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

Session 2



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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



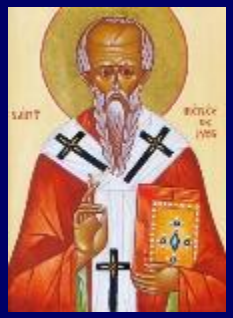
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Irenaeus (A.D. 125–202)

Quoted in George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 3 vols. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1952), 1:47.

"The literal, grammatical interpretation of the Scriptures must…be observed in order to obtain a correct understanding…The primitive church occupied this position, and Irenaeus...gives us the general sentiment...when he says of the Holy Scriptures: **'that what the understanding can daily make use of, what it can easily know, is that which lies before our eyes, unambiguously, literally, and clearly in Holy Writ.'"**

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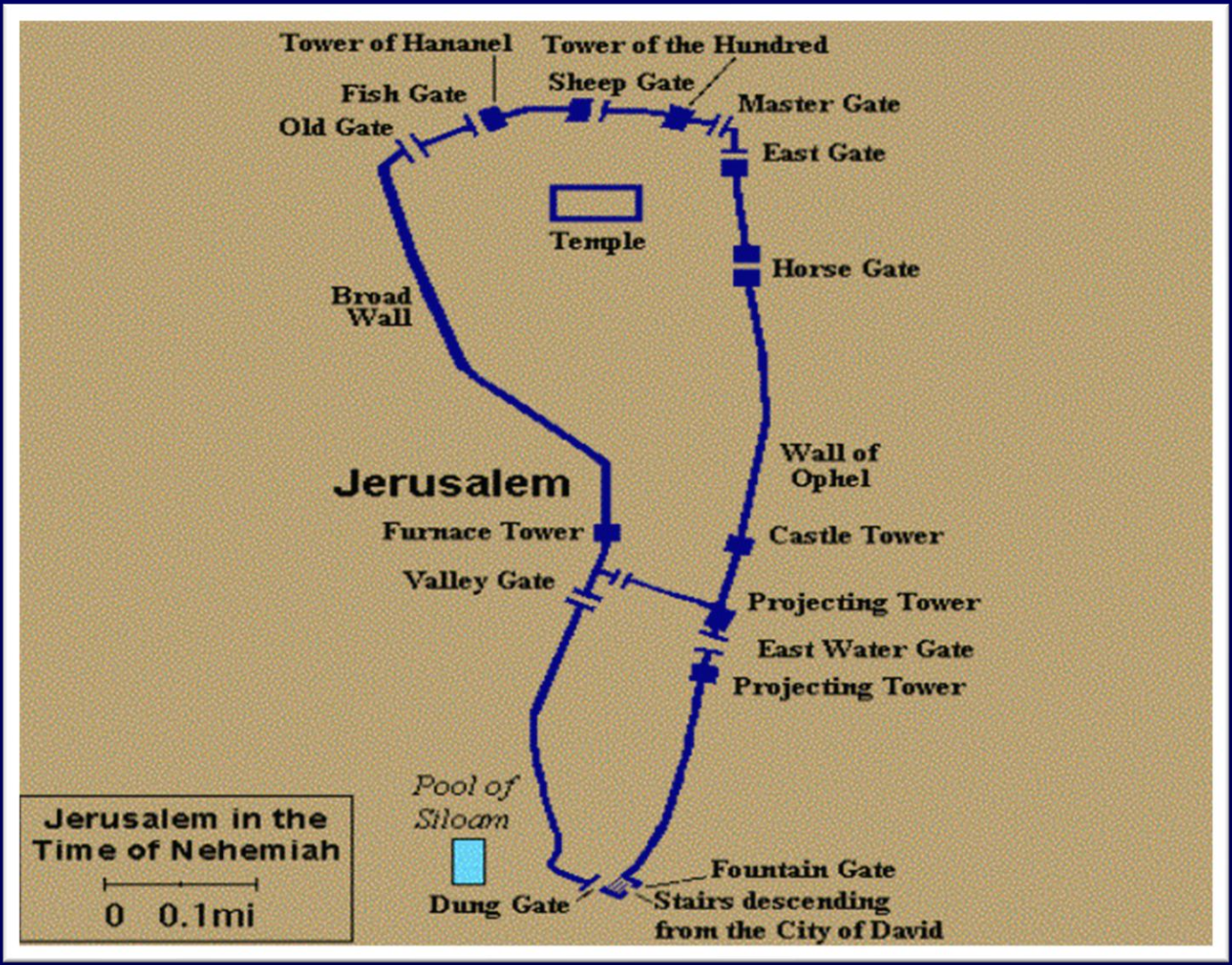

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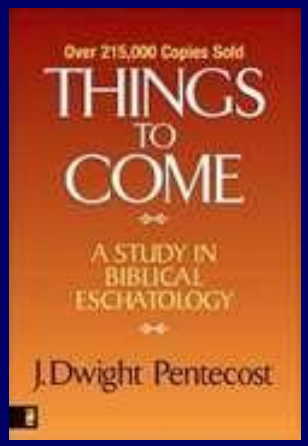
Dangers of Allegorization – Philo



Dangers of Allegorization
Gates of Nehemiah



Dangers of Allegorization

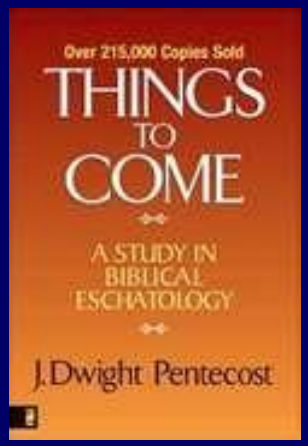


I. Text is not being interpreted
II. Authority is transferred from text to interpreter
III. There is no way to test the interpreter
IV. No mechanism for controlling the interpreter's imagination



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

Dangers of Allegorization



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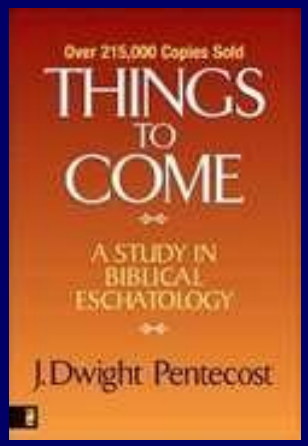
Milton S. Terry

Biblical Hermeneutics (NY: Philips and Hunt, 1883), 224.

"…it will be noticed at once that its habit is to disregard the common signification of words and give wing to all manner of fanciful speculation. It does not draw out the legitimate meaning of an author's language, but **foists into it whatever the whim or fancy of an interpreter may desire**."

“He (or she) who spiritualizes tells spiritual lies.”

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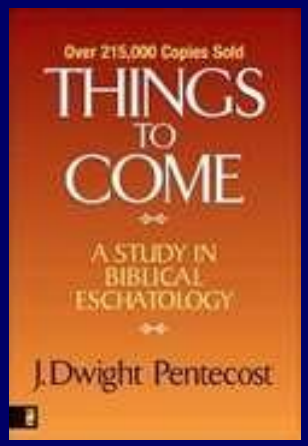
Jerome

Quoted by F.W. Farrar, *History of interpretation* (NY: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1886), 238-39.



"…once we start with the rule that whole passages and books of scripture say one thing when they mean another, the reader is delivered bound hand and foot to **the caprice of the interpreter**."

