

# TACWA

## Understanding “The Time of the End” by Tim Warner

### Introduction

The **Scientific Method** for Christian Doctrine

### **Principles of Biblical Interpretation:**

1. The original Scriptures are infallible.
2. Grammar cannot be violated.
3. Interpret within the historical setting. (Historical context and culture)
4. Interpret Scripture progressively. (New revelation compliments and builds on older revelation, never contradicting it.)
5. Reject all doctrines that defy sound logic. (Reject mutually exclusive ideas.)
6. Agreement with God’s nature and with all other acknowledged doctrines. (God never acts contrary to His revealed nature. God is not the author of confusion.)
7. Literal meaning has priority over non-literal interpretation.
8. Whenever possible, trace the history of modern doctrines. (See how, when, and why doctrines became polluted and/or became dogma.)

You might also add:

- \* The Scriptures, illuminated by the “Breath of God,” are entirely sufficient to fully equip the man of God without any human sources.
- \* The Apostles’ spiritual discernment must always be followed to unlock and explain the “mysteries” concealed in the Old Testament Scriptures.

These principles are intended to remove personal bias and faulty presuppositions as much as possible. The first seven principles guide our handling of Scripture. They would be entirely sufficient if we did not have nearly 2,000 years of theological baggage pointing to our modern understandings of Scripture. Most of us are not new to Christianity or to the Scriptures. We have been indoctrinated for many years by various denominations and the pastors and teachers in our churches. Some of us have also been indoctrinated by Christian college and/or seminary professors, reading required theological source material, and the various theological systems of the schools we attended. This exposure “colors” our thinking and imposes biases and presuppositions, many of which do not reflect the pristine teachings of Jesus, the Christ, and His apostles. (The truth of this statement is illustrated by the fact that there are a multitude of Christian churches, groups, and denominations that do not agree with each other on even the fundamentals of the Gospel message or the

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Christian faith. Yet the average Christian just assumes that the church he/she happens to attend is preaching and teaching the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But why should that particular church or denomination be error-free while all of the other thousands of churches and denominations are teaching error? This simple fact should drive Christians to investigate further. Unfortunately, most are too lazy, or simply do not know how.) Most Christians are oblivious to the fact that their minds have been conditioned to assume certain things as being true and other things as being anathema and heretical without solid proof. Most have not even attempted to apply Paul's admonishment objectively or thoroughly, "Test all things; hold fast what is good." – 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NKJV. It is simply "bein' Berean", a reference to Acts 17:11.

It is because of this Theological baggage that the eighth principle is absolutely critical if we expect to arrive at the whole truth. This principle provides a check against the possibility that we might have overlooked something important, or are still being influenced by personal biases of which we are not aware. If our conclusions cannot be found in the writings of the earliest Christians, we need to know why. The last thing we want to do is come up with something unique that was not taught by Jesus or His Apostles and thus faithfully passed on to the earliest Christian assemblies. Worse yet, we do not want to teach something that was considered heresy by the earliest Christians who were instructed by the Apostles. Jesus warned that many Christian pastors and teachers will be cut in pieces and cast in with unbelievers or be beaten with lashes when He returns (Luke 12:41-48). Referring to this, James warned that Christian teachers will receive a much harsher judgment than the average Christian (James 3:1). These threats and admonitions should be taken very, very seriously.

## Chapter 1

### Knowing the Day and the Hour

Before we can begin any attempt to discern the time of the Christ's return, we first have to address the most important major hurdle of today's modern Christians. Is this information indeed something that God wants Christians to know as we near the biblical end time events leading up to the Christian's hope of the bodily Resurrection to take hold of our share (see Galatians 3:26-29) of His inheritance (see Psalm 2) as given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant (see Genesis 22:15-18)? Or does God simply want us to be completely surprised by the second coming of His Christ, Jesus? Is seeking such knowledge misguided, or even sinful, as many truly think?

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Certainly, desiring to know when the Christ's kingdom would appear was not sinful, but honorable. This information was sought by all of the prophets of old as well as by the Apostles.

What did Peter write?

**1 Peter 1:10 NKJV** - Of this salvation the prophets have **inquired and searched carefully**, who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you,

**1 Peter 1:11 NKJV** - searching what, **or what manner of time**, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ **and the glories that would follow**.

**1 Peter 1:12 NKJV** - To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; **things which angels desire to look into**.

The prophet Daniel is the perfect example of one prophet's search for such knowledge. He was given time-related information about both the Messiah's first and second comings, in response to his inquiries. In the seventy weeks prophesy of Daniel 9, he was told by the Angel Gabriel exactly how long it would be until the Messiah would come, as well as be crucified. And this was prophesied almost 500 years before it actually happened. This information was intended to give the religious leaders, as well as the children of Israel, adequate warning of when the Messiah would appear. Yet, they did **not** heed Daniel's warning. They did not keep up a continuous biblical calendar as God had commanded in Leviticus chapters 25 and 26. Consequently, they did not recognize the Messiah when He came. If they had, they would have known the exact year of Jesus' crucifixion.

Jesus condemned them for **NOT** knowing the time of His appearance from Daniel's prophesy.

**Luke 19:41 NKJV** - Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,

**Luke 19:42 NKJV** - saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

**Luke 19:43 NKJV** - "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,

**Luke 19:44 NKJV** - and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, **because you did not know the time of your visitation.**"

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God held the Jews accountable for understanding the prophecies, keeping an accurate chronology, and knowing the time that Jesus would appear the first time. Why would He expect anything else from us regarding His second coming? Remember, God does not change (See Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). He has given us in scripture all the necessary information to know when it will occur. According to Daniel, it will be uncovered at the proper time to the “wise” who understand and prepare.

**Daniel 12:10 NKJV** - “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, **but the wise shall understand.**”

In Daniel 12, Daniel was told that there would be 1290 days from the “Abomination of Desolation” until the “end” (when Daniel would be resurrected and receive his allotted inheritance). Daniel was told by the angel/messenger Gabriel, who came in the “likeness of a man” (Daniel 10:16, 18) “*Go your way Daniel, for the words are **closed up and sealed till the time of the end.** Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, **but the wise shall understand.**” –Daniel 12:9, 10. The time of Christ’s return was to be revealed at some point just prior to the end, and the wise will indeed understand.*

Referring to this same chapter, Jesus, also called the “Son of Man” to accentuate His humanity, told His disciples on the Mount of Olives,

**Matthew 24:15 NKJV** - “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (**whoever reads, let him understand**),

Therefore, Jesus was pointing all of His followers to Daniel chapter 12 in order to understand the exact time of His return. So it is obvious that knowing the time of His return prior to that return, is **not** impossible. Christians will certainly know the exact date once this event occurs, **if** they are “wise” and paid attention to Jesus’ instructions about Daniel’s prophecy, and can count to 1,290. If Daniel’s prophesy is to be ‘unsealed’ in the last days, we should be just as eager as Daniel was to gain this knowledge, and act accordingly at the appropriate time.

How then should we understand Jesus’ statement,

**Matthew 24:36 NKJV** - “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”

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The first thing we need to understand is what Jesus meant by the terms, “day” and “hour”. A majority of Christians today take both terms literally. But the word “hour” does not necessarily have to refer to a sixty minute period of time. On other occasions He used the term “hour” to refer to an extended period of time. In fact, in the book of Revelation He used the term “hour” to describe the whole time period we call the Great Tribulation.

**Revelation 3:10 NKJV** - “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, (οἰκουμένη) to test those who dwell on the earth. (γῆ)”

**Rev 3:10 GNT** ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, καὶ γὰρ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Revelation also refers to this as an “hour of His Judgment.”

**Revelation 14:7 NKJV** - saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the **hour of His judgment** has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

It also indicates that the ten kings will reign for “one hour with the Beast”.

**Revelation 17:12 NKJV** - “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.”

Of course, this is referring to the final 3½ years of the final seven years called the Great Tribulation.

Also, the phrase “no one knows” does not mean that no one will ever know. Although we have been led to believe so by the ‘so-called’ prophecy experts. The misrepresentation of this passage comes from both pretribulationists and amillennialists alike. The pretribulationist’s (Dispensationist’s) entire eschatological system depends on the “rapture” being an “imminent” event. Amillennialists also believe and teach an “imminent” end of the world. The modern, not traditional Christian understanding of this verse, is supposed to prove that Jesus’ coming could occur at any moment. This point of view is completely unbiblical, since the very same passage places Christ’s coming after a long sequence of signs, ending with an unimaginable cosmic display. Let’s read Matthew 24:29-31.

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**Matthew 24:29 NKJV** - “Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days **the sun will be darkened**, and **the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven**, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

**Matthew 24:30 NKJV** - “**Then** the sign of **the Son of Man will appear** in heaven, and **then** all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

**Matthew 24:31 NKJV** - “And **He will send His angels** with a great sound of a trumpet, and **they will gather together His elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Try just reading the bold, underlined type. That might make it more clearly understood. Tribulation... cosmic signs... gathering of His elect... (that’s the rapture, duh.) Can the order of events be any more clearly stated? No. Why do so many believe in a pretribulation rapture that is plainly stated NOWHERE in scripture? Things that make you go, hmmm.

And until that whole sequence of events plays out, Jesus is **not** coming back to earth, period. That would make a contradiction with what is stated in Acts 3:20-21 about Jesus being taken to heaven “until the restoration of all things”. And since Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 14:33 that God is **not** of confusion, then God’s word as written in scripture, **must absolutely** harmonize. Without harmony, you do **not** have the correct understanding. (That’s why we use the Principles of Interpretation... the scientific method for interpreting the Bible.)

No matter what, Jesus told us to look to Daniel, and Daniel told us that the sequence of end time events will begin with the “Abomination of Desolation”. So when we see that happen, we will know exactly when He is coming... Just count 1,290 days from that event. If that is too large of a number for you, ask for help.

Now let’s look at our original scripture that is used by modern Christians to disregard what other passages in scripture say.

**Matthew 24:36 NKJV** - “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”

When Jesus said this, no one had seen or discovered “that day and hour”. The “day” is the specific day of His coming. The “hour” is the general time-frame of tribulation events in which this entire series of signs will play out including His coming “***immediately after the tribulation of those days.***” Obviously, Jesus was not speaking of a pretribulation rapture. Pretribulationists who use this passage to try to prove their

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point, are grossly mishandling the text. Let's consider this passage carefully, in context.

**Matthew 24:36 NKJV** - "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only..."

**Matthew 24:42 NKJV** - "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming."

**Matthew 24:43 NKJV** - "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into."

**Matthew 24:44 NKJV** - "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Two things need our attention here. The first is the English translation, which is imprecise in virtually all English translations. The second is the illustration Jesus used to drive His point home to the disciples. Let's take the translation issue first. Below is my literal translation from the Greek text.

**Matthew 24:36** - "But of that day and hour **no one has seen**, not even the messengers of heaven, but My Father only..."

**Greek Text** - Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ ὥρας οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι τῶν οὐρανῶν, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ μου μόνος.

**Matthew 24:42** - "Watch therefore, for you **have not seen** what hour your Master is coming."

**Greek Text** - γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε ποία ὥρα ὁ Κύριος ὑμῶν ἔρχεται.

**Matthew 24:43** - "But know this, that if the master of the house **had seen** what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into."

**Greek Text** - Ἐκεῖνο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι εἰ ἦδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποία φυλακῆ ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται, ἐγρηγόρησεν ἂν καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἶασε διορυγῆναι τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ.

**Matthew 24:44** - "Therefore you also **become ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

**Greek Text** - διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἔτοιμοι, ὅτι ἡ ὥρα οὐ δοκεῖτε ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται.

The word οἶδεν / οἴδατε (in verses 36 and 42) is the Greek verb for the word "see" in the perfect tense. (It is translated as the word "know" in English, which would be the Greek word γινώσκω if it were referring to knowing, as in knowledge.) The perfect tense in Greek indicates a past completed action with results that continue to the

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present. In verse 43, the same verb (ἤδει) is in the pluperfect tense. That means the progress of an action has been completed and the results of that action are continuing on. Example, a house is burning down, once it is completely burnt, that action has completed and the result, ashes, continue on to the present. And until the house is rebuilt, the tense of the verb in Greek will not change. Make sense? Another example, Galatians 2:20 should be translated “*I am in a present state of having been crucified with Christ,*” indicating that not only was I crucified with Christ at some point in the past, but I am existing now in that present state or condition.

In verse 44, γίνεσθε (G1096) refers to something coming into being. The noun “genesis” comes from this root verb. The verbs for “generate” and “begat” are also closely related. Here it is in the imperative mood. It is a command.

So you notice that Jesus did not say that no one knows (present tense) the time. Nor did He say that no one will ever know (future tense). And He certainly did not say that it was impossible to ever discover the time. He said that no one had yet discovered (seen or perceived) the time. He used the perfect tense of the verb “see”. The perfect tense refers to the past completed action with the results continuing to the present. The result of observing something in the past is the present knowledge of what was seen. This verb refers to current knowledge based on past observation or discovery. When Jesus said this, no one had yet seen or discovered either the specific day or the general time-frame for when Jesus would return... Not even Jesus Himself, which would be strange if He were both “fully God and fully man” at the same time. Maybe only the God part knew?

Notice carefully that this parable does not concern knowing the exact time, but knowing the time-frame, that is which watch. The term “watch” as a measurement of time refers to **three-hour time periods** in which the night was divided so that the Roman soldiers could change shifts. The first “watch” was from 6-9pm, the second was from 9pm-12am, the third was from 12-3am, and the fourth was from 3-6am. Therefore, in Jesus’ parable, the fault of the householder was his ignorance of the three-hour time-frame in which the thief was coming, not the exact time of his arrival.

Also, notice the association between **KNOWING** and **WATCHING**. In Jesus’ statement, “watching” depends on first “knowing the time-frame. If the householder had known the time-frame (the three-hour watch), he would have watched during it. And if he had watched, he would have avoided disaster by confronting the thief the moment of his arrival. Knowing the time-frame is therefore a prerequisite to watching. And watching is absolutely necessary to avoid the plundering of the house. The plundering of his house was the result of not knowing the time-frame, and



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therefore neglecting to watch during the critical three-hour time period. On the other hand, if he had known the time-frame, he obviously would have watched and his house would not have been plundered.

Jesus' parable demonstrates that knowing the time-frame beforehand is good and even essential. Ignorance of the time-frame beforehand is portrayed as being extremely dangerous and potentially disastrous.

Since the disciples had not yet perceived when this time-frame of the tribulation events would occur, they too were vulnerable to the same kind of disaster. Jesus then gave them this critical command: “**Through this**, you also **become ready**, because you do not know which hour the Son of Man is coming.” (This is the more accurate rendering of the verse in English. Matthew 24:44.)

Jesus began the parable saying, “But know this:...” in verse 43 of Matthew 24. The pronoun “this” is neuter in gender and points ahead to the whole parable, **not to any previously specified verb**. Immediately after the parable He said, “through this you become ready.” I state it again, “this” is a neuter pronoun, pointing back to the whole parable.

Jesus commanded the disciples to use this parable as a mechanism to “become ready.” He did not say “be ready” as many translations have it. The Greek words are **γίνεσθε ἔτοιμοι**. The verb literally means, “to cause to be, to generate, to become, to come into being.” It does **not** refer to continuing in a static state of readiness, but achieving something they did **not** yet possess. Jesus told them this due to their incomplete knowledge. He meant that His followers must not be like this man (who did not know the time-frame in which the thief was coming; therefore he did not watch; therefore he suffered great loss). To “become ready” means to discover the time-frame of the tribulation events so that you know when to watch for His coming. When the “Abomination of Desolation” actually occurs within that time-frame, you will know precisely when He is coming. By doing this, you will avoid the calamity of having your house ransacked. In the verses which immediately follow, Jesus spoke about His servants whom the Master puts in charge of His other servants, “to give them their food in due season, or at the proper time.” What food? He had just commanded them to discover the time-frame of the tribulation events. Thus, if the servants who have been charged with feeding Christ's flock do as Jesus commanded, and they actually discover the critical information in time to prepare their subordinates, (to give them their proper food at the proper time), they will be blessed by the Lord when He returns. Luke's parallel account (Luke 12:35-48) makes it quite clear that Jesus was addressing these two parables to future Christian **pastors and elders** who would be charged with shepherding Christ's flock.

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Upon hearing Jesus' parable of the man surprised by the thief, and Jesus' command to "become ready" Peter asked Him a critical question. "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all?" (Luke 12:41). Peter wanted to know whether Jesus' parable was meant generally, that each of Christ's followers must discern the time for himself, or specifically for the twelve disciples. Jesus' answer to Peter's question was, neither. It was for the future pastors and elders who would be appointed to shepherd the Christ, Jesus' congregations at some time in the future.

**Luke 12:42 NKJV** - And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"

Jesus' answer speaks of future appointments of "rulers." These are the elders of the churches who would be charged with both ruling and feeding Christ's flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4). His command to discover the time-frame was neither for the Apostles nor for Christians in general at that time. It was for future pastors and elders. These are the ones Jesus commanded to discover the time-frame of end-time events, and feed this necessary food to the flock at the proper time.

Jesus then went on to describe the various rewards and punishments that will be given out to pastors and elders based on how well they take to heart this parable, preparing Christ's household under their care at the proper time.

**Luke 12:43 NKJV** - "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

**Luke 12:44 NKJV** - "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

**Luke 12:45 NKJV** - "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,

**Luke 12:46 NKJV** - "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

**Luke 12:47 NKJV** - "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

**Luke 12:48 NKJV** - "But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

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According to Jesus' own words some of the Christian pastors will be "cut in two and appointed their portion with the unbelievers." Other pastors will be "beaten with many stripes"; and still others will be "beaten with few stripes". But the "faithful and wise stewards" will heed Jesus' parable. They will discern the time-frame of tribulation events and will give His other servants under their care the necessary food at the proper time. And when Jesus returns, He will make them "ruler over all that he has." The servant who says, "My Master is delaying His coming" is the Christian pastor who does not heed Jesus' warning. He refuses to discern the time of tribulation in advance and prepare the flock under his care. Instead, he abuses the flock' he "eats and drinks," implying an extravagant lifestyle or simply business as usual. And he becomes drunk. Drunkenness is a metaphor in Scripture for self-deception. (See Isaiah 19:13-14; 28:7-8; 29:9-10.) This Christian pastor is condemned for not knowing when the Master is coming.

**Luke 12:46 NKJV** - "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

This is not an idle threat. And Christian pastors would be prudent to take it very, very seriously. Notice the contrast between the command to "become ready" by discovering the time-frame, and the manner in which Christ's return will catch the unprepared pastor off guard, coming "on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware."

This raises the question of how one is to discover the time of the Lord's coming. The answer is within the context. Jesus had just given them a series of signs that will precede His coming. These are divided into two sections. The first group is called "the beginning of sorrows, or birth pangs," (Matthew 24:8) and the second group is called "great tribulation or intense travail" (Matthew 24:21). These terms were borrowed from the parable in Isaiah 66. God likened the restoration of Jerusalem and the Promised Land to a woman giving birth. (Isaiah 66:5-16). Jesus also likened the "beginning of birth pangs", which is the first 3½ years of the final seven years, or Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week; and the intense travail, or the last 3½ years of the final seven years, to a fig tree budding (Matthew 24:32-33). When the tree buds, they knew that summer was near. He then said, "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors" (Matthew 24:33). Thus, Jesus did not tell them exactly when He was coming, but He equipped them with the necessary tools to discover it in plenty of time to give believers "their necessary food at the proper time."

When Paul referred to Jesus' parable of the thief, he indicated that his readers were already equipped to know when the time came.

**1 Thessalonians 5:1 NKJV** - But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

**1 Thessalonians 5:2 NKJV** - For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

**1 Thessalonians 5:3 NKJV** - For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

**1 Thessalonians 5:4 NKJV** - But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

**1 Thessalonians 5:5 NKJV** - You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

**1 Thessalonians 5:6 NKJV** - Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

Paul expected that the Thessalonians were perfectly capable of discovering the time since they were “not in darkness”, ignorant of the signs and instructions Jesus gave. He had already instructed them about these things orally.

A short time later, Paul had to readdress this issue because some of the Thessalonian Christians were not nearly as well versed in Jesus’ teaching as Paul had supposed. In the second epistle, he got much more specific, describing the two primary signs Jesus had given, the “**falling away**”, which occurs throughout the “birth pangs” according to Matthew 24:8-12, and the **revealing of the Man of Sin**, which occurs at the beginning of the “intense travail” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5).

**2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV** - Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

**2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV** - not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

**2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV** - Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.

**2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV** - who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

**2 Thessalonians 2:5 NKJV** - Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

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Verse 5 was somewhat of a rebuke for their failing to retain what Paul had previously taught them. In the previous epistle he expressed confidence that they knew all these things by saying, *“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.”* –1 Thessalonians 5:1-2. Yet here he had to re-teach something he had already taught them before, and assumed that they had retained.

Jesus spoke specifically about the revelation of the “Man of Sin” which would actually reveal the exact date of the Christ’s return.

**Matthew 24:15 NKJV** - “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

Daniel described this event, and was told how long it would be from this event until the resurrection and inheritance. The clause “whoever reads, let him understand,” means whoever reads Daniel’s prophecy about this should understand, from Daniel, how much time there is left.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel, he was told about the coming time of “great travail,” much worse than anything before or after. Yet, the Messenger also promised that many would be delivered from the intense trouble by Michael’s standing up on their behalf. (This is the same promise found in Revelation 12. The “woman” is given two wings to fly into the wilderness where God had prepared a place for the angels to provide for her during the last 3½ years of “intense travail”. This woman is the true Church of Jesus, the Christ. Psalm 91 refers to this as well.) This was to be followed by the Resurrection of the Dead. Daniel then questioned the Angel/Messenger Gabriel about when the “end” of these things would come. Daniel was told...

**Daniel 12:9 NKJV** - And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

**Daniel 12:10 NKJV** - “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

**Daniel 12:11 NKJV** - “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Therefore, when Paul wrote, “You yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night,” and when he reminded the Thessalonians that our

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gathering to Christ **will not occur until after the Man of Sin has been revealed** as described by Daniel), he was implicitly reminding them that they were aware of the information necessary to calculate the exact day of Christ's return once the sequence of end-time events had begun. What was needed was to discern the time-frame of tribulation in which one is supposed to "watch" for that critical event, the "Abomination of Desolation."

It is quite clear from all of these passages that the early Christians had been fully equipped by the Apostles to discern when Christ's coming would become imminent. It is a shame that so many modern Christians are completely and utterly ignorant of these things, and that so many pastors **do not** teach these essential truths.

Pastors in the end-times are commanded by Jesus to discern the time-frame of these events and to prepare the flock under their care. Daniel said that knowledge of the time had been sealed up **until** "the time of the end". That time is now. Daniel said that the "wicked" will continue to do wickedly. These are some of the servants whom Christ appointed over His flock. These wicked are Christian pastors and teachers. They are wicked in the eyes of God. They become "wicked servants" by continuing to teach their eschatological fables. Yet, the "wise" will understand. These are the pastors in Jesus' parable who heed His command, discern the time, and prepare the flock under their care. There are very few of these pastors and teachers today. The devil has done his part.

Why is the penalty so severe for the "wicked servants?" These men are entrusted with the well-being of the Christ's flock, something as precious to God as the blood of His own Son.

**Acts 20:28 NKJV** - "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God **which He purchased with His own blood.**

When pastors maliciously fail Jesus' flock, He takes it very seriously.

**Luke 17:1 NKJV** - Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!

**Luke 17:2 NKJV** - It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

Question pastor... Do you fear God?

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**Ecclesiastes 12:13 NKJV** - Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God** and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.

**1 Peter 2:17 NKJV** - Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. **Fear God.** Honor the king.

**Revelation 14:7 NKJV** - saying with a loud voice, “**Fear God** and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

It's just a question.

Still, read Lamentations 2:19-22; Lamentations 4:6-10; Leviticus 26:29; Deuteronomy 28:53-57; Jeremiah 19:9; Ezekiel 5:7-17 and see the punishment God bestowed on His chosen people for **not** fearing Him and keeping His commandments.

**Lamentations 2:19 NKJV** - "Arise, cry out in the night, At the beginning of the watches; Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him For the life of your young children, Who faint from hunger at the head of every street."

**Lamentations 2:20 NKJV** - “See, O LORD, and consider! To whom have You done this? Should the women eat their offspring, The children they have cuddled? Should the priest and prophet be slain In the sanctuary of the Lord?

**Lamentations 2:21 NKJV** - “Young and old lie On the ground in the streets; My virgins and my young men Have fallen by the sword; You have slain them in the day of Your anger, You have slaughtered and not pitied.

**Lamentations 2:22 NKJV** - “You have invited as to a feast day The terrors that surround me. In the day of the Lord's anger There was no refugee or survivor. Those whom I have borne and brought up My enemies have destroyed.”

**Lamentations 4:6 NKJV** - The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, Which was overthrown in a moment, With no hand to help her!

**Lamentations 4:7 NKJV** - Her Nazirites were brighter than snow And whiter than milk; They were more ruddy in body than rubies, Like sapphire in their appearance.

**Lamentations 4:8 NKJV** - Now their appearance is blacker than soot; They go unrecognized in the streets; Their skin clings to their bones, It has become as dry as wood.

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**Lamentations 4:9 NKJV** - Those slain by the sword are better off Than those who die of hunger; For these pine away, Stricken for lack of the fruits of the field.

**Lamentations 4:10 NKJV** - The hands of the compassionate women Have cooked their own children; They became food for them In the destruction of the daughter of my people.

**Leviticus 26:29 NKJV** - You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.

**Deuteronomy 28:53 NKJV** - “You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you.

**Deuteronomy 28:54 NKJV** - “The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind,

**Deuteronomy 28:55 NKJV** - “so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

**Deuteronomy 28:56 NKJV** - “The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter,

**Deuteronomy 28:57 NKJV** - “her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

**Jeremiah 19:9 NKJV** - “And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair.”

**Ezekiel 5:7 NKJV** - “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have multiplied disobedience more than the nations that are all around you, have not walked in My statutes nor kept My judgments, nor even done according to the judgments of the nations that are all around you';



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**Ezekiel 5:8 NKJV** - “therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Indeed I, even I, am against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations.

**Ezekiel 5:9 NKJV** - ‘And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations.

**Ezekiel 5:10 NKJV** - ‘Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the winds.

**Ezekiel 5:11 NKJV** - ‘Therefore, as I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish you; My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity.

**Ezekiel 5:12 NKJV** - ‘One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

**Ezekiel 5:13 NKJV** - ‘Thus shall My anger be spent, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them, and I will be avenged; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them.

**Ezekiel 5:14 NKJV** - ‘Moreover I will make you a waste and a reproach among the nations that are all around you, in the sight of all who pass by.

**Ezekiel 5:15 NKJV** - ‘So it shall be a reproach, a taunt, a lesson, and an astonishment to the nations that are all around you, when I execute judgments among you in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**Ezekiel 5:16 NKJV** - ‘When I send against them the terrible arrows of famine which shall be for destruction, which I will send to destroy you, I will increase the famine upon you and cut off your supply of bread.

**Ezekiel 5:17 NKJV** - ‘So I will send against you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you. Pestilence and blood shall pass through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I, the LORD, have spoken.’”

This has already happened twice in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple under, first Nebuchadnazzar, then under General Titus in 70AD. Now understand this, Jesus, in Matthew 24:21, as well as the words of Daniel 12:1, tell us that the things to come in the last days are of such great tribulation as has **never before** happened, nor will ever happen again. I can think of nothing worse than eating your own children. Or children eating their own parents. How is it that it is going to be worse than that?

## Chapter 2

## Early Christian Eschatology

The earliest Christian writers, whose eschatology can be determined with certainty, consistently held to chiliasm (millennia) – six millennia followed by the Millennial Sabbath. [All of the earliest writers who had any kind of connection to the Apostles or their associates specifically endorsed chiliasm. We have no clear examples of any first or second century writers opposing chiliasm, or offering any theological points which are incompatible with chiliasm. Justin Martyr called the opponents to chiliasm “heretics” (referring to the Gnostic cults) and indicated that they denied the resurrection of the body, which was a cardinal tenet of Apostolic Faith.] These early writers lived contiguous with the age of the Apostles. Some of them were personally instructed by the Apostles and others who had seen the Lord. They were the early apologists for the Christian Faith, fiercely attacking and overthrowing the emerging Christian-Gnostic cults that sprang up like tares among the wheat. They took seriously the warning of Jude to “earnestly contend for the Faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude 1:3) Their weapons were the sacred Scriptures and the united testimony of apostolic oral tradition preserved by the elders within all the churches personally founded by the Apostles. (See Irenaeus, Bk. I, ch. X; Bk. III, ch. iii-iv; Bk. III, ch. xii; Bk. V, ch. xxxiii) And many of them sealed their testimony with their own blood.

The earliest Christians’ hope was the one found throughout the Old Testament Scriptures and reiterated in the New Testament – the resurrection of the flesh and gathering to the permanent Land inheritance, the millennium of Christ’s reign over the nations from Jerusalem. The prophets predicted that God would come to live among His people perpetually. (Jeremiah 4:17; Ezekiel 43:7; 48:35; Revelation 21:3; 22:3) Rather than expecting to fly away to heaven at the second coming, the early Christians expected to be caught up in the air to greet Christ at His coming, escort Him back to earth, and receive their inheritance on the restored Land.

Unlike modern dispensationalists who look only to the New Testament for their “blessed hope,” the early Christians looked to the Old Testament Scriptures, viewing the New Testament hope as being perfectly compatible with the prophets. According to the earliest Christians, the future hope of the inheritance for Christ’s followers is described most clearly in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel. This hope was found in the coming Kingdom of the Messiah, the resurrection of the body, the restoration of Jerusalem and the Promised Land, the curse removed from the earth, and the redeemed from all ages and nations rejoicing in Jerusalem. This hope came from passages such as the following:

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**Isaiah 66:10 NKJV** - “Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;

**Isaiah 66:11 NKJV** – That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom, That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory.”

**Isaiah 66:12 NKJV** - For thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; On her sides shall you be carried, And be dandled on her knees.

**Isaiah 66:13 NKJV** - As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”

**Isaiah 66:14 NKJV** - When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, And your bones shall flourish like grass; The hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants, And His indignation to His enemies.

**Isaiah 66:15 NKJV** - For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire.

**Isaiah 66:16 NKJV** - or by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many. ...

**Isaiah 66:22 NKJV** - “For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “So shall your descendants and your name remain.

**Isaiah 66:23 NKJV** - And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.

**Isaiah 66:24 NKJV** - “And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

Ezekiel’s closing chapters provide a detailed description of the division of the resorted Land among the tribes of Israel after having been brought out of their graves, and a vivid account of restored Jerusalem. “And the name of the city from that day shall be: “THE LORD IS THERE” (Ezekiel 48:35).

The early Christians say harmony between these promises and the New Testament prophecies, including Revelation. They saw themselves as being adopted into Israel, becoming “heirs according to the promise” through being baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-29). Consequently, the eternal Land promises were for the faithful of Israel and the Gentile nations, all who belong to Christ.

### **The Land Promise Hope of the Abrahamic Covenant**

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The hope of Israel was the hope of Abraham, to finally receive the Promised Land as an eternal inheritance. Israel's inheritance under the Law was temporary and conditional. Moses repeatedly recorded God as saying that Israel's Tenancy in the Land was only as long as they kept His Law (Leviticus 18:24-29; 20:22-24; Deuteronomy 4:25-27, 40; 5:32-33; 28:20-21, 63-68). They were merely tenants in God's Land. "The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me (Leviticus 25:23-24). He reserved the right to evict them. But the Abrahamic promise of the Land was unconditional and forever. After Israel's temporary inheritance of the Land under Joshua, Scripture promised a second permanent inheritance of the same Promised Land under the new "Joshua" (Yeshua).

**Isaiah 60:18 NKJV** - Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise.

**Isaiah 60:19 NKJV** - "The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory.

**Isaiah 60:20 NKJV** - Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, And the days of your mourning shall be ended.

**Isaiah 60:21 NKJV** - Also your people shall all be righteous; **They shall inherit the land forever**, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified.

**Isaiah 61:1 LXX** - The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me; He has sent Me to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind;

**Isaiah 61:2 LXX** - to declare the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of recompense; to comfort all that mourn;

**Isaiah 61:3 LXX** - that there should be given to them that mourn in Zion glory instead of ashes, the oil of joy to the mourners, the garment of glory for the spirit of heaviness; and they shall be called generations of righteousness, the planting of the Lord for glory.

**Isaiah 61:4 LXX** - And they shall build the old waste places, they shall raise up those that were before made desolate, and shall renew the desert cities, even those that had been desolate for many generations.

**Isaiah 61:5 LXX** - And strangers shall come and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your plowmen and vinedressers.

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**Isaiah 61:6 LXX** - But you shall be called priests of the Lord, the ministers of God; you shall eat the strength of nations, and shall be admired because of their wealth.

**Isaiah 61:7 LXX** - Thus shall they inherit the land a second time, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head.

This is the literal translation of the Greek Septuagint. The Hebrew text can be translated either, “they will inherit double” or “they will inherit twice”. Since the Jewish translators of the LXX rendered the Hebrew as “a second time,” this is the preferred translation.

Psalms 37 also spoke of this second, permanent Land inheritance.

**Psalms 37:9 NKJV** - For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.

**Psalms 37:10 NKJV** - For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more.

**Psalms 37:11 NKJV** - But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Jesus quoted this Psalm in His Sermon on the Mount, and applied it to His disciples (Matthew 5:5).

The early Christians based their hope of inheritance squarely on the permanent and unconditional Land promise of the Abrahamic Covenant. Irenaeus, disciple of Polycarp, disciple of John, articulated this hope plainly.

Irenaeus (120-202 AD) was a student of Polycarp, who was a student of John. Polycarp was appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna by the Apostles (Irenaeus, Bk. III, Ch. III, 4). He led that congregation when Jesus dictated the letter to Smyrna contained in Revelation 2. Jesus had no criticism, only praise for the faithfulness of this church. His prophetic exhortation to this church, “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. ... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life,” (Revelation 2:10) was certainly heeded by Polycarp. He stood boldly and confidently on the pyre, without being bound to the stake, while he was burned to death for his faithfulness to Christ. His pupil, Irenaeus, carried on his master’s teachings and included some of them in his own works. Irenaeus also dies for his faith along with many of the members of the church he pastored in Lyons, Gaul.

*Thus, then, the promise of God, which He gave to Abraham, remains steadfast. For thus He said: “Lift up thine eyes, and look from this place where now thou art,*

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towards the north and south, and east and west. For all the earth which thou seest, I will give to thee and to thy seed, even for ever.” (Gen\_13:13, Gen\_13:14) And again He says, “Arise, and go through the length and breadth of the land, since I will give it unto thee;” (Gen\_13:17) and [yet] he did not receive an inheritance in it, not even a footstep, but was always a stranger and a pilgrim therein. (Act\_7:5; Heb\_11:13) And upon the death of Sarah his wife, when the Hittites were willing to bestow upon him a place where he might bury her, he declined it as a gift, but bought the burying-place (giving for it four hundred talents of silver) from Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite. (Gen\_23:11) Thus did he await patiently the promise of God, and was unwilling to appear to receive from men, what God had promised to give him, when He said again to him as follows: “I will give this land to thy seed, from the river of Egypt even unto the great river Euphrates.” (Gen\_15:13) If, then, God promised him the inheritance of the land, yet he did not receive it during all the time of his sojourn there, it must be, that together with his seed, that is, those who fear God and believe in Him, he shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For his seed is the Church, which receives the adoption to God through the Lord, as John the Baptist said: “For God is able from the stones to raise up children to Abraham.” (Luk\_3:8) Thus also the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians: “But ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise.” (Gal\_4:28) And again, in the same Epistle, he plainly declares that they who have believed in Christ do receive Christ, the promise to Abraham thus saying, “The promises were spoken to Abraham, and to his seed. Now He does not say, And of seeds, as if [He spake] of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal\_3:16) And again, confirming his former words, he says, “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, fore-seeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, declared to Abraham beforehand, That in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham.” (Gal\_3:6, etc.) Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham. Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Mat\_5:5) – (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Bk. V, Ch. xxxii, 2)

The Land promise was not only to Abraham’s Seed, but to Abraham personally (Genesis 13:15, 17; Genesis 17:8). Therefore, its fulfillment absolutely requires the resurrection of Abraham. The promise of God to Abraham, then to Isaac, then to Jacob, that they would receive the Land as a permanent possession could not be fulfilled by the Israelites merely inheriting the Land under Joshua. God’s promise absolutely required the resurrection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they did

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not inherit the Land while they were alive, but only lived in it as pilgrims and aliens (Acts 7:1-5).

As the previous quotation of Irenaeus shows, the early Christians believed that Abraham's Seed, which Genesis states was to be the heir of the Land permanently along with Abraham, is Christ and all who are baptized into Him. This was derived from Galatians 3:16-29, which makes this exact claim.

The first few generations of post-Apostolic Christians held the hope of the Abrahamic permanent possession of the Land. It was for Abraham and his Seed through Jesus, the Christ; and it was to be realized at the resurrection. Justin Martyr agreed with Irenaeus on the destiny of the redeemed.

Justin Martyr (110-165 AD) was a former Greek philosopher turned Christian. He became the earliest apologist for the Christian Faith, defending Christianity to the Roman Senate and to the Greek pagans. He was born only about 15 years after John wrote Revelation.

*What larger measure of grace, then, did Christ bestow on Abraham? This, namely, that He called him with His voice by the like calling, telling him to quit the land wherein he dwelt. And He has called all of us by that voice, and we have left already the way of living in which we used to spend our days, passing our time in evil after the fashions of the other inhabitants of the earth; **and along with Abraham we shall inherit the holy land, when we shall receive the inheritance for an endless eternity, being children of Abraham through the like faith.** – (Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, ch. cxix)*

*But why do you not similarly investigate the reason why the name of Oshea the son of Nave (Nun), which his father gave him, was changed to Jesus (Joshua)? But since not only was his name altered, but he was also appointed successor to Moses, being the only one of his contemporaries who came out from Egypt, he led the surviving people into the Holy Land; and as he, not Moses, led the people into the Holy Land, and as he distributed it by lot to those who entered along with him, so also Jesus the Christ will turn again the dispersion of the people, and will distribute the good land to each one, though not in the same manner. For the former gave them a temporary inheritance, seeing he was neither Christ who is God, nor the Son of God; but the latter, after the holy resurrection, shall give us the eternal possession. – (Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, ch. cxiii)*

## **A Posttribulation Resurrection and Gathering**

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There was absolutely no debate among the early Christians whether the resurrection and gathering of Jesus' elect was pre- or post-tribulational. All of them were posttribulational, seeing Christians enduring the brief tribulation under Antichrist prior to Christ's second coming.

### **Irenaeus (120-202 AD)**

*In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules [the earth] shall be partitioned. He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel, telling us that thus it had been said to him: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings." (Rev\_17:12, etc.) It is manifest, therefore, that of these [potentates], he who is to come shall slay three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them. And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord.* – (Irenaeus, Against Heresies V, XXVI, 1)

*For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one.* – (Irenaeus, Against Heresies V, XXXV, 1)

**Tertullian** (145-220 AD) was a presbyter of the North African Church of Carthage. He is considered the founder of Latin Christianity, being the first to write a defense of Christianity in the Latin language.

*In the Revelation of John, again, the order of these times is spread out to view, which "the souls of the martyrs" are taught to wait for beneath the altar, whilst they earnestly pray to be avenged and judged: (Rev\_6:9-10) (taught, I say, to wait), in order that the world may first drink to the dregs the plagues that await it out of the vials of the angels, (Rev\_16:1-21) and that the city of fornication may receive from*



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*the ten kings its deserved doom, (Rev\_18:1-24) and that the beast Antichrist with his false prophet may wage war on the Church of God; and that, after the casting of the devil into the bottomless pit for a while, (Rev\_20:2) the blessed prerogative of the first resurrection may be ordained from the thrones; (Rev\_20:4-6) and then again, after the consignment of him to the fire, that the judgment of the final and universal resurrection may be determined out of the books. (Rev\_20:12-14) Since, then, the Scriptures both indicate the stages of the last times, and concentrate the harvest of the Christian hope in the very end of the world, – (Tertullian, On the Resurrection of the Flesh, XXV)*

*“Now the privilege of this favor [the resurrection] awaits those who shall at the coming of the Lord be found in the flesh, and who shall, owing to the oppressions of the time of Antichrist, deserve by an instantaneous death, which is accomplished by a sudden change, to become qualified to join the rising saints; as he writes to the Thessalonians: “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” – (Tertullian, On the Resurrection of the Flesh, XLI)*

### **Hippolytus: (170-236 AD)**

Hippolytus was a student of Irenaeus, who was a student of Polycarp, who was a student of John. He was a presbyter (an elder in the Presbyterian Church) and possible bishop (overseer of priests or ministers) of the church in Rome. He was martyred in 235 AD.

*“It is proper that we take the Holy Scriptures themselves in hand, and find out from them what, and of what manner, the coming of Antichrist is; on what occasion and at what time that impious one shall be revealed; and whence and from what tribe (he shall come); and what his name is, which is indicated by the number in Scripture; and how we shall work error among the people, gathering them from the ends of the earth; and (how) he shall stir up tribulation and persecution against the saints; and how he shall glorify himself as God; and what his end shall be; and how the sudden appearing of the Lord shall be revealed from heaven; and what the conflagration of the whole world shall be; and what the glorious and heavenly kingdom of the saints is to be, when they reign together with Christ; and what the punishment of the wicked by fire. – (Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and the Antichrist, 5)*

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*“With respect to his name, it is not in our power to explain it exactly, as the blessed John understood it and was instructed about it, but only to give a conjectural account of it; for when he appears, the blessed one will show us what we seek to know. ... Wherefore we ought neither to give it our as if this were certainly his name, nor again ignore the fact that he may not otherwise be designated. But having the mystery of God in our heart, we ought in fear to keep faithfully what has been told us by blessed prophets, in order that when those things come to pass, we may be prepared for them, and not be deceived. For when the times advance, he too, of whom these things are said, will be manifest.” – (Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and the Antichrist, 50)*

### **Cyprian: (200-258 AD)**

Cyprian was bishop of Carthage (North Africa), and was martyred for his faith in 258 AD).

*“The Lord hath foretold that these thing would come. With the exhortation of His foreseeing word, instruction, and teaching, and preparing, and strengthening the people of His Church for all endurance of things to come. He predicted and said that wars, and famines, and earthquakes, and pestilences would arise in each place; and lest an unexpected and new dread of mischiefs should shake us, He preciously warned us that the adversary would increase more and more in the last times.” – (Cyprian, Treatise VII, 2)*

*“For you ought to know and to believe, and hold it for certain, that the day of affliction had begun to hang over our heads, and the end of the world and the time of Antichrist to draw near, so that we mush all stand prepared for the battle.” – (Cyprian, Epistles of Cyprian, LV, 1, 2)*

*“Nor let any one of you, beloved brethren, be so terrified by the fear of guture persecution, or the coming of the threatening Antichrist, as not to be found armed for all things by the evangelical exhortations and precepts, and by the heavenly warnings. Antichrist is coming, but above him comes Christ also. The enemy goeth about and rageth, but immediately the Lord follows to avenge our sufferings and our wounds.” – (Cyprian, Epistles of Cyprian, LV, 7, 8)*

### **Victorinus: (?-304 AD)**

Victorinus was bishop of the church in Poetovio (modern Ptuj in Slovenia, which is the halfway point on a road from Vienna, Austria, to Trieste, Italy), who flourished

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about 270 AD. His surviving works are commentaries on Genesis and Revelation. He was martyred during the persecutions of Diocletian in 304 AD.

*“He speaks of Elias the prophet, who is the precursor of the times of Antichrist, for the restoration and establishment of the churches from the great and intolerable persecution.”* – (Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse, 7:2)

*“The woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and wearing the crown of twelve stars upon her head, and travailing in her pains, is the ancient Church of fathers and prophets and saints and apostles...”* – (Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse, 12:1)

*“He shall cause also that a golden image of Antichrist shall be placed in the temple at Jerusalem, and that the apostate angel should enter, and thence utter voices and oracles. ...The Lord, admonishing His churches concerning the last times and their dangers, says: ‘But when ye shall see the contempt which is spoke of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place, let him who readeth understand.’”* – (Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse, 13:13)

*“The little season signifies three years and six months, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself under Antichrist against the Church.”* – (Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse, 20:1-3)

### **The 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel**

Like modern dispensationalists, the chiliast interpretation of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel was a seven years period at the close of this age. The first half contains the preaching of the two witnesses, and the last half contains the Antichrist’s rule. They believed that the Temple would be rebuilt, and the Antichrist would defile it in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

### **Irenaeus: (120-202 AD)**

*“This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle of the Thessalonians: ‘Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.’ The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped – that is above every idol – for these are indeed so called by men, but are*

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*not [really] gods; and that he will endeavor in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.*

*“Moreover, he (the apostle) has also pointed out this which I have shown in many ways, that the temple in Jerusalem was made by the direction of the true God. For the apostle himself, speaking in his own person, distinctly called it the temple of God. Now I have shown in the third book, that no one is termed God by the apostles when speaking for themselves, except Him who truly is God, the Father of our Lord, by whose directions the temple which is at Jerusalem was constructed for those purposes which I have already mentioned; in which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavoring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: ‘But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house; for there shall then be great hardship, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.’ – (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book V, XXV, 1 & 2)*

*“That is, the earthly Jerusalem, ... Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom; he shall remove his kingdom into that city, and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ. To this purpose Daniel says again; ‘And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin had been given for a sacrifice, and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active, and gone on prosperously.’ ... And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: ‘And in the midst of the week,’ he says, ‘the sacrifice and the liberation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolate shall be brought into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete.’ Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.” – (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book V, XXV, 2)*

### **Hippolytus: (170-236 AD)**

*“For when the threescore and two weeks are fulfilled, and Christ is come, and the Gospel is preached in every place, the times being then accomplished, there will remain only one week, the last, in which Elias will appear, and Enoch, and in the midst of it the abomination of desolation will be manifested, viz., Antichrist, announcing desolation to the world...” – (Hippolytus, On Daniel, II, 22)*

*“But it becomes us further diligently to examine and set forth the period at which these things shall come to pass, and how the little horn shall spring up in their midst. For when the legs of iron have issued in the feet and toes, according to the similitude*

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*of the image and that of the terrible beast, as has been shown in the above, (then shall be the time) when the iron and the clay shall be mingled together. Now Daniel will set forth this subject to us. For he says, ‘And one week will make a covenant with many, and it shall be that in the midst (half) of the week my sacrifice and oblation shall cease.’ By one week, therefore, he means the last week which is to be at the end of the whole world of which week the two prophets Enoch and Elias will take up the half. For they will preach 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth, proclaiming repentance to the people and to all the nations. For John says, ‘And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.’ That is the half of the week whereof Daniel spake. ‘These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire will proceed out of their mouth, and devour their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.’ – (Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, 43, 47)*

*“Now concerning the tribulation of the persecution which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary, John also speaks thus, ‘And I saw a great and wondrous sign in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, ... And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.’ That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church... These things then, being come to pass, beloved, and the one week being divided into two parts, and the abomination of desolation being manifested then, and the two prophets and forerunners of the Lord having finished their course, and the whole world finally approaching the consummation, what remains but the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ from heaven, for whom we have looked in hope.” – (Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, 60, 61, 64)*

*“For he says, ‘I shall make a covenant of one week, and in the midst of the week my sacrifice and libation will be removed.’ For by one week he indicates the showing forth of the seven years which shall be in the last times. And the half of the week the two prophets, along with John, will take for the purpose of proclaiming to all the world the advent of Antichrist, that is to say, for a thousand two hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth; and they will work signs and wonders with the object of making men ashamed and repentant, even by these means, on account of their surpassing lawlessness and impiety. And if any man will hurt them, fire will proceed out of their mouth, and devour their enemies. ‘These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not’ in the days of the advent of Antichrist, ‘and to turn waters into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.’ And when they have proclaimed all these things they will fall on the sword, cut off by the accuser. And*

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*they will fulfill their testimony, as Daniel also says; for he foresaw that the beast that came up out of the abyss would make war with them, namely with Enoch, Elias, and John, and would overcome them, and kill them, because of their refusal to give glory to the accuser. That is the little horn that sprang up. And he, being lifted up in heart, begins in the end to exalt himself and glorify himself as God, persecuting the saints and blaspheming Christ.” – (Hippolytus, Appendix to the Works of Hippolytus, XXI)*

*“And at first, indeed, that deceitful and lawless one, with crafty deceitfulness, will refuse such glory; but the men persisting, and holding by him, will declare him king. And thereafter he will be lifted up in heart, and he who was formerly gentle will become violent, and he who pursued love will become pitiless, and the humble in heart will become haughty and inhuman, and the hater of unrighteousness will persecute the righteous. Then, when he is elevated to his kingdom, he will marshal war; and in his wrath he will smite three mighty kings, – those, namely, of Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia. And after that he will build the temple in Jerusalem, and will restore it again speedily, and give it over to the Jews. And then he will be lifted up in heart against every man; yea, he will speak blasphemy also against God, thinking in his deceit that he shall be king upon the earth hereafter forever; not knowing, miserable wretch, that his kingdom is to be quickly brought to nought, and that he will quickly have to meet the fire which is prepared for him, along with all who trust him and serve him. For when Daniel said, ‘I shall make my covenant for one week,’ he indicated seven years; and the one half of the week is for the preaching of the prophets, and for the other half of the week – that is to say, for three years and a half – Antichrist will reign upon the earth. And after this his kingdom and his glory shall be taken away. Behold, ye who love God, what manner of tribulation there shall rise in those days, such as has not been from the foundation of the world, no, nor ever shall be, except in those days alone. Then the lawless one, being lifted up in heart, will gather together his demons in man’s form, and will abominate those who call him to the kingdom, and will pollute many souls.” – (Hippolytus, Appendix to the Works of Hippolytus, XXV)*

### **The Millennial Week and Sabbath Rest**

The primary component of chiliasm, which is critical to our study of chronology and discovering the time of Jesus’ return, is the belief in the Millennial Week. The whole time of man’s struggle under the curse was confined to six millennia. The seventh millennium, the Sabbath Rest, was the one thousand year reign of Christ over the nations from Jerusalem. In fact, the term “chiliasm” (meaning “millennialism”) referred to these seven millennia, not just the “Millennium” of Christ’s reign over the nations. The Millennial Week eschatology was an inseparable part of early Christian

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eschatology; In the following quotation from Irenaeus, all of the essential elements of chiliasm can be seen tied together. This is early Christian eschatology in a nutshell:

- \* the future gathering of Jesus' elect after a brief period of persecution by the Antichrist's
- \* the future hope of the Abrahamic Land inheritance
- \* the future millennium, "the rest, the hallowed seventh day," after six millennia of man's struggle under the curse.

*"But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, **the rest, the hallowed seventh day**; and **restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance**, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that 'many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'" – (Irenaeus, Against Heresies Bk. V, ch. xxx)*

One can clearly see in this quotation the connection between chiliasm's "seventh day" (seventh millennium) and the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Land inheritance, which includes the gentiles who have become Abraham's see through Jesus Christ.

The early Christians believed that the seven-day creation week in Genesis one was an accurate historical record. God created everything in six twenty-four hour days. Yet they also understood the creation week to be prophetic. God's six days of labor and His rest on the Sabbath formed a precedent and pattern for His entire plan of redemption. God would instruct and discipline humanity for six millennia, bringing mankind to completion and perfection in the seventh Millennium. Man's destiny was to take full dominion over the earth, just as He commanded Adam. – (Barnabas, VI, "But He said above, 'Let them increase, and rule over the fishes.' Who then is able to govern the beasts, or the fishes, or the fowls of heaven? For we ought to perceive that to govern implies authority, so that one should command and rule. If, therefore, this does not exist at present, yet still He has promised it to us. When? When we ourselves also have been made perfect [complete] to become heirs of the covenant of the Lord.") "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'." – (Genesis 1:28) Yet because of man's sin and the curse placed on the creation, man is not yet fit to reign over God's creation. As Hebrews says, "For in that HE put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things

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put under him. – (Hebrews 2:8) Christ came to make man fit for his destiny, “leading many sons to glory.” – (Hebrews 2:9-10) Man will ultimately enjoy God’s “rest” in the Millennial Sabbath, when Jesus Christ returns to restore Jerusalem, rule the nations, and rid the Earth of its curse at the end of the sixth millennium.

The week of six millennia plus the Sabbath millennium was held by virtually all of the earliest writers who had any connection whatsoever to the Apostles.

### **Clement of Rome (30-100 AD) and Justin (110-165)**

Clement of Rome knew the Apostle Paul, being called by him a “fellow worker” in Philippians 4:3 (Eusebius, History, Book III, ch. iv) “And the fact that it was not said of the seventh day equally with the other days, ‘And there was evening, and there was morning,’ is a distinct indication of the consummation which is to take place in it before it is finished, as the fathers declare, especially St. Clement, and Irenaeus, and Justin the martyr and philosopher.” – (Justin, Frag. XV, Comments by Anastasius about Clement, Irenaeus, and Justin.)

### **Papias (70-155 AD)**

Papias was one of the Apostle John’s students. He was bishop in the church at Hierapolis while John lived at Ephesus (just a few miles to the north) after his release from Patmos. Papias also had personal contact with others who had heard Jesus teach. He wrote a great deal about chiliasm. Unfortunately, all of his original works are lost. All that remains are references to him and quotations from his works by later writers.

*“Taking occasion from Papias of Hierapolis, the illustrious, a disciple of the apostle who learned on the bosom of Christ, and Clemens, and Pantaenus ... of the Alexandrians, and the wise Ammorius, the ancient and first expositors [of Scripture], who agreed with each other, who understood the work of the six days as referring to Christ and the whole Church.” – (Fragments of Papias, IX)*

### **Barnabas (100? AD)**

Early Christian writers attributed this epistle to Barnabas, Paul’s companion (see: Tertullian, On Modesty, ch. xx; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, Bk. II, ch. xx). It was held in extremely high regard, so much so, that it was included along with the inspired New Testament books in some early Christian copies of the Scriptures (e.g. Codex Sinaiticus). In general, the book seems to have been written to counter the Judaizing tendencies by Jewish Christians. One striking feature of this epistle is its clear dependence on the book of Hebrews, using very similar arguments and



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terminology. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, chiliasm itself was rooted largely in the teaching of the fourth chapter of Hebrews.

*“And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.’ Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, ‘He finished in six days,’ This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, ‘Behold, today will be as a thousand years.’ Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. ‘And He rested on the seventh day.’ This meaneth: when His Son, coming [again], shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day.” – (Epistle of Barnabas, XV)*

### **Irenaeus: (120-202 AD)**

*“He give this as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years, (the 6,000 years are counted from the fall of man, when the curse was put into force and Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden) For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: ‘Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works.’ This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousandth year... the whole apostasy of the six thousand years, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things’ sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth].” – (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Bk. V, xxviii)*

*“These are [to take place] in the times of the kingdom, that is upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes.” – (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Bk. V, xxviii)*

### **Hippolytus: (170-236 AD)**

*“And six thousand years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day on which God rested from all His works. For the Sabbath*

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*is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they shall reign with Christ, when He comes from heaven, as John says in his Apocalypse. 'For a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.' Since, then, in six days God made all things, it follows that six thousand years must be fulfilled."* – (Hippolytus, On the HexaEmeron, (Or Six Days' Work), Fragments Commentaries on Various Books of Scripture)

### **Commodianus: (240 AD)**

Commodianus was a bishop of a church in North Africa. *"Adam was the first who fell, and that he might shun the precepts of God, Belial was his tempter by the lust of a palm tree. And he conferred on us also what he did, whether of good or of evil, as being the chief of all that was born from him; and thence we die by his means, as he himself, receding from the divine, became an outcast for the Word. We shall be immortal when six thousand years are accomplished."* – (Commodianus, Christian Discipline, xxxv)

*"This has pleased Christ, that the dead should rise again, yea, with their bodies; and those, too, whom in this world the fire had burned [martyrs], when six thousand years are completed, ... Those who are more worthy, and who are begotten of an illustrious stem, and the men of nobility under the conquered Antichrist, according to God's command living again in the world for a thousand years, ... They who make God of no account when the thousandth year is finished shall perish by fire,...* " – (Commodianus, Instructions of Commodianus, lxxx)

### **Cyprian: (200-258 AD)**

*"It is an ancient adversary and an old enemy with whom we wage our battle: six thousand years are now nearly completed since the devil first attacked man.\**

\* A few writers spoke of the 6,000 years as being nearly complete in their day. These writers thought that the Antichrist was about to appear, after which Christ would return. (Other writers, such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus, expected a considerable delay before Antichrist would appear.) Their error has been on their use of the Septuagint's erroneous ages of the patriarchs in the Genesis genealogies. The LXX has been systematically altered, adding 100 years per generation to most of the people mentioned when they had their child. The use of such calculations necessarily placed the end of the 6,000 years with in a hundred or so years of some of the later writers.

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All kinds of temptation, and arts, and snares for his overthrow, he has learned by the very practice of long years. If he finds Christ's soldier unprepared, if unskilled, if not careful and watching with his whole heart; he circumvents him if ignorant, he deceives him incautious, he cheats him inexperienced. But if a man, keeping the Lord's precepts, and bravely adhering to Christ, stands against him, he must needs be conquered, because Christ, whom that man confesses, is unconquered." – (Cyprian, Treatise xi)

### **Methodius: (260-312 AD)**

Methodius was a bishop of the churches of Olympus and Patara in Lycia (Turkey), and was martyred for the Faith in AD 312. He was an outspoken opponent and critic of Origen – the enemy of chiliasm. The philosophical speculations and allegorical approach to Scripture made popular by Origen eventually led to the decline of eventual extinction of chiliasm in Christianity.

*“For since in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and finished the whole world, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, so by a figure in the seventh month, when the fruits of the earth have been gathered in, we are commanded to keep the feast to the Lord (Feast of Tabernacles), which signifies that, when this world shall be concluded in the seventh thousand years, when God shall have completed the world, He shall rejoice in us. ... Then, when the appointed times shall have been accomplished, and God shall have ceased to corm this creation, in the seventh month, the great resurrection-day, it is commanded that the Feast of our Tabernacles shall be celebrated to the Lord, of which the things said in Leviticus are symbols and figures.”* – (Methodius, Discourse IX, ch. I)

*“For I also, taking my journey, and going forth from the Egypt of this life, ... celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called ‘the seventh day,’ even ‘the true Sabbath.’”* – (Methodius, Discourse IX, ch. v)

### **Lactantius: (260-330 AD)**

Lactantius “boldly confessed the Faith amid the fires of the last and most terrible of the great persecutions” (editor of his works). Justin had written to the Roman Emperor in his day, defending Christianity and overthrowing the pagan gods of the Empire. Lactantius followed in Justin's footsteps, writing to instruct the Emperor Constantine himself in the Christian Faith. He was a Christian teacher of great renown, being charged with the personal instruction of the Emperor Constantine's son, Crispus.

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*“Therefore let the philosophers, who enumerate thousands of ages from the beginning of the world, know that the six thousandth year is not yet completed, and that when this number is completed the consummation must take place, and the condition of human affairs be remodeled for the better ... Therefore, since all the works of God were completed in six days, the world must continue in its present state through six ages, that is, six thousand years. ... And again, since God, having finished His works, rested the seventh day and blessed it, at the end of the six thousandth year all wickedness must be abolished from the earth, and righteousness reign for a thousand years; and there must be tranquility and rest from the labors which the world now has long endured. ... For six thousand years have not yet been completed, and when this number shall be made up, then at length all evil will be taken away, that justice alone may reign,” – (Lactantius, The Epitome of the Divine Institutes, LXX)*

### **Victorinus: (300 AD?)**

*“And in Matthew we read, that it is written Isaiah also and the rest of his colleagues broke the Sabbath – that that true and just Sabbath should be observed in the seventh millenary of years. Wherefore to those seven days the Lord attributed to each a thousand years; for thus went the warning: ‘In Thine eyes, O Lord, a thousand years are as one day.’ Therefore in the rest of the Lord each thousand of years is ordained, for I found that the Lord’s years are seven. Wherefore, as I have narrated, that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign.” – (Victorinus, On the Creation of the World)*

“So a great cloud of witness” have testified to the eschatology handed down by the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Many were pastors entrusted with the early churches; many were martyrs who sealed their testimony with their own blood. They all believed and taught the same eschatology – Chiliasm.

The question that begs to be asked is, why? Where did Chiliasm originate? The proverbial elephant in the room is that Chiliasm was taught by the Apostles, just as Irenaeus indicated, “the presbyters, the disciples of the Apostles” repeated what they had heard from the Apostles (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Bk. V, ch. xxxvi). Chiliasm was and is part of “*the Faith once for all delivered to the saints.*” (Jude 1:3)

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Millennial Week in Scripture**