The Protestant Reformation: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

Session 12



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Introduction



I. Oct 31, 1517
II. 500 years
III. Far reaching impact
IV. Partial restoration
V. Restoration of a hermeneutic
VI. Selectively applied
VII. Subsequent generations applied consistently
VIII. Preview



Overview



I. The early church
II. The Alexandrian eclipse
III. The Dark Ages
IV. The contribution of the Protestant Reformers
V. The Reformers' incomplete revolution
VI. Reformed Theology today
VII. Dispensationalism & the completed revolution
VIII. Looking back 500 years later



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SICILY
Syracuse
IONIAN SEA
MACEDONIA
THRACE
Danube River
BLACK SEA
Sinope
Heraclea
Byzantium
Philippi
Thessalonica
Berea
GREECE
AEGEAN SEA
ASIA
Adramyttium
Pergamum
Delphi
Athens
Corinth
Sparta
Smyrna
Ephesus
Miletus
Sardis
BITHYNIA
PONTUS
Ancyra
PHRYGIA
GALATIA
CAPPADOCIA
Antioch in Pisidia
Caesarea Mazaca
Iconium
Laodicea
Lystra
Derbe
COMMAGENE
Tios
PAMPHYLIA
Side
Tarsus
Antioch
Seleucia Pieria
Seleucia Tracheotis
Apamea
Salamis
Arvadus
CYPRUS
Paphos
Tripoli
Beirut
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Ptolemais
Caesarea
Joppa
Jerusalem
JUDEA
Pelusium
Alexandria
Leontopolis
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Leptis Magna
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LIBYA


Asia
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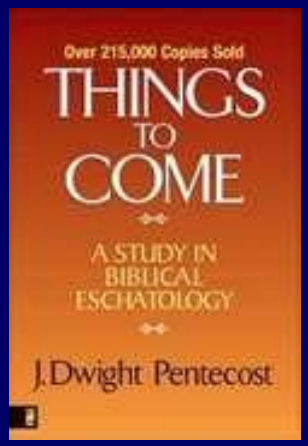

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Dangers of Allegorization – Philo



Dangers of Allegorization



I. Text is not being interpreted
II. Authority is transferred from text to interpreter
III. There is no way to test the interpreter
IV. No mechanism for controlling the interpreter's imagination



Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pps. 4-5

What Caused the Shift Into Allegorism?

A. Need for immediate relevance

B. Incorporation of human philosophy into interpretation

C. Gnostic dualism (Gen. 1:31; 1 John 2:22; 4:2-3; Acts 17:32; 1 Cor. 15:12)

D. Decline of the church's Jewish population

E. Constantine’s Edict of Milan (A.D. 313)

F. AD 70 and Hadrian’s (A.D. 117–138)“Palestine”



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III. <u>THE DARK AGES</u>

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III. The Dark Ages (or the Middle Ages)

A. Lasted from the 4th to the 16th centuries
B. Obsolescence of prophetic studies
C. Domination of Augustinian Amillennialism
D. Only one church: Roman Catholicism
E. The Bible is removed from the people
    1. Allegorization
    2. Illiteracy
    3. Mass read in Latin
F. Sale of indulgences
G. Anti-Semitism
H. Church in need of rescue



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IV. Contribution of the Protestant Reformers



A. Preparation of the Reformers
B. Emphasis on literal interpretation
C. Denunciation of allegorization
D. Rejection of church tradition as a guide
E. Priesthood of all believers
    1. Bible translations
    2. Literacy
F. Basis for the American system of governance
G. Five *solas*
H. Rejection of celibacy of the priesthood
I. The ultimate sacrifice
J. Rejoice



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V. The Reformers' Incomplete Revolution



A. Protology
B. Selective literalism
C. Did not deal with eschatology in depth
D. Retention of Augustinian Amillennialism
E. Antichrist & Babylon = Pope and Papacy
F. Dragged vestiges of Roman Catholicism with them
    1. Initially desired to remain Catholics
    2. Infant baptism
    3. Consubstantiation
    4. Church = the earthly kingdom
    5. Anti-Semitism
G. Reasons for their inconsistency
H. Laid the groundwork for future generations



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A. Erroneously assumed no further progress to be made
B. Froze progress into creeds & confessions
C. Creeds & confessions = authority rather than Scripture
D. Augustinian Amillennialism fossilized into RT
E. Allegorizing of biblical Eschatological texts is common
    1. Zech. 14:4
    2. Preterism
    3. Rev. 20-22
    4. Ezek. 40-48



F. Not applying a literal hermeneutic to the whole Bible

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Daniel 12:4, 9 (NASB)

"But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book **until** the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase…He said, 'Go *your way*, Daniel, for *these* words are concealed and sealed up **until** the end time.'"



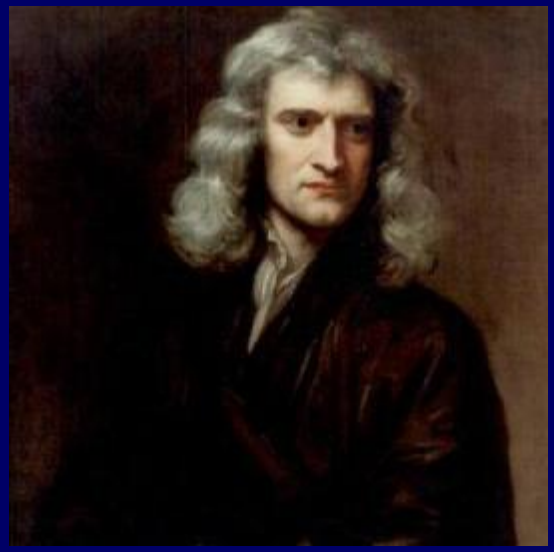
Amos 8:12 (NASB)

"People will stagger from sea to sea And from the north even to the east; They will go **to and fro to seek the word of the LORD**, But they will not find *it*."



Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727)

"About the time of the end, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the Prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation, in the midst of much clamor and opposition."



Isaac Newton cited in Nathaniel West, *The Thousand Years in Both Testaments*, 462.

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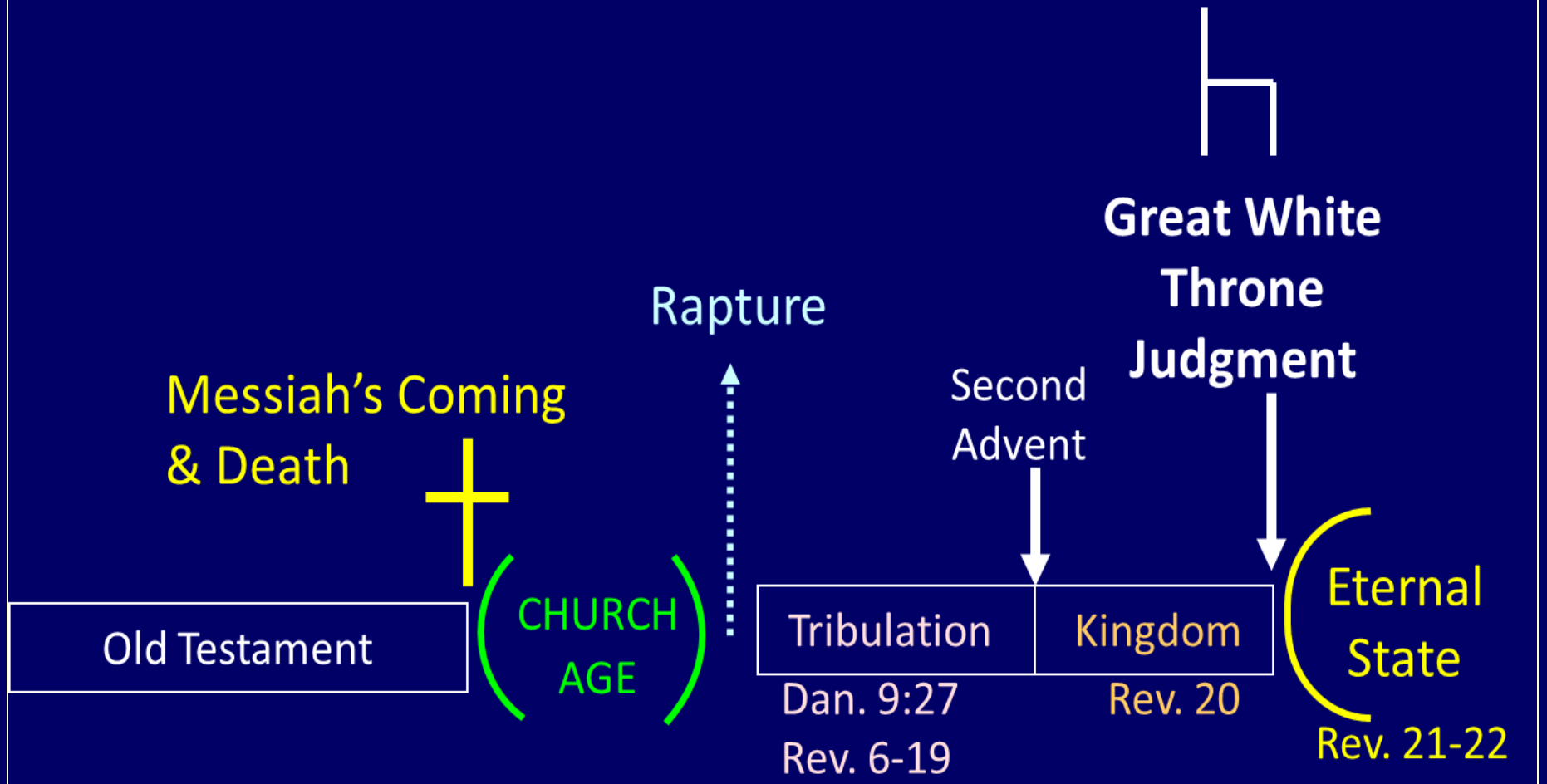


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Westminster Confession

Westminster Confession. Chaps. 32and 33; *Larger Cat*. , Ques. 87–89.–These teach—1. At the last day shall be a general resurrection of the dead both of the just and of the unjust. 2. All found alive shall be immediately changed. 3. Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of all angels and men, good and bad. 4. That the date of this day and hour is purposely kept secret by God.

Prophecy Panorama



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Jeremy Edmondson

"The goal of the Reformation was to point Christianity back to the Scriptures. The noble intentions of the Reformers called for the Bible as the supreme authority for believers everywhere. For this we rejoice! But if the Reformation and its resulting creeds are exalted to the standard of measuring orthodoxy, does it not defeat the very purpose for which it was intended?"

Jeremy Edmondson, "Returning to Scripture as Our Sole Authority," in *Free Grace Theology: 5 Ways It Magnifies the Gospel*, ed. et al. Charlie C. Bing (Allen, TX: Bold Grace, 2016), 3.

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Renald Showers

John Ankerberg and Renald Showers, *The Most Asked Prophecy Questions* (Chattanooga, TN: ATRI, 2000), 328.

Showers explains, “The Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican Reformers rejected Premillennialism as being ‘Jewish opinions.’ They maintained the Amillennial view which the Roman Catholic Church had adopted from Augustine.”

Barry Horner

Barry E. Horner, *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, NAC Stuides in Bible & Theology (Nashville, TN: Baker, 2007), 155-60.

"The inheritance from the Augustinian tradition that modern Europe received, notwithstanding the opposition of Melanchthon and others to Luther's excesses, resulted in a continuance of an eschatology that upheld the essentially anti-Judiac thesis, namely, the transference of blessings, formerly promised to Israel, to the Christian church for it's fulfillment...On a much larger scale the reformed movement maintained its allegiance to Augustinian eschatology, which essentially found authoritative expression in the writings of Francis Turretin (1623–1687) who studied at Calvin's academy in Geneva and later taught there for 30 years. His monumental *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* became the epitome of reformed doctrine. Not surprisingly, his quotations of Augustine are . . .

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...copious, even far exceeding references to Calvin. Consequently, Turretin's eschatology is almost predictable...Of course such a mass incorporation into the church is to the exclusion of any perpetuation of Jewish identity. In classic Augustinian fashion, there is token recognition of Jewish individuality for a time, though any form of Jewish restoration was considered to be a gross form of chiliasm. Turretin's *Institutes* became the central textbook for systematic theology in American Ivy League colleges during the later half of the 18th century. It is not surprising that the early theologians of Princeton Theological Seminary highly esteemed this most influential legacy, and of course it's eschatology.”

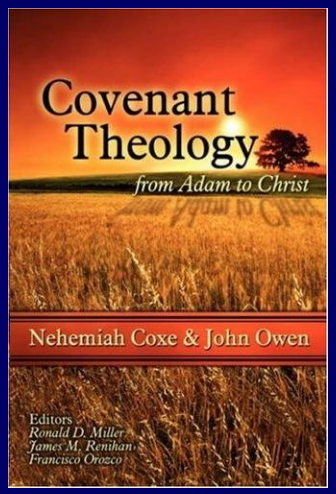
Distinctives of Covenantism

I. A system of interpreting the Scriptures on the basis of two covenants: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. Some add the covenant of redemption.

II. Importance of grace – In every age, believers are always saved by grace.

III. God's primary purpose on earth is redemptive.

IV. Partial allegorical system of hermeneutics

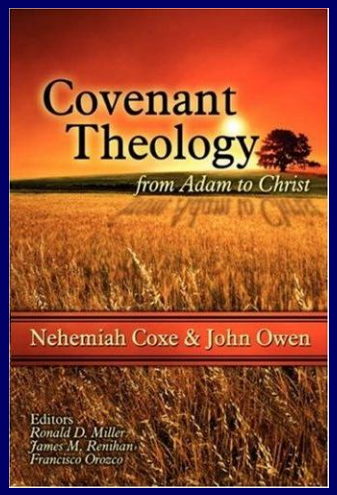


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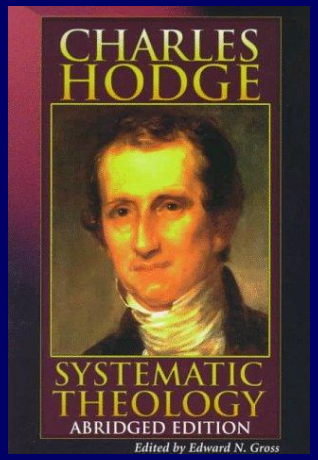
I. Covenant of Works – God entered into a covenant with Adam as the federal head of the human race in which He promised eternal life for obedience and eternal death for disobedience.

II. Covenant of Redemption – A covenant made between God the Father and God the Son in eternity past in which they covenanted together for the redemption of the human race.

III. Covenant of Grace – A covenant made by God with the elect in which He provides salvation to the elect sinner.



Implied vs. Exegetical Covenants



"this statement does **not** rest upon any express declaration of the Scriptures…And although the word covenant [as in works] is **not used** in Genesis, and does not elsewhere, in any clear passage occur in reference to the transaction there recorded,…it is **plain** that the Bible does represent the arrangement made with Adam as a truly federal transaction."

Hodge, *Systematic Theology,* 2:117

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Zechariah 14:4 (NASB)

“In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.”



David Reagan

"The Beginning and the Ending," online: http://christinprophecy.org/articles/the-beginning-and-the-ending/, accessed 19 April 2017, 1.

"Let me give you a classic example of spiritualization taken from the writings of a theologian by the name of Loraine Boettner. It has to do with his interpretation of Zechariah 14:1-9. That passage says that in the end times Jerusalem will be surrounded by enemy forces and will be ready to fall to them when the Lord will suddenly return to the Mount of Olives. When His feet touch the Mount, it will split down the middle. The Lord will then speak a supernatural word that will instantly destroy all the enemy forces. And on that day, the Lord will become King over all the earth. In his commentary on this passage, Boettner completely spiritualized it. **He argued that the Mount of Olives stands for the human heart. The enemy forces symbolize the evil in this world that surrounds and attacks the heart. The Lord's return represents what happens when a person accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior. Thus, when Jesus comes into a person's heart, their heart (the Mount of Olives) splits in contrition, and all the evil influences in the person's life are defeated, and Jesus becomes king of that person's heart.** That's what I call an exercise in imagination!"

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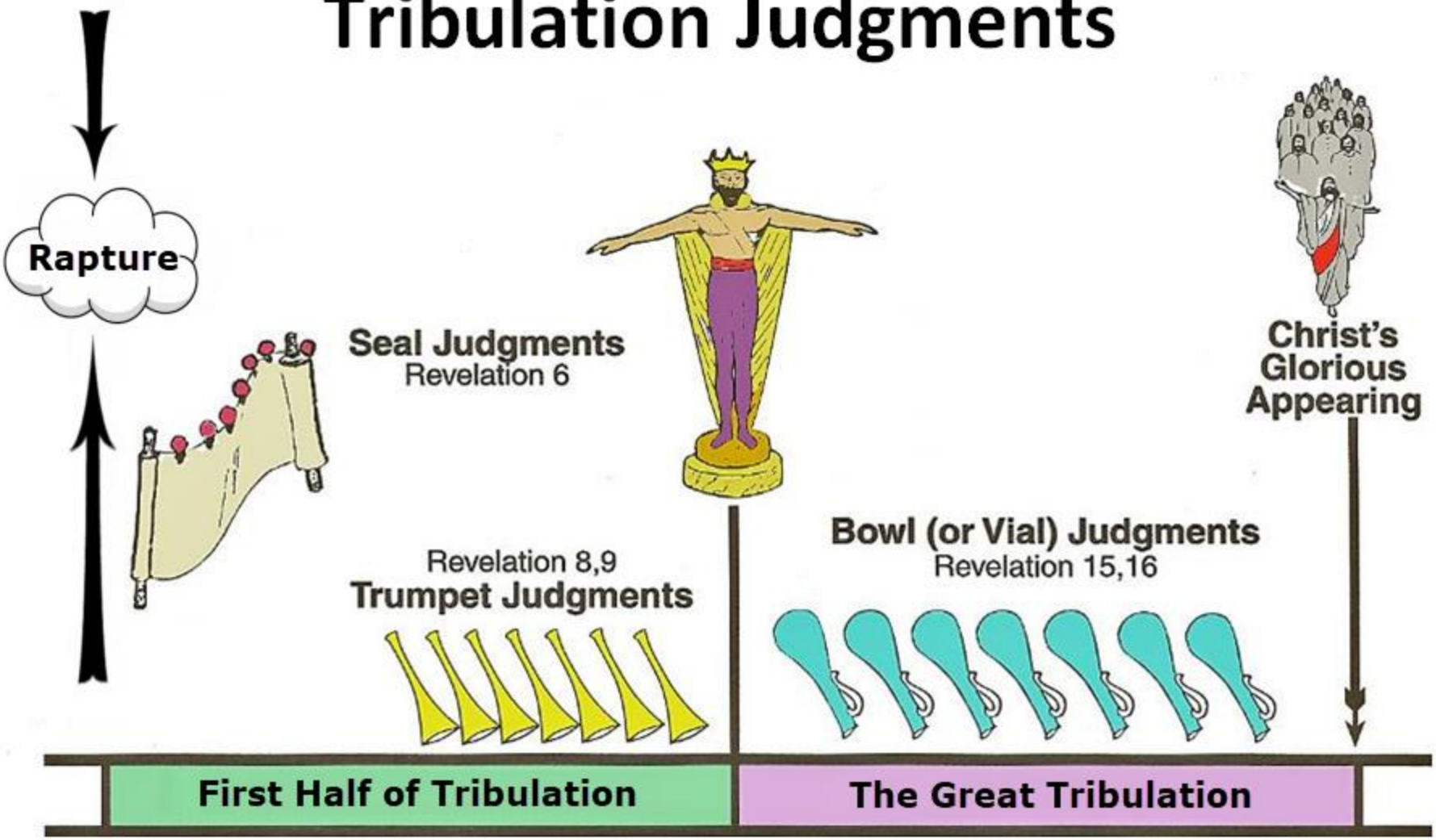
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Preterism Advocates

Recent Preterist Commentators

- R.C. Sproul 
- N.T. Wright 
- Scott Hahn 
- J. Massyngbaerde Ford 
- David Chilton 
- Hank Hanegraaff 
- Kenneth Gentry 

Tribulation Judgments



GLOBAL EVENTS YET TO OCCUR

I. World population destroyed (Rev. 6:8; 9:15)

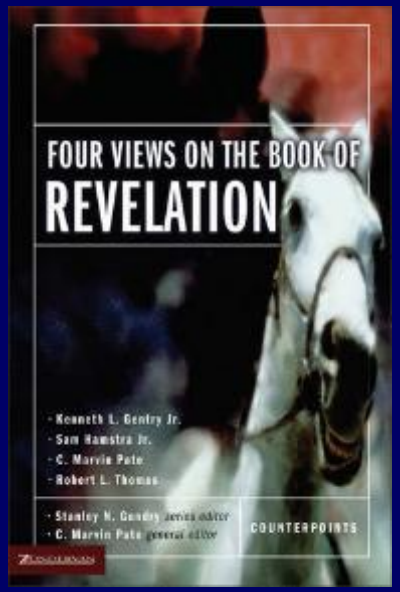
II. Sea turns to blood (Rev. 16:3)

III. Greatest Earthquake in history (Rev. 16:18)

IV. The great city that reigns over the entire earth (Rev. 17:18)

Kenneth Gentry

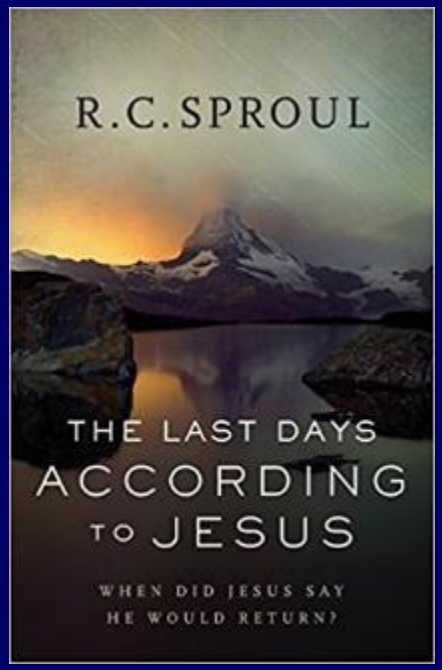
Four Views of Revelation, p. 38.



"…the preterist view does understand Revelation's prophecies as strongly reflecting actual historical events in John's near future, though they are set in apocalyptic drama and clothed in poetic hyperbole."

Sproul

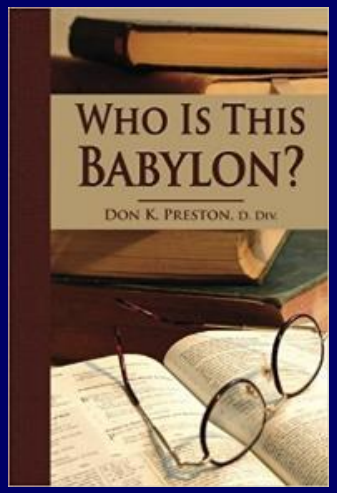
The Last Days According to Jesus, 45.



"Russell and Calvin agree that the language employed in biblical prophecy is not always cold and logical as is common in the western world, but adopts a kind of fervor common to the East."

Don Preston

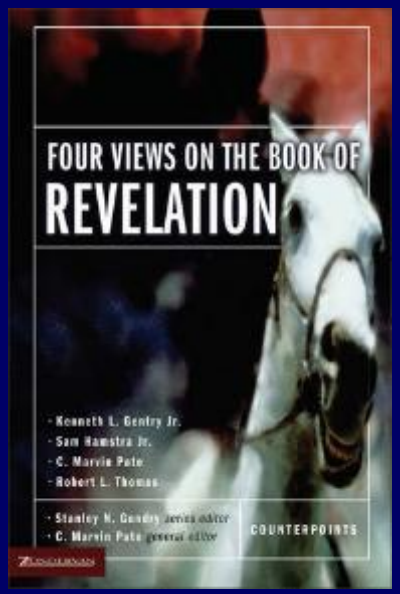
Who Is This Babylon? (Don K. Preston, 1999), 56.



Preterist Don Preston also relies upon Revelation to belonging to the apocalyptic category in order to find support for his view that Revelation's global language was fulfilled in the local events of A.D. 70. He observes that apocalyptic literature hyperbolizes the destruction of Jerusalem. According to *Sibylline Oracle* 5:153, "the whole creation was shaken" when war began on Jerusalem. If Revelation is also apocalyptic literature, then Revelation must be similarly using hyperbolic language.

Kenneth Gentry

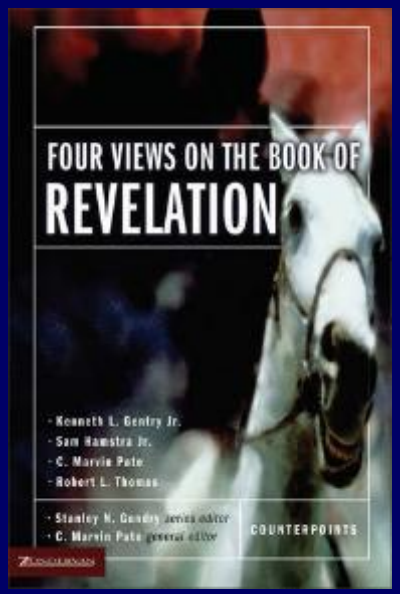
Four Views of Revelation, p. 38.



"Before beginning my survey, I must note what most Christians suspect and what virtually all evangelical scholars (excluding classic dispensationalists) recognize regarding the book: Revelation is a highly figurative book that we cannot approach with a simple straightforward literalism."

Robert Thomas

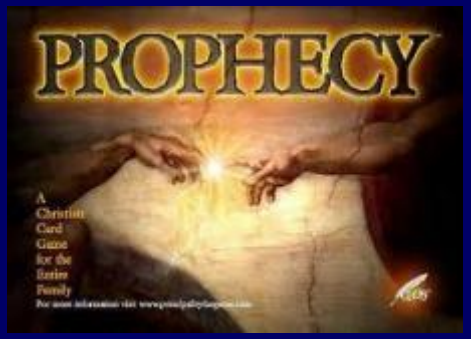
"A Classical Dispensationalist View of Revelation," in Four Views of the Book of Revelation, p.181.



"A Preterist approach must assume an apocalyptic genre in which the language only faintly and indirectly reflects the actual events. This extreme allegorical interpretation allows for finding fulfillments in the first-century Roman Empire prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70."

Emergent Eschatology and Genre

"The book of Revelation is an example of popular literary genre of ancient Judaism, known today as Jewish apocalyptic. Trying to read it without understanding its genre would be like watching *Star Trek* or some other science fiction show thinking it was a historical documentary…instead of being a book about the distant future, it becomes a way of talking about the challenges of the immediate present."



Brian McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus*, 175-76

VI. Reformed Theology Today

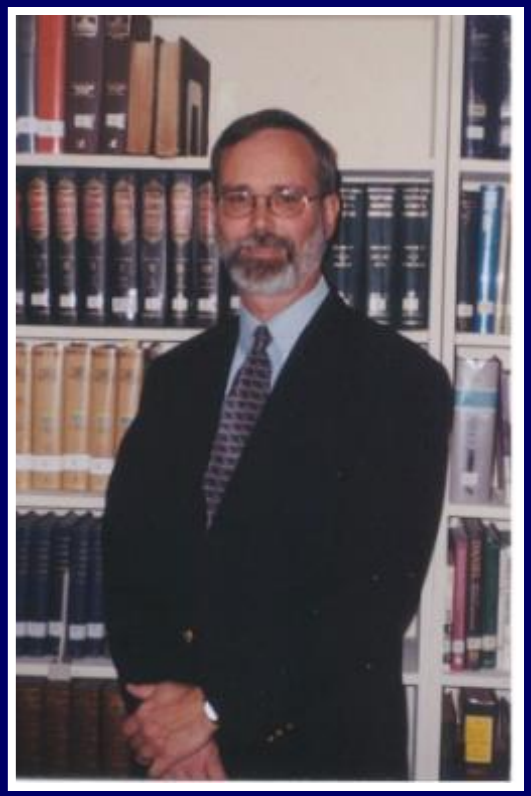
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F. Not applying a literal hermeneutic to the whole Bible

Kenneth L. Gentry

He Shall Have Dominion: A Post Millennial Eschatology (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian economics, 1992), page 335.



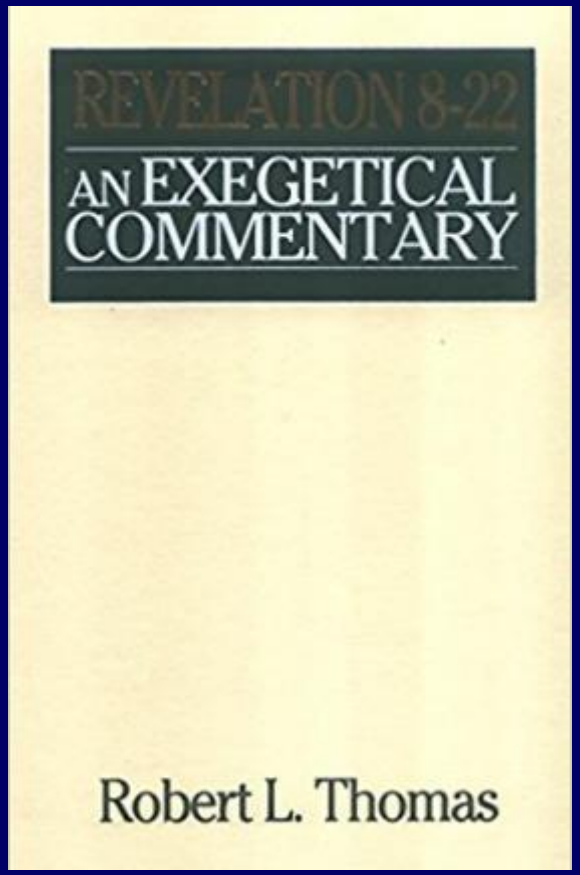
"The proper understanding of the thousand-year time frame in Revelation 20 is that it is representative of a long and glorious era and is not limited to a literal 365,000 days. The figure represents a perfect cube of 10, which is the number of quantitative perfection."

Reasons for Understanding 1000 Literally

I. John's use of indefinite concepts elsewhere (Rev. 20:8, 20:3)
II. Exception to the "# of years" examples?
III. Other numbers are taken literally
    A. Two witnesses (11:3)
    B. 7000 people (11:13)
    C. 4 Angels (7:1)
    D. 7 Angels (8:6)
    E. 144,000 Jews (7:4)
    F. 42 months (11:2)
    G. 1260 days (11:3)
IV. Not always a symbolic interpretation (Rev. 17:18)

Robert Thomas

Revelation 8 to 22: An Exegetical Commentary
(Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 408.



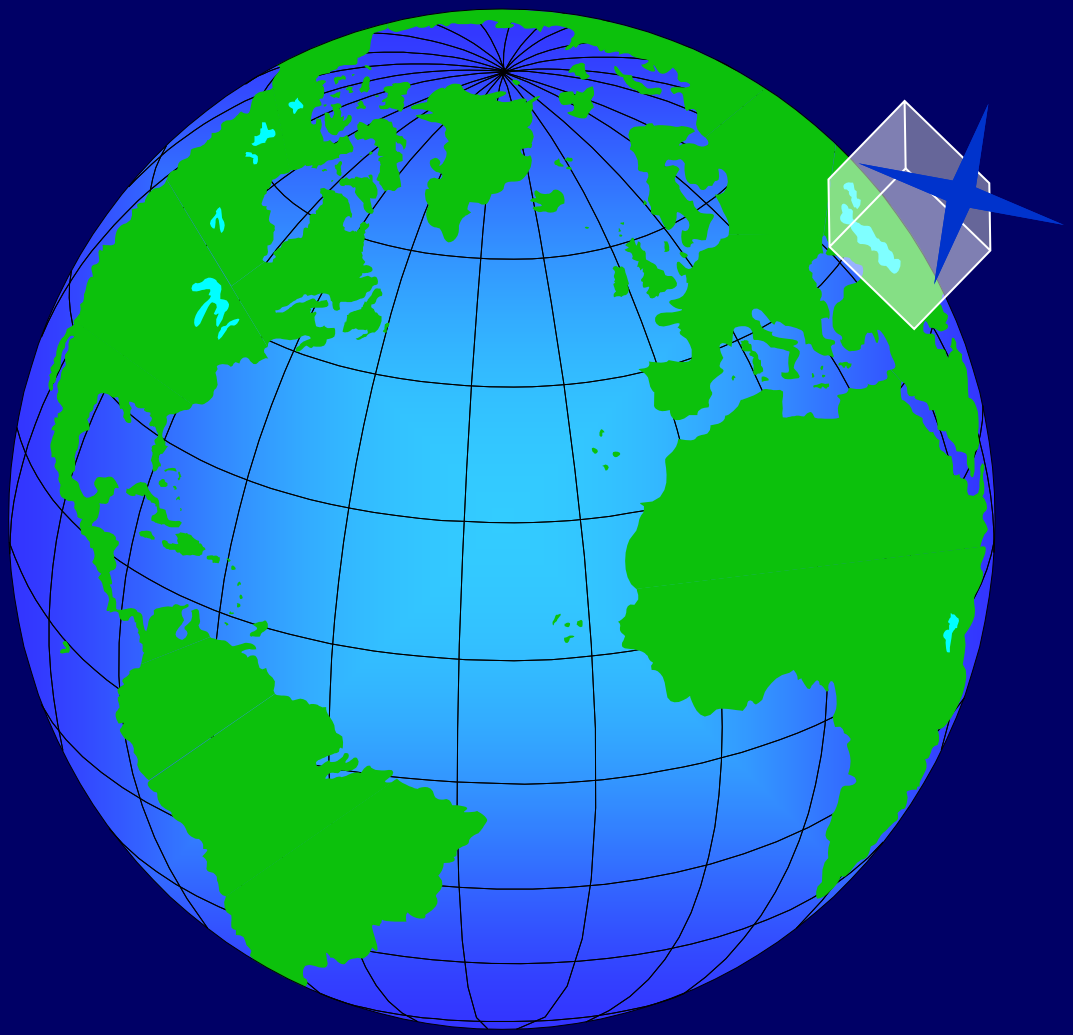
Robert Thomas observes that, "no number in Revelation is verifiably a symbolic number.”

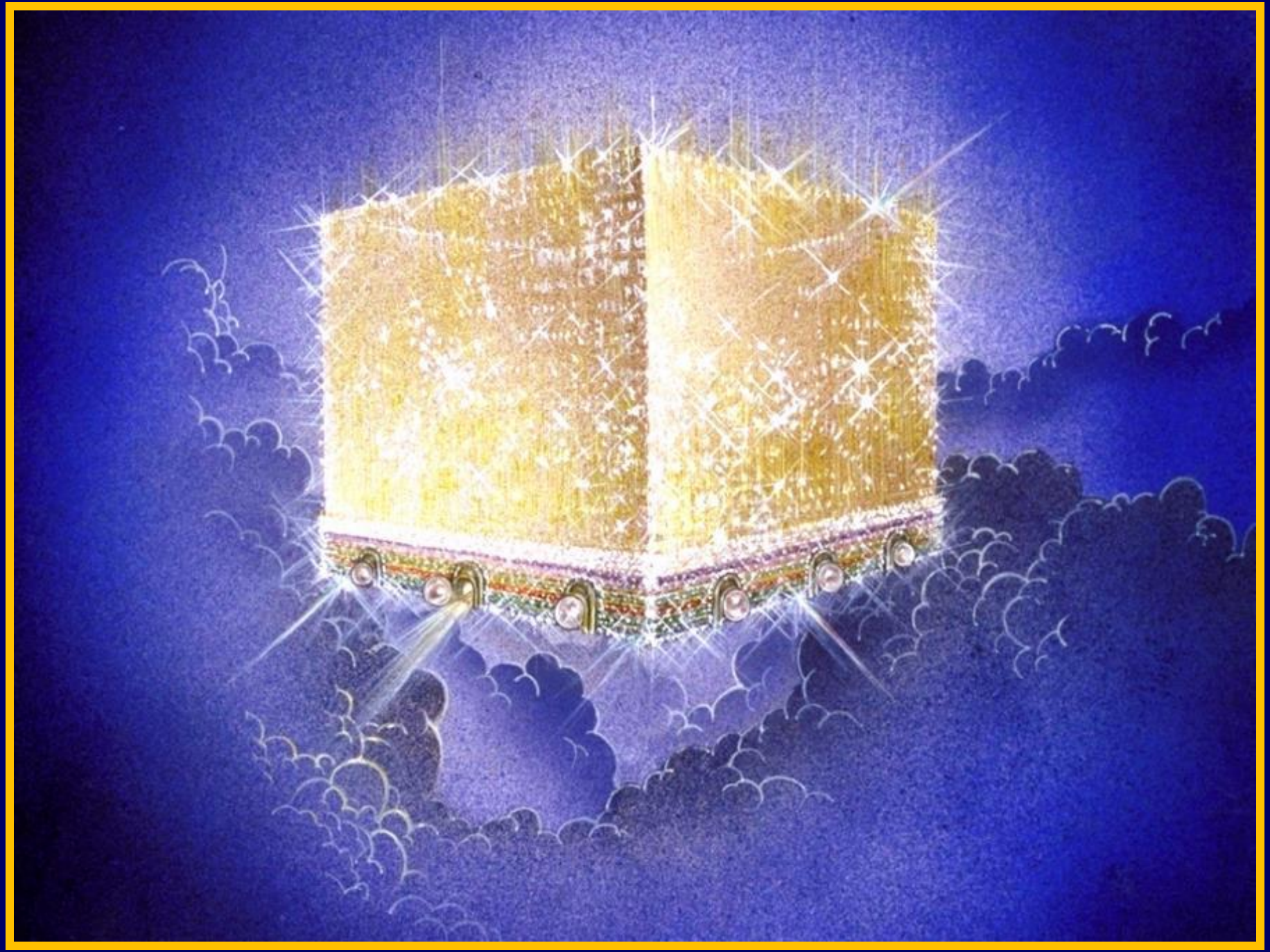
Revelation 21:16-17

16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be [*1500 miles*] in length, and as wide and high as it is long. 17 He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, **by** man's measurement, which the angel was using.