Dangers of Allegorization



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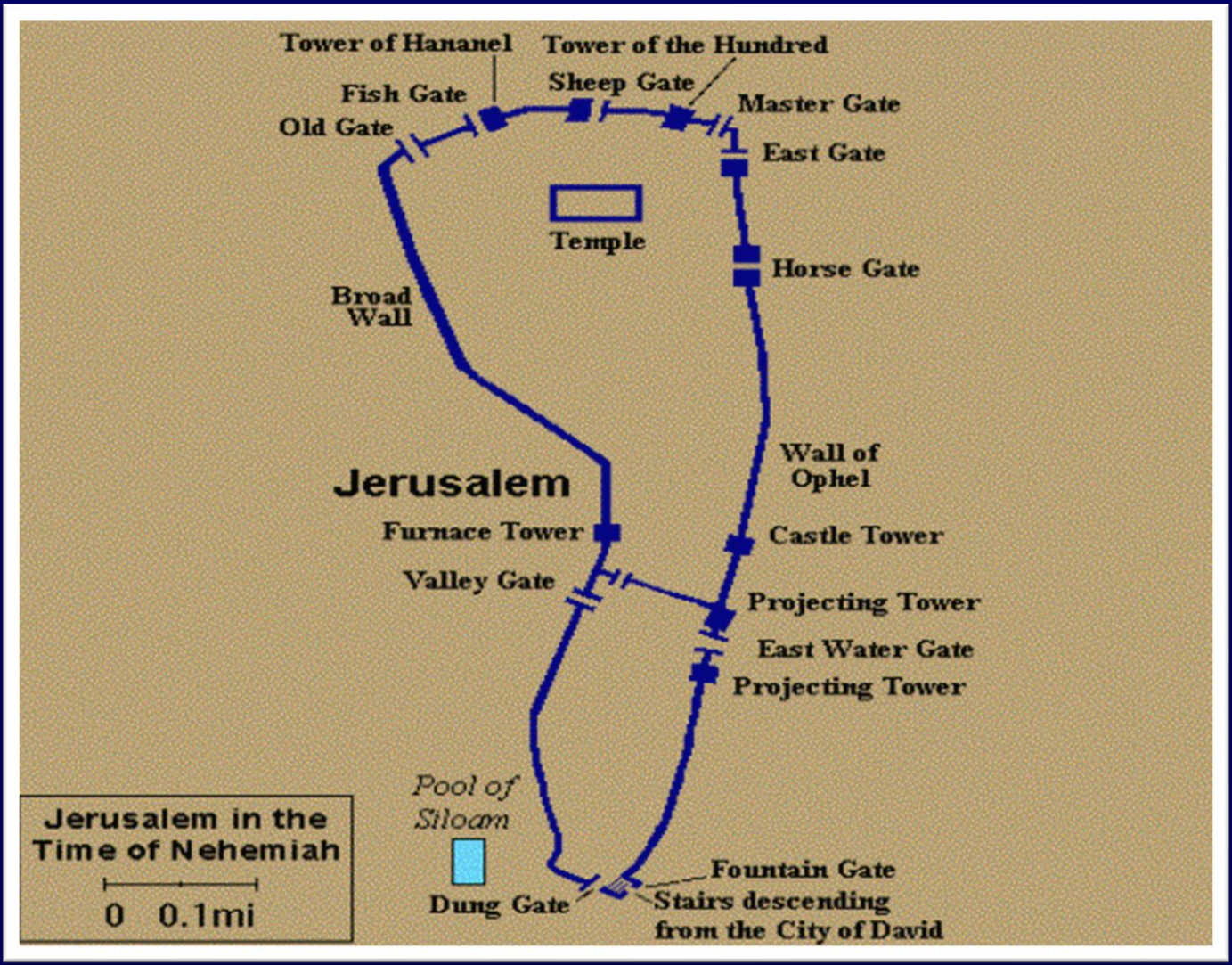
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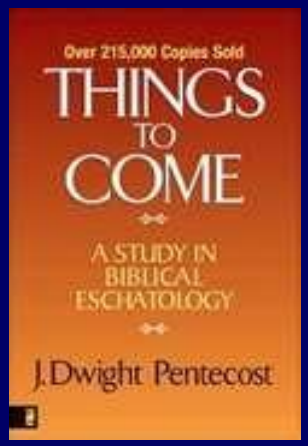


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Dangers of Allegorization
Gates of Nehemiah



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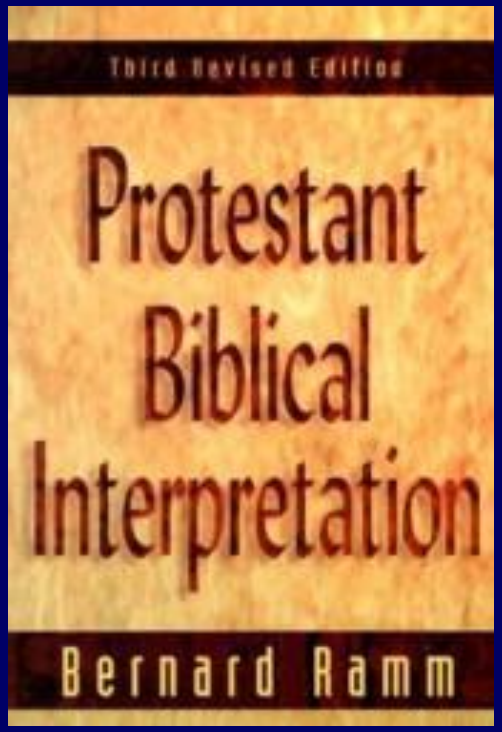
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Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pps. 4-5

Bernard Ramm

Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 3d ed. (Boston: W.A. Wilde, 1956; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 65.



"...to state that the principal meaning of the Bible is a second-sense meaning, and that the principle method of interpretation is 'spiritualizing,' is to open the door to almost **uncontrolled speculation and imagination**. For this reason we have insisted that the control in interpretation is the literal method."

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)





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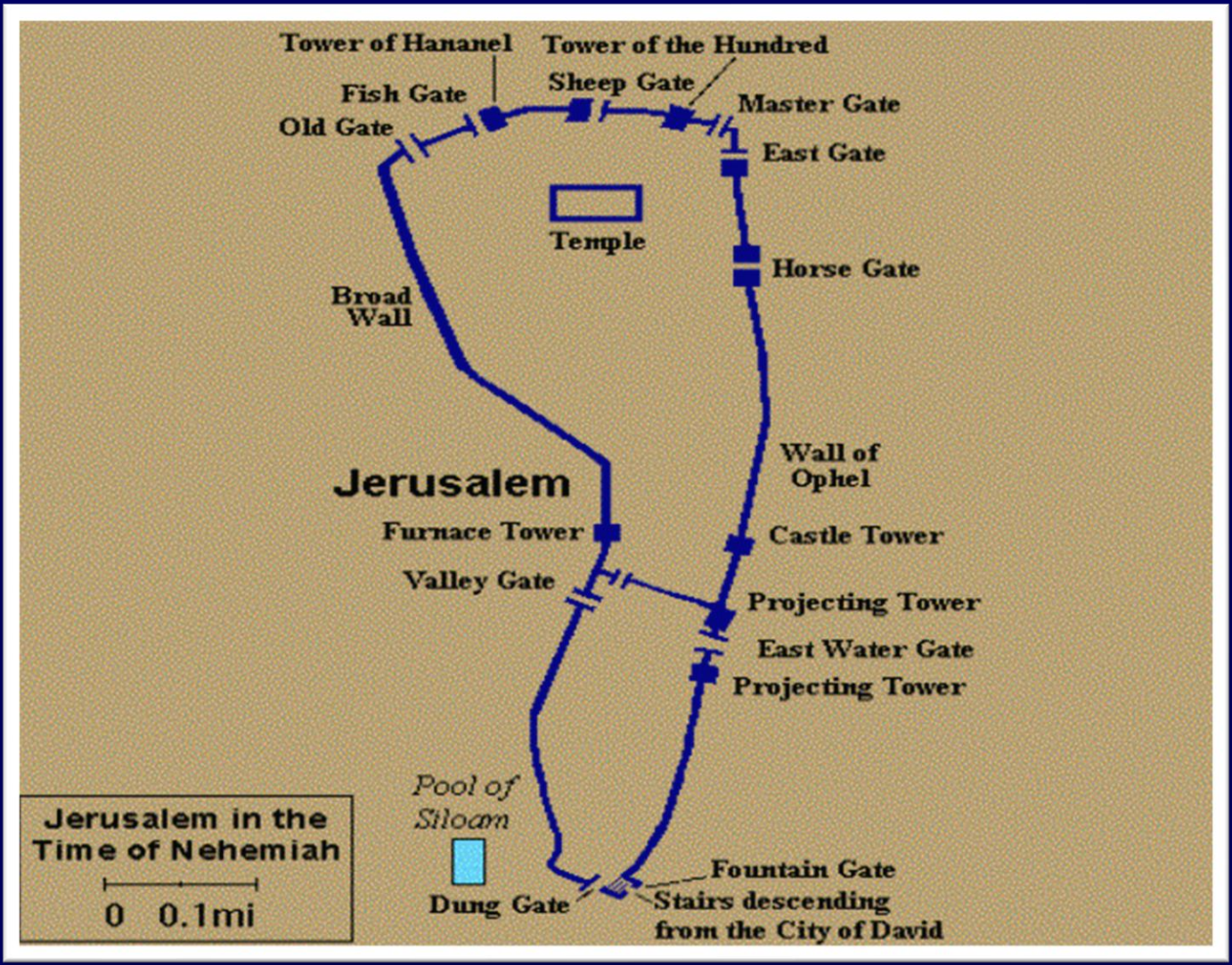


Bernard Ramm

Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 30.

"But citing verses in the Old Testament, in themselves frequently very obscure, as if superior to verses in the New, revealed no understanding of the significance of historical and progressive revelation for hermeneutics…They considered the Old (especially) and the New Testaments filled with parables, enigmas, and riddles. The allegorical method alone sufficed to bring out the meaning of these parables, enigmas, and riddles."

Dangers of Allegorization
Gates of Nehemiah



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Colossians 2:8 (NASB)

" See to it that no one takes you captive through **philosophy** and empty deception, according to the tradition of **men**, according to the **elementary** principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."



Bernard Ramm

Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 27.

"The outstanding Jewish allegorist was Philo…He was a thoroughly convinced Jew. To him the Scriptures (primarily in the Septuagint version) were superior to Plato and Greek philosophy…Yet, he had a great fondness for Greek philosophy, especially Plato and Pythagoras. By a most elaborate system of allegorizing he was able to reconcile for himself his loyalty to his Hebrew faith and his love for Greek philosophy."

Ronald E. Diprose

Israel in the Development of Christian Thought (Rome: IBEI, 2000), 157-58.

"Clement of Alexandria (c. 155–c. 220) was unashamedly a Christian Platonist and as such he quoted from Plato, and indeed from other philosophers, with the same ease the He quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. Moreover, he interpreted the Bible in light of Platonic concepts…His dependence upon Plato is further evident in a speculative passage in which the Jews feature as 'helpers' while the Christians are considered 'fit to rule.' Origen continued the Alexandrian tradition of interpreting the Bible in a way which harmonized with Greek philosophy."

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Genesis 1:31 (NASB)

"God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was **very good**. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day."



1 John 2:22 (NASB)

"Who is the liar but the one who **denies that Jesus is the Christ**? This is the **antichrist**, the one who denies the Father and the Son."



1 John 4:2-3 (NASB)

"By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that **Jesus Christ has come in the flesh** is from God; [3] and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the **antichrist**, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world."



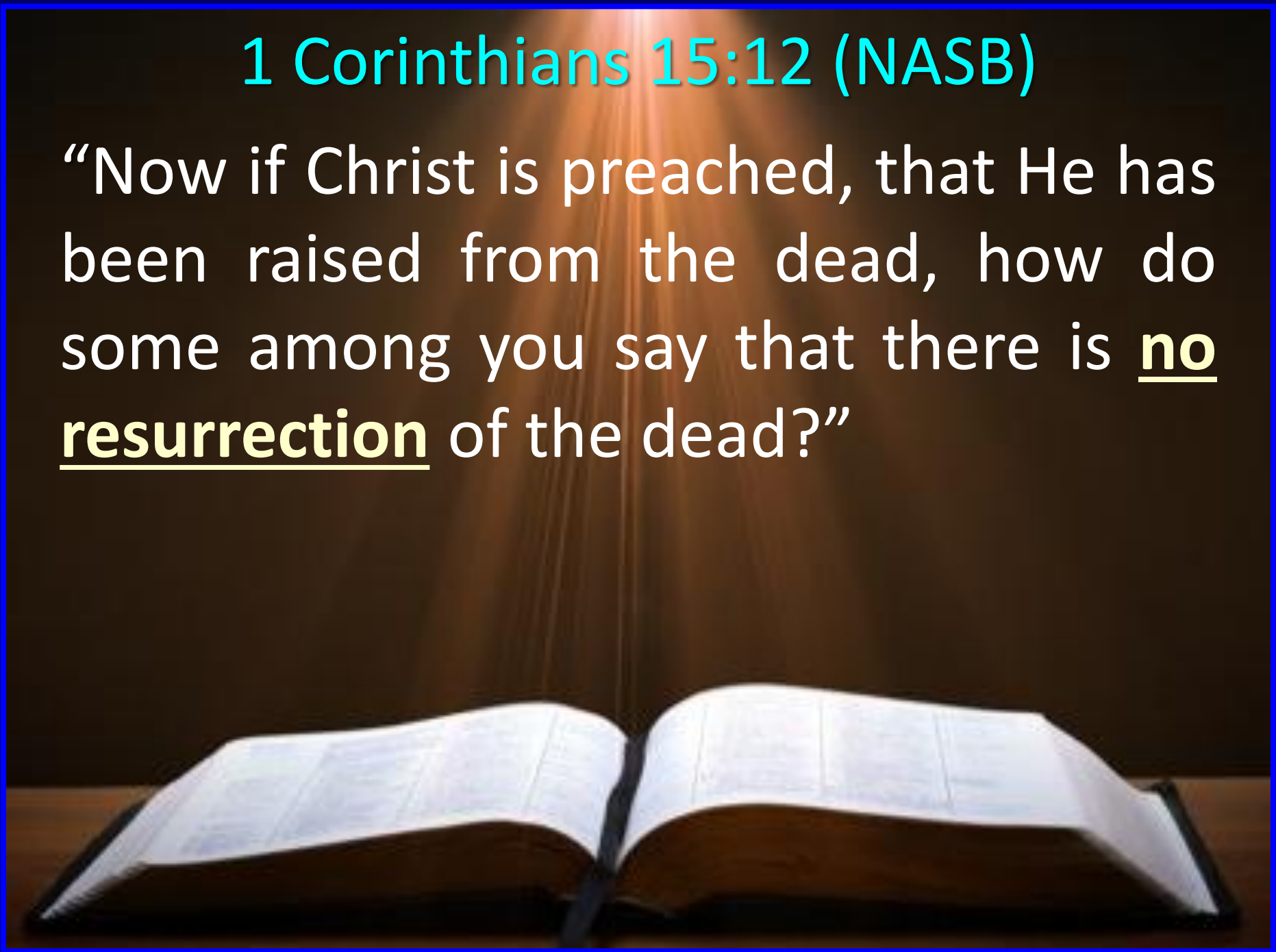
Acts 17:32 (NASB)

"Now when they heard of the **resurrection** of the dead, some *began* to **sneer**, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this."



1 Corinthians 15:12 (NASB)

"Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is **no resurrection** of the dead?"



Matthew 8:11 (NASB)

"I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline *at the table* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."



Luke 13:29 (NASB)

"And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline *at the table* in the kingdom of God."



Matthew 26:29 (NASB)

“But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”



Renald Showers

John Ankerberg and Renald Showers, *The Most Asked Prophecy Questions* (Chattanooga, TN: ATRI, 2000), 326.

"The…factor in his change of view was the influence of Greek philosophy upon his thinking. Before his conversion Augustine was deeply immersed in the study of this philosophy, much of which asserted the inherent evil of the physical or material and the inherent goodness of the totally spiritual. This philosophy continued to leave it's mark up on him even after his conversion. It prompted him **to reject as carnal the pre-millennial idea of an earthly, political Kingdom of God with great material blessings. He believed that, in order for the Kingdom of God to be good, it must be spiritual in nature**."

Augustine

The City of God, trans., Marcus Dods (NY: Random House, 1950), Book XX, chap. 7, p. 719.

"And this opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God; for I myself, too, once held this opinion. **But, as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal**. They who do believe them are called by the spiritual Chiliasts, which we may literally reproduce by the name Millenarians."

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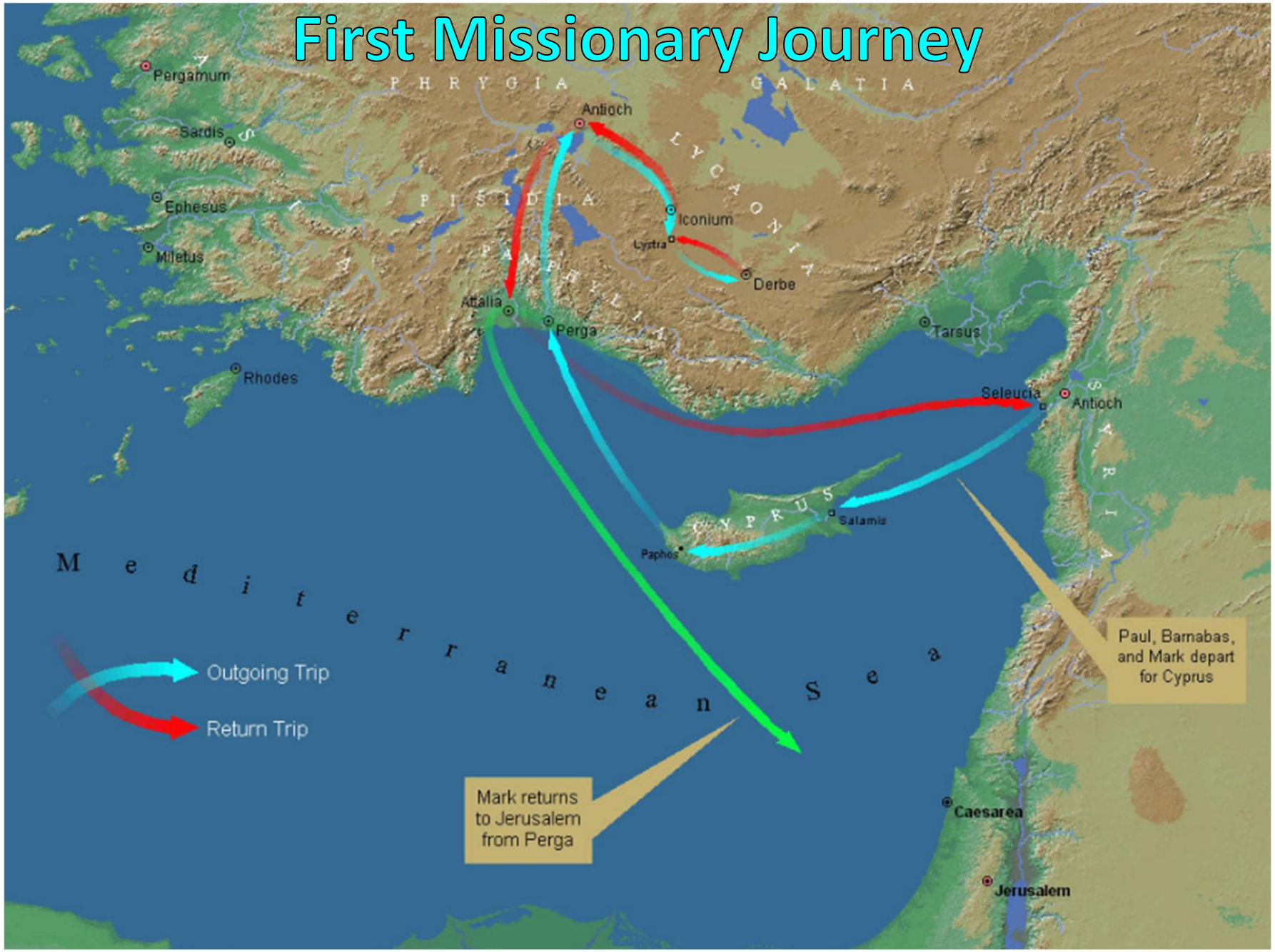
C. Gnostic dualism (Gen. 1:31; 1 John 2:22; 4:2-3; Acts 17:32; 1 Cor. 15:12)

D. **<u>Decline of the church's Jewish population</u>**

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






First Missionary Journey
Pergamum
PHRYGIA
GALATIA
Antioch
Sardis
Ephesus
Miletus
PISIDIA
LYCAONIA
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
PAMPHYLIA
Attalia
Perga
Tarsus
Rhodes
Seleucia
Antioch
SYRIA
CYPRUS
Salamis
Paphos
Mediterranean Sea
Outgoing Trip
Return Trip
Paul, Barnabas, and Mark depart for Cyprus
Mark returns to Jerusalem from Perga
Caesarea
Jerusalem

Acts 13:45, 48 (NASB)

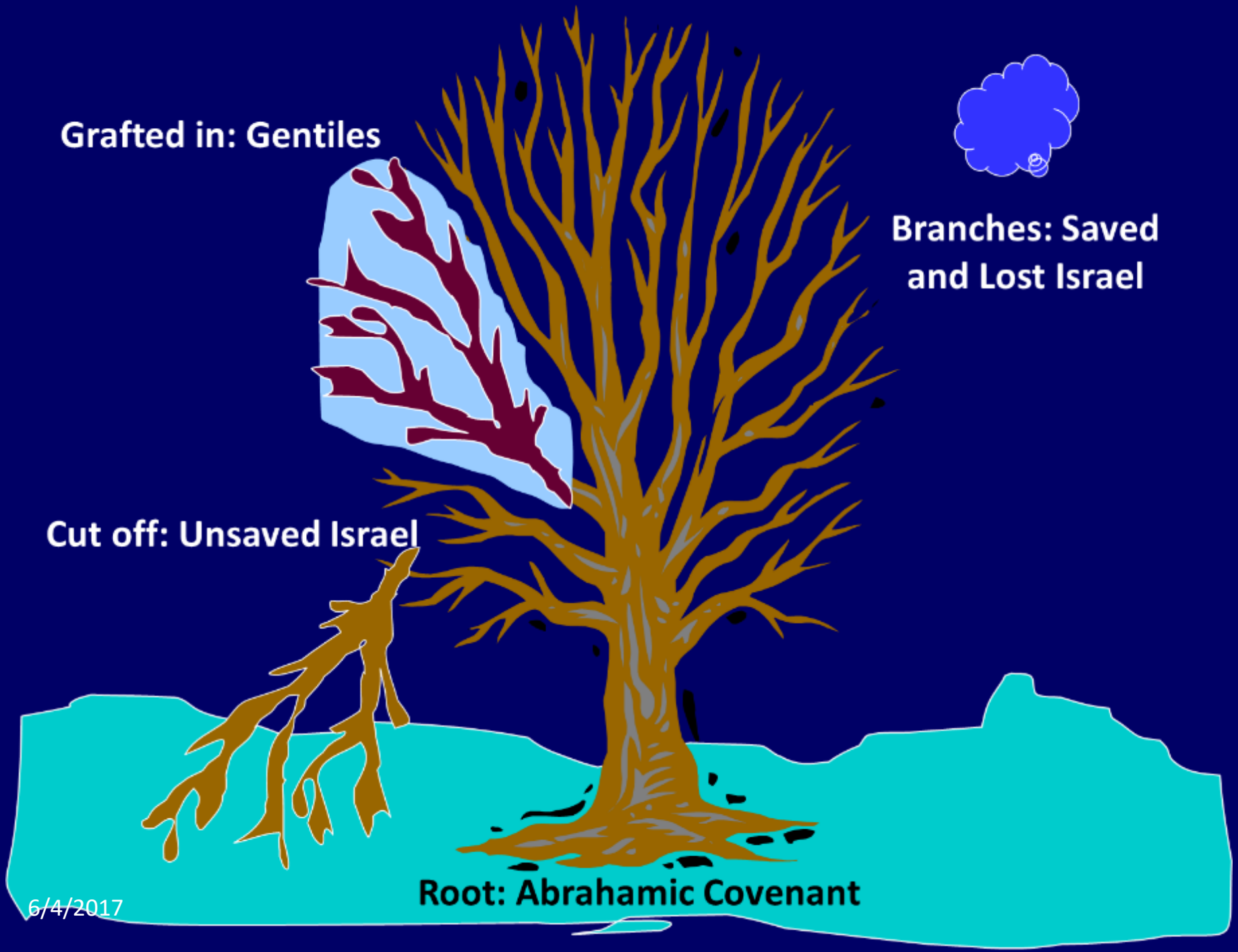
45 "But when the **Jews** saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and *began* contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming…48 When the **Gentiles** heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed."



Romans 11:13, 17-21 (NASB)

“But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry…But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, [18] **do not be arrogant toward the branches**; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you. [19] You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” [20] Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; [21] for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either”




Grafted in: Gentiles
Branches: Saved and Lost Israel
Cut off: Unsaved Israel
Root: Abrahamic Covenant

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Renald Showers

John Ankerberg and Renald Showers, *The Most Asked Prophecy Questions* (Chattanooga, TN: ATRI, 2000), 325.

"That new view became known as Amillennialism. Several things prompted this change in Augustine. First, the political situation of the Church in the Roman empire had changed radically around the period of his life. By his time the Roman persecution of the Church had stopped, and the state had made itself the servant of the Church. As the Roman empire crumbled, the Church stood fast, ready to rule in the place of the empire. It looked as if Gentile world dominion was being crushed and that the Church was becoming victorious over it. Under these circumstances **Augustine concluded that Premillennialism was obsolete, and that it did not fit the current situation**. In the place of it he developed the idea that the Church is the Kingdom of the Messiah foretold in such Scriptures as Daniel 2 and 7 and Revelation 20. In his book, *The City of God*, **he became the first person to teach the idea that the organized Catholic (Universal) Church is the promised Messianic Kingdom and that the Millennium began with the first coming of Christ**."

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Ronald Diprose

Israel in the Development of Christian Thought (Rome: IBEI, 2000), 86-87.

"Origen was also influenced by the example of Philo, a first-century Alexandrian Jew who had interpreted the Old Testament Scriptures allegorically in order to make them harmonize with his Platonism. Allegorism played an important part in Origen's theory of interpretation and, as he was the first biblical scholar to work out 'a complete hermeneutical theory', his work was destined to exert great influence on the Christian approach to the Hebrew Scriptures, for centuries to come…Origen is remembered for his philosophical speculation as the allegorist *par excellence* among Biblical interpreters."

Revelation 20:1-4 (NASB)

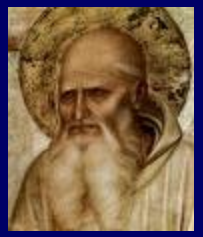
“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is **the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years**; 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and **they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years**.”



Augustine

The City of God, trans., Marcus Dods (NY: Random House, 1950), Book XX, chap. 9, p. 725-26.

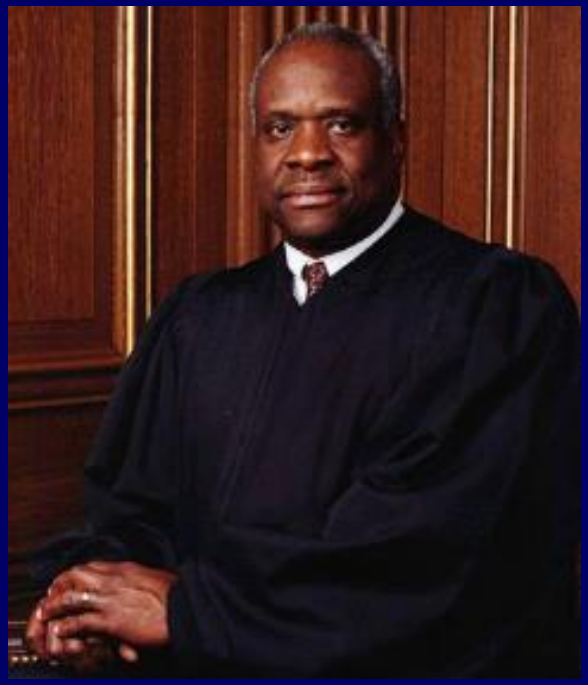
Augustine wrote, “the saints reign with Christ during the same thousand years, understood in the same way, that is, of the time of His first coming” and “**Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven.** Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him.”



Eusebius

Ecclesiastical History, 3.39.12-13

"Papias . . . says that there will be a millennium after the resurrections of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth. I suppose that he got these notions by a perverse reading of the apostolic accounts, not realizing that they had spoken mystically and symbolically. For he was **a man of very little intelligence, as is clear from his books**. But he is responsible for the fact that so many Christian writers after him held the same opinion, relying on his antiquity, for instance Irenaeus and whoever else appears to have held the same views."



"He is the **dumbest** Justice to ever sit on the bench...He waits to see how Scalia votes, and he votes the same. He rarely issues comments or engages in questions during any Supreme Court hearing...He rarely grants media interviews (because **he knows he will look stupid**). He rarely writes opinions. He believes in a **narrow interpretation** of the Constitution. **He is an idiot**."

http://juneauempire.com/opinion/2011-09-22/outside-editorial-law-and-clarence-thomas#.Tn5rqNSo1_p



Jerome

http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_letter_120.htm

"How must we understand what the Saviour says in Matthew: 'But I say to you, I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of my Father'? (Matth. 26. 29). This passage is the origin of **a certain fable of a thousand years**, in which they say that Christ will reign in the flesh and will drink that wine which He has not drunk since that time until the end of the world…**For the kingdom of God isn't food and drink**, but justice, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14. 17)."

CONCLUSION

Review



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



NEXT SESSION



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