

# “All These Things”

*Our Journey from Theological Frustration to Absolute Spiritual Freedom*  
by Kenneth Dahl

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## **Introduction**

From a very early age much of what I had been taught as “the full gospel” seemed... incomplete, or... too complex. And some of it actually seemed to be a little too... fantastic, but as a child you believe almost everything you are told.

“God’s ways are not our ways” was one of the most popular responses to “childish” questions about seemingly contradictory church doctrines.

By the age of thirty I lazily accepted that church leadership had somehow obtained a deeper understanding of the scriptures than I ever possibly could, and that “they must know what they’re talking about”. So I just... defaulted to their superior knowledge. Every time I came across verses that just didn’t seem to fit, I told myself... “*These mysterious things are higher than me, and the reason they seem so odd and out of place is because I am not smart enough or spiritual enough to comprehend the multi-faceted, deeper contextual complexities of God’s Holy Word.*” I was approaching the Bible the same way a child would approach a children’s book, but then someone told me, “*Ken. You don’t understand. The Bible is just not that simple.*”

As I grew older a new question began to haunt me...

**“Isn’t it?”**

This is my very personal confession of 40 years as a Pentecostal Christian...

## Chapter One: You'll never fall in love, young man.

It was 1969, and an uncomfortably humid summer night in the house of God. The thick air was occasionally broken by the soft sound of crinkling paper as the older women fanned their faces with the evangelist's fliers. With his Bible held high above his head, he paced theatrically back and forth across the humble little stage. I remember watching with focused intensity as the ceiling fan gently flipped the thin pages. The out-of-breath traveling evangelist screamed out, *"JESUS IS COMING SOOONNNNAH! AND WE WINNNNAH! I RRREAD THE LAST CHAPTERRRRAH!!! GLORY TO GOD AH!"* His body twisted in perfect timing with his accentuated "AH" exclamation points. The congregation of the faithful was responding with an almost visual wave of romantic tears and raised hands unto the Lord. *"Thank you Jesus! Thank you Jesus!"* an elderly lady cried out with the most unforgettable look of sweet relief that all of her life's struggles would be over as she was very soon to be seeing the King of Kings "face to face" as the skies above Hibbing, Minnesota would roll back and the *"last trumpet"* would sound. The preacher became emotional as he purposely fell to one knee. Wiping the dripping sweat from his brow he stared directly at me and assured the congregation that the coming of Christ was only three to five years away, and "most definitely not ten years away".

I was thirteen years old, and I suddenly "knew" that I would never fall in love. The only thing that really mattered now was "saving the lost" from an eternal burning lake of fire. I couldn't let that happen to my friends. I knew right then what I had to do... and that was to invite my friends to these "special meetings" before this evangelist left town. If I didn't, they might be "lost forever". I had also stopped applying myself in school. My rationale was, *"What difference is it going to make in heaven if I can add and subtract fractions?"*

As a young person, one of the main fear-based messages of the church was, *"Are you ready to meet your Maker? Because if you're not, there's going to be hell to pay!"* If dying spiritually-unprepared in your sleep wasn't enough pressure,

there was always the unexpected car accident scenario. And if that wasn't scary enough, the church was pushing the "rapture scenario" – which basically said that we could be walking down the street tomorrow and all of a sudden, *"in the blink of an eye"* get *"left behind"* in an immediately-implemented "seven-year-tribulation" of absolute Auschwitz-like oppression for all who refuse to *"take the mark of the beast"*. At that point the only escape from hell fire would be some brutal, uncivilized form of martyrdom. Even though my heart felt like it all seemed a little crazy and unbelievable, the Bible actually "appeared" to back it all up, including the words of Jesus Himself...

One would think that with the passing of years us rapture-hungry parishioners would have suspected that we had been taught incorrectly. However, as current news events were weaved into the preaching, adding the effective dynamic of fear to the mix, our interest level only intensified. That makes it sound sinister and subversive, but in all honesty, the preachers were good people who were quite sincere and genuinely believed everything they were preaching.

At age fifteen I "knew" that I would never get married or experience the joys of fatherhood, but I had also come to "understand" that us Christians were like some exclusive race of humans who may be sucked up into the sky at any time without warning. We were all led to believe that this doctrine was actually based on the Bible. No one in the church in 1970 knew that the doctrine of pre-tribulation rapture had never been found in history before 1830, or that it was first promoted by an Irish minister named John Nelson Darby. We know that now, but we didn't know it then.

When I was sixteen there was an obvious shift by the end-times teachers of showcasing less of what the Bible said about the "end of the age" and more of how current "end-times-related" news events were unfolding *"right before our very eyes"*. In 1972 the fear-designed church movie called "A Thief in the Night" was being played night after night in churches all across America in the hopes of scaring people into the "kingdom". That movie was followed by three other

movies and was the beginning of the rapture book and film industry. This industry diminished by the end of the 1970s - only to start back up again (ironically) twenty years later in the 1990s with new films (all warning once again of the imminent return of Christ, which real human history had been continually proving wrong decade after decade after decade). End times “experts” like Hal Lindsey, Jack Van Impe, and many others made several date predictions that have long since come and went. Yet even after their repeated failed predictions, Christians continued buying their latest (revised) books. Christian book stores to this very day still sell the new (and old) works of these same time-proven false prophets.

### **Doing “God’s Work”**

We really believed we were doing God’s work... handing our “unsaved” friends “free tickets” to the scary “Left Behind” church movie so they wouldn’t have to go through the hellish tribulation that was soon to come upon the whole earth. Even though Jesus hadn’t returned in the last ten years like we had been told He would, somehow the church managed to continue the “*last days*” urgency of an “*imminent*” event that was always “*just around the corner*”... “*Any day now*” (like the words in the old song by Andre Crouch). I simply accepted it all as unchallengeable truth and focused more on my personal “Christian growth”...

Looking back to the early 80’s, the evangelical church’s main mission seemed to be offering eternal life insurance policies to escape God’s soon-coming judgment on this sinking ship called Earth. No one ever stopped to think thoughts like...

*“Okay, so... one of the main reasons we are here is to get safely to somewhere else? Huh?”* By this time in American history we had all but removed our moral influence from such culture-forming institutions like state colleges, politics, and even local community organizations. The driving (subconscious) rationale was that there simply wasn’t enough time left to change the world. “*We are not of this world*” was the proverbial chant, as we zealously readied the life rafts for the coming prophetic storm. Twenty years later the church stood surprised that atheists and politically left-leaning groups had taken the helm of our country’s culture-building institutions. We didn’t blame ourselves, we blamed the devil, the

democrats, or both. But if we can be nakedly honest about our present culture, we left the factory unattended and other people assumed the responsibility of stepping up and running it. We abandoned our role as the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” for the foolishness of going into the lifeboat/rapture business, with the message of “*This ship is sinking*”. The results are obvious.

## **Chapter Two: The Enlightened Ones**

(The reality of unfolding revelation in church history)

Our generation is a very small slice of time compared to the entire history of the Christian church. We all tend to view our particular place in time as the “finally enlightened ones”. Yet if we were honest enough to showcase even the last forty years of our church’s changes, a book would be produced of which we wouldn’t want anyone else to read. Well, when thinking about the *next* forty years, let’s take a trip down memory lane of the *last* forty years in the church...

### **1960’s...**

If a Sunday school teacher was spotted standing in line at the movie theater she would be getting a visit from the elders of the church informing her that she could no longer teach children about Jesus at the church. The same would have happened to the woman who dared to come to church wearing a dress that showed her knees or shoulders. When I was 8 years old I got my backside tanned by the pastor’s wife because I twisted my feet on a newspaper to rip it. She thought I was “doing the twist”. As a young man I distinctly remember church members looking down their noses at a divorced woman with two kids who showed up in church with her boyfriend. Oh, and inter-racial marriage was still not accepted by most churches, even in the northern states.

### **1970’s...**

Jesus didn't return before 1970 like we all believed He would. I remember in the mid 1970's how even the Pentecostal churches were very leery of adding a drum set or an electric guitar to the "song service". They were saying that rock music had that "jungle beat" that mesmerizes the youth. Now almost every church in town has a drum set, including the more conservative denominations. Jesus didn't return in 1975 as Jack Van Impe had projected.

### **1980's...**

We were strongly discouraged from seeing secular psychologists for counseling, church leadership exhorting us rather to seek divine healing at the front of the church podium, commonly known as "the alter". Oh, and Jesus didn't return before 1982 as Hal Lindsey told us He would. The widespread book entitled "88 Reasons The Rapture Will be in 1988" by Edgar C. Wiseman also slipped conveniently into the sea of Christian forgetfulness. Since Hal's 1982 prediction failed he publicly agreed with Wiseman's new date (based on Israel becoming a State in 1948 being interpreted as the "blossoming of the fig tree", therefore the generation that sees that 1948 event would be the generation that would not pass away until the Son of Man returns... Hence, a generation, being 40 years, places the rapture somewhere around 1988). Oops.

Then there was the popularization of the "gift of knowledge". Although there had been obscure traveling evangelists, a few of which obviously had some sort of God-given clairvoyant gift, it was Pat Robertson who really made this "practice" popular by boldly showcasing it on every episode of the "700 Club". The words "*I see a family somewhere in Michigan*", over the last thirty years has turned into many televangelists now saying the same things, and especially when trading miracles for money.

### **1990's...**

I remember being sternly warned that I should "be careful" of saying anything negative about TV preachers, because I might (unknowingly) be "*slandering one*

*of God's anointed*". The warning eluded that I ought to maintain a "healthy" level of fear of the consequences of such dangerous talk. Oh, and Jesus didn't return before 1990 like we all believed He would. And He didn't return in 1992 as Jack Van Impe's latest prediction had reported. The late 90's can also be justifiably marked as the decade where so many of us found ourselves hinging a great deal of our self-esteem on having a daily impressive testimony of how God either talked to us or used us in a spiritual ministry of some capacity. Everyone had a "ministry", you know, like the apostle Paul. It defined us as useful and powerful and significant. We do not like to admit this quirky, psychologically-unbalanced part, but it was a part of our church history.

### **Early 2,000's...**

Jesus didn't return before 2000 (Y2K) like so many were making sure they were "ready" for, which included stocking dry goods in the basement as a sort of, you know, extra "oil for our lamps". Nor did Y2K trigger a financial meltdown that led to bar codes being tattooed to our hands and foreheads. Jesus did not return in 2007 as Hal Lindsey's newest calculation suggested, but Hal has "contingency dates" going all the way up to 2048. How convenient for future book sales.

Just yesterday while flipping through TV channels I landed on the 71-year-old TV preacher John Hagee boldly shouting how he has "*no doubt*" that within HIS lifetime the sky will open up and Jesus will come down to earth, and "*Oh what a glorious day that will be!*" He also added, "*And I'm no spring chicken!*" The faithful stood to their feet in rapturous applauding agreement. But what will that congregation believe when Mr Hagee dies of old age? They will continue believing exactly what they were told to believe.

Here's adding Reverend Hagee's bold declaration to the long list of others who preached the same thing... Here are those date-setters... Jack Van Impe 1975, 1988, 1992, Hal Lindsey 1982, 1988, 2007, Pat Robertson 1982; Lester Sumrall 1985, 1986, 2000; Benny Hinn 1993; Kenneth Hagin 1997 to 2000; Jerry Falwell 2010; John Hinkle (on Trinity Broadcasting Network) 1994; Louis Farrakhan

1991; The Jehovah's Witnesses (too many dates to list), Ellen G. White; founder of the Seventh Day Adventist church (too many to list).

**IT IS NOT A COINCIDENCE** that over the last 40 years they have **ALL** been wrong. They didn't just have the date or season wrong; they've got the entire STORY wrong. And yet, somehow, we just keep listening to them? Really? Forty years from now (2052) when Jesus STILL hasn't violently broke through the afternoon clouds perhaps that generation will finally surrender to what the Bible actually says on these matters...

The months and years are rolling on, and I still don't recall any preacher stepping up to a podium somewhere and saying, *"I'm sorry. I was wrong. We were wrong."* The fact that all the above information didn't come to us from a pastor's podium speaks volumes about the lack of social integrity, courage, accountability, and humility in church leadership. There is no polite way to say that.

### **Chapter Three: When the Student is Ready the Teacher Appears**

When someone presented theology that differed from ours we immediately assumed they were disagreeing with the Bible itself rather than what we have been taught the Bible says. Any information that differed from our long-held doctrines actually seemed "crazy" to us. *"What could those people on the outside of our spiritually-enlightened camp possibly know or see that we don't. Simply impossible!"* Recently a fellow Christian with differing theological views told me that the reason she *knows* her theology is correct is because when she reads her Bible she asks the Holy Spirit to show her the truth in everything she studies. I simply replied, *"That is a good policy, but have you ever wondered, over the last twenty years, why the 'Holy Spirit' has never once disagreed with the doctrines of the church or your pastor? With a pastor like that, who needs the Holy Spirit?"*

I had arrived at a place where I was willing to question the things I had been taught. I was finally ready for "THE Truth" to differ from "my truth", or for that

matter, the pastor's "truth". You see, we actually are human beings, and we actually can be wrong. And yes, our pastor can be wrong, and the bible college can be wrong. And what we *thought* was the Holy Spirit internally confirming our church's doctrines can simply be the well-indoctrinated-thoughts in our own heads – "looking" only for "truths" that agree with what we think we already "know".

### **Peculiar Literary Conflict: Like mixing water with oil**

I thought to myself, *"If our church leaders have been wrong about the previously-listed things, then what else could they be wrong about?"*

What the scriptures were plainly saying was in such a peculiar literary conflict with what I had been taught they were saying. The main New Testament subject where this is so vividly experienced is in those passages that the church called **"end times texts"**. Many of those verses have always puzzled me - how they just didn't seem to fit with the church's teachings. What seemed so very clear as describing an unfolding drama in the local region of first-century Jerusalem was being framed by the church as events that were not to take place until another future generation some 2,000 years later. It seemed odd, like it didn't fit... like it didn't all add up. I've always felt that way, and I'm not the only one. Most Christians, like myself, had simply accepted that the Bible must have been intentionally written in this anomalous style that (evidently) uses these ancient events to somehow prophetically paint mysterious "pictures" or "types" of what is to one day become OUR story instead of THIER story. The first-century people, their conversations, and their events were to be viewed as... um... well... "object lessons", if you will, like the flannel caricatures my childhood Sunday school teacher used on an illustration board.

**Somewhere between *"the kingdom is at hand"*, the *"age to come"*, and *"old wineskins"*, I got lost in the mixture of water and oil.** The entire New Testament seemed to contradict itself, but I just knew that couldn't be. So, I concluded that it must have been deliberately written in some riddle-filled, puzzle-

like format that could only be properly deciphered by those who were truly willing to work hard, spend the countless years of study, and figure it all out. Even as odd as that assessment seemed, I accepted it and decided that the pastor who has studied all that stuff “must know what he’s talking about”.

**I went to work and lived my life...** When I got hungry for more of God’s truth I went to church and let the pastor tell me what to think and believe. Every now and then I would open my Bible and start reading the book of Matthew. Once again, as usual, somewhere around chapter ten my brain started perceiving the unfolding of an ancient story about a soon-to-come judgment upon first-century Israel. In verse 23 of chapter 10 Jesus tells his disciples *“Truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.”* Just a few pages later Jesus tells His disciples *“Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in is kingdom.”* And then Jesus looks His own disciples in the eye, telling them repeatedly and in the strongest possible fashion that their generation will not pass away until all of those “end time” events take place. He even reworded it in several different ways so there would be absolutely no confusion as to what generation He was talking about.

But then our pastors were saying just the opposite - that *“all that talk”* is actually referring to events still in OUR future, some 2,000 plus years after the words were pointedly-addressed directly to that real, live first century audience.

## **What does the Bible ACTUALLY say about all of this?**

Please consider every verse in this study in the light of these three questions...

1. Who was talking?
2. Who were they talking directly to?
3. What did that actual (original) audience believe they had just heard?

## Jesus began His ministry with these words...

*"The kingdom of heaven is 'AT HAND'" (Matthew 4:17).*

John the Baptist in Matthew 3: 7-12 telling the Pharisees and Sadducees *"Who warned you to flee from the wrath about to come?" (Matt. 3:7)*

*"The axe is already laid at the root of the trees." (Matt. 3:10)*

*"His winnowing fork is in His hand." (Matt. 3:12)*

*"The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17)*

*"The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 10:7)*

*"...the age about to come." (Matt. 12:32)*

Then we come to Matthew 10:16-23, which is a continuation of the conversation of Jesus sending out his disciples to preach that the *"kingdom of heaven is at hand"*... and in verse 23 He tells them *"Truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes."*

### **Brief Summary:**

When someone gives the analogy of an axe having already been laid to the root of a tree, do we get the sense that they are talking about something in the very near future or something that is 2,000 years away? Likewise, when someone says an event is *"at hand"* or *"about to come"*, don't we all get the same feeling of temporal nearness? Doesn't a *"winnowing fork is in His hand"* sound like someone who is just about to process some crops?

We can't leave out John the Baptist... Matthew 11: 13-14: *"And if you care to accept it, he himself is Elijah, who was to come."* John himself might not have known this about himself, but Jesus obviously DID. I have even heard my fellow Christians say that John the Baptist was a "type" of Elijah (who is yet to come). It seems like whenever people can not explain away plainly-written verses – they conveniently turn them into a "type" (no Scriptural support required). One man

told me... *"There are actually multiple fulfillments..."*, but these kinds of wild statements never come with scriptural support attached.

All throughout the gospels we see Jesus warning of a horrific judgment that is coming to THEIR generation (for not accepting God's Son)... Please read **Matthew 21: 33-45** (Parable of the landowner) KEY verse #45 *"about THEM"*. Key word *"THEM"* (not us).

**Matthew 13: 40-43** Jesus is telling them that there is an unbelievably horrendous judgment coming, and it is clear throughout the entire New Testament that it is coming to the generation that was present during Christ's time period on earth, not some generation over 2,000 years later.

**Luke 23: 26 - 30**... Jesus tells the weeping women *"Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills 'Cover us.'"* (Compare to Revelation 6:14-17)

**Question:**

Was Jesus talking to THEM about something THEIR children would experience? Or was He just USING them as mere human story-telling stage props to talk to US about what OUR children may have to experience some 2,000 years later? Most of us have never even thought about that when reading it. Maybe we need to ask ourselves *"WHY have I never thought about that?"* Read 1 Thessalonians 5: 3 - 9... Sounds exactly like Matthew chapter 24, doesn't it?

Judgment is coming, judgment is coming, judgment is coming, not to the twenty first century, but to Jerusalem way back there in the first century.

### **Setting out to DISprove what Jesus plainly said...**

How did I structure the truth-finding study I was about to begin? Well, I started it in the same way any other evangelical Christian would start that study... Rather than building upon the words of Jesus and the apostles and trying to figure out how what I had been taught fits into that, I (unknowingly) started by studying what I had been TAUGHT in the hopes of being able to explain away what it clearly appears Jesus and the apostles taught. Just take a moment and really think about what I just said...

Without even knowing it I set out to disprove what Jesus plainly said. If the choice was between believing my pastor and believing the words of Jesus, I was leaning toward my pastor and the “end times” doctrines of the church. That, my friend, is very telling about just how strong indoctrination is. When we are first shown how Jesus repeatedly said He would be coming *“in his kingdom”* within that first-century generation, we don’t say *“Wow, I can’t believe I never saw that before!”* What we say is *“That just CAN’T be true!”*

## **Chapter Four: “The Greatest Theological Disaster of All Time” (How futurist eschatology has held Christianity captive for the last 150 years)**

### **Audience Relevance**

I have wondered my entire Christian life... *“Why would God have writers pen the entire New Testament like some big puzzle or never-ending labyrinth of double meanings and hidden clues?”* But, could it be that the reason so many New Testament passages often “seem” so oddly written is not that God intended them to look that way, but because our theologians have not only given them the wrong time zone, but also the wrong audience? Is the Bible written clear enough and easy enough to understand exactly what is being said, and to whom it is being said to, and to what time period it is referring to?

With any passages the church deemed as “end times texts”, audience relevance was never stressed as being real-time conversations taking place between

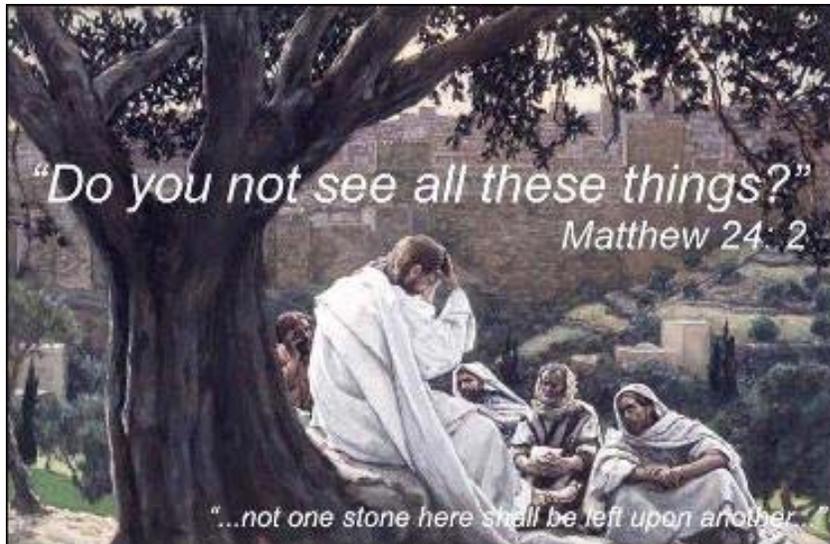
people in the first century about events that were to take place for THEM and in THEIR generation. It COULDN'T be THAT, because that would totally mess up the church's doctrines of a future end-of-the-world apocalypse. Rather, we were taught to look at Jesus as if He was some... Master Poet, holding two fingers up in a spiritually-romantic Shakespearian style, loftily chanting into the air – “timeless words” - above the heads of the people standing there. And so, because our theologians had misinterpreted the letter called “Revelation”, we've been taught that literally ALL of the verses in the gospels where Jesus uses the word “YOU” when telling His original audience what THEY were going to see and experience – doesn't “really” mean THEY would see or experience ANY of those things. That has always bothered me...

### **Audience Switching...**

All of a sudden I realized that a most incredible thing has happened without us even knowing it... We have (literally) been trained – that whenever we read the New Testament - - - (get this) to mentally **remove** that original first-century audience – and **insert** ourselves in their place. We don't even realize we're doing it, and most of us have never even thought about it.

Perhaps it is not the Bible that has confused man after all, but man who has confused the Bible. According to most of today's “end times” preachers, Jesus was running around in that first century telling those people that something was going to happen to them that didn't happen to them and wouldn't happen to them. These same Jesus-is-coming-soon folks would also have us believe that Jesus basically USED the people of that first generation merely as some sort of... illustration tools or... human story-telling stage props, if you will, and that He was not really talking to (or about) THEM or what THEY would experience in that first century, but to (and about) US, in a time setting some 2,000 plus years later. That would directly imply that Jesus premeditatedly lied directly to their faces. That has always been really hard for me to believe about Jesus.

**At this point I knew that I was starting to ask all the right questions.**

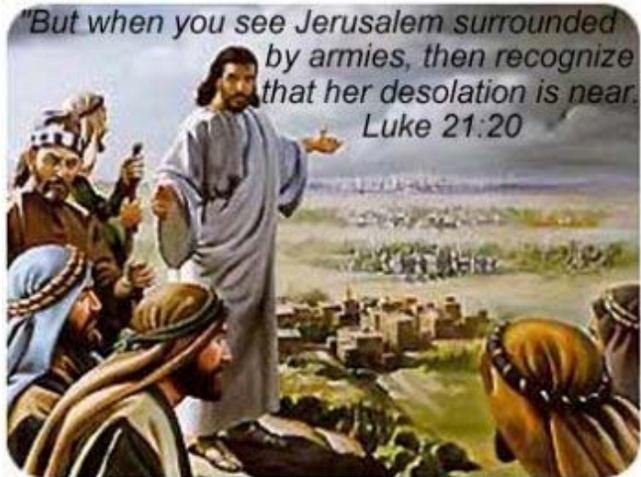


### **When in doubt, go back to the Bible...**

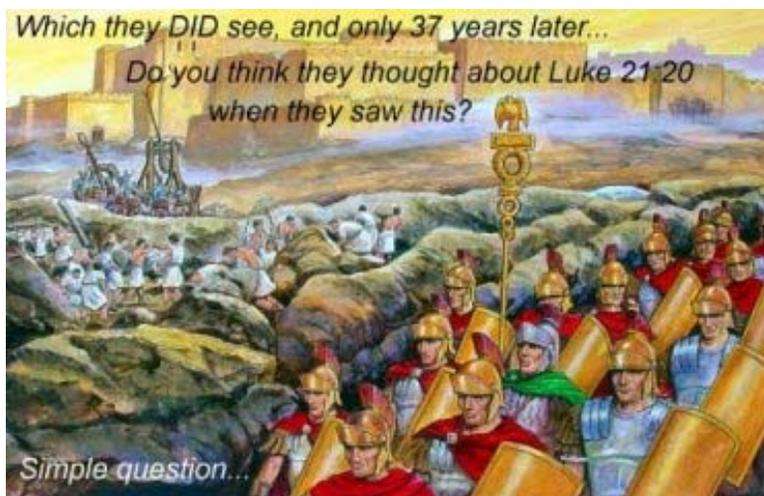
In Matthew chapter 24 the DISCIPLE'S questions are being answered... His answer starts at verse 4 and goes all the way up through verse 34 (verse 34 clearly answering the WHEN part of their question). Please take the time to read the first two verses of Matthew chapter 24 to see what Jesus was responding to... The disciples were pointing out the temple buildings to Jesus, and He said to them (about the temple buildings) *"Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down."* But it is also imperative for us to realize that Matthew chapter 24 is a continuation of the conversation in chapter 23 with the Scribes and Pharisees. Again, especially take note of 23:38 *"Behold, your house (the temple) is being left to you desolate!"* Only 3 verses later Jesus is telling the disciples how that very "house"/temple would be completely destroyed. The disciples are shocked, and ask... *"Tell us, WHEN will these things be, and what will be the SIGN of Your coming, and of the end of the age"*.

Mt 24: 34 *"Truly I say to YOU (His disciples), this generation will not pass away until **ALL THESE THINGS** take place."* Well, wouldn't "all these things" have to **include** the destruction of the temple in Matthew 24:2? Again, please remember that Jesus is not talking to cardboard cut-out story props that resemble people.

He is standing there looking into the EYES of real, live people, and telling them “*all these things*”... Also, Jesus speaking directly to His disciples in Luke 21:20 “*But when YOU see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand.*” This actually happened in 66 AD, just thirty seven years later (in their generation) just as Jesus had foretold it would in Matthew 24:2, when He looked directly into their eyes, also using the word “YOU”.



In Luke 21:22 Jesus added... “*because **these** are the days of vengeance, in order that **ALL** things which are written may be fulfilled.*” “*These days*” – clearly meaning the days of when armies would be seen (by His disciples) surrounding Jerusalem. But according to the end-times “*experts*” it should have said “*some things*”, not “*ALL things*”...



Please compare Matthew 23:38 with Matthew 24:2 and Luke 21:20-22 (with the understanding that Luke 21:20-22 actually happened to the disciples only thirty seven years after Matthew chapters 23 and 24). Very few Christians would argue that when Jesus said “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” - the generation Jesus was referring to would also be the generation who would actually witness the destruction of the temple as foretold not only in Matthew 24:2, but in Luke 21:20-22.

### **The Actual Historical Account of the Destruction of the Temple in 70 AD**

Our only first-hand account of the Roman assault on the Temple comes from the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius. In the year 66 AD the Jews of Judea rebelled against their Roman masters. In response, the Emperor Nero dispatched an army under the generalship of Vespasian to restore order. By the year 68, resistance in the northern part of the province had been eradicated and the Romans turned their full attention to the subjugation of Jerusalem. That same year, the Emperor Nero died by his own hand, creating a power vacuum in Rome. In the resultant chaos, Vespasian was declared Emperor and returned to the Imperial City. It fell to his son, Titus, to lead the remaining army in the assault on Jerusalem.

The Roman legions surrounded the city and began to slowly squeeze the life out of the Jewish stronghold. By the year 70, the attackers had breached Jerusalem's outer walls and began a systematic ransacking of the city. The assault culminated in the burning and destruction of the Temple that served as the center of Judaism.

In victory, the Romans slaughtered thousands. Of those spared from death: thousands more were enslaved and sent to toil in the mines of Egypt, others were dispersed to arenas throughout the Empire to be butchered for the amusement of the public. The Temple's sacred relics were taken to Rome where

they were displayed in celebration of the victory. Here is that astonishing eye-witness written history...

"...the rebels shortly after attacked the Romans again, and a clash followed between the guards of the sanctuary and the troops who were putting out the fire inside the inner court; the latter routed the Jews and followed in hot pursuit right up to the Temple itself. Then one of the soldiers, without awaiting any orders and with no dread of so momentous a deed, but urged on by some supernatural force, snatched a blazing piece of wood and, climbing on another soldier's back, hurled the flaming brand through a low golden window that gave access, on the north side, to the rooms that surrounded the sanctuary. As the flames shot up, the Jews let out a shout of dismay that matched the tragedy; they flocked to the rescue, with no thought of sparing their lives or husbanding their strength; for the sacred structure that they had constantly guarded with such devotion was vanishing before their very eyes.

No exhortation or threat could now restrain the impetuosity of the legions; for passion was in supreme command. Crowded together around the entrances, many were trampled down by their companions; others, stumbling on the smoldering and smoked-filled ruins of the porticoes, died as miserably as the defeated. As they drew closer to the Temple, they pretended not even to hear Caesar's orders, but urged the men in front to throw in more firebrands. The rebels were powerless to help; carnage and flight spread throughout.



Most of the slain were peaceful citizens, weak and unarmed, and they were butchered where they were caught. The heap of corpses mounted higher and higher about the altar; a stream of blood flowed down the Temple's steps, and the bodies of those slain at the top slipped to the bottom.

When Caesar failed to restrain the fury of his frenzied soldiers, and the fire could not be checked, he entered the building with his generals and looked at the holy

place of the sanctuary and all its furnishings, which exceeded by far the accounts current in foreign lands and fully justified their splendid repute in our own.

As the flames had not yet penetrated to the inner sanctum, but were consuming the chambers that surrounded the sanctuary, Titus assumed correctly that there was still time to save the structure; he ran out and by personal appeals he endeavored to persuade his men to put out the fire, instructing Liberalius, a centurion of his bodyguard of lancers, to club any of the men who disobeyed his orders. But their respect for Caesar and their fear of the centurion's staff who was trying to check them were overpowered by their rage, their detestation of the Jews, and an utterly uncontrolled lust for battle.



Most of them were spurred on, moreover, by the expectation of loot, convinced that the interior was full of money and dazzled by observing that everything around them was made of gold. But they were forestalled by one of those who had entered into the building, and who, when Caesar dashed out to restrain the troops, pushed a firebrand, in the darkness, into the hinges of the gate. Then, when the flames suddenly shot up from the interior, Caesar and his generals withdrew, and no one was left to prevent those outside from kindling the blaze. Thus, in defiance of Caesar's wishes, the Temple was set on fire.

While the Temple was ablaze, the attackers plundered it, and countless people who were caught by them were slaughtered. There was no pity for age and no regard was accorded rank; children and old men, laymen and priests, alike were butchered; every class was pursued and crushed in the grip of war, whether they cried out for mercy or offered resistance.

Through the roar of the flames streaming far and wide, the groans of the falling victims were heard; such was the height of the hill and the magnitude of the blazing pile that the entire city seemed to be ablaze; and the noise - nothing more deafening and frightening could be imagined.

There were the war cries of the Roman legions as they swept onwards en masse, the yells of the rebels encircled by fire and sword, the panic of the people

who, cut off above, fled into the arms of the enemy, and their shrieks as they met their fate. The cries on the hill blended with those of the multitudes in the city below; and now many people who were exhausted and tongue-tied as a result of hunger, when they beheld the Temple on fire, found strength once more to lament and wail. Peraea and the surrounding hills, added their echoes to the deafening din. But more horrifying than the din were the sufferings.

The Temple Mount, everywhere enveloped in flames, seemed to be boiling over from its base; yet the blood seemed more abundant than the flames and the numbers of the slain greater than those of the slayers. The soldiers climbed over heaps of bodies as they chased the fugitives."



References: Josephus' account appears in: Cornfield, Gaalya ed., Josephus, The Jewish War (1982); Duruy, Victor, History of Rome vol. V (1883). How To Cite This Article: "The Romans Destroy the Temple at Jerusalem, 70 AD," EyeWitness to History, [www.eyewitnesstohistory.com](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com) (2005).

**Question:** When that history happened (in their generation) do you think those disciples thought of Luke 21:20-22? And if not, why wouldn't they have? Jesus told them that they would SEE Jerusalem surrounded by armies. In 66 AD they SAW exactly that. Yes, every eye saw it, "*even those who pierced Him*" (because they were still alive to see it).

Read in the Parable of the Marriage Feast in Matthew 22:7 "*But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire.*"

Wow! That's exactly what happened to Jerusalem in 70 AD.

### **Coincidence?**

Notice the beginning verse (Mt 23: 36) and the ending verse (Mt 24: 34) of this very telling discourse, so that there would be NO DOUBT as to to whom (and to what generation) Jesus was clearly referring. Also, please notice how often the word "YOU" is used as He is telling "*all these things*" directly to their faces... The conversation recorded in chapter 24 is a conversation between JESUS and His DISCIPLES concerning the ending of an "age", the "*Coming of the Son of Man*" and the "*Judgment*" (which was to include the total destruction of the temple they were pointing at) that was going to happen in THEIR generation... which I have clearly shown – did.

### **Question:**

Do we just... ignore all this credible audience-relevant, in-context information? Do we just say "*So what if Jesus taught something different than what our church teaches?*" Is that really how we are going to process "*all these things*"? Is our indoctrination so strong that not even the words of Jesus Himself can change it?

### **"Those who are in Judea" (Even More History)**

Luke 21:21 "*Then let those who are in JUDEA (not Minneapolis) flee to the mountains...*" What does history have to say about this?

### **The early Christian scholar Eusebius wrote:**

"The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella." Epiphanes also attested to the Christian escape, according to Bible scholar Adam Clarke. The latter wrote: "It is very remarkable that not a single Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, though there were many there when Cestius Gallus invested the city; and, had he persevered in the siege, he would soon have rendered himself master of it; but, when he unexpectedly and unaccountably raised the siege, the Christians took that opportunity to escape. ..."

“[As] Vespasian was approaching with his army, all who believed in Christ left Jerusalem and fled to Pella, and other places beyond the river Jordan; and so they all marvelously escaped the general shipwreck of their country: not one of them perished.”

### **Ancient local event, or a distant, future, worldwide calamity?**

1. The army uses ancient tactics of taking a city (i.e., they build siege mounds around the city [Lk. 19:43-44]). Why would a twenty first century mechanized army with missiles, fighter planes and high explosive smart bombs build a siege mound?
2. The Pharisaical Sabbath laws are still in effect (Mt. 24:20). Why would there be a 21<sup>st</sup> century concern about the Sabbath laws when the Pharisaical laws have been out of civil use for over nineteen hundred years.
3. The disciples are to be persecuted by synagogues and brought before kings (Mk. 13:9). What twenty first century synagogues will stand in judgment over believers?
4. The Christians are to flee Judea and go to the mountains (Mt. 24:16). Documented history actually reports in journalistic detail that they did.
5. The people are dwelling in flat-roofed houses. (Mt. 24:17). It should be obvious to any unbiased interpreter that the "great tribulation" has reference to the Jews living in Palestine in the first century. Where are the twenty first century flat roofs that people must not return to?
6. Who in Tokyo or Sydney or Minneapolis or Seattle will be able to "see" the "abomination of desolation?"

One cannot even apply this chapter 24 passage of Scripture to a twenty-first century Jerusalem, let alone somewhere else on the planet.

There has never been found an additional apostle-written letter after the letter of Revelation that descriptively recorded a first-century “Coming of the Son of Man” event, but the scriptures are crystal clear that it WAS to happen sometime within the lives of the people living at that time in history. History itself does (vividly) record the complete desolation of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 AD, and that “those in Judea” actually DID flee in 66 AD just as they were forewarned to do.

It does NOT matter if we can not explain what the “*Coming of the Son of Man*” looked like in 70 AD (whether it was an actual physical rapture or some sort of spiritual transformation), but the “*end of the age*” and the “*Coming of the Son of Man*” (according to Jesus anyway) was to happen in the same generation of Christ’s disciples... Jesus Himself said it would! “*Let every man be a liar...*”

### **Even more history?**

The report of Josephus that the Jewish rebels cried “*the Son comes!*” during the Roman siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 has caused angst for many scholars. It has done so despite the fact that all the ancient manuscripts of Josephus' text of “The Jewish War” contain that very phrase. The passage at issue, as translated from Book 5, Chapter 6 of Josephus' Greek text by William Whiston, reads as follows:

“...Now, the stones that were cast [by the Roman catapults during the siege of Jerusalem] were of the weight of a talent, and were carried two furlongs and farther. ...As for the Jews, they at first watched the coming of the stone, for it was of a white color, and could therefore not only be perceived by the great noise it made, but could be seen also before it came by its brightness; accordingly the watchmen that sat upon the towers gave them [the Jewish rebels] notice when the engine was let go, and the stone came from it, and cried aloud in their own country language, “*THE SON COMETH:*” so those that were in its way stood off, and threw themselves down upon the ground: by which means, and by their thus guarding themselves, the stone fell down and did them no harm. But the Romans contrived how to prevent that by blacking the stone, [an effective action by the Romans] who then could aim at them with success, when the stone was not discerned beforehand, as it had been till then; and so they destroyed many of them at one blow.”

Wow! Did you know that first century history eloquently documented the Roman army hurling 100-pound boulders at the city of Jerusalem? How horrendous that must have been for the recipients of those... “Hailstones”! (compare to Revelation 16:21).

### **What about being “*left behind*” at the “*rapture*” ?**

How did this doctrine begin? When did it begin? Many believe it began way back in the days of Jesus and the apostles. That's not entirely accurate... Generations

of well-meaning theologians have been teaching what they were taught to teach, by others who were taught the same...

### **The History of the “Pre-Tribulation Rapture Mythology”**

There is no known writing or any kind of reference by ANY writer about a pre-tribulation rapture prior to the year 1830? The origin of this belief actually began with a fifteen-year-old girl named Margaret MacDonald in the town of Port Glasgow, Scotland. In 1830 she had a dream that Christians were raptured just before the “*Great Tribulation*” in Matthew chapter 24. A Presbyterian pastor in England, Edward Irving, heard about this dream and started teaching it in his church.

These are well-known, credible reports among any scholar of eschatology. John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren, also started preaching this new doctrine after visiting the girl with the strange dream or vision. By 1917, C. I. Scofield had published his “improved edition” of the Scofield Reference Bible (which contained these pre-tribulation teachings). Before long, Bible Colleges like the Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary became staunch promoters of the doctrine. In 1970 Hal Lindsey popularized this doctrine via his book entitled *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Other people wrote more books, and started teaching this very young philosophy as biblical truth. We are all familiar with Tim LaHaye's "left behind" books and movies... Many Christians have long since accepted it as biblical, just because they were told it is. However, Jesus Himself is found telling God... *“I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.”* (John 17:15)

### **“As it was in the days of Noah”?**

Matthew 24:37-39 *“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and ‘TOOK’ them all away; so*

*shall also the coming of the Son of man be". Okay, so... who was TAKEN AWAY, and who was left behind, and alive?*

And it was this same way (as foretold) with the coming of the Son of Man:

**Matthew 24:40-41** *"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be TAKEN, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be TAKEN, and the other left."*

How could this possibly be talking about a rapture! If the one *TAKEN* in Noah's day was the wicked, then the one *TAKEN* in the field is the wicked as well. Otherwise, it is NOT as it was in Noah's day. Genesis 7:23 *"And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only REMAINED alive, and they that were with him in the ark".* Him and his family were *"Left"*...

Who was left behind and ALIVE? Noah and his family.

**Luke 17:36** *"Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."*

**But here's the key...** *"And they answered and said unto Him, WHERE, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together".* Where? Where the carcass is. Where the dead body is. Where the place of death is. Where destruction is. The biblical version is that the saints are left behind after destruction TAKES the wicked out. Has this always been talking about the destruction and desolation of the temple and we've completely missed it? Could the "eagles" actually be referring to the Roman armies and their boldly displayed golden ensigns which was an eagle?

## ***“this generation”...***

How is it that futurist theologians have... decided that all throughout the New Testament the term *“this generation”* DOES mean the first-century generation EXCEPT for Matthew 23:36 and Matthew 24:34 (*Also Mark 13:30 and Luke 21:32*)?

**These two “time texts” form book ends for the “sign texts” in between...**

**(Matt. 23:36)** *“Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation.”*

**(Matt. 24:34)** *“Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”*

Here is a list of every other place in the gospels where *“this generation”* was used...

*“But to what shall I compare this generation?” (Matt. 11:16)*

*The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.” (Matt. 12:41)*

*“The Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.” (Matt. 12:42)*

*“Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.” (Mark 8:12)*

*“To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like?” (Luke 7:31)*

*“This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah.” (Luke 11:29)*

*“For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation.” (Luke 11:30)*

*“The Queen of the South shall rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.” (Luke 11:31)*

*“The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold something grater than Jonah is here.” (Luke 11:32)*

*“For this reason also, the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, in order that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the alter and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.” (Luke 11:49-51)*

*“But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.” (Luke 21:32)*

All of these verses are clearly talking about the first-century generation people who were the very audience of Jesus. Not to mention the MANY verses throughout the gospels that POINTEDLY state the same (without the use of the actual words *“this generation”*), one example being Luke 21:20-24 – especially the words *“these are the days of vengeance”*, – clearly referring to the days when Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies (which again, actually happened IN that same generation).

How do we read all of this and just... ignore it? I don't know, but we do.

Saying that *“this generation”* could mean – *“whatever generation happens to be around when ‘all these things’ happen”* is like saying that *“I won't be hungry when I leave this restaurant”* could actually mean five years from now at a completely different restaurant (even though I am standing there telling the cook how amazing his food is). We have never actually thought this stuff through, but rather just blindly believed whatever we were told it all means. Again, perhaps we need to ask ourselves *“WHY have I never thought this stuff through?”*

**“This generation”** clearly means the generation to whom Jesus was speaking directly to as He stood there looking directly into their eyes, telling them about events THEY would SEE... Not only did Jesus make this crystal clear, but so did the writer of Revelation, and furthermore, the early church record unmistakably shows that the people in that generation were EXPECTING these things to happen in THIER lifetime.

**1st Thess 4: 13-18** *“WE who are alive and remain...”* Paul was talking to some folks who were mourning THEIR dead relatives (not our dead relatives 2,000 years later). What did they think about what Paul had just told them? When Paul said *“We who are alive and remain...”* – who was he referring to? Was he not clearly referring to HIMSELF and his PEERS? Hence the very telling word, *“We”*?

I am merely pointing out what the Bible clearly and plainly says in its audience-relevant context. But that’s not what we’ve been TOLD it says, now is it? We have mentally removed Paul and his peers, and then inserted ourselves in their place! Can we really not see that we’ve done this?

**Acts 2:15 - 21**... Here’s another vivid example of us switching the audience... *“THIS”* is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: And it shall be *“in the last days”*... Key word *“THIS”*... THIS event that was taking place THEN (not some event over 2,000 years later). Again, I would stress that the reader be reminded that these are real, live people who are being told something that is currently happening in THEIR community and in THEIR midst. Was he not clearly stating that Acts chapter two was IN the *“last days”*? Are we to believe that the *“last days”* have now lasted over 2,000 plus years? Or are we to believe that Peter was giving them incorrect information when he looked them in the eyes and used the word *“this”*, making the strong point that THEY were in fact *“IN the last days”*? It is beyond peculiar, don’t you agree, how we have been (actually) trained to miss this.

Jesus WAS teaching that the Second Coming was to take place soon, during the lifetimes of His disciples. Many theologians are actually bewildered by these verses and are at a loss as to why Jesus "failed" to keep his promise. But is it possible that Jesus could have failed in *any* of his prophecies? No! What He said was going to happen to that generation, happened, and it happened WHEN He said it was going to happen.

**C.S. Lewis** is admired by many Christians for his great, inspirational writings, but here's an example to prove that men and mere (fallible) men. In one of his broadcasts he said this:

*"Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage".*

The following quotation is from his sermon, "The World's Last Night".

*"The apocalyptic beliefs of the first Christians have been proved to be false. It is clear from the New Testament that they all expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime. And, worse still, they had a reason, and one which you will find very embarrassing. Their Master had told them so. He shared, and indeed created their delusion. He said in so many words, 'this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.' And he was wrong. He clearly knew no more about the end of the world than anyone else. This is certainly the most embarrassing verse in the Bible."*

C.S. Lewis is to be commended, I think, for being theologically naked enough to admit the obvious New Testament's billboard-like display of how Jesus clearly taught a first-century coming, and also how the Christians in that century clearly expected that return in their lifetimes, but what he obviously FAILED to recognize is that it was the end of the (Mosaic) "AGE", not the end of the "WORLD" that Jesus was talking about.

If we are brave enough to actually (and objectively) revisit this subject we will find that Jesus was talking about the "time of the end" of an "age" and an old covenant, not the "end of TIME". I will take what Jesus said over C.S. Lewis any day of the week.

## **Expectancy of His coming throughout the entire New Testament...**

John. 21:22 - *"If I want him (John) to remain until I come, what is that to you?"*

Acts 17:31 - *"He has fixed a day in which He is **about to** judge the world in righteousness..."*

Acts 24:15 - *"There is **about to be** a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked."*

Acts 24:25 - *"As he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment **about to come...**"*

Rom. 4:23-24 - *"Not for [Abraham's] sake only was it written, that [faith] was reckoned to him [as righteousness], but for our sake also, to whom it is **about to be** reckoned."*

Rom. 8:13 - *"If you are living according to the flesh, you are **about to die.**"*

Rom. 8:18 - *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is **about to be revealed** to us."*

Rom. 13:11-12 - *"You know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, **the day is at hand.**"*

Rom. 16:20 - *"The God of peace will **soon** crush Satan under your feet."*

1 Cor. 7:29-31 - *"Brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world **is passing away.**"*

1 Cor. 10:11 - *"**On [us] the ends of the ages have come.**"*

1 Cor. 15:51-52 - *"We shall not all fall sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."*

Phil. 4:5 - *"The Lord is **at hand.**"*

James 5:8-9 - *"The coming of the Lord is **at hand**. ... Behold, the Judge is standing **at the door**."*

1 Pet. 4:7 - *"The end of all things is **at hand**."*

1 John 2:18 - *"**It is the last hour ... we know that it is the last hour.**"*

1 Tim. 6:19 - *"...storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for that which is **about to come**, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed."*

Heb. 9:8-10 - *"The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way of the [heavenly] Holy Places has not yet been revealed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation." (Compare Gal. 4:19; Eph. 2:21-22; 3:17; 4:13)*

1 John 2:17 - *"The world is passing away, and its desires."*

Jude 1:17-19 - *"But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, 'In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.' These are the ones who cause divisions..."*

Eph. 1:21 - *"...not only in this age, but also in the one **about to come**."*

Col. 1:23 - *"The gospel ...was proclaimed in all creation under heaven." (Compare Matt. 24:14; Rom. 10:18; 16:26; Col. 1:5-6; II Tim. 4:17; Rev. 14:6-7; cf. I Clement 5,7)*

Col. 2:16-17 - *"...things which are a shadow of **what is about to come**."*

1 Thess. 4:15,17; 5:4 - *"...**we** who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord... We who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds... ... You, brethren, are not in darkness, that the Day should overtake you like a thief."*

1 Thess. 5:23 - *"May your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

1 Tim. 4:8 - *"Godliness ...holds promise for the present life and that which is **about to come**."*

1 Tim. 6:14 - "I charge **you** ...that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Tim. 3:1-2,5-6,8-9 - "In the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self... ...Avoid these men. For of these are those who enter into households and captivate weak women... ...These also oppose the truth... ...But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be **obvious to all**..."

2 Tim. 4:1 - "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is **about to** judge the living and the dead..."

Heb. 1:1-2 - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **in these last days** has spoken to us in His Son."

Heb. 1:14 - "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who are **about to** inherit salvation?"

Heb. 2:5 - "He did not subject to angels the world **about to come**."

Heb. 6:5 "...and have tasted ...the powers of the age **about to come**."

Heb. 8:13 - "When He said, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is **ready to disappear**."

Heb. 9:11 - "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things **about to come**..."

**What do you think when someone tells YOU that something is "about to come"? It is about to rain... the bus is about to come... the sun is about to go down... the relatives are about to arrive... the mailman is about to show up...**

Heb. 9:26 - "Now once at the **consummation of the ages** He has been manifested to put away sin."

Heb. 10:1 - "For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things **about to come**..."

Heb. 10:25 - "...as **you** see the Day drawing near."

Heb. 10:27 - "...the fury of a fire which is **about to** consume the adversaries."

Heb. 10:37 - "For yet **in a very little while**, He who is coming will come, **and will not delay**."

Heb. 13:14 - *"For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the one that is **about to come.**"*

Jms. 2:12 - *"Speak and so act, as those who are **about to** be judged by the law of liberty."*

Jms. 5:1,3 - *"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. ...It is **in the last days** that you have stored up your treasure!"*

Jms. 5:7 - *"Be patient, therefore, **brethren**, until the coming of the Lord."*

Jms. 5:8 - *"You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is **at hand.**"*

I Peter 1:6 - *"...salvation ready to be revealed **in the last time.**"*

I Peter 4:5 - *"They shall give account to Him who is **ready** to judge the living and the dead."*

I Peter 4:7 - *"The end of all things **is at hand**; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer."*

I Peter 4:17 - *"For **it is time** for judgment to begin with the household of God."*

I Peter 5:1 - *"...as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is **about to be revealed.**"*

I Peter 3:3,5 - *"In the last days mockers will come. ...For this they willingly are ignorant of..."*

II Peter 3:10-12 - *"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God."*

I Jn. 2:17 - *"The world is passing away, and its desires."*

I Jn. 2:18 - *"**It is the last hour.**"*

I Jn. 2:18 - *"Even now many antichrists **have** arisen; from this **we KNOW that it is the last hour.**" (Compare Matt. 24:23-34)*

I Jn. 4:3 - *"This **is** that of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is **already in the world.**" (Compare II Thess. 2:7)*

### **So... were all these people wrong?**

The end times “experts” actually think they **were**. We can clearly see what the Bible says, but that’s not what we’ve been TOLD it says, now is it?

There’s MORE???

### **Time references in the book of Revelation**

(that were addressed directly to that original first-century audience)

ταχει, tachos and en tachei means "quickly, all at once, with all speed, without delay."

Revelation 1:1 - "...things which **must shortly take place**"

Revelation 1:3 - "**The time is near.**"

Revelation 1:19 - "Write ... the things that are **about to take place.**"

Revelation 3:10 - "... the hour of trial ... is **about to come upon the whole world.**"

Revelation 3:11 - "Behold, I come **quickly!**"

Revelation 22:6 - "...things which **must shortly take place.**"

Revelation 22:7 - "Behold, I am **coming quickly!**"

Revelation 22:10 – “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, **for the time is near.**”

Revelation 22:12 - "Behold, I am **coming quickly.**"

Revelation 22:20 - "Surely I am **coming quickly.**"

εγγυς, engus means "at hand, near"

Revelation 22:10 - "The time is **at hand.**"

μελλει, mello, mellei means "about to, on the point or verge of"

**The OPENING statement of Revelation is** *“things which must shortly take place”* (Rev 1:1) and *“for the time is near”*. (Rev 1:3)

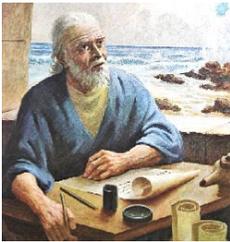
**The CLOSING statement of Revelation is** *“things which must shortly take place”* (Rev 22:6) and *“for the time is near”*. (Rev 22:10)

Again; this reminds us of **Matt. 23:36** and **Matt. 24:34**... the two verses that STARTED and FINISHED Jesus telling us about the same subject.

Were they wrong? Today’s “end times” preachers actually think they were.

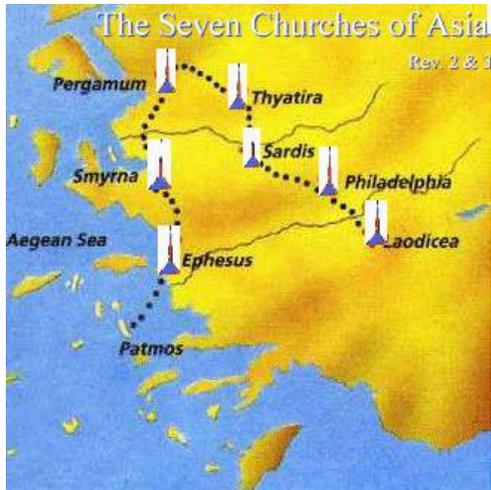
## **Who was the book of Revelation (really) written for?**

Rev. 1:4 *“John to the seven churches that are in Asia:...”*



Rev. 1:11 *“Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardus and to Philadephia and to Laodicia.”*

These cities are real, historical places. No one in the church had ever told me that the order in which they were recorded in the Bible is in the actual order of a well-known first-century Roman postal route. Am I the only one who finds that amazing?



These seven churches were real local churches undergoing great tribulation and unimaginable suffering... Rev. 1:9 *"I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation..."* In fact, there is an obvious martyr theme that goes right along with their *"tribulation"* and their need of *"perseverance"* (Rev. 2:9-10, 3:9-10, 6:9-11, 11:7-8, 11-13, 18, 12:10, 13:10, 14:11-13, 16:5-6, 17:6, 18:20, 24, 19:2, 20:4, 6) These people were suffering. For example, in chapter 6 we learn of God's special blessings for the people who have actually been killed because of their faith (Rev. 6:9-11). The apostle John is MINISTERING to them – giving them HOPE about what must *"shortly take place"* (in their lifetimes), and he expects them to understand and act upon his directives, for he tells them that the *"time is near"*...

Most of us have never even stopped for a minute to examine (for ourselves) **the very THEME of this letter** called "Revelation". For instance, in the very first verse of the first chapter John plainly states who his actual audience is (his bondservants), and then proceeds to tell them that his letter is about things *"which must shortly take place"*. To make my point even clearer, in 1:3 we see John unmistakably saying to the people in those seven churches that the **VERY REASON** they are to *"heed the things which are written in it"* is because *"the time is near"*. Why would John boldly say that the very PURPOSE of his letter was about things that are very near, if they absolutely were not near? We have never been challenged by the church to even ask that question. We have never been

asked to imagine those poor, persecuted Christians in those seven (actual) churches sitting in candle light, reading that letter out loud. Once again, here's just another example where we have been trained to mentally REMOVE the original audience and then INSERT ourselves in their place.

**We really can not see that we've done this, can we?**



**To seal up, or not to seal up...**

The “*time*” in the book of Daniel was **NOT** near (Dan. 12:4), but the “*time*” in Rev 22:10 **WAS** near... If Revelation was NOT to be sealed because the “*time is near*”, but Daniel was to be sealed because it was for “*many days*” and the “*time of the end*” (Daniel 10:14, 12:4,9), then “*many days*” are only 500 years, and if that is true, how can “*at hand*” or “*the time is near*” be for 2,000 years? Not only have we never asked ourselves that question, but we have never even thought about this literary inconsistency.

Please take a moment to really think this through... Is John telling these poor persecuted saints that “*the time is near and you must heed that which I’m writing, and God is concerned with your persecution – BUT the things I am telling you that are near to you and shortly to come are actually NOT (really) near to you and NOT (really) shortly to come, but are (really) not going to take place until 2,000-some years from now. But hey, thanks for letting us USE your*

*DESPERATE HOPE and your DIRE SITUATION as a STORY TELLING PROP for the REAL people (2,000 years from now) this letter is (actually) written for." ?*

**Huh?**

What kind of a SICK JOKE would that be?!

**And yet that is literally what we have been told to believe!**

Was God just... USING those poor people as mere cardboard cut-out story-telling props for a story that was not even ABOUT them? Those first-century Christians actually took that letter, gathered around it with oil lamps and candles and read it aloud to each other, then sent it on to the next church (probably by horse). This actually happened! What did those words say to them as they huddled there with their families in that room in a town called Pergamum? What did that community of believers now believe after hearing "*The time is near*" and "*things which must shortly take place*" and "*Behold, I am coming quickly!*" and "*Surely I am coming quickly.*" and "*The time is at hand.*" and "*... the hour of trial ... is about to come upon the whole world.*"...?

SOMEONE PLEASE TELL ME HOW WE CAN JUST **NOT** ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS??? WE HAVE LITERALLY STOLEN **THEIR** STORY.

We are not allowed to be them, and they are not allowed to be us.

But what about the "*signs of the end times*"?

**What about "wars and rumors of wars"?**

There were "Wars and rumors of wars" during the era of "Pax Romana" (Roman Peace). Josephus writes that "*Roman civil wars were so common*" in that empire that there was "*no need to write about them in great detail*". The Jews were often the target of these wars. At Seleucia "more than 50,000 Jews were killed." The Annals of Tacitus (14 A.D. to 68 A.D.) describes the tumult of the period with phrases such as "disturbances in Germany," "commotions in Africa," "commotions in Thrace," "insurrections in Gaul," and the list goes on and on...

### **What about “famines in the land”?**

There were actually horrendous famines in the land in the first century. Beginning with the book of Acts, we see famines were prevalent in the period prior to Jerusalem’s destruction in 70 A.D. (Acts 11:27-29). The famine was so great that the church as far away as Corinth participated in relief efforts (1 Cor. 16:1-5; Rom. 15:25-28). Also, well-documented historians of the time, Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius all wrote of horrific famines during that same time period.

### **What about “earthquakes in different places”?**

There were a number of catastrophic earthquakes in the first century. Jesus simply said, *“in various places there will be famines and earthquakes”* (Matt. 24:7). He never said anything about an increase in their number. Earthquakes are mentioned prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., one at the crucifixion (Matt. 27:54), at Christ’s resurrection Matt. 28:2), and another in Acts 16:26 that shook the foundations of a prison... Secular historians of that same time period record many earthquakes in Crete, Smyrna, Militus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Calosse, Campania, Rome, and Judea. Josephus describes an earthquake in Judea of such magnitude “that the constitution of the universe was confounded for the destruction of men.”

### **What about the “great tribulation”?**

A “Great Tribulation” of the saints is clearly documented all throughout the New Testament and the book of Revelation, and a very clear record of this in the book of Acts (4:1-22; 5:17-40; 8:1-3; 12:1-9; 14:19-20; 16:22-23; 22:30-22:11).

Consequently, the tribulation had reference to the Jews, the people of Judea (Matt. 24:16; Luke 21:20-24); it was not a world-wide tribulation. The seven-year period of tribulation spoken of in the Book of Daniel can be traced accurately and exactly to be the seven years beginning in A.D. 63 and ending in A.D. 70. Historical records tell us that in year 63 A.D. the Jewish people revolted against Rome, which gave way to a hellish seven year period in which millions of Jewish people died, and ended with the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. Josephus, in his volume Wars of the Jews documents in detail this terrible period of time and points out numerous instances of prophetic fulfillment. In addition, the seventy weeks of Daniel are not a future event, rather it is presented as a judgment on Israel: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression” (Daniel 9:24). The Great Tribulation is not a future period of time; it was a period of time ending in A.D. 70 with the destruction of the Temple, and can be documented well with historical documents.

### **What about “last days false prophets”?**

There is so much evidence of “end times” false prophets in the New Testament... The Apostle Peter writes that “false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who brought them, bringing swift

destruction upon themselves” (2 Peter 2:1). These false prophets will malign the truth, “and in their greed will exploit you with false words” (2:2-3). And entire study could be done about this reality in the New Testament, but here are a few verses for you... (2 Cor. 11:13; Acts 13:6; 2 Tim. 2:16-17; Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:13; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 7; 1 John 2:18)...

At this point in my research it was becoming very clear to me that this “preterist” view of eschatology actually had miles of more in-context, audience-relevant exegetical weight than the “futurist” view did. I’ve always realized that men can twist the scriptures into all sorts of crazy scenarios, but the deeper I studied the more I realized that my discoveries were going way beyond mere coincidences.

### **But doesn't the Bible talk about the end of the “world”?**

The truth is that the Bible does not speak of something called "The End of the World or Time." The distinction is in the interpretation of passages in which "the time of the End" is discussed. While seemingly minor, the difference is crucial in that Biblical passages discussing the "time of the End" are not describing events which will take place in the future, rather events related to the time of the "end of the Jewish nation" and the "end of the Mosaic covenant."

The “end of the age” refers to the end of the old covenant redemptive system with its attendant sacrifices and rituals. These were designed to be temporary symbols of the coming atoning work of Christ. The “end of the age” refers to the termination of the exclusive Jewish entitlement to the covenant promises and the inclusion of the Gentiles into the blessing of the covenant and the privileges of the gospel and kingdom (Matt. 21:41,43; 22:10). “End of the age” is a covenantal phrase.

With the temple destroyed there would be no way and no need to carry out the rigorous demands of the sacrificial system, a system that was predestined to “pass away” with the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus. Jesus replaces the sacrificial system as the “lamb of God” (John 1:21), God’s dwelling place as the “temple of God” (2:13-22), God’s sanctuary as the “true tabernacle” (Heb. 8:2); John 1:14), and God’s earthly sinful high priest as the “perfect High Priest” (Heb. 2:17, 3:1, 5:1-10, 7:26-28; Eph. 2:11-22; Heb. 10:4, 9:1-28

### **What about Signs in the heavens?**

Again, the information is there if you really look for it... Just remember, having all 800 questions (by the futurists) perfectly answered is not what is needed to confirm or establish what Jesus Himself said, but here’s some interesting information... The appearance of comets in the sky in those days was often

viewed as a warning of some approaching calamity or a sign of change in the political world.

For example, a comet appeared in 44 B.C., the year of Julius Caesar's assassination. Another comet appeared in 11 B.C. This time it was thought to have something to do with the death of Marcus Agrippa. We know that the "star in the east" was a sign of joy for the Magi, but it was a bad omen for Herod who feared political competition (Matt. 2:1-12). Another comet appeared around 60 A.D. during the reign of Nero. The public speculated that a change in the political scene was imminent...

Much is actually written on how this comet affected both the public and the government at that time. Halley's Comet appeared in 66 A.D. Historians have linked the appearance of Halley's Comet not only with the death of Nero, but the destruction of Jerusalem four years later. In addition to Halley's Comet, Josephus recounts that "there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year."

### **What about "antichrist", "the beast" and the "abomination of desolation"?**

The "abomination of desolation", the "antichrist", and the "beast" have been so mixed up and jumbled in the minds of modern-day Christians! Futurists (since they do not believe what Jesus said in Matt. 24 verses 2 and 34) NEED a rebuilt temple in order to project the fulfillment of prophecies related to the abomination of desolation to another time in the 21st century. Interestingly enough is the non-existent Bible text that would indicate another rebuilding of a future temple. A careful reading of Scripture clearly shows that the abomination of desolation mentioned by JESUS was an event that would be fulfilled during the lifetime of His disciples.

The Apostle Paul would later address the concerns of the Thessalonians about the "day of the Lord" with a discussion of the "man of lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2). The man of lawlessness was a contemporary figure who was identified with the "abomination of desolation."

Historic record tells of many horrific events surrounding Rome's destruction of Jerusalem, including Romans offering sacrifices to their standards in the temple... While disagreement remains as to what form the abomination took, Scripture makes it CLEAR that it occurred soon after Jerusalem was surrounded by armies. As history attests, Jerusalem was surrounded just prior to the temple's destruction in the fall of 70 A.D. The abomination brought desolation.

"Antichrist": Interesting fact... There is no mention of the Antichrist in Matthew 24. The Biblical doctrine of Antichrist is VERY DIFFERENT from today's fanciful futurist teaching on the subject. Here's the Biblical definition of "antichrist": The word "antichrist" appears ONLY in the epistles of John (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2

John 7). John's description of "antichrist" is altogether different from the modern-day image. John's "antichrist" is...

1. Anyone "who denies Jesus is the Christ" (1 John 2:22)
2. Anyone who "denies the Father and Son" (1 John 2:23)
3. "Every spirit that does not confess Jesus" (1 John 4:3)
4. "Those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist" (2 John 7)

NONE of what John writes relates to the modern doctrine of the "antichrist".

### **Who is the Beast described in the book of Revelation?**

Generally speaking, the Beast appearing in Revelation is Rome, the Roman Empire or the Roman emperor. There are several reasons for understanding the Beast generally as Rome: The woman Babylon was seated on the Beast, which implies they were in league with each other. Josephus writes: It seems to me to be necessary here to give an account of all the honors that the Romans and their emperors paid to our nation, and of the leagues of mutual assistance they have made with it." (Antiquities, 14.10.1-2)

The Jewish people used this relationship with Rome to persecute Christians and destroy Christianity: (Jn. 19:15, Luke 23:2). Throughout Acts they agitated against the Christian so as to involve the Romans in their persecution (Acts 4:27; 16:20; 17:7; 18:12; 21:11; 24:1-9; 25:1-2)

The Beast turned on Babylon and destroyed her: Rev. 17:16-17. This happens during the Jewish War, the 42 month period of trampling underfoot by the Gentiles (Rev. 11:2)

"The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits." (17:9) Rome was known in antiquity as the city on seven hills (Septimontium).

Rome was rising from the sea: (13:1). From either John's vantage point on Patmos, or the Jews' vantage point, Rome appeared to rise from the sea. Cf. 17:1.

"The seven heads ... are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come." By this time of Revelation's writing (during the Neronian persecution) five of the Roman emperors had fallen (Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius), one was still reigning (Nero), and one would remain for only a short time (Galba, who reigned only seven months, from June A.D. 68 to January, A.D. 69), and was followed by three others in short succession.

The Beast could also be specifically understood as Nero for several important reasons:

Nero was the emperor at the time when Revelation was written: He is the sixth king "who is." Suetonius' enumeration of the emperors was: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius or Caligula, Claudius (the five kings who have fallen at the time that John is writing), Nero (one "who is"), and Galba - one who "has not yet come, but when he does come, he must remain for a little while" - seven months (Rev. 17:10)

Nero claimed he was a god and demanded to be worshiped as such: (Rev. 13:5-8). Inscriptions have been found in Ephesus in which Nero is called "Almighty God" and "Savior." He and Caligula "abandoned all reserve" in promoting emperor worship - they were the only two who demanded divine honors while still alive. Nero claimed to be Apollo.

Nero persecuted the Church for 42 months: from November, A.D. 64 through June, A.D. 68. John banished to Patmos during this persecution (Rev. 1:9) and Peter and Paul died in A.D. 66 or 67.

John accurately prophesied this: (Rev. 13:5) - "The beast was given ... authority for forty-two months... He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them."

Tacitus reported that Nero "inflicted unheard-of punishments on those who, detested for their abominable crimes, were vulgarly called Christians" (Annals 15.44). The persecution claimed "an immense number" (Tacitus), "a vast multitude of the elect" (1 Clement 6).

Nero's character is also very much similar to that of a Beast:

- Nero murdered his own family
- He married a boy then castrated him and killed him
- He kicked his pregnant wife to death
- Suetonius writes that Nero "devised a kind of game in which, covered with the skin of some wild animal, he was let loose from a cage and attacked the private parts of men and women, who were bound to stakes." (The Lives of the Caesars, 6.29)
- Tacitus ... spoke of Nero's 'cruel nature' that 'put to death so many innocent men.' Pliny the Elder ... described Nero as 'the destroyer of the human race' and 'the poison of the world.' Juvenal tells of 'Nero's cruel and bloody tyranny.' Apollonius of Tyana specifically states that Nero was called a 'beast': 'In my travels, which have been wider than ever man yet accomplished, I have seen man, many wild beasts of Arabia and India; but this beast, that is commonly called a Tyrant, I know not how many heads it has, nor if it be crooked of claw, and armed with horrible fangs. ... And of wild beasts you cannot say that they were ever known to eat their own mother, but Nero has gorged himself on this diet.'

- He committed suicide by the sword at the age of 31. Cf. Rev. 13:10 - "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he will be killed."

The number of the beast was also 666 according to Revelation 13:18, therefore as Hebrew had no numerals and used letters to signify numbers, the name *Neron Caesar* when transliterated into Hebrew (NRWN QSR) had a number of 666.

### **Ten horns or ten kings...**

The general understanding of most Preterists is that the "ten horns" or "ten kings" are the ten Roman emperors in the following order with the years of their reign:

1. Julius Caesar (Caesar) B.C. 49 to B.C. 44
2. Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (Augustus) to B.C. 31 to August 19, A.D. 14
3. Tiberius Caesar Augustus (Tiberius) A.D. 14 to March 16 A.D. 37
4. Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (Caligula) A.D. 37 to January 24, A.D. 41
5. Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (Claudius) January 24, A.D. 41 to October 13 A.D. 54
6. Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (Nero) October 13, A.D. 54 to June 9, A.D. 68
7. Servius Sulpicius Galba (Galba) June 8, A.D. 68 to January 15, A.D. 69
8. Marcus Salvius Otho (Otho) January 15, A.D. 69 to April 16, A.D. 69
9. Aulus Vitellius Germanicus (Vitellius) April 17, A.D. 69 to December 22, A.D. 69
10. Imperator Caesar Vespasianus Augustus (Vespasian) A.D. 69 to A.D. 79

As it is evident from history, the three kings which were "uprooted" (reigned for very short periods of time) were Galba, Otho and Vitellius before the "little horn" with the remaining seven kings being the seven kings of Revelation 17.

### **What about the "42 months" in Rev. 11:2) ?**

This just so happens to perfectly parallel the period of the Jewish War with Rome from the time of its formal engagement by Nero until the temple was completely desolated and destroyed by Titus. From spring of AD 67 to August/September AD 70 is 42 months. There is actually an enormous amount of information on this very subject available to anyone who is hungry for it.

### **What about the "70 weeks of Daniel"?**

There are several opinions among preterist view scholars regarding the Seventy Weeks mentioned in the book of Daniel. What all agree on is that those "weeks"

are in fact *weeks of years* and would add up to roughly 490 literal years. The disagreements are however caused by two important points:

Changes in calendars system created discrepancies in the historical timeline. This makes it nearly impossible to accurately calculate the differences in years and months demanded by many critics.

There are four different decrees that could be used as the starting point of the seventy weeks of Daniel

It seems that regardless of which decree is being used, the prophecy of the seventy weeks points to a period of time during which several important things will happen:

- Atone for iniquity
- Bring sin to completion
- Seal up prophetic vision
- Anointing a new most holy place
- A seven-year covenant will happen
- Sacrifices and temple offerings will stop permanently

Because of these specifics, it seems without a doubt that the seventy weeks of Daniel were wrapped up sometime in the first century, likely at the fall of the Jewish Temple in A.D. 70 when sacrifices and offerings were permanently stopped.

### **But wasn't the Book of Revelation written AFTER 70 AD?**

Critics of Preterism often "point out" that the Book of Revelation was written in 95-96 A.D. and therefore it could not have prophesied events taking place in 63-70 A.D. The truth is that there is no evidence to suggest that the Book of Revelation was written that late in the first century.

But here's some interesting facts...

The many "coming soon" and "at hand" passages (1:1, 2:16, 3:11, 22:6-20) only make sense if events matching the symbolism of Revelation were not too far in the future, plus they correlate with Matt. Chapters 23 and 24...

The Jewish themes would make no sense after 70 A.D. - there was nothing left of the Jewish state.

John was told he must prophesy again before kings (10:11) . . . he would have been over 90 if the late date is correct. Stories of his actions after being released from Patmos are difficult to reconcile with an aged man.

Revelation was a letter written specifically to the "Seven Churches of Asia" not to contemporary Christians living 2,000 years later

The Jewish Temple was still standing when it was written (Revelation 11:1-2) If the temple had already been destroyed, one would expect at least one mention of it somewhere.

The story is about Jerusalem, the great city where our Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:8)

Nero was the "sixth king" that gave the order for Jerusalem to be destroyed. The order of the Roman emperors was as follows: 1. Julius Caesar, 2. Augustus, 3. Tiberius, 4. Gaius (Caligula), 5. Claudius, 6. Nero (54-68)

The Beast (which most if not all scholars agree represents Rome) was ruled by its 6th head ("head" = "king" see: 17:10) which was already in existence in John's day. Of the 7 heads (kings) only one was left - by 95 A.D. Rome was long past its 7th Caesar.

A 2nd Century manuscript of Revelation says it was written when Nero was Caesar (68 A.D.).

There were still Judaizers in the church at that time (Rev. 2:9, 3:9) - impossible after 70A.D.

Revelation 2:2 shows that there were other apostles around - yet it is believed that all but John were dead by 70 A.D.

Irenaeus' statement regarding Domitian's reign is difficult to interpret and based on a secondary source. In the same passage he also mentions "ancient copies" of Revelation in existence which makes little sense if they were only a few years old.

Evidence for a massive persecution by Domitian (81-96 A.D.) is lacking.

The only time there were only 7 churches in Asia was the early 60's.

The "Song of Moses" was being sung by the martyrs in Revelation 15:2,3; only Jewish people would have known to sing this song found in Deuteronomy 32:1-43.

Many time statements promise the events are "at hand" and they would happen "quickly" and "soon" (Revelation 1:1,3; 2:16; 3:11; 22:6,7,10,12,20).

Other external evidence can also be used to show an early date for the Book of Revelation. For an in-depth look at these sources, I highly recommend the book

*Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation* written by Kenneth L. Gentry.

### **What about “every eye shall see Him”?**

Well, let’s go ahead and look at the entire verse... *“Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, **even those who pierced him**, and all tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen”*. First of all, *“those who pierced Him”* have been dead for over 1900 years, but they WERE alive in 70 AD. Secondly, *“all the tribes of the earth”* means the same thing that *“all the world”* meant in the first century – the Roman Empire. The Greek word *“oikoumene”* is the word used in the original text of Matthew 24:14. That same Greek word is used in Luke 2:1 concerning the census that was taken. *“The whole world”* or *“All the tribes of the earth”* did not mean the western hemisphere included, it meant the Roman Empire. Even an undisciplined study can easily prove this.

### **What about the gospel being preached in the whole world?**

Here’s the verse... *“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”* (Matthew 24:14) Part of the answer to this question is in the answer to the previous question, but here’s more... *“...the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister”*. (Colossians 1:23). In Colossians 1:6 Paul talked about how the gospel was *“constantly bearing fruit and increasing in all the world [kosmos]”, “to all nations”* (16:26). Also Romans 16:25-27, Acts 11:28, Acts 2:5 *“devout men, from every nation under heaven”*? Paul states in 55 AD, that *“the word of Christ”* (Romans 10:17) has *already* gone [aorist verb: past tense] *“to the ends of the oikumene”*. A small book could be written on this subject...

### **What about a future Rebuilt Temple?**

Although there are many references to a rebuilt temple in the Old Testament, and that rebuilding DID happen, there is absolutely NO reference to ANOTHER rebuilt temple that will replace the one that was destroyed in 70 A.D., yet in order for the futurist end times doctrines to be true - there *has to be one*... From the way the end times "experts" have taught over the years, I thought they were getting that from the BIBLE... But now I realize that **1**. It is not biblical, and **2**. Even if someone DID build a new 21<sup>st</sup>-century temple in Jerusalem and started offering sacrifices - it would change nothing.

### **What about the “Heavenly City of Jerusalem”?**

Doesn’t the Bible talk about a huge, golden city that will one day come down from heaven and land somewhere in Jerusalem? The answer is “No”. We’ve all heard preachers talking romantically about the *“New Jerusalem”* being a “large” golden city that will one day come down from “heaven” and land in Jerusalem... What

they didn't say is that according to the measurements in Revelation – this golden city would be 1,500-miles-CUBED. If that were an actual object coming down to earth from outer space, it would completely cover the entire Mid East including all of Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, a HUGE section of the Mediterranean Sea, and several parts of other neighboring countries (For a more familiar mental picture; it is 1,500 miles from Seattle to Minneapolis) - not to mention extending 1,200 miles out BEYOND the International Space Station. So, basically, we are being asked to believe that a colossal cubed city almost as large as our moon will one day come down from outer space and completely cover the entire Mid East (without affecting the ocean or the gravity or the orbital mechanics of our planet).

The “New Jerusalem” is not a literal 1,500-mile CUBED city that is going to come down from outer space some day and bring the BIG part of some REAL (physical) kingdom, but rather is a metaphorically-symbolic picture of the Bride of Christ (Please refer to Hebrews 12:22 or Revelation 21:9). Hence, “I will show you the Bride” ...

### **What about a third of the stars one day falling from heaven?**

Well, that sounds like an amazing occurrence. The only problem with it is that the smallest star in our galaxy is 1,000 times larger than our planet. We never really thought any of this stuff through, because we were too busy blindly believing whatever we were told. Again, perhaps we need to ask ourselves “*WHY have we never thought this stuff through?*”.

### **If we are already IN the “kingdom”, then why so much sin still in the world?**

The Bible says in the last chapter of Revelation, that those who believe while in this physical this life enter in at the gate and those who don't in this physical life are outside the gate...spiritually...and that they will ALWAYS be with us....in this part of our life. So, if the last Chapter of Revelation is about the kingdom being here, then who are the dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolaters and whosever loveth and maketh a lie? What are they doing in the “kingdom”? And, why is there the need for a “Tree” (Rev. 22.2) of which its leaves are for the “healing of the nations” in what we were told will be a perfect world? Why would there still be the need for healing in a Utopian paradise with no (physical) tears and no (physical) death? Could it be that “no tears” and “no death” were actually referring to “surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” and being “alive in Christ”?

The questions are endless from those who have been told that the book of Revelation is about a future end-of-the-world apocalypse. And can we blame them? They DESERVE some answers. So much of the language used in both Matthew and Revelation about Jesus coming in the clouds is the same judgment imagery language used throughout the Old Testament. Did Jesus actually come

down in the clouds over Jerusalem in 70 AD? Was His “coming” more of a spiritual event? **We don’t know**, but the questions we **should** be asking are: When did Jesus say He would be coming? Who did He say it directly to? What were the signs He told His disciple they would see? And did those signs take place during the lifetimes of His original audience? The answer, of course, is... YES.

### ***Painting the gospel with the brush of futurist eschatology***

Did our eschatology come from the gospel, or did (our interpretation of) the gospel come from our eschatology? The deeper I dug into this subject the more it became inescapably apparent that the end-times “experts” had (literally) used their treasured end-times doctrines as the FOUNDATION from which to understand the entire New Testament and the gospel itself. They didn’t use the gospel to interpret eschatology. They used their futurist eschatology to interpret the gospel. And this is exactly why they can not allow all those plainly-spoken first-century (audience-specific) conversations to mean what they plainly appear to say and mean, and they can not allow them to be intended for the original first-century audience they obviously “appear” to be intended for. So, because of this gross (and obstinate) error the entire Christian faith has been painted as something it absolutely is not. And, any verse or passage of scripture that does not support their futurist eschatology (including the words of Jesus Himself) MUST BE EXPLAINED AWAY. And that is precisely what they have done. And they’ve done it for so long, so authoritatively, that no one even questions them anymore.

### ***So... what is the futurist view (really) based on?***

**Firstly**, on processing the metaphors, the symbolism, and Old Testament apocalyptic judgment language in the book of Revelation literally, and then, out of necessity, locating other New Testament verses that “seem” to support that futurist view. But then the awkward and uncomfortable words of Jesus have to be “dealt with”, so...

**Secondly**, basing it on the words of Jesus NOT meaning what they clearly and plainly appear to be saying... The rationale goes something like this... *“The Second Coming COULDN’T have happened yet because THIS hasn’t happened yet and we haven’t seen THAT happen, and there’s no record of THAT having happened yet”* (which is mostly a list of things in the book of Revelation they are certain are literal in nature)... In short, *“Jesus can’t POSSIBLY be saying what it clearly LOOKS like He IS plainly saying.”*

**Thirdly**, This is actually difficult to comprehend, but the futurist view MUST be based on mentally **removing** that (pesky and awkward) original first-century audience, and **inserting** ourselves in their place (and then teaching it all as if Jesus and the apostles were not really telling that original audience about things that THEY would see and experience, but things some other generation 2,000 years in the future would see and experience). Therefore, without even knowing it, we have been asked to believe that Jesus and John were simply USING all those first-century people as unsuspecting “human story-telling stage props”, or... “object lessons”.

### More examples of this same (futurist doctrine) rationale...

*“‘The whole world’ or ‘all the tribes of the earth’ can’t POSSIBLY mean just the Roman empire!”*

*“Armies surrounding Jerusalem can’t POSSIBLY be referring to the total destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD which was (actually) witnessed by that first-century generation!”*

*“Since we don’t have biblical text or actual video footage of a first-century ‘Coming of the Son of Man’, then it can’t POSSIBLY be something that took place in the first century!”*

*“John, on the island of Patmos couldn’t POSSIBLY have been talking directly to the people his letter is actually addressed to.”*

*“Jesus can’t POSSIBLY mean that John the Baptist was Elijah who was to come, therefore he has to be, um, well... some kind of ‘type’ of Elijah...that is YET to come!”*

*“In Matthew 3:7 When John the Baptist said ‘Who warned you to flee from the wrath about to come?’, he couldn’t POSSIBLY have really meant it was REALLY just ‘about to come’.”*

*“Surely in Matt. 10:23 when Jesus told His disciples ‘You shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes’ He couldn’t POSSIBLY have been referring to the ‘Coming of the Son of Man’ or the ‘end of the age!’”*

*“That just can’t BE!”*

*“In Luke 23:28-30 when Jesus looked at those women and said ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children’, He couldn’t POSSIBLY have been talking to or about the (actual) women who were crying there, or about THEIR children.”*

*“The words ‘All these things’ in Matthew 23:36 couldn’t POSSIBLY have included the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, so that HAS to mean that sometime in the future the temple will have to be rebuilt! There HAS to be one so that it can be destroyed again. Right?”*

*“The words ‘This generation’ couldn’t POSSIBLY have been referring to the generation of people He was standing there talking directly to as He looked them in their eyes!”*

*“Matthew 23:38, Matthew 24:2, Luke 21:20-22, and the historian Josephus’s account of the total destruction and desolation of the temple in 70 AD couldn’t POSSIBLY all be talking about the same event!*

*That just can’t BE!”*

*“The historic account of the great Christian escape to the mountains from the destruction of Jerusalem couldn’t POSSSIBLY be connected to Matthew 24:16!”*

*“In Luke 21:22 when Jesus said... ‘because these are the days of vengeance’, in order that ALL things which are written may be fulfilled.” He couldn’t POSSIBLY have been talking about when His disciples would actually witness the Roman ‘armies surrounding Jerusalem’ (only 37 years later)!”*

*“In 1 Thess 4: 13-18 when Paul said ‘WE who are alive and remain’ he couldn’t POSSIBLY have been referring to himself and the actual first-century people he was talking to!”*

*“In Acts 2:15 – 21 when Peter said ‘THIS is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days’, he couldn’t POSSIBLY have been saying to those people that THEY were IN the ‘last days’! Since it would be impossible for both those first-century Christians and us twenty first century Christians to be ‘in the last days’, then we must conclude that WE are in the ‘last days’, not them (regardless of what Peter told those people that day).”*

*“In John. 21:22 when Jesus said ‘If I want him (John) to remain until I come, what is that to you?’ couldn’t POSSIBLY mean that John could very well actually be alive when the ‘coming of the Son of Man’ took place!”*

*In 1 John 2:18 – ‘It is the last hour ... we know that it is the last hour.’ couldn’t POSSIBLY be true for the people John was telling that to!”*

*“The timing phrases that are peppered all throughout the New Testament that describe things that are ‘about to come’ and ‘things which must shortly take place’ couldn’t POSSIBLY be the writers asserting these things as being for the actual audience they were addressing them directly to!”*

*“In I Jn. 2:18 when John said ‘Even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we KNOW that it is the last hour.’ (Compare Matt. 24:23-34) he couldn’t POSSIBLY have been saying that those first-century Christians were actually IN the ‘last hour’, because how could THEY be in the ‘last hour’ and US (in the twenty first century) also be in the last hour?”*

*In I Jn. 4:3 when John said ‘This is that of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.’ (Compare II Thess. 2:7) he couldn’t POSSIBLY have been saying that the ‘antichrist’ was already in the world in the first century! Because he can’t be in both the first century and the twenty first century at the same time... Right?”*

*“Hey, just because both the Bible and history vividly display all ‘last days signs’ in the first century (including wars and rumors of wars, great famines in the land, great tribulation, horrendous earthquakes, ‘last days’ false prophets, signs in the heavens, and a first-century antichrist that was said to be ‘already in the world’ – that doesn’t mean its not going to happen all over again in the future... Right?”*

*“And just because the first-century political world, Nero Cesar, and the rulers of first-century Rome fit all the ‘last days’ Bible text like a hand-tailored glove – doesn’t mean that it is anything more than the most amazing coincidence in all of human history!”*

*“And just because John’s letter called ‘Revelation’ was addressed to the seven churches doesn’t mean that it was actually intended FOR those actual seven churches – even though they were the actual audience he was told to “send” the letter to.”*

*“Just because the opening and closing statements of Revelation were ‘things which must shortly take place’ and ‘for the time is near’. (Rev 1:1, Rev 1:3, Rev 22:6, Rev 22:10), doesn’t actually have to mean that the time was (actually) ‘near’, or that they were things which had to (actually) ‘shortly take place!’”*

**Can you now “see” the folly I am trying to embarrassingly reveal?**

And as I mentioned earlier, they also believe the “*New Jerusalem*” in the book of Revelation is an actual, physical city, not a metaphorical description or symbol of the Bride of Christ. Hence they believe that Jesus will set up a physical Utopian paradise “kingdom” here on the planet earth sometime in our future.

**But didn’t Jesus Himself say His kingdom was NOT physical?**

John 14:19 *“Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.”* How can Jesus' kingdom be physical when Jesus clearly rejected a physical kingdom? Why did Jesus leave earth after his resurrection, if he really wanted to establish an earthly physical kingdom here? Why didn't He just stay here? How can Jesus' kingdom be set up in earthly Jerusalem, when Jesus himself said the hour was coming when worshiping God would NOT be in Jerusalem (John 4:21)? And why would Jesus' kingdom be set up in earthly Jerusalem, when Jesus condemned their city several times (Matthew 21-25), and also, Paul said earthly Jerusalem was bondage and the old covenant (Galatians 4:24-25)? How can Jesus' kingdom have not yet come, when John the baptist, Jesus Himself, and the apostles all declared the *“kingdom of God is at hand”* (Matthew 3:2, 4:17, 10:7)? How can Jesus' kingdom be physically seen by everyone when Jesus himself said it comes NOT with observation (Luke 17:20)?