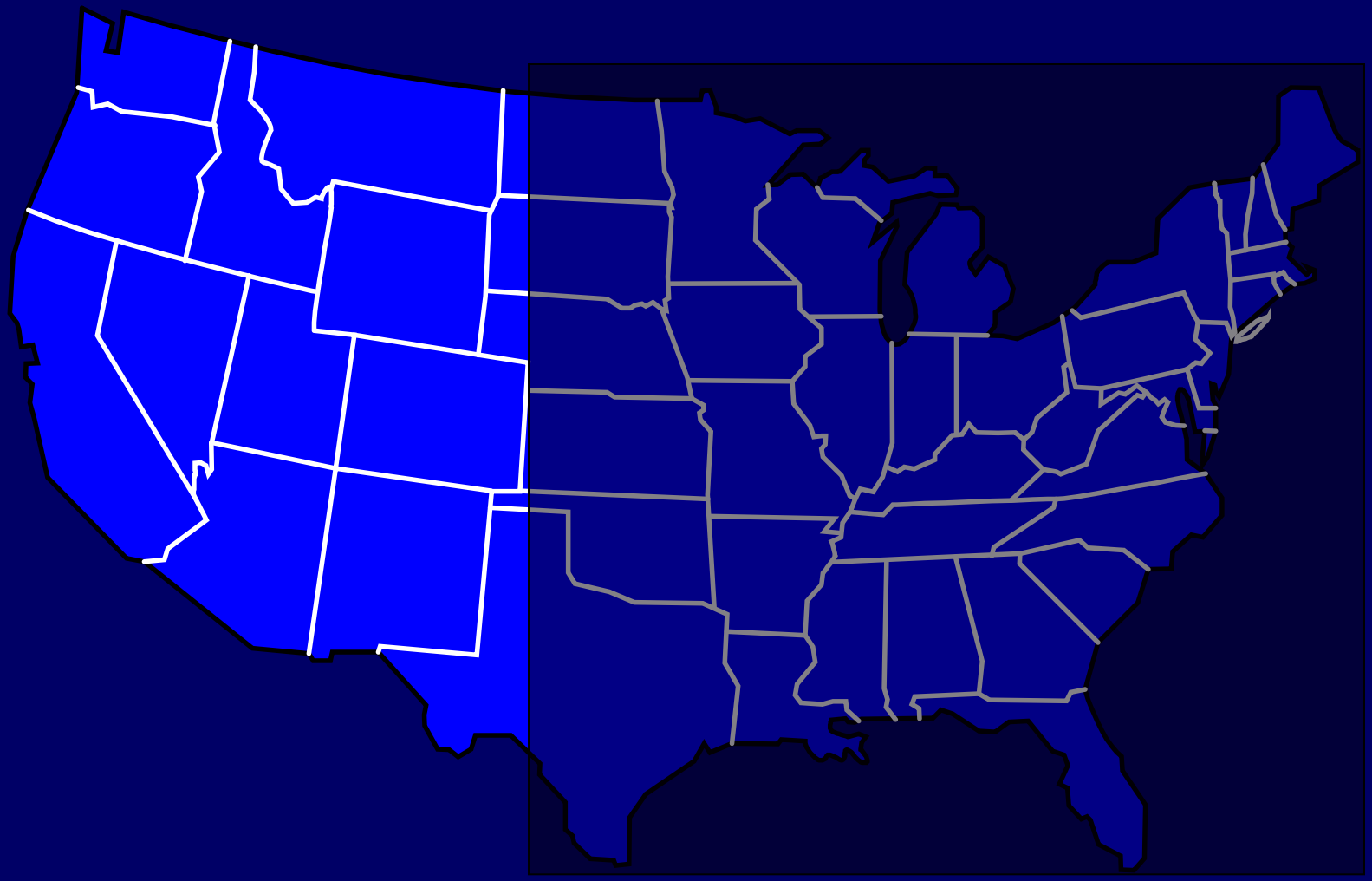


Jerusalem Descending





The New Jerusalem



Paul Lee Tan

Cited in, *The Interpretation of Prophecy*
(Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 1974), 285-86.

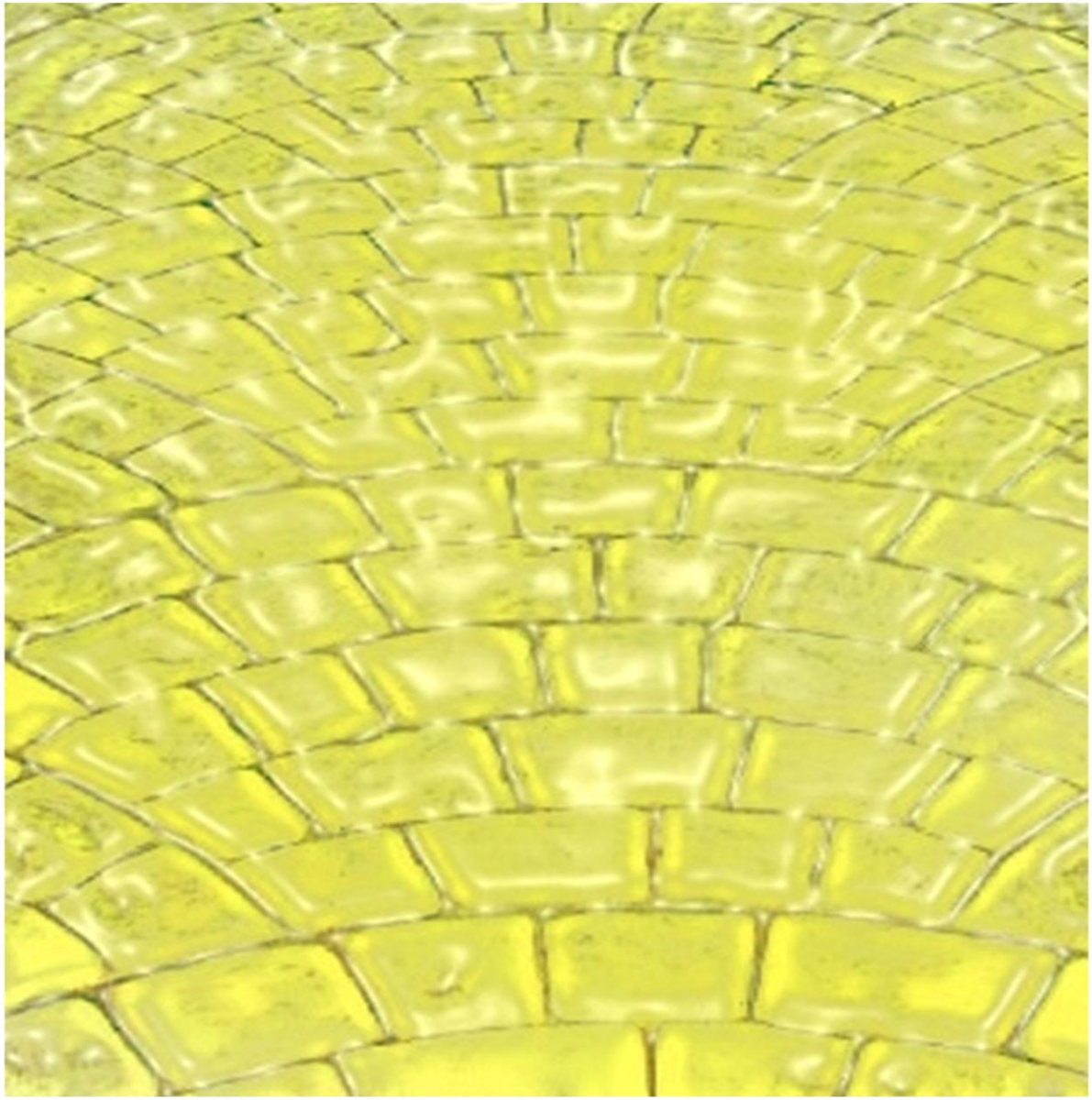
1. **Swete**: "Such dimensions defy imagination and are permissible only in the language of symbolism."
2. **Barnes**: "Of course, this must preclude all idea of there being such a city literally in Palestine…this cannot be understood literally; and the very idea of a literal fulfillment of this shows the absurdity of that method of interpretation…this cannot be taken literally; and an attempt to explain all of this literally would show that that method of interpreting the Apocalypse is impracticable."

Paul Lee Tan

Cited in, *The Interpretation of Prophecy*
(Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 1974), 285-86.

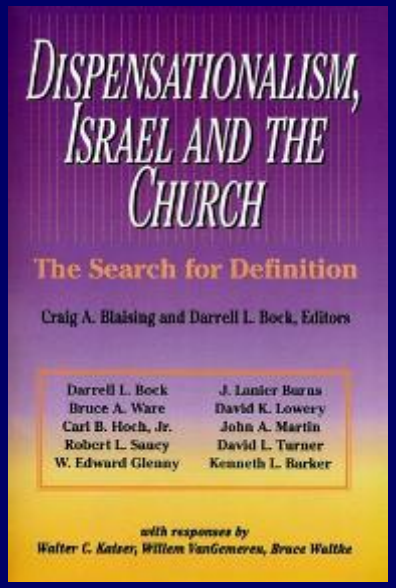
3. **Grant**: “no clearer proof…that all is figurative. Such a height is simply out of harmony with the constitution of our world.”
4. **Boettner**: “Neither the shape nor the dimensions of the city can be taken with mathematical exactness, as if it were a gigantic apartment house.”


JUDAH
יהודה
JAMES
PHILIP
ANDREW
SIMON
THOMAS
PETER
PIERRE
PEDRO



David L. Turner

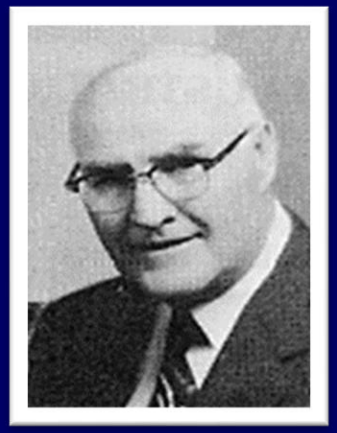
"The New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1-22:5; Consummation of a Biblical Continuum," Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church, ed., Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 277.



"Perhaps the absence of oysters large enough to produce such pearls and the absence of sufficient gold to pave such a city (viewed literally 1380 miles squared and high) is viewed as sufficient reason not to take these images as fully literal!…the preceding discussion serves to warn against a 'hyper-literal' approach to apocalyptic imagery…."

David L. Cooper

The World's Greatest Library Graphically Illustrated (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1970), 11.



"When the **plain sense** of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, **ordinary, usual, literal** meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

VI. Reformed Theology Today

A. Erroneously assumed no further progress to be made
B. Froze progress into creeds & confessions
C. Creeds & confessions = authority rather than Scripture
D. Augustinian Amillennialism fossilized into RT
E. **Allegorizing of biblical Eschatological texts is common**
    1. Zech. 14:4
    2. Preterism
    3. Rev. 20-22
    4. **<u>Ezek. 40-48</u>**

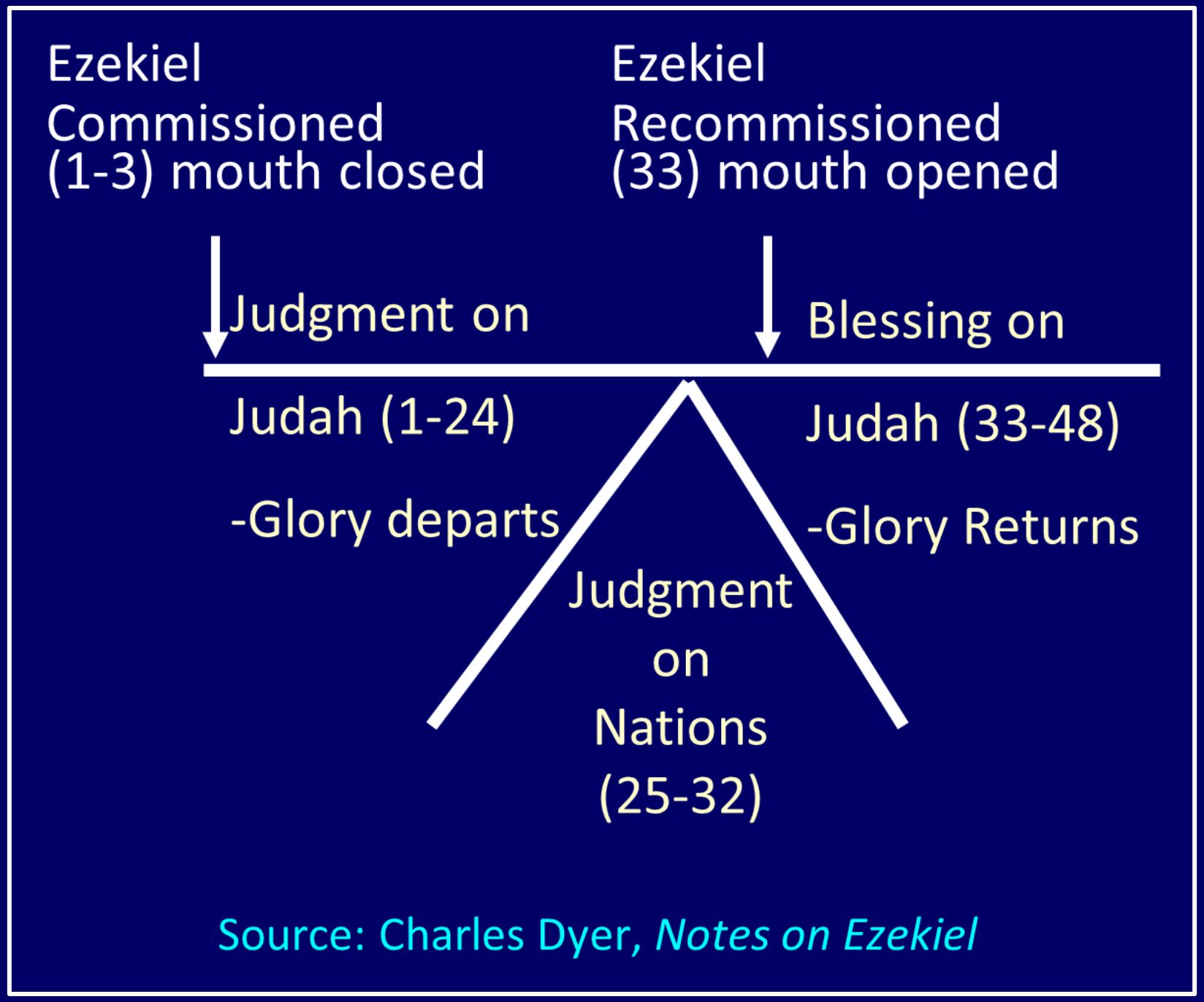


F. Not applying a literal hermeneutic to the whole Bible

Gary DeMar

Last Days Madness, 4th rev. ed. (Powder Springs, GA: American, 1999), 97-98.

"The Book of Hebrews was written to show beyond a shadow of a doubt that the entire Old Covenant system–with its priest, sacrifices, ceremonies, and temple–has been done away with in Christ…The prophecy of Ezekiel's temple is a picture of the restored covenant community that returned to the land after the exile. The vision should not be projected 2500 years into the future into some earthly millennial kingdom where sacrifices will be offered *for atonement* in the presence of the crucified Christ."



Source: Charles Dyer, *Notes on Ezekiel*

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F. **<u>Not applying a literal hermeneutic to the whole Bible</u>**

Albertus Pieters

"The leader," September 5, 1931; as cited in John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom: A Basic Text in Premillennial Theology* (Findlay, OH: Dunham, 1959), 128.

"The question whether the Old Testament prophecies concerning the people of God must be interpreted in their ordinary sense, as other Scriptures are interpreted, or can properly be applied to the Christian church, is called the question of spiritualization of prophecy. This is one of the major problems in biblical interpretation, and confronts everyone who makes a serious study of the Word of God. It is one of the chief keys to the difference of opinion between Premillenarians and the mass of Christian scholars. The former reject spiritualization, the latter employ it; and as long as there is no agreement on this point the debate is interminable and fruitless."

CONCLUSION

VI. Reformed Theology Today

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    1. Zech. 14:4
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F. Not applying a literal hermeneutic to the whole Bible

NEXT WEEK



I. The early church
II. The Alexandrian eclipse
III. The Dark Ages
IV. The Contribution of the Protestant Reformers
V. The Reformers' Incomplete Revolution
VI. Reformed Theology Today
VII. DISPENSATIONALISM & THE COMPLETED REVOLUTION
VIII. Looking back 500 years later

