWO: Resurrection

**AMILLENNIALISM:** General resurrection of believers and unbelievers at second coming of Christ.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** General resurrection of believers and unbelievers at second coming of Christ.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Resurrection of believers at beginning of millennium; resurrection of unbelievers at end of millennium.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Distinction in resurrections: • Church at Rapture • Old Testament/tribulation saints at Second Coming • Unbelievers at end of millennium

## CATEGORY THREE: Judgments

**AMILLENNIALISM:** General judgment of all people.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** General judgment of all people.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Judgment at Second Coming; judgment at end of tribulation.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Distinction in judgment: • Believers' work at Rapture • Jews/Gentiles at end of tribulation • Unbelievers at end of millennium

## CATEGORY FOUR: Tribulation

**AMILLENNIALISM:** Tribulation is experienced in this present age.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Tribulation is experienced in this present age.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Posttrib view: church goes through the future tribulation.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Pretrib view: church is raptured prior to tribulation.

## CATEGORY FIVE: Millennium

**AMILLENNIALISM:** No literal millennium on earth after Second Coming; kingdom present in church age.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Present age blends into millennium because of progress of gospel.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Millennium is both present and future. Christ is reigning in heaven; millennium not necessarily 1,000 yrs.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** At Second Coming, Christ inaugurates literal 1,000-year millennium on earth.

## CATEGORY SIX: Israel and the Church

**AMILLENNIALISM:** Church is the new Israel, no distinction between Israel and church.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Church is the new Israel; no distinction between Israel and church.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Some distinction between Israel and church; future for Israel, but church is spiritual Israel.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Complete distinction between Israel and church; distinct program for each.

## CATEGORY SEVEN: Adherents

**AMILLENNIALISM:** L. Berkhof, O. T. Allis, G. C. Berkhouwer

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, W. G. T. Shedd, A. H. Strong

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** G. E. Ladd, A. Reese, M. J. Erickson

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Paul Benware, L. S. Chafer, Clarence Larkin, J. D. Pentecost, C. C. Ryrie, J. F. Walvoord