And lastly, how can Jesus' kingdom be worldly/earthly/physical, when Jesus himself said *“My kingdom is **not** of this world”* (John 18:36)?

**Kingdom Konfusion...**

On Sunday morning the preacher is enthusiastically trumpeting “kingdom principles”, yet on Wednesday night he is telling us that some day in our future

Jesus will return to “set up His kingdom”... He assures us that we are “reigning with Christ” now (Rom 5:17), but when He brings His PHYSICAL kingdom we will “REALLY” be reigning with Him then...

### **What?**

Here’s another good display of this confusion...

*“We are in the kingdom, but we’re not, well, I mean... PART of His kingdom has come, but part of it... well... the COMPLETION of the kingdom is still future... I mean... well, how can I put this... It is ‘within us’, not to be confused with the HUGE 1,500-mile CUBED city that is going to come down from outer space some day and bring the BIG part of His REAL (physical) kingdom... (not to be confused with Hebrews 12:22 or Revelation 21:9) but... and... you know... the one with the streets of gold in it... or... wait a minute, isn’t it ‘heaven’ that has streets of gold... Well, anyway, you know what I mean...”*

NO. Actually... we **DON’T** know what you mean.

We’ve got the concept of “heaven” (which we still don’t fully understand) mixed up with a metaphorically-symbolic picture of the Bride of Christ – all merged into some futuristic PHYSICAL Utopia that looks and feels like Alice in Wonderland on steroids.

The fact is that theologians have so scrambled the scriptures with their futurist interpretations that we don’t really know WHY we believe what we believe. We know how to use the scriptures to SHOW people why we believe what we believe, but only because we’ve been taught how to. WE DID NOT FIND OUR CURRENT FUTURIST END-TIMES DOCTRINES ON OUR OWN. There is absolutely no way we could have (especially if we used the Bible). So, we have unknowingly defaulted to whatever doctrinal labyrinths our church denominations have TOLD us it all means. What’s worse is that we have absolutely no idea that this is indeed what has happened. The results of Christians confusingly trying to

live in two different ages at the same time are strangely on display for all to see. The church's current "understanding" of "the kingdom" is a very awkward subject for them, because they are (and should be) quite confused about it.

### **Not a Physical Kingdom**

*"The kingdom"* not being a physical kingdom (but a SPIRITUAL kingdom) is the HARDEST truth to overcome by most Christians. Perhaps wiping all tears away doesn't mean that in the kingdom our tear ducts will not produce salty liquids, and perhaps "no male or female" isn't about a sexless utopian society, but about how "children" of God are now produced by faith, not by marrying. Could it actually be that the passing away of heaven and earth doesn't mean that God is going to destroy the planet and build a "new earth", but completely replace the old covenant with a new covenant? All these things that WE don't understand – did not have to be explained to the people in that first century who understood all that Old Testament language.

Could it be that the main reason we have not been able to "see" this is because we have been trained to believe that the first century (Matthew through Revelation) story is OUR story? But what if it is (exclusively) the story of our ancestors, and WE are the benefactors of the new *"age to come"* that Jesus talked about? Could it be that we are already IN the millennium. And what if it is not a literal 1,000 years, but endless? Perhaps God's kingdom (of which we are now in that Church age) has no end (as the Bible says)...

### **Not learning from history...**

The Jews of the first century were looking for a PHYSICAL kingdom...they were wrong, it is spiritual, and consequently they did not recognize their Messiah. The Christians of today have been greatly misled to also be looking for a perfect physical kingdom... again, wrong...still spiritual, and Jesus said 2,000 years ago that the kingdom is already here, it is in us. The hope of a physical rapture plays heavily into our earthly desire for a perfect physical world just like the Jews were looking for, and leads us into that mindset so strongly, that we miss the idea of

the AWESOMENESS of a SPIRITUAL kingdom, where we have more than we can ever imagine right here, right now.

The Bible says that this world is forever and ever. The kingdom is spiritual and of the Increase of His kingdom (people are the increase of a kingdom) there shall be no end, as this physical earth goes on and on, more and more people are added to the kingdom. Wow.

**Question:**

How could the kingdom “increase” if there were no male or female?

We want so badly for the Bible to have said (and meant) something else here, but the Bible will not conform to our desires on this subject. We want so badly for our pastors to not have been wrong about “*all these things*”... TRUE (Blessed) HOPE, of the SPIRIT OF THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE LIVING IN US AND GIVING US PEACE AND JOY AND POWER AND ALL THINGS THAT HE HAS AND IS, has been put on the back shelf awaiting a Coming that has already clearly happened to the first believers as they went through and endured the Tribulation “*to the end*”, and were “*saved*”.

Every single thing about a future coming that is being taught today can be easily explained from scripture WHY it is in error. The idea of PHYSICAL perfection in the “kingdom” is what mere men have convinced us the book of Revelation is all about. And they’ve taught that incorrect doctrine for so long that most Christians now believe it to be what the Bible actually says.

In a nutshell, theologians promised us a gigantic golden city from outer space, graves opening up, airliners crashing, a twenty first century antichrist, 70-pound “hailstones”, a rebuilt temple (no such verse available), and lush, green meadows with pop-up flowers where we can physically walk and talk “face-to-face” with Jesus Himself, but “all we got” was “*Christ within*” (*the hope of glory*).

**Like my Dad used to say, “How do ya like them apples?”**

We have been told that the gospel is not yet fully complete. We have been told that the kingdom is not yet fully here. And, we believed it, and we STILL believe it. And so we are still YEARNING and ASKING for God to DO something or GIVE us something that He already DID give us – namely, His kingdom on earth – within us all.

### **Our response?**

*“Even so, Come Lord Jesus.”* Why? Because we have been completely convinced that “God’s kingdom” will look and feel like Disney World “squared” (pardon the pun).

## **Chapter Five: What DOES it all mean and change?**

Once I really came to grips with the Bible’s version of the *“end of the age”* and the *“Coming of the Son of Man”* my entire Christian belief system started changing. It had to. It was then that I realized the church’s gross misinterpretation of eschatology was in fact the main catalyst for the manufacturing of all the odd and awkward ideologies of today’s evangelical Christian faith.

We were never the intended recipients of the book of Revelation OR any of those other “end times” texts, but rather the benefactors of those completely-fulfilled first-century events. The day we get out of bed and read the gospels and the New Testament “as if” they are actually historically-recorded conversations that were pointedly-directed exclusively to that first century audience, we will “see” for the first time in our lives - a completely different “gospel” than the one we have been taught.

Since the “great tribulation”, the “end of the age”, and the “Coming of the Son of man” already happened in the first century, those things are NOT going to

“happen again” in our future. What was already (completely) fulfilled does not get “fulfilled again”. In short, Jesus is NOT (physically) “coming back”, not “soon”, not ever. That is not a blasphemous statement, it is biblical truth. According to the Bible, what we were taught about this is wrong.

Since the “Second Coming” (biblically known as the “Coming of the Son of Man”) already happened in and around 70 AD, then so did the “judgment”, and therefore it was obviously not a global, end-of-the-world judgment, but a regional event having to do with first-century Jerusalem, the ending of the Mosaic age, and the initiation (and spiritual implementation) of a brand new era and covenant with mankind. Here it comes...

### ***Jesus is not coming back...***

Pastors and preachers and theologians and television evangelists are telling people there is an “imminent” Grand Utopian (Stephen Spielberg-type) Event that is “just around the corner” from happening that IS ABSOLUTELY NOT EVER GOING TO HAPPEN. The afternoon sky is NOT going to open us like a scroll with beams of sunlight and glory, and Jesus is NOT going to come down riding on a white stallion with a sword in His mouth. Graves are NOT going to open up at the local cemetery, and missing airliner pilots are NOT going to disappear from their cockpits.

If we are going to “see Him face to face”, it is going to be after our heart stops on that rainy afternoon down some hallway in a hospital room.

We have unarguably missed something SO MONUMENTAL here, and it is not because we are stupid, but because we have been taught something that is JUST NOT TRUE. Not only have our theologians “not gone in”, but they have also kept us from going in, thus becoming just like the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:13.

**Can we really not see what we have completely missed here?**

Virtually everything we have been taught has been intricately defined through the lens of our incorrect futurist eschatology. Therefore, our entire present concept of the gospel is greatly flawed in its basic fundamental essence and understanding.

This is why the preterist view of eschatology is so difficult for Christians to accept. It is not a matter of futurism having more exegetical weight than preterism, for I have vividly displayed just the opposite throughout the pages of this very telling study. In order to accept a first-century return of Christ we must also come to grips with the prospect of so many fundamental doctrines of our faith having been so wrong for so long. Therefore, the problem is NOT in what the Bible says on the matter, but that we simply do not have the courage or the humility to admit such a huge, hand-me-down theological disaster. It is just too embarrassing, period. Therefore, it just *“Can’t be true.”*

Sadly, it is possible that my entire generation of Christians will have to pass before a younger, more exegetically-responsible church will begin to make these important interpretive corrections. Theologians will no doubt be hammering out all the details for centuries to come, just like they have always done. If there is one point worth repeating over and over and over to my readers, it is this... It is not the words of Jesus and the apostles concerning the timing of Christ’s return that need to somehow awkwardly fit into OUR eschatology, but our eschatology that needs to fit into what Jesus and the apostles said concerning the timing of Christ’s return. The fact that this is NOT the exegetical method of how we approach our study of “all these things” speaks volumes of how far we’ve yet to come.

### **Uncomfortable Truth always leads to More Uncomfortable Truth**

We have, in an over-analytical fashion, dissected every verse and passage of the Bible as if it were some big scary puzzle or magic book. And in the process we have meticulously pieced together a picture very much different than the actual story itself.

The New Testament is NOT A PUZZLE or some complicated labyrinth of double meanings and riddle-filled clues or conversations with first century people that are "actually" conversations with people in the twenty first century that lead to other cross-referenced clues that "all line up" for a key that opens a mathematical code in Daniel - that meshes perfectly with current world news events, etc, etc, etc... The New Testament is a plainly-written, simple-to-understand story, written TO and FOR and ABOUT the people (culture/language) of the first century, and is a completely fulfilled (from Matthew through Revelation) historical document. Whew! The New Testament is NOT some magical collection of hidden keys like something out of the movie The Scorpion King, or Raiders of the Lost Ark. The New Testament is a story that is about an ancient culture, in an ancient language that is full of words and phrases the people in the first century understood perfectly.

What "end times" futurist theologians have done with the New Testament is nothing short of criminal, not to mention insanely bizarre. As much as my readers may not like to hear this... Much of the New Testament was not written for US (here in the twenty first century) but to the people in the pre-new covenant era of the first century...

We have two choices...

**Choice #1.** The entire New Testament (including the book of Revelation) is an historic (true) recorded story directed and addressed to the actual people the text clearly and plainly SAYS it was directed to - that not only all took place in the first century but was all fulfilled in the first century, instituting the "*age to come*" which we are now in. Much of the symbolic/metaphorical and old-testament-judgment-imagery language in the book of Revelation is grossly misunderstood by most evangelical churches of today. End times teachers have misinterpreted literal things into metaphorical/symbolic things and have misinterpreted metaphorical/symbolic things into literal things, and have wrongfully pushed

ancient history (and completely fulfilled events) up into our 21st century and beyond.

**Or, Choice # 2.** Jesus and all the apostles were USING all those unsuspecting people (their entire audience throughout the entire New Testament) as mere story-telling illustration tools (or unsuspecting human theatrical props, if you will) to get a message to the people that will one day be living 2,000 years into the future. And Jesus wasn't (really) talking to THEM or what THEY would see and experience (in Mt 24), even though standing there looking into THEIR eyes while answering THEIR questions, repeatedly telling them "YOU" will see this and that, etc..."... Which then HAS to mean that they were told to expect things within the span of their lifetimes to happen - that were absolutely NOT going to happen in their lifetimes. If that's true, then Jesus and all the apostles were also (knowingly) lying to the people they were looking in the eye - talking to, knowing full well that those people would now EXPECT (as the early church record vividly shows) things to happen in their lifetimes that simply would NOT happen to them. Which means that the entire New Testament is chock full of one contradiction after another after another after another...

Choice #1, or Choice #2...

It IS either one or the other, because as you now know, they can't both be true...

Preachers can do all sorts of creative exegetical dance moves, but they can not make *"at hand"* or *"is about to come"* or *"this generation"* or *"things which must shortly take place"* mean *"2,000 years later"*. It is irresponsible and everyone who has read this far knows it. We can't unsee what we have clearly seen here today, and we can't unhear what both Jesus and all the apostles have said in the listed verses throughout this study. The truth will not leave us alone from here on out about all those "awkward" passages. They say what they say, they mean what they mean, and they were intended for the very generation they were being directly addressed to.

## Chapter Six: Keep your filthy hands off my desert

Moses wandered around aimlessly for 40 years in what we now know as Saudi Arabia, mainly because Israel wasn't ready to accept God's provisions. They were busier looking at their fears than at God, and it took away or delayed their blessings. A very haunting parallel to their case is the present day Christian church and how we have allowed incorrect, fear-filled doctrines to keep us from going into our "promised" land, i.e. the full realization of "the kingdom".

If we are convinced that we still live somewhere between 30 and 70 AD, then we are forced to live our lives in a pre "*age to come*" mentality. By misinterpreting the first century "*end of the AGE*" judgment of Israel for some future "end of the world" judgment, we harbor the same hungry "all is not yet fulfilled" composure of the people in the first century. Therefore we continue to wait with romantic anticipation for the "*coming of the Son of Man*" in the same way the Jews waited for their Messiah. This affects our philosophy on millennial kingdom matters, "salt and light" responsibilities, politics, culture, and basically every aspect of our social relationships with our fellow man and with God. One of the harshest realities of this grave misinterpretation of the gospel is that we still view our fellow man through the lens of "sheep and goats", those who are Christians and those who are not... continually standing in secret religious judgment of others (those on their way to "heaven" and those on their way to "hell"). And, by the way, it is unavoidable.

These flawed beliefs dictate the "good news" of the gospel as something that is not completely finished yet, because we still believe that the "*end of the age*" has not yet happened. Out of doctrinal necessity, Christianity that (incorrectly) relocates the book of Revelation into the twenty first century must also place "*the wrath to come*" (Mt 3:7) in our future. In doing so, we unknowingly change "*no condemnation for those that are in Christ*" into "*those who endure to the end*". Hence, we are motivated to meticulously (and fearfully) dissect every New Testament verse and sentence with the utmost care, so as to avoid the DANGER

of missing any crucial (eternally-consequential) directives. And in this grossly over-analytical process – **we've missed the whole thing**. Rather than simply LISTENING to and simply BELIEVING what Jesus plainly said, we are caught up in trying to figure out how what Jesus said fits into our futurist end-times doctrines. It is a very complicated and exegetically-complex business.

If, however, we live in "*the age to come*" then both the work of Christ on the cross and the complete replacement of the old covenant are totally fulfilled and finished events. The work on the cross is then a once-and-for-ALL coverage, and now that we live in "*the kingdom*" (which literally is without end), the gospel is "*the good news*", not the scary news. For those (in the first century) who were still awaiting the coming of the Son of Man the gospel was greatly about what was YET to happen, but now that there is no end, the gospel is all about what HAPPENED.

The days of standing in secret judgment of other people are over. We share the gospel now so that others can enjoy an abundant kingdom life, not so they can be spared from some horrible coming judgment where people are wishing the rocks would fall on them (Mt. 23:28-30). We no longer have to "*endure till the end*" because "the end" already happened in 70 A.D.

### ***“He’s not heavy, he’s my brother”***

The guy with the tattoos and the piercings who smells like marijuana is our brother. The sexy, young scantily-clad intoxicated woman in high-heeled boots stumbling out of a night club at 2:00 am is our sister. And the foul-mouthed boss who doesn't seem to care about anyone but himself is also our brother, but he doesn't know it yet. Makes you stop and think... Maybe it is US (the church) who doesn't know it yet.

Perhaps the new covenant is nothing like the old covenant. Perhaps ALL people have been freed from Adam's curse. If not, then what Adam did (affecting all) was greater than what Christ did (affecting some). (Eph 2: 14-16; Romans 5:18;

1 Cor 15: 22-23). Perhaps the “*age to come*” (which we are now in) is nothing like the first century “*this age*” that Jesus referred to as His first century generation’s age. Perhaps there are some “new age” people who are running around promoting a philosophy that is closer to the essence of God’s kingdom principles than the church is.

Perhaps we are now living in a “new age” where God writes His laws in men’s HEARTS (Jeremiah 31:33), and where people who didn’t even seek Him are somehow finding Him (Isaiah 65:1). Perhaps the kingdom of God on earth is literally that beautiful, and that free, and that simple, and that easy, and that FULL of an all-inclusive LOVE of our Creator. Could God actually do that without our permission?

Perhaps it is US who have limited God’s (once and for ALL) forgiveness. Perhaps our “lost” brothers and sisters are ALREADY forgiven and they just don’t know it yet... or worse... WE don’t know it yet. Perhaps Jesus Himself is the “Tree of Life” mentioned in Rev 22:2, and perhaps we are the branches and leaves of that tree... The need for such a “Tree” in the Millennium would suggest that there would still be a need for “*healing of the nations*”. Would it not? Imagine that...

I believe that when our grandchildren or great grandchildren finally come to terms with this, they will (literally) begin the transformation of this planet into a monument of God’s LOVE in ways you and I never dreamed possible! Sadly, the “end times” preachers will probably find a way to keep their “*This-Is-The-Last-Generation*” message alive for at least 2 or 3 more “generations” (think of the irony of that), but by then the new Christianity will finally start realizing that someone made a MONSTROUSLY-HORRIBLE mistake.

The sky is NOT going to open up sometime in our future, and Jesus is NOT going to come down riding on a horse. It is NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

I know... it is SO HARD for us to say it out loud...

***“Jesus is not coming back”.***

We have been taught something that is just not true.

Our descendants will all enjoy watching their children grow, get married, visit Hawaii, cry tears of joy at the first sight of their newborn grandchildren, and on, and on, and on... Who would have thought that understanding the significance of what took place in 70 AD is the VERY KEY to understanding the VERY ESSENCE of "Kingdom Living", and the VERY ESSENCE of what God expected us Christians to have accomplished by now with this planet that He gave us. God not only GAVE us a *"promised land"*, but paid for it, and even sent His Spirit and teachers to tell us what just happened.

### ***Our response?***

*"Give us manna from heaven, a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night... Guide us, because we are lost, and helpless, and afraid, and please come soon because we want to get out of here". "Give us Your peace", we plead and cry... "Give us bread. Please give us miracles. Give us success. Show us favor. Please open the doors..."*

In effect... *"Please be our 'salt of the earth' and please be our 'light of the world', and please bring Your kingdom, because we don't deserve or want that job or accept that Your kingdom has already come..."*

In a nutshell... The *"end of the age"* and the *"Coming of the Son of Man"* already took place when and where and to whom Jesus said it would all take place, but we have (actually) been taught NOT to believe it.

### **Quick summery**

1. Main message of Jesus: The new (spiritual) kingdom is at hand.
2. Was to happen in the first century at the destruction of the temple and the *"coming of the Son of Man"*.

3. Judgment theme in the gospels is about first century Israel and the end of the Mosaic AGE, not some twenty first century apocalyptic end of the WORLD.
4. The book of Revelation is about God divorcing Israel to take another wife (The church / Bride of Christ / New Jerusalem / US) Hebrews 12:22.
5. Old Covenant is replaced with New Covenant, and the “age to come” is implemented with Christ as the enthroned King over His kingdom, and the beginning of the millennium which is not 1,000 literal years, but the kingdom is endless (of which we are now in).

The reason the church’s “end times” studies and books and novels and commentaries and seminars and near-death biographies all seem so absolutely bizarre and wildly intricate and Raiders-of-the-Lost-Ark-puzzle-like is NOT BECAUSE THE STORIES IN THE BIBLE NEEDED TO BE DECIPHERED BY QUALIFIED THEOLOGIANS IN PROPER EXEGETICAL or HERMENEUTICAL FASHION, but because futurist eschatology **MUST** explain away what the Scriptures clearly and plainly “appear” to be saying on the matter... Hence, our view of the “gospel” is seen (and taught) through the lens of our futurist eschatology rather than the other way around. Our theologians didn’t use the plainly-spoken, plainly-written audience-relevant gospels to understand Revelation; they used their “end-of-the-WORLD” version (or interpretation) of Revelation to “understand” the gospels.

I wish every Christian I knew could read those last two sentences.

What I (along with millions of others) have found is not merely some inconsequential timing issue like the insignificant differences between pre-trib, post-trib, pre-wrath, or whether or not angels have wings, etc, but whether or not the Greatest Theological Disaster of all Human History has actually occurred to the church without us even knowing it.

### **My Personal Apology...**

Since the futurist theologians won't do it, I will... I am genuinely sorry that you and I were taught that the gospel is both less and "more" than it actually is. I am sorry if you've been led to believe that Jesus has not yet returned as He said He would to His disciples (in their generation). I am sorry if you've been taught that the "*end of the age*" and the "*Coming of the Son of Man*" are events yet in your future, and that "when He comes" He will "set up" a physical paradise "*kingdom*" on earth with a gigantic golden city from outer space. And I'm sorry that the truth about "*all these things*", in truth, completely changes our entire religion into something that we had absolutely no idea it was (and is).

### **My Prediction...**

What you have read and seen here today is soon to become a very LOUD conversation in your local church within just a few short years. A "New Christianity", I believe will emerge within just the next couple of generations that will celebrate the truths within these pages. They will say, "*The reason Jesus is not coming back is because He is already here! How could our ancestor's have possibly missed this?*"

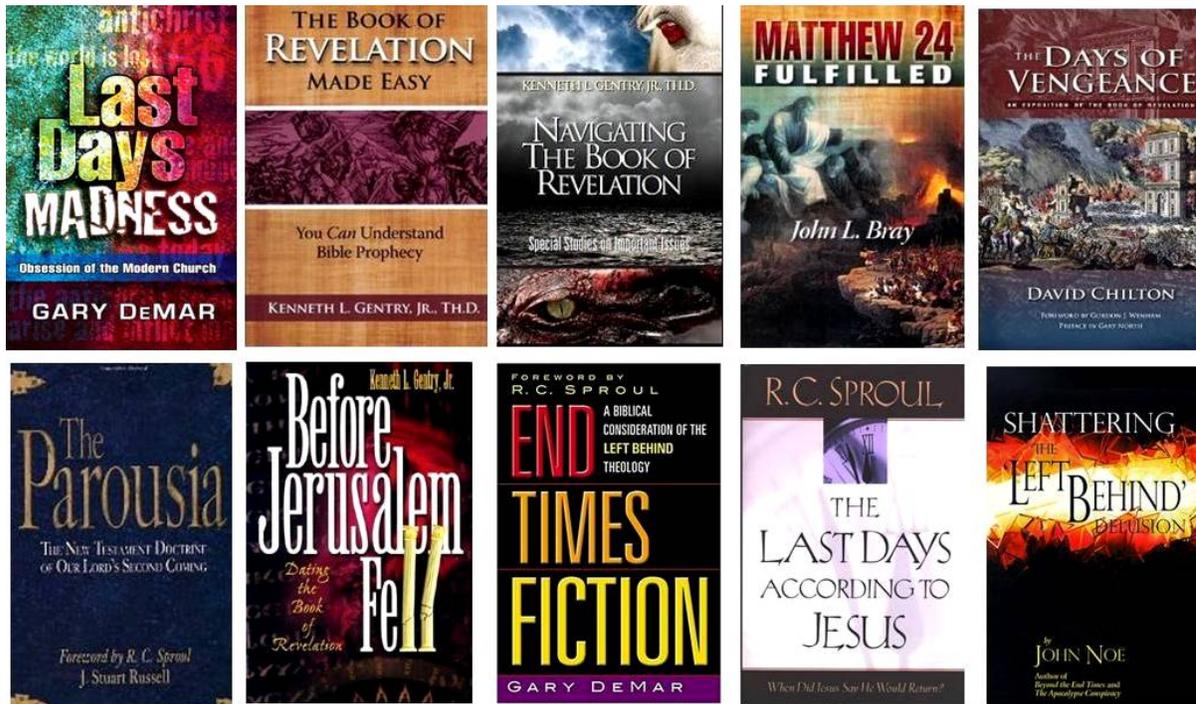
### **In Closing:**

How can we possibly unsee what we've seen here today?

The current, ongoing re-examination of the Scriptures on this subject is the most explosive theological revelation of this century. And you just got in on the ground floor. We have two choices...

1. Start seriously revisiting and rethinking our theology.
2. Since ALL of our questions can't be perfectly answered, just carelessly disregard everything we just read and continue following someone else's flawed theology...

If you'd like to save **20 years** of your life trying to figure all this stuff out, then take the time, spend the money, and read just 2 or 3 of these books...



Here's just a small list of amazing **books** that will (more than) clear all this up for Christians who are not afraid of the truth they may find by simply returning to the Bible for clarification... Spend the money, take the time, and save yourself 20 years of staying in the dark about "all these things"...

1. **"Last Days Madness"** by Gary DeMar  
<http://www.amazon.com/Last-Days-Madness-Obsession-Modern/dp/0915815354>
2. **"The Book of Revelation Made Easy"** by Kenneth Gentry  
[http://www.amazon.com/Book-Revelation-Made-Easy/dp/0915815915/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328476677&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Book-Revelation-Made-Easy/dp/0915815915/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328476677&sr=1-1)
3. **"Christianity's Great Dilemma"** by Glenn L. Hill  
<http://glennhill.com/index.html>
4. **"The Olivet Discourse Made Easy"** by Kenneth Gentry  
[http://www.amazon.com/Olivet-Discourse-Made-Easy/dp/0982589050/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328476703&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Olivet-Discourse-Made-Easy/dp/0982589050/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328476703&sr=1-1)

5. **“Matthew 24 Fulfilled”** by John L. Bray  
[http://www.amazon.com/Matthew-24-Fulfilled-John-Bray/dp/0915815907/ref=pd\\_rhf\\_se\\_shvl3](http://www.amazon.com/Matthew-24-Fulfilled-John-Bray/dp/0915815907/ref=pd_rhf_se_shvl3)
6. **“Last Days according to Jesus”** by R. C. Sproul  
[http://www.amazon.com/Last-Days-according-to-Jesus-Sproul/dp/080106340X/ref=pd\\_rhf\\_se\\_shvl2](http://www.amazon.com/Last-Days-according-to-Jesus-Sproul/dp/080106340X/ref=pd_rhf_se_shvl2)
7. **“Shattering the Left Behind Delusion”** by John Noe  
[http://www.amazon.com/Shattering-Left-Behind-Delusion-John/dp/0962131164/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328477398&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Shattering-Left-Behind-Delusion-John/dp/0962131164/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328477398&sr=1-1)
8. **“The Parousia: The New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming”** by J. Stuart Russell  
[http://www.amazon.com/Parousia-Testament-Doctrine-Second-Coming/dp/0801077257/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328477511&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Parousia-Testament-Doctrine-Second-Coming/dp/0801077257/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328477511&sr=1-1)
9. **“The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation”** by David Chilton  
[http://www.amazon.com/Days-Vengeance-Exposition-Book-Revelation/dp/0930462092/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328477741&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Days-Vengeance-Exposition-Book-Revelation/dp/0930462092/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328477741&sr=1-1)
10. **“End Times Fiction: A Biblical Consideration Of The Left Behind Theology”** by Gary DeMar  
[http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0785266429/qid=1024722042/sr=1-1/ref=sr\\_1\\_1/002-5836527-7297623](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0785266429/qid=1024722042/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/002-5836527-7297623)
11. **“Before Jerusalem Fell”** by Kenneth Gentry  
[http://www.amazon.com/Before-Jerusalem-Fell-Revelation-JERUSALEM/dp/B0070HDRMO/ref=sr\\_1\\_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328477999&sr=1-4](http://www.amazon.com/Before-Jerusalem-Fell-Revelation-JERUSALEM/dp/B0070HDRMO/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1328477999&sr=1-4)
12. **“Navigating the Book of Revelation”** by Kenneth Gentry  
<http://www.kennethgentry.com/products/Navigating-Revelation-%28pb-book%29-30%25-off!.html>

### **And just a few website resources...**

- <http://www.biblicalpreteristarchive.com/>
- <http://www.americanvision.com>
- <https://www.kennethgentry.com>
- <http://www.planetpreterist.com/>
- <http://www.eschatology.org/>
- <http://www.preterist.org/preteristQA.asp>
- <http://www.preteristcentral.com/>
- <http://www.bibleprophecy.com/>

*I would really appreciate your thoughts on this work...*

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