

A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century – Vol 9 Ecclesiology

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Dr. Edward G. Rice

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Preface

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a USAF retired systems engineer turned Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and armed with a staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures, I praise the Lord that he has provided me the unique opportunity to assemble “A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century.”



As a systems engineer for thirty years (since 1972), I focused on systems analysis. Systematic theology has intrigued me ever since my first Bible institute course in 1975. I have amassed multiple systematic theology books and never found one that is wholly Biblical. In 2013 my seminary work at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary, under Dr. Steven Pettey, assigned me to read and analyze six volumes of “Systematic Theology” by Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and previous president of Dallas Theological Seminary. Initial critique of this neo-evangelical's voluminous, wordy, often unorganized work, answered the question, “Is there not a cause?” A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century is indeed a valid need. It cried out to be written and it was a work that I was privileged to endeavor.

God says he built man with an inner knowledge of the Creator's eternal power and Godhead. Further, God reveals from heaven, to every man, his wrath against all ungodliness. This true Light “*lighteth every man that cometh into the word.*” The Bible says the righteous God, The LORD of hosts, tries the reins and the heart of every man. The prophet Jeremiah writes of God, “*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*” The psalmist says, “*my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*” With his tugs on the reins of your heart, you have come far in your studies, be sure that you have come to a knowledge and submissive acceptance of God's only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The beloved Apostle John wrote, “*And many*

other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

Every Bible student is encouraged to follow through a list of Bible verses called by some the Romans road to heaven. The believing Bible student is encouraged to memorize them. That quintessential list of verses is John 3:16-19, 36, 5:24, Romans 3:10, 23, 5:8, 12, 18-19, 6:23, and 10:9-13. That last reference is God's formal acceptance policy for your receiving his free gift of salvation and eternal life. Got life? The beloved Apostle John writes, *“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* Selah! It is Hebrew for “go-figure”, and it intends that you pause, meditate, and consider what you just read.

After due consideration of the sole source of a systematic theology in Volume 01 – Prolegomena and a Volume 02 – Bibliology, an appropriate course of study would entail the study of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That is the course of study for Volume 03 – Theology, Volume 04 – Christology and Volume 05 – Pneumatology. Such a discipline establishes a foundation for the other studies of this systematic theology. Volume 06 through 08 pursue the plight and salvation of man with titles Anthropology, Hamartiology, and Soteriology, and finally Volume 09 through 11 pursue the doctrines of the church, angels, and last things, in titles Ecclesiology, Angelology, and Eschatology. The set concludes with a Volume 12 – Epilogue.

In researching for this volume on ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, I found that the Roman Catholic teaching that the church is a Holy Catholic Church and their teaching that it replaces Israel are the most detrimental influences to an overall Biblical understanding of the church. Those errors invade every Protestant denomination, and consequently the “poisonous fruit” invades all areas of Reformed theology. Baptists are not Protestant but the leaven then invades even Baptist theology. A conscious guard against a Catholic Church and its Replacement Theology via Covenant Theology is the first address of this ecclesiology. There is no wading pool, as it were, for a reproof of these errors in ecclesiology or in eschatology and the Bible student should be prepared to dive right into this powerful volume. May God bless your head first dive, and may the Holy Spirit of God guide you

through this sticky wicket. (A “Sticky wicket” in the game of Cricket is the area of ground around a wicket when it is tacky because of recent rain and therefore does not allow the ball to bounce well; it is a metaphor used to describe a difficult circumstance.)

When I began work on my Ph.D. in 2014 I set a goal to finish this Systematic Theology for the 21st Century in a five year period. When I finished my Ph.D. in 2017, I reestablished the same goal. This year, after publishing at least a draft of all twelve volumes in 2019, the goal remains. My plea for critique and correction also remains the same. I prefer friendly and constructive critique, but have found the hostile ones to be enlightening and beneficial for rounding out a stronger defense of truth. Feel free to engage in this effort, the many inputs I have received have strengthened the cause.

There is a cause.

Volume 09 Ecclesiology The Doctrine of the Church

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Chapter 1 Ecclesiology Introduction

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church (1577 εκκλησια ekklesia ek-klay-see'-ah); and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

(Matthew 16:16-18)¹

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the *ecclesia*, translated to English as the *church*. The origin of the word *church* comes from the Greek word *kuriakos*, meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended to some extent to make it capture the full concept of Christ's *Ecclesia*. It had to capture that the *Ecclesia* is "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this basic definition need to be emphasized. The church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body." The King James Bible consistently translates the Greek word 1577 εκκλησια ekklesia ek-klay-see'-ah "church" one-hundred-and-fifteen times, and appropriately translates it assembly three times in Acts 19:32, 39, 41.

The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant theology and doctrine have all and always considered the church to be one united catholic, universal, entity. The error in the concept of a Holy Catholic Church, originated in The Holy Roman Catholic Church. After Protestants broke from their mother, The Holy Roman Catholic Church, there was consternation about this doctrine and many devised a solution whereby the Holy

1 The Holy Bible

Catholic Church was... invisible, but still Catholic.

Baptists have historically held to the Biblical view that the church is a local, independent, autonomous body with no denominational head, only Christ is head of the church. The corporate body of Christ being built and referenced in Matthew 16:18, is not a Holy Roman Catholic Church, nor a Holy Catholic Protestant Church, nor an invisible Catholic Church. It was seen in soteriology that a genuine born-again-saved individual is by the miraculous power of God, instantaneously converted, justified, quickened, indwelt, and baptized into Christ. In the latter of the simultaneous, instantaneous acts the individual is wholly immersed (baptized) into the corporate body of Christ and is made one with him. In this world that believer is called upon to be baptized and united with other believers in a local, independent, autonomous body called a church and continue in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:40-41). There is no unified, universal, catholic church with a visible or invisible, human or denominational head otherwise involved in this operation.

That local church doctrine is espoused in this work, but before detailing it, and distinguishing it, it is important to understand the historical background of why Christendom went through the wide gate and travels on the broad way of the Roman Catholic Church, its Covenant Theology, and its Replacement Theology. There needs to be, as it were, a precursor to ecclesiology, one wherein the promises that God made to Israel stand solidly and separately apart from the church, and wherein the church age is recognized as a stand alone dispensation with a distinct beginning and a dispensational ending. That precursor is so essential it is part of this introduction to the doctrine of the church.

Ecclesiology Precursor

Before one can safely and successfully pursue a study of the local, autonomous, independent church there are three things that must be nailed down in their belief system. These are essential to ecclesiology because Satan's major inroad into the church was threefold: 1) Rome's presuming that it would replace Israel as

God's chosen people, 2) that the Holy Catholic Church would rule the world, and 3) that there would therefore be no need of a literal thousand year reign of Christ. These lies permeate all Protestant and Reformed theology. Careful attention must be given to these three lies before full understanding can be given to ecclesiology.

God Shall Fulfill Promises Made To Israel

First understand that God will fulfill the promises that he made to Israel.

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.” (Micah 7:18-20)

God made some substantial promises about, and to, the twelve tribes of Israel. Promises about inheriting the promised land, about being regathered into the promised land, about dwelling in peace and prosperity in the promised land, and about all nations coming to them to seek after the LORD their God. Christendom has tried to spiritualize and steal these promises, to allegorize away the nation of Israel, and to detract from the holiness of God's holy land. What God promises God completely delivers.

Messiah Shall Reign From Zion

Secondly, God promised that his Messiah, the anointed one, the Christ, would rule and reign over the nations of this world from the throne of David set in his Holy Hill of Zion. One must insist that this promise be completely and literally fulfilled in a period of time here on this earth. It must fit in before the new heaven and new earth of Revelation 21, and it must fit in before the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20. This is an essential key to

understanding any doctrine of last things, eschatology, and in comprehending that the dispensation of grace, i.e. the church age, will come to an end as God's focus turns to the restoration of Israel. The Roman Catholic Church's ecclesiology thoroughly muddied the water and Christendom, in whole, cannot and never has seen the truth.

All Roman, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant (i.e. Presbyterian, Reformed, Episcopalian, Methodist, Pentecostal, and all their splinter groups) theology and doctrine has missed these two critical understandings; 1) God will literally fulfill the promises he made to Israel, and 2) God will literally establish his Messiah on the throne of David in his Holy Hill of Zion. There, from Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ will rule all the nations of the world while Israel is restored in his promised land. Without these two truths firmly embedded and believed one cannot have “an ear to hear” the Revelation of Jesus Christ, i.e. *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (Rev 2:7 – to the angel of the church of Ephesus); *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (2:11 – to the angel of the church in Smyrna); *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (2:17 – to the angel of the church in Pergamos); *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (2:29 – to the angel of the church in Thyatira); *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (3:6 – to the angel of the church in Sardis); *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (3:13 – to the angel of the church in Philadelphia); *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (3:22 – to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans).²

2 There are some things to be noted in this seven-fold repetition of the “ear to hear” verses. 1) The written message goes to individual, independent, autonomous, local churches, not to a Catholic (universal) Church that might want to control its “denominations.” 2) The written message goes to “the angel of the church” not to the congregation directly. This angel, messenger, elder, bishop, pastor is singular with one (singular) assigned to each independent, autonomous, local church. Sheep need to be fed and in God's economy each local congregation has one Elder (presbyter), Bishop (overseer), Pastor (shepherd) assigned to “feed my sheep.” 3) the message is

Roman Catholic Saint Origen Was Wrong

Third and lastly, before one can safely and successfully pursue a study in eschatology or ecclesiology they need to understand what the allegorical method of Bible interpretation is, where it comes from, and why they must totally abandon it and its premises. To those with a Roman Catholic background and to those grounded in a Protestant/Reformed background, this will be a

word-for-word identical for all seven churches, but not, again, addressed to any Catholic Church. This sets a premise that God has, and God recognizes, no Catholic Church, and no “denomination” of churches; God only establishes and speaks to local, independent, autonomous churches. 4) Each individual message to each individual church is what the Spirit is saying “to the churches.” It is not to the Roman Church, nor is it to any Catholic Church or denominational head. It is to the churches, which logically extend to all local churches of all ages. The seven messages to seven churches parallel the 2,000 years of church history that has unfolded. The message to Ephesus marks the beginning of the church age, and the messages to the Laodiceans marks the end of the church age. The parallel fit, all the way through these 2,000 years, is noticeable and not just a coincidence, as Romans and Protestants pretend. 5) There are seven repetitions and seven is a Bible number of completeness. This completeness further solidifies the previous assertions refuting the catholicness of any church. 6) Ear is singular here. In each of Christ's parable exclamations he declares this using plural “whosoever hath ears to hear...” but in each use in Revelation “ear” is singular, “an ear to hear.” It could be an indication of a half-hearted listener and a stronger emphasis to pay the more diligent attention. i.e. even if you only have one ear engaged in this revelation, pay all the more earnest heed. 7) The first and last church messages address the church “of” Ephesus, and the church “of the” Laodiceans, the other five messages address the church “in” Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia. There is significance to this; things that are different are not the same. A church “in” Philadelphia differs from a church “of” Ephesus. Belief in verbal inspiration makes it so. I will not here codify that difference except to say that I pastor a Baptist church *in* Dresden which is not the church *of* Dresden. Notice in the article and title that there is also a difference in “of Ephesus” and “of the Laodiceans.” Ephesus was a church of Christ, while the Laodicean one was a church of the Laodiceans. Also consider that the Greek construct for the church of/in Smyrna follows similar to that of the church of the Laodiceans, without the word “in” (also lacking the article and articulation of Smyrnians). I am not sure why the fifty-seven expert linguists who took seven years to translate the Authorized Version put it down as the church

reproof. A correction, as called out in 2Timothy 3:16, is a turning which brings on back on a proper course, but a reproof in that same scripture means going all the way back to the drawing board and starting over. Those who learned to rely on allegorical methods of Bible interpretation must go all the way back to the drawing board on this issue.

In the Bibliology section of this work, under the chapter Biblical Hermeneutics, the allegorical method has been quite thoroughly exposed and refuted. Its most detrimental and obvious defect is found in eschatology and ecclesiology, but its leaven is present in each Bible doctrine considered in this systematic work. The allegorical method of Bible interpretation is the primary force behind the rejection of the first two points of this thesis, that Israel has a promising, and promised, future, and that Christ will rule from the throne of David, situate in God's Holy Hill of Zion.

Origen of Alexandria Egypt (AD 182-254) carefully followed his mentor Clement of Alexandria Egypt (AD 150-215) who had concluded that after the AD 70 fall of Jerusalem, and the systematic annihilation of every Jew in the land, God could never put Israel back together again. It was impossible. In his effort to help God out of such an embarrassing situation Origen of Alexandria Egypt began tinkering around with his Bible. He was genius and effective. He became known as “The Father of Biblical Criticism”, “The Father of the Allegorical Method”, and ergo “The Father of Roman Catholicism.”

Origen Adamantius determined that he would spiritualize all the promises made to and about Israel and apply them to the church. Three things were necessary for such a monumental task. First, the Bible had to be extensively picked at so that what was plainly written was not necessarily what was actually meant: thus Origen's title as a “Bible Critic” doing “Biblical Criticism.” Next a revolutionary new way of doing Bible interpretation needed to be

“in” Smyrna, instead of the church “of” Smyrna, but seeing I only took one year of Greek and only passed with a C, I will trust them in their decision. When analyzing a verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant Bible one cannot read to much into little word variations like these. All Roman, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant theologies hold to a catholic church and denominational controls. Which denomination is right? None.

formalized. But God had made extensive, all encompassing, and eternal promises to the seed of Abraham, to the twelve tribes of Israel, and to King David and his seed. How could all these literal promises be wholly discarded or refocused to the church?

In Origen's allegorical method of Biblical interpretation, "Scripture is NOT to be interpreted according to normal communication rules", "Scripture, he supposed in the 2nd century after Christ, has many meanings, a literal sense, a moral-ethical sense, and a spiritual-allegorical-mystical sense", and Bible words, even certain letters, have SECRET significance only to be deciphered by those who have an inside knowledge. Ergo the Bible had many meanings and none can be certain.³ Commoners, reading the Bible, presuming that it follows normal communication rules, were, and are, a threat to Origen's allegorical method. These commoners, or "lay-people", must be dealt with... we, "the clergy", as Origen supposed, and subsequent denominational heads thinking themselves to be "the clergy" supposed, must stop them from reading the Bible. This clarifies a thousand-years of Bible burning, translator burning, and Bible revision-mongering.

The third thing Origen needed to do in order to remove Israel from God's agenda and apply all their promises to the church, was to make the church catholic. Israel was one nation and was promised world domination, and thus the church needed to be one, universal, catholic entity headed for world domination. Israel was lined up to rule all the nations of the world from Jerusalem, and thus the Catholic Church had to be staged in order to take over that promise.... Staged to rule the world from Rome, labeled "Mystery Babylon" by the Roman Catholic Church herself.

To understand eschatology, yeah to understand ecclesiology, one must disavow all the effects brought on by the Father of Biblical Criticism, the Father of the Allegorical Method, and the Father of the Catholic Church. Clearly God says what he means and means what he says, and the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation needs to be completely discarded, it has evil roots. Christ will sit on the throne of David in God's Holy Hill of Zion

3 Edward Rice, "Systematic Theology for the 21st Century – Bibliology," Chapter 13 Hermeneutics, 2018, pg 485.

and rule all the nations of the world, the Catholic Church will not, Israel will inherit and dwell in the entire promised land, the Catholic Church will not.

Only when one grasps this systematic understanding of God's ongoing relationship with his chosen nation, Israel, can they see that the church is a parenthesis in his dealings with the nations of this world and the restoration of his chosen nation. Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, Reformed, Methodist, and Pentecostal theology and doctrine is grossly handicapped when it comes to ecclesiology and eschatology. They have been so handicapped since their founding. The source of that handicap is their rejection of Israel as God's chosen people.

The LORD God's Promises To Israel Are Literal

Examine if you would, God's assurances that he will literally and completely fulfill his promises about Israel and about King David's throne. Israel will be restored and that restoration is larger than the restoration after their 70 year Babylonian captivity (586 – 516 BC):

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus

saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD. ³⁸ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever. (Jeremiah 31:33-40)

God's covenant with Israel is an everlasting covenant:

Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. (Jeremiah 32:37-42)

God's covenant with David is everlasting:

Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. (Jeremiah 33:20-22)

The promises are as sure as night and day:

Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them. (Jeremiah 33:24-26)

God is married to Israel (as Christ is to be married to the church) and will never abandon her:

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.... For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a

woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee. (Isaiah 54:1,5-10)

God is married to the Land, Beulah land, and will not forsake her:

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. (Isaiah 62:1-5)

These verses assure us that God means what he says and says what he means when it comes to Israel. Origen of Alexandria

Egypt, the Father of Bible Criticism, the Father of the Allegorical Method of Bible interpretation, and the Father of the Catholic Church, opened three doors of apostasy and the majority of “Christendom” has entered his wide gate and walked his broad way. A Bible believer must know where that path leads, get clear of it, and give it wide berth if he will understand the doctrine of Christ's church, ecclesiology, and the Revelation of Jesus Christ as it pertains to the doctrine of last things, eschatology.

In an exceptional book *“Holy Ground, the True History of the State of Israel”*, Dr. William P. Grady details an extraordinary and miraculous history with his King James Bible wide open. In its 900 pages he thoroughly exposes and reprimands Replacement Theology, taking careful aim at Fundamental Baptists that get drawn into its pernicious ways. Therein Dr. Grady expertly expounds Romans 11 which begins with the Apostle's question, “I say then, Hath God cast away his people?” The Apostle Paul then answers the question, “God forbid!” and goes on to present Godly, eternal truths about Israel. Dr. Grady's expose' of this section is worth every investment of reading his whole book. Israel is chosen of God, blessed of God, going to be saved as it is written, and “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes”... Such a conundrum is explained by Dr. Grady with a clarity that only a seasoned preacher, teacher, pastor, professor of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ could muster.

Also note that our hymnals, as written by Protestants with this Replacement Theology and Covenant Theology in their mind, are also riddled with this leaven of error. It is not necessary to discard such hymns, i.e. “Joy to the World” by Isaac Watts, but be cognizant of their misgivings about the Catholic Church, and the 2nd Coming of Christ. May God richly bless your studies as you keep yourself pure from these errors as a student of God's Holy Word.

The Effect of This Precursor

Seeing that these truths are self evident it is obvious that Christ the Redeemer of mankind is to become Christ the Redeemer

of Israel. That necessitates an upcoming change of venue. The Church of Jesus Christ is a parenthesis in God's dealings with Israel and that parenthesis will close. We, standing inside of this parenthesis, see God's grace and mercy extended to the Gentiles. But Christendom, via its Roman Catholic mother and guide, inflame with ego to suppose we Gentiles are the main thing in God's plan, to suppose we Gentiles are the new Elect of God, to suppose we Gentiles are the replacement of Israel, and that there will be no close to Gentile preeminence, that there will be no rapture of the church and no millennial reign of Christ from the throne of David. In short, Christendom, following its Roman Catholic mother, is wrong about Israel, wrong about Catholicism and the permanence of a Catholic Church, wrong about ecclesiology and wrong about eschatology.

Finding the close of this parenthesis, the church age, the dispensation of grace, is easy when one is looking for it. Understanding that this period of time, wherein Israel is temporarily set aside, will end, opens a door to understanding the dispensational teachings of Scripture, and dispensational teachings of Scripture opens the door to good ecclesiology and eschatology.

It should be noted here that visionaries who rebelled against Roman-Presbyterian teachings of Calvinism's election and end time teachings, but held on to the misgivings about Israel have started the cults. Joseph Smith, 1830s founder of LDS, Ellen White, 1860s founder of SDA, Charles Taze Russel 1870s founder of JW's, Mary Baker Glover Eddy, 1880s founder of Christian Science, Robert Ingersol, 1890s founder of Atheism in America (Robert was born to his father, a Presbyterian pastor, in Dresden, NY, the town where I today pastor Good Samaritan Baptist Church across the street from a shrine/museum for Robert Ingersol), and even Harold Camping whose 2005 founding evaporated after his eschatology predictions proved false, all these fit this description, they rebelled against Roman-Presbyterian Christendom but could not comprehend dispensationalism nor God's enduring love for Israel.

Grasp this concept and grasp a good ecclesiology, and a good eschatology. Miss this concept and flounder around in Covenant

theology, Replacement Theology, Orthodox blunder and Calvinist election. Be a good student of the Holy Bible here, and comprehend a little bit of history; especially the ugly history of Bible criticism, the allegorical method, and the catholic church.

Chapter 2 Ecclesiology One of God's Seven Dispensations

One cannot account for a thorough coverage of Biblical ecclesiology (or anthropology, or eschatology) without a consideration of the great stages of stewardship wherewith mankind has been and will be tested. A systematic review of the whole of Scripture discovers seven distinct stewardship tests for man.

One cannot account for a thorough coverage of Biblical ecclesiology (or anthropology, or eschatology) without a consideration of the great stages of stewardship wherewith mankind has been and will be tested. A systematic review of the whole of Scripture discovers seven distinct stewardship tests for man. Since the concept of the progressive testing of man in these stewardship phases, properly called dispensations, insults and assaults Roman Catholic Church doctrine, and that of its Protestant offspring, the Biblical basis for this teaching needs careful development up front.

A preliminary development of dispensationalism was given in the doctrine of man, Vol 6 Anthropology, because of the stewardship of man that it captures. This development of dispensationalism is pursued in the doctrine of the church because the church age has a beginning and a closing that is crucial to that doctrine. Dispensational truths are presented again in , Volume 11 Eschatology, in order to understand the doctrine of last things. One cannot understand the second coming of Christ without discerning the transition from the dispensation of grace into the last dispensation, “the dispensation of the the fullness of times,” called the Kingdom Age. For that reason a solid understanding of the seven dispensations is vital to Biblical doctrine. That understanding can be achieved by going through Chapter 5 of the Anthropology volume and/or this Chapter 2 of the Ecclesiology volume and/or Volume 11 Eschatology, pursuing the doctrine of last things. A brief outline of these seven dispensations is included

below:

God's Seven Dispensations Outlined

The First Dispensation – Innocence (Gen 1:28 Scofield Note)

The Second Dispensation – Conscience (Gen 3:23 Scof. Note)

The Third Dispensation – Government (Gen 8:21 Scof. Note)

The Fourth Dispensation – Promise (Gen 12:1 Scof. Note)

The Fifth Dispensation – Law (Exod 19:8 Scof. Note)

The Sixth Dispensation – Grace and Truth (John 1:17, Eph 3:1-6)

The Seventh Dispensation – The Kingdom (Eph 1:10 Scof. Note)

Much more needs to be said about these dispensations. It is necessary to be systematically aware of their presence in the big picture. Mankind is given thorough and complete testing and opportunity in seven distinct phases, covering seven thousand years, and is repeatedly found lacking in each stewardship and dispensation. Dispensationalism is key to comprehending the larger picture of all of Scripture.

An understanding of dispensations is best introduced starting in the book of Genesis. So is an understanding of God, an understanding of man, and an understanding of redemption. But presuming some understanding of those three, let us focus on the very first dispensation, which is often called “Innocence.” Most simply, a dispensation is a period of time where stewardship is tested. *Stewardship* and *dispensation* come from the same root word, *oikonomia* in Greek.

The First Dispensation – Innocence

God placed man in the Garden of Eden with a specific requirement of obedience. He was left in that testing for a period of time to “see” how he would fare⁴. He fared poorly, and was

4 That period of time opens with all heaven and earth of this universe being “*very good*” as stated in Gen.1:3. After Gen.1:31 Satan falls in rebellion and shows up in Gen.3:1 lying and deceiving. The Bible does not dictate how long this period of testing is, nor should we. The Bible does not tell us when Satan rebelled but one dare not move his rebellion outside of these 1:31 to 3:1 boundaries. Especially do not move it to some fictitious gap imagined by C. I. Scofield (1834 – 1921), and portrayed by Clarence Larkin (1850 – 1924)!

consequently removed from the Garden. There were consequences for his failure and that period of testing, for all mankind, was abruptly ended. Now a new set of guidelines must be determined, a new testing of mankind would be pursued.

In that scenario there is a general set of guidelines which define a dispensation (Greek - οικονομία – *oikonomia* translated in English “dispensation,” four times and “stewardship,” three times). It is defined in the lexicon, *the management, oversight, or administration of a household or of other property- usually owned by another*. A dispensation contains 1) a set of rules, guidelines or expectations given by God, 2) a period of time wherein man is tried or tested under the guidelines, and 3) a distinct ending of the testing period wherein (it shall be seen as the pattern develops) man fails to live up to the guideline. The word *dispensation* is used four times in the Holy Bible (1Cor 9:17, Eph 1:10, 3:2, and Col 1:25). Additionally it is translated *stewardship* three times (Luke 16:2, 3, 4). The understanding of stewardship might better refine what a dispensation is because as a *steward* one is left in charge of what belongs to another, there is a period of time where they are accountable, and there is a definite ending wherein “the Lord of the vineyard” returns (cf Matt 21:33-46). The first dispensation, *innocence* in the Garden of Eden, illustrates well these three concepts of a dispensation.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the first dispensation:

Scofield Note 4 (1:28, heading) A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture. (See Gen.1:28 note 5).

Scofield Note 5 (1:28 And God blessed them...) The First Dispensation: Innocency. Man was created in innocency, placed in a perfect environment, subjected to an absolutely simple test, and warned of the consequence of disobedience. The woman fell through pride; the man deliberately. 1 Timothy 2:14 God restored His sinning

creatures, but the dispensation of innocency ended in the judgment of the Expulsion Gen.3:24⁵

The Second Dispensation – Conscience

What were the rules after man was removed from the Garden of Eden? C. I. Scofield labeled the second dispensation “*Conscience*.” Therein man did what was right in his own mind. In the dispensation of conscience the first born man became the first first-degree murderer. Note particularly in that murder report, that man was not to take vengeance or retribution on Cain for his act of murder. Instead man had to answer for himself before a Holy God. Note also that a blood sacrifice was required in this age of conscience. Even if the learned scholar cannot find it in Genesis chapter four, the Bible believer knows the principle well from Hebrews 9:22, “*And almost all things are by law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission (of sin).*”

How did this dispensation of conscience end?

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart (Gen 6:5-6).

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the second dispensation:

Scofield Note 2 (3:23 Therefore the Lord God...) The Second Dispensation: Conscience. By disobedience man came to a personal and experimental knowledge of good and evil--of good as obedience, of evil as disobedience to the known will of God. Through that knowledge conscience awoke. Expelled from Eden and placed under the second, or ADAMIC COVENANT, man was responsible to do all known good, to abstain from all

5 C. I. Scofield, “*The Scofield Reference Bible*”, Oxford University Press, Inc., 1909, public domain, pg 5, s.v. *Genesis 1:28 note 4 & 5*.

known evil, and to approach God through sacrifice. The result of this second testing of man is stated in Genesis 6:5 and the dispensation ended in the judgment of the Flood. Apparently "the east of the garden" Genesis 3:24 where were the cherubims and the flame, remained the place of worship through this second dispensation.⁶

The flood brought the second dispensation to an expedient end. A new dispensation would now begin.

The Third Dispensation – Government

When man's conscience before God was unable to keep him from evil, God installed a dispensation wherein man was accountable to man to curb him from evil. C. I. Scofield labeled the third dispensation "*Government.*" Human government has three primary responsibilities in this endeavor, 1) to promote the good, 2) to punish the bad, and 3) to protect the innocent. These primary functions of a government are carried to our current day. It is intended to keep a restraint on man's depravity, iniquity and evil. It finds its root and basis in God's command,

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man (Gen 9:5-6).

Of course much more could be said about this dispensation, but consider that it did have other provisions, like shortened life spans, the eating of meat, and its tower of Babble consequence (Gen 6:3, 9:3, 11:3). Note also that this dispensation did not formally end, it just got dispersed to all the nations of the world when they dispersed with confounded languages. In that sense the role and principles of human government continue until today.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the third

⁶ Ibid., pg 10, s.v. *Genesis 3:23 note 2.*

dispensation:

Scofield Note 1(Gen.8:21 ...the Lord said in his heart...) The Third Dispensation: Human Government. Under Conscience, as in Innocency, man utterly failed, and the judgment of the Flood marks the end of the second dispensation and the beginning of the third. The declaration of the Noahic Covenant subjects humanity to a new test. Its distinctive feature is the institution, for the first time, of human government--the government of man by man. The highest function of government is the judicial taking of life. All other governmental powers are implied in that. It follows that the third dispensation is distinctively that of human government. Man is responsible to govern the world for God. That responsibility rested upon the whole race, Jew and Gentile, until the failure of Israel under the Palestinian Covenant (Deu 28.-30:1-10) brought the judgment of the Captivities, when "the times of the Gentiles" (See Luke 21:24; Rev.16:14) began, and the government of the world passed exclusively into Gentile hands ; Daniel 2:36-45; Luke 21:24; Acts 15:14-17. That both Israel and the Gentiles have governed for self, not God, is sadly apparent. The judgment of the confusion of tongues ended the racial testing; that of the captivities the Jewish; while the Gentile testing will end in the smiting of the Image (Dan. 2) and the judgment of the nations (Matt.25:31-46).⁷

Anyone can see this third dispensations initial, and then repeated failures on man's part. In any event there was a failure of government to restrain man's evil and God moves on to a new trial. The first three dispensations are applicable to all of mankind. The next two are applicable to a select group, God's chosen.

⁷ Ibid., pg 16, s.v. *Genesis 8:21 note 1.*

The Fourth Dispensation – Promise

With the failure of nations in curbing man from iniquity God chooses to construct one particular and peculiar nation and calls Abram as the father of this chosen nation. He gives Abram profound promises and Abram believes God. C. I. Scofield labeled the fourth dispensation “*Promise.*” Much more could be said about this dispensation of promise but suffice it to say some of the promises were unconditional and are yet to be fulfilled, i.e. Israel will occupy all of the promised land in peace and safety. The dispensation closes with the seed of Abraham still holding the promises. They have divided into twelve tribes of Israel, but they are in bondage in Egypt.

Dispensations are divinely ordered stewardships by which God reveals himself, reveals man's depravity, and reveals his longsuffering. It becomes increasingly apparent that every stewardship testing of man ends in man's failure. The fact that there are seven such stewardship tests emphasizes that God is giving man every opportunity to do right. Yet each dispensation ends in the abject failure of man.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the fourth dispensation:

Scofield Note 1(Gen 12:1 Now the Lord ...) The Fourth Dispensation: Promise. For Abraham, and his descendants it is evident that the Abrahamic Covenant (See Gen.15:18 note) made a great change. They became distinctively the heirs of *promise*. That covenant is wholly gracious and unconditional. The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing. In Egypt they lost their blessings, but not their covenant. The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex.19:8). Grace had prepared a deliverer (Moses), provided a sacrifice for the guilty, and by divine power brought them out of bondage (Ex.19:4) but at Sinai they exchanged grace for law. The Dispensation of Promise extends from Genesis 12:1 to Exodus 19:8, and was exclusively Israelitish. The

“*dispensation*” must be distinguished from the “*covenant*”. The former is a mode of testing; the latter is everlasting because it is unconditional. The law did not abrogate the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal.3:15-18) but was an intermediate disciplinary dealing "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal.3:19-29; 4:1-7). Only the dispensation, as a testing of Israel, ended at the giving of the law.⁸

Of all the failed dispensations, the failure under this one, *Promise*, may have been more providentially driven than depravity driven, but it still depicts a failure. The failed *Innocence* dispensation brought death, The failed *Conscience* dispensations brought the destroying flood, the failed *Government* dispensation brought Babble, and the failed *Promise* dispensation ends in Israel's bondage. In the fifth dispensation God would lay down the law for his chosen nation Israel.

The Fifth Dispensation – Law

The promised seed of Abraham, which were to inherit God's promised land, were redeemed from bondage in Egypt and read the Law of God by God himself. This began the dispensation called *Law*. The children of Israel agreed to obey all the laws of God. God agreed to bless them and give them all the promised land if they did. A quick read through the book of Judges confirms that they did not, and thus he did not.

It needs to be clarified that the law was only given to the promised seed of Abraham, i.e. the twelve tribes of Israel. It was not given to Gentile nations. It was not given as a model law for Gentile nations to pattern their laws after, and it was not given as a model law for the Christians, or the pious, or the religious. It was given to keep Israel a holy and a peculiar people in all the earth (Exo 19:5, Deut 14:2, 26:18, Psalm 135:4). The severe penalties of death by stoning were given so that this holy, peculiar people could “put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear” (Deut 21:21, cf 17:17, 19:19, 22:21, 24:7).

⁸ Ibid., pg 20, s.v. *Genesis 12:1 note 1*.

Consternation is dolled out to Christians who do not understand the dispensations, this dispensation particularly, and this purpose of the law. First because many religionists and “Clergy”⁹ construct some form of works salvation where they pick a few choice laws and disregard others. Second because Christians themselves are confused and troubled about God having a man stoned because he picked up sticks on a Sabbath (Num 15:32-36). And third because the world mocks the Christian because he does not know how to explain the conflict between law and grace. Such consternation is relieved when one understands the realities of the dispensation of law. It is for Israel's peculiarity and for Gentiles learning (Gal 3:24-25¹⁰).

Although the law, given to God's chosen nation Israel, is not set as a model for other nations to follow there are many moral principles and civil laws which are exemplary models for other Gentile nations. Many of our US laws are based on God's laws for Israel. Our Creator's requirements for moral right and wrong are discernible. Criminal laws for murder and manslaughter, civil laws for stealing, property damage and restitution can certainly find a place in our legal systems. But the death penalty punishments and the eye for an eye consideration must be left in their context for the dispensation of law and their focus on Israel's peculiarity. All of Israel's dietary laws, ceremonial laws, and other laws designed to keep Israel a peculiar people must be kept in their proper context, in order to rightly divide the Word of Truth.¹¹

And so Israel was given a myriad of laws to keep her a holy people, a peculiar people, and a chosen nation of God. Israel failed, but God's promises remain centered on his chosen people. After her chastisements only one tribe remained. The Hebrews are now

9 Recall that true Christianity has no clergy, or laity, or Nicolaitans, cf Rev 2:6, 15.

10 Gal 3:24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* 25 *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

11 Ellen White (1827 – 1915) insisted that her followers keep the 5th commandment in order to keep their salvation. She also supposed, from her hundreds of visions, a bunch of peculiarities about the advents of Christ and her misguided followers came to be called Seven Day Adventists!

called Jews, because the only tribe left in Israel at the coming of her Messiah was Judah. The only begotten Son of God came as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to be the king of the Jews. But after being under law for fifteen hundred years (BC 1492 – 30 AD) the lawyers, scribes and Pharisees of the Jews rejected their king. Indeed they had the Romans crucify him under Roman law fulfilling many Bible prophecies about the Messiah (Greek *Christ*).

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the fifth dispensation:

Scofield Note1 (Ex.19:8 ...we will do...) The Fifth Dispensation: Law. This dispensation extends from Sinai to Calvary--from Exodus to the Cross. The history of Israel in the wilderness and in the land is one long record of the violation of the law. The testing of the nation by law ended in the judgment of the Captivities, but the dispensation itself ended at the Cross.¹²

Although the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah and King, their King did not reject them. The promise of God is emphatic, the Christ will sit on the throne of David and rule and reign the twelve tribes of Israel as he said. But after they rejected him as their king, he goes to the Gentiles, and temporarily the Gentiles become his people. That makes for a separate and distinct dispensation, the dispensation of grace, the age of the church.

The Sixth Dispensation – Grace and Truth

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt 21:43)... *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17).

In the sixth dispensation the promises that were made to the Jews are temporarily set aside and God's grace was extended to all people. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith”* (Eph 2:8a) is the hallmark of this dispensation. The salvation available in this dispensation differs from any other: individual's are Converted –

¹² Ibid., pg 94, s.v. *Exodus 19:8 note 1*.

Justified – Quickened – Indwelt – and Immersed-in-Christ (Matt.18:3, Rom.5:1, Eph.2:1, Rom.8:9, Rom.6:3). They are consequently sealed by the Holy Spirit of God and that new-birth, salvation, conversion, cannot be undone. It has been said, “In the Old Testament God made a temple for the people, in the New Testament God makes a people for his temple¹³. A whole volume of this systematic theology deals with soteriology. Suffice it to say here that it has never been easier for man to be in a right relationship with his Creator, Jehovah God, and yet this dispensation of Grace and Truth (John 1:17) is destined to end “*as it was in the days of Noe,... as it was in the days of Lot...*” (Luke 17:26, 28).

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the sixth dispensation:

Scofield Note 1,2,3 (John 1:17 Grace. Summary)

(1) Grace is "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man. . . not by works of righteousness which we have done (Tit.3:4 - 5).

It is, therefore, constantly set in contrast to law, under which God demands righteousness from man, as, under grace, he gives righteousness to man (Rom.3:21 - 22; 8:4; Phil.3:9). Law is connected with Moses and works; grace with Christ and faith (John 1:17; Rom.10:4-10). Law blesses the good; grace saves the bad (Ex.19:5; Eph.2:1-9). Law demands that blessings be earned; grace is a free gift (Deut.28:1-6; Eph.2:8; Rom.4:4- 5).

(2) As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom.3:24-26, 4:24 - 25). The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as a fruit of salvation (John 1:12 - 13; 3:36; Matt. 21:37; 22:24; John 15:22, 25; Heb.1:2; 1John 5:10-12). The immediate result of this testing was the rejection of

13 This was a well rehearsed thought of noted evangelist Dr. Laren Dawson, who had and heard more recordings of fundamental preachers of the gospel than any other evangelist.

Christ by the Jews, and His crucifixion by Jew and Gentile (Acts 4:27). The predicted end of the testing of man under grace is the apostasy of the professing church (See "Apostasy" 2Tim.3:1-8 note) and the resultant apocalyptic judgments.

(3) Grace has a twofold manifestation: in salvation (Rom.3:24, refs) and in the walk and service of the saved (Rom.6:15, refs).¹⁴

The dispensation of grace will come to an end, and it will end in a failure of mankind. It is man's failure in accepting God's simple plan of salvation (Heb 2:3). The ending of the sixth dispensation and the beginning of the seventh and final dispensation is really the beginning of a Biblical eschatology. The doctrine of last things includes the closing of the Church age, called the dispensation of Grace and Truth, and the ushering in of the last dispensation.

The Seventh Dispensation – The Kingdom

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:31-33 emphasis added).

*“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever”***

(Rev.11:15 emphasis added). *“And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”*** (Rev 19:16 emphasis added).

It has been resoundingly promised that the Jewish Messiah (Greek *Christ*) would be the King of the Jews, i.e. the King of

¹⁴ Ibid., pg 1115, s.v. *John 1:17* note 1,2,3.

Israel, who sits on the throne of David. That fact is hated by Satan and refuted with tenacity by the Roman Catholic Church and her children. The despise of that coming kingdom has freely flowed into the doctrine of the Roman reformers. The persistence of the denial has caused the rejection of all dispensational teaching in the wide gate and broad path of Christendom. That broad path is called “*supersessionism*” and it is unfortunate that so many Baptists are ignorant of its devices.

A study of Biblical eschatology will center on the fact that this kingdom will be ushered in at the second advent of Christ. It will last for the thousand years that Christ promised in Revelation chapter twenty, so it is called the “*Millennial Kingdom*.” It will be preceded by a judgment of the nations which will end “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24¹⁵) and be called the seven year tribulation and the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan 9:24). This Great Tribulation has 144 thousand virgin males (Rev. 14:1-5), from the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev.7:2-8), preaching the gospel. It will not be the church preaching the gospel during this seven year transition period, it will be these 144 thousand virgin male followers of the Lamb (Rev 14:4). The Church is removed in a pretribulation rapture, else they would be in competition with the 144 thousand Jews. Again the whole key to understanding “*the things which shall be hereafter*” requires that one believe in the Millennial Reign of Christ as the seventh dispensation of the Holy Bible.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the seventh dispensation:

Scofield Note 3 (Eph 1:10 ...dispensation of the fullness of times...) The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. This, the seventh and last of the ordered ages which condition human life on the earth, is identical with the kingdom covenanted to David (2Sam. 7:8-17; Zech. 12:8).

15 Luke 21:24 *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

Summary; (Luke 1:31-33; 1Cor. 15:24 Summary) and gathers into itself under Christ all past "times":

(1) The time of oppression and misrule ends by Christ taking His kingdom (Isa. 11:3 - 4).

(2) The time of testimony and divine forbearance ends in judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30 - 31; Rev. 20:7-15).

(3) The time of toil ends in rest and reward (2Thes. 1:6 - 7).

(4) The time of suffering ends in glory (Rom. 8:17 - 18).

(5) The time of Israel's blindness and chastisement ends in restoration and conversion (Rom. 11:25-27; Ezek. 39:25-29).

(6) The times of the Gentiles end in the smiting of the image and the setting up of the kingdom of the heavens (Dan 2:34 - 35; Rev. 19:15-21).

(7) The time of creation's thralldom ends in deliverance at the manifestation of the sons of God (Gen. 3:17; Isa. 11:6-8; Rom.8:19-21).¹⁶

But even the Kingdom age, where Christ physically rules and reigns over the whole world, ends with an insurrection . That insurgence is short lived and mankind steps off into eternity and streets of gold. This short survey of the seven dispensations builds the framework for the study the stewardships of man in anthropology, the study of the church age in ecclesiology, and the study of last things in eschatology. Christendom's many misunderstandings of the Bible and its end times comes from those who have rejected dispensationalism and embraced supersessionism, i.e. Replacement Theology, and Covenant Theology. Be careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth in these areas, and dispensationalism is key to the divisions.

As was stated previous, grasping these dispensations, these great spiritual divides in God's dealings with man, these stewardship tests of mankind, is key to rightly dividing the word of

¹⁶ Ibid., pg 1250, s.v. *Eph 1:10 note 3*.

truth. It is paramount for comprehending anthropology, ecclesiology and eschatology in ones systematic theology. It is, consequentially, covered in Volume 8 Anthropology, here in Volume 9 Ecclesiology, and in Volume 11 Eschatology. May God richly bless the student of Scripture that comprehends these great divides.

Dispensational's Alternative, Supersessionism

Supersessionism is a big word that simply captures the belief that the Catholic Church completely replaces Israel. Its main tenets are found in Replacement Theology and Covenant Theology. One cannot comprehend a Biblical doctrine of the church or of the last things while holding to these ideological moorings that the Catholic Church is the centerpiece for all Bible revelation and all Bible prophecy. The flaws of supersessionism are rehearsed and exposed in this essay.

The denial of the Bible's dispensational teachings started with the Roman Church. After the annihilation of the Jews, and Jerusalem in 70 AD. Catholic Church Fathers Saint Clement of Alexandria (150 – 215 AD), and his student Saint Origen of Alexandria (184 – 253 AD) supposed that Judaism was gone forever, and supposed that the Church (they supposed it to be *catholic*) should thus absorb all the promises given to the Jews. Given that the Bible clearly promised the regathering of Israel, and their inheriting the Promised Land, this would have been an impossible task, but Saint Origen, known as the Father of the Allegorical Method, found a way to dismiss any literal rendering of Scripture whenever it pleased “the Catholic Church.” Consequently the allegorical method of hermeneutics has been the mainstay of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformers to this day.

Supersessionism, Replacement Theology, and Covenant Theology are so brazenly unBiblical that it is often an embarrassment to claim it's tenets publicly. A less toxic summary of supersessionism is expressed by the neo-evangelicals who spend their days tip-toeing around it and pretending that it is not so bad.

Michael J. Vlach, writing in a journal for John MacArthur's Masters Seminary, tries to back away from the toxicity by saying:

Replacement theology or supersessionism is not a 'one size fits all' perspective. There are variations within this view. Punitive supersessionism emphasizes Israel's disobedience as the reason for its displacement as the people of God. Economic supersessionism emphasizes that national Israel's role as the people of God expired with the coming of the New Testament church. Structural supersessionism is an approach to the canon that minimizes the role of the Hebrew scriptures. Within supersessionism strong and mild forms are discernible. Strong supersessionism does not believe in a future salvation or restoration of Israel. Mild supersessionism believes in a salvation of the nation Israel but no restoration to a place of prominence.¹⁷

The whole concept of Covenant Theology, with its basis in supersessionism, is likewise an embarrassment to those who would defend it against Bible truth. Consequently there is little written by its proponents, who defend it with tradition, i.e. it is orthodox, (and catholic) and "we" have always believed this way. They will paint dispensationalists and teachings about the rapture as a Johnny-Come-Lately doctrine that could not possibly be true.

Who better to refute Covenant Theology than a Friends of Israel executive director and author, and in his writing, James Showers also delineates the facts of Covenant Theology which oftentimes even its proponents fail to mention. It is worthwhile in this effort on ecclesiology and eschatology to include all three parts and the conclusions of Dr. Shower's "The Facts And Flaws of

17 Michael J. Vlach, "VARIOUS FORMS OF REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY", TMSJ 20/1 (Spring 2009) 57-69, <https://legacy.tms.edu/JournalIssue.aspx?year=2009> (accessed 10/29/2016). [Michael J. Vlach is a Ph.D. and Assistant Professor of Theology at Dr. John MacArthur's Masters Seminary. The neo-evangelical positions of Masters Seminary do not represent the views of this author.]

Covenant Theology.”¹⁸ That article is copied in its entirety below:

The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Part 1

By: James Showers

Covenant Theology is the dominant theological system of most mainline Protestant churches.

(Covenant Theology) is a system of theology that interprets the Bible’s philosophy of history through the lens of two or three covenants and is founded on Replacement Theology, which maintains that God has replaced the Jewish people with the church and that Christians are now God’s chosen people.

As a systematic theology, it attempts to explain God’s purpose for history. Why are things the way they are today? Why were they different in the past? Why was there a time when there was no government on Earth? Why was there a time when God gave the Law to a particular group of people? Why is that system of law not applied throughout the world today?

Systematic theology must make sense of the progress of revelation. Why didn’t God give the Epistles to Old Testament Israel? Why did He wait to reveal those after the church began? Theology must provide a unifying principle that connects these historical differences with the progress of revelation, thus providing answers for the past, present, and future. Most important, a valid philosophy of history will answer these questions: “Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?”

The Facts

Covenant Theology’s basic premise is that, in eternity past, God determined to govern all of history on the basis of three covenants. (Some combine two of the covenants into one.) These are the

18 James Showers, “Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology”, from The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843, www.foi.org/free-resources/article/facts-and-flaws-covenant-theology-part1/...part-2/ ...[part-3/](http://www.foi.org/free-resources/article/facts-and-flaws-covenant-theology-part1/...part-3/) ...[conclusion/](http://www.foi.org/free-resources/article/facts-and-flaws-covenant-theology-part1/conclusion/) (accessed 9/9/2016). [James A. Showers is executive director for The Friends of Israel. Permission to copy and distribute this material is granted provided that you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction or alter the wording in any way. Please contact The Friends of Israel if you are making more than 100 physical copies. Proper accreditation must be visible on each copy. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred (where applicable). Any exceptions to the above must be formally approved by The Friends of Israel. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: From The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org . E-mail: webmaster@foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843.]

covenants of works, redemption, and grace.

The Covenant of Works. According to Covenant theologians, the covenant of works was established between the creation and Fall of Man. Covenants are formal, legally binding agreements in which both parties have obligations.

The covenant of works supposedly was established between the triune God and Adam, in which Adam is God's representative head of the human race and acts for all his descendants. Covenant theologians argue that Adam's obligation was perfect obedience to God. God's obligation was to provide eternal life in exchange for perfect obedience. Adam's penalty for failing to keep his part of the covenant was death to both Adam and his descendants.

Where do we find this covenant in the Bible? We don't. It is not in the Bible. Covenant theologians infer these covenants based on certain Scriptures, including the threat of death for eating of the tree of knowledge in Genesis 2. There must be a covenant, they say, because God provided a warning and a penalty. That is the logic they use. ^{End Note 1}

The Covenant of Redemption. This covenant supposedly was established before creation in eternity past between God the Father and God the Son, in which the Father made His Son the Head and Redeemer of the elect. The Son volunteered to take the place of those whom God gave to Him—the elect here on Earth. The Son's obligation was to become human under the Law, live without sin, and willingly take the elect's punishment on the cross. The Father's obligation was to resurrect the Son and give Him numerous seed, all power in heaven and earth, and great glory.

Again we ask, "Where is this covenant in Scripture?" And again the answer is that it is not there. It does not exist. Covenant theologians claim it is implied based on God's promises and the Son's willingness to go to the cross. ^{End Note 2}

The Covenant of Grace. Some Covenant theologians combine the covenants of redemption and grace. They are uncertain when the covenant of grace was established. Some argue it began with the promise of redemption in Genesis 3:15 when God told the serpent He would bruise the serpent's head and that the serpent would bruise the Man-Child's heel. Others argue it began with the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12.

In the covenant of grace, God, the offended, makes a covenant with the elect sinner, the offender. The elect sinner's obligation is to accept the promise of salvation willingly, agree to be a part of God's people, trust in Christ forever, and commit to a life of obedience and dedication to God. God's obligation is to provide salvation through faith in Christ and eternal life to all who believe.

There is no reference to this covenant in the Bible. Covenant theologians argue that it is implied in the “I will be Your God” passages throughout the Old and New Testaments.

These three covenants constitute what is known as Covenant Theology. They define history’s ultimate purpose as glorifying God through the redemption of elect man. The shortcoming of this philosophy is that it presents a human-centered view of history: The glory of God is summed up only through the redemption of man. The covenant of grace becomes the unifying principle for history, in which history is understood in terms of God’s redemption of man.

If you want to understand what happened in the past, you turn to the covenant of grace. If you want to understand what is happening now or in the future, look at the covenants of grace and redemption.

End Note 3

The Flaws

There are a number of problems with Covenant Theology. First, its ultimate goal for history is flawed because it only explains God’s purpose for elect man. It does not begin to touch on all the other programs God is carrying out in history.

For example, if God is the one true and sovereign God of this universe, He will restore the universe to its pre-fall condition (Mt. 19:28; Acts 3:18–21). Covenant theology provides no explanation for this aspect of history. Nor does it provide reasons for God’s dethroning of Satan as ruler of the earth (Rom. 16:20) or for reestablishing God’s theocratic Kingdom on Earth (Rev. 19—20).

Second, it is a human-centered theological system with an inherent weakness for humanism. Who is the god of humanism? It is man and the belief that, ultimately, all answers lie in man.

A theological system that believes the glory of God is centered in what God is doing with man ultimately focuses on man. Add to that fact a hermeneutic that spiritualizes the words of Scripture, reinterpreting the literal into something figurative, and you have created a platform for humanism. History bears out that liberal, modernist movements have flourished in mainline Protestant, Covenant churches.

A further problem is that the unifying principle of Covenant Theology is too narrow. It deals solely with man’s redemption; it does not include God’s plan for the redemption of all creation. Nor does it provide enough answers for what God is doing here on Earth. Furthermore, it diminishes the true covenants recorded in Scripture: the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and New Covenants— to mention three.

Another of Covenant Theology’s serious flaws is that it denies the distinction between Israel and the church. It redefines the church as all covenant people throughout history. Therefore, the church

begins with Abraham (Gen. 12), rather than in Acts 2; and Old Testament Israel no longer refers to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Old Testament Israel is redefined as the covenant people, the people of faith in the Old Testament. No longer is it physical descent that makes one an Israelite; it is faith in God.

To accomplish its goals, Covenant Theology uses two methods, rather than one, to interpret Scripture— another serious flaw. Bible-believing Covenant theologians use the historical-grammatical-literal method of interpretation for most of Scripture, including all prophecy that has already been fulfilled. However, when it comes to unfulfilled prophecy, they turn to a different method: an allegorical-spiritual one that enables them to redefine Israel and make it the church, rather than the Jewish people. They also change the Millennial Kingdom from a literal, future 1,000-year period into the current Church Age. This belief is referred to as Amillennialism or Postmillennialism. ^{End}

Note 4

Because it is built on Replacement Theology, to remove Replacement Theology from Covenant Theology would collapse the entire system. It would force Covenant theologians to accept that God has two distinct programs, one for Israel and one for the church. Covenant theologians would have to define the church as beginning in Acts 2, with Israel being a separate entity. Further, they would have to accept a literal, future Tribulation and the Millennium. To accept this would turn them into dispensationalists.

ENDNOTES

1 *Renald E. Showers, There Really Is a Difference (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990), 10.*

2 *Ibid.*, 9–10.

3 *Ibid.*, 10–13.

4 *Ibid.*, 19–24, 127, 136–137.

The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Part 2

By: James Showers

Covenant Theology is the dominant theological system of most mainline Protestant churches and maintains that God has replaced the Jewish people with the church.

On the basis of two or three “covenants” that are found nowhere in the Bible, it claims that Christians are now God’s chosen people and that the Jewish people have no claim to the land of Israel. When examining this theology, what matters most is whether it can stand when tested by Scripture. It cannot.

What God’s Word Actually Says

God’s Word says the church began after Christ. Jesus Christ said, “I will build [future tense] My church” (Mt. 16:18). Christ was

looking to a future day when the church would begin. Clearly, it had not yet begun or He would not have used the future tense. So the church must begin after Matthew 16. It began at Pentecost with the baptism of the Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to send after He was gone (Jn 14:16–17; Acts 1:8).

First Corinthians 12:13 says all believers are put into the church through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, when Peter referred to Pentecost in Acts 11:15, he called it “the beginning.” Obviously, he meant the beginning of the church. ^{End Note 1}

God’s Word distinguishes between Israel and the church. In the Old Testament, Israel was a nation. In the New Testament, the church is never called a nation but, rather, an assembly or gathering of believers from many nations. Saved Jews in the Old Testament were never called the church, but they are part of the church in the New Testament. For example, Paul said, “Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks [Gentiles] or to the church of God” (1 Cor. 10:32). The words Jews and Greeks encompass all the unsaved (unredeemed). The words church of God refer to the saved, which include both Jews and Greeks. ^{End Note 2}

Scripture calls Israel the wife of God (Isa. 54:5–6) but calls the church the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9; 22:17). These concepts are never interchanged. They refer to two distinctly different relationships.

God’s Word says there will be seven years of tribulation following the Rapture of the church. Covenant Theology claims there is no need for the Tribulation and no need to restore the nation of Israel and bring it to repentance because God is finished with Israel. According to Covenant Theology, there also is no reason for God to judge the Gentile nations for their treatment of the Jewish people.

Scripture begs to differ. Paul taught that the church will be caught up before the wrath of the Day of the Lord (1 Th. 4:16–17). In 1 Thessalonians 1:10, he spoke of our waiting for God to send His Son from heaven, “even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” First Thessalonians 5:9 says, “For God did not appoint us to wrath.”

The Tribulation is a literal seven years, according to Daniel 9. The Antichrist will usher in that period by entering into a covenant with Israel. Divine judgment will flood the earth. Revelation 6—18 explains God’s twofold purpose: to punish the Gentiles and bring Israel to reconciling faith in the Messiah.

The prophet Jeremiah referred to the Tribulation as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). He said Jewish men will hold their loins like women in labor because of the great trouble on Earth. Christ

referred to the time as “great tribulation,” the greatest trouble the earth has ever seen (Mt. 24:21). Unless God stopped it, He said, no one would survive. It will culminate at the battle of Armageddon (Joel 3:9–17; Rev. 16:14–16), in which Satan will bring the armies of the world against Israel to destroy the Jewish nation. Then Christ will return to deliver Israel (Zech. 14:1–5; 2 Th. 2:8; Rev. 19:11–21).

God’s Word promises Christ will rule from His throne for a literal 1,000 years. Covenant Theology, of course, sees no reason for this. Covenant theologians have developed two views that spiritualize the texts. The first is Amillennialism. Augustine developed it about 400 years after the church began. It maintains the Church Age merely continues until Christ returns to judge all men and then take believers to the eternal future. The second view is Postmillennialism. It takes what it considers to be a more positive outlook: The church will continue until the entire world becomes Christian, thereby opening the door for Christ to return to take all believers to the new heavens and new earth. Both these views are contrary to the explicit Word of God.

Six times in the first seven verses of Revelation 20 there are references to the 1,000-year reign of Christ here on Earth. God promises to establish His Kingdom on Earth with the Messiah sitting on the throne to rule over Israel (Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1–2; Lk. 1:31–33) and the nations (Ps. 72:8–11; Dan. 7:13–14; Zech. 14:9). The Bible says Messiah will govern as God’s King—God’s representative to do God’s will (Ps. 7:2–8; Zech. 14:9; Rev. 11:15). Since the time Adam fell in sin, there was no qualified human representative to administer His rule until Jesus came. When Jesus returns, His purpose will be to reestablish the theocratic Kingdom on Earth.

The beginning of the Millennial Kingdom is called a time of restoration of all things, a season of refreshing (Acts 3:18–21). Christ referred to it as the time of regeneration, in which He will restore the environment to its pre-sin condition. He will do away with droughts, wars, pestilence, disease, and illness and bring the world back to the way it existed before man sinned (Isa. 2:2–4; 9:6–7; 11:2–5, 6–9; 33:24; 35:5–6; 55:13; Ezek. 34:25–29; 47:1–12). Covenant Theology is a fabrication based on supposed covenants found nowhere in Scripture. However, the Bible does have covenants that are clearly defined. They include the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. We do not have to say that God implied these covenants; they are all recorded. They are clearly defined in Scripture. They were all initiated by God. They were given to the Jewish people, and they see their ultimate fulfillment through Israel. They also are unbreakable because their fulfillment is not based on Israel’s obedience but on

God's faithfulness. And they are everlasting covenants (Gen. 17:7–8, 19; Ps. 105:8–11).

These covenants guarantee that Israel will be restored to the Promised Land as a nation and its place of blessing. Someday all of Israel will be regenerated. The Messiah will return to establish God's Millennial Kingdom on Earth and will rule from His throne in Jerusalem. And Israel will be the most blessed nation on the earth (Isa. 2:1–4; 60:1–3; 61:4–9; Zeph. 3:20; Zech. 8:23).

All this will happen because God clearly says so in His Word. And His Word will endure forever!

END NOTES

1 *Renald E. Showers, There Really is a Difference (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990), 171, 180.*

2 *Ibid., 183–6.*

The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Part 3

By: James Showers

If Replacement Theology is true, then certainly God has an opinion about it—one He states clearly and teaches visibly in Scripture.

Conversely, if it is not plainly taught, then Replacement Theology must be the fictitious creation of men.

What It Maintains

Replacement Theology maintains that, because the Jewish people rejected Jesus Christ, God has replaced or superseded ethnic Israel with the church* and punished them by rescinding all of the covenant promises He gave them.

It also claims (1) the church began with Abraham in Genesis 12, (2) the church is merely a continuation of Old Testament Israel, (3) the church is true or “spiritual Israel,” and (4) true Israel in the Old Testament was comprised of Abraham's spiritual, not physical, descendants.

Replacement theologians also claim we must first understand the New Testament before we can understand the Old. The New Testament, they say, teaches us how to interpret the Old Testament. This method enables them to redefine Israel to mean Abraham's spiritual descendants only. However, interpreting Scripture this way ignores the progress of God's revelation and implies that people who had only Old Testament revelation could not have understood it.

Replacement Theology also conveniently manages to uncouple God's covenant promises from His covenant curses. The church inherits all of the promises to Israel, but the Jewish people (ethnic Israel) keep all of the covenant curses. This uncoupling is quite a feat.

Since the Replacement church sees itself as a continuation of Old Testament Israel, it applies portions of Old Testament Law to

itself while ignoring important New Testament teachings.

Finally, Replacement Theology teaches there is no future for national Israel: God has thoroughly rejected Israel and no longer has a place for it in His plan for eternity apart from the salvation of individual Jewish people. They are no longer His Chosen People; nor is there a future 70th week of Daniel (see Daniel 9:24–27) or a future, literal, Millennial Kingdom of God on Earth.

Replacement Theology is the historical position of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and the common position of the Reformed and Covenant churches. Unfortunately, it has fueled anti-Semitism for 1,800 years. It has been said that more anti-Semitic acts have been committed in the name of the church than by all other groups combined.

Christ's Words

Since Israel did not reject Christ until the Gospels, we would expect Replacement Theology to be taught in the New Testament. Using a literal-historical-grammatical method of interpretation, we would expect to find:

- Clear, concise statements that God has rejected Israel.
- Definitive passages that teach that the church has replaced Israel.
- God's declaration that He has excluded Israel from the Old Testament covenants.
- A total lack of New Testament verses that speak of Israel's future in God's plan.

Speaking to a Jewish audience, Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Mt. 21:43).

Replacement theologians say this passage teaches that Jesus said (1) God has permanently rejected national Israel, and (2) the "nation" to whom the Kingdom of God will be given is the church.

On the surface, this explanation seems reasonable. However, scrutiny shows otherwise. Throughout the first part of His ministry on Earth, Jesus preached, "Repent, for the kingdom is at hand!" He offered the restored Kingdom of God to Israel if the people repented of their sins and accepted Him as their Savior and Lord. But they would not.

Later Jesus lamented over Jerusalem, "who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" (23:37, 39). Although this passage teaches that Israel will be judged, it concludes by promising a future day when a new generation of national Israel will repent and accept Him as Messiah. If Matthew 21:43 taught that God had rejected Israel, then Jesus would not have

taught later that a future Jewish nation will accept Him. Therefore, Matthew 21:43 cannot imply God has permanently rejected Israel as His people.

Furthermore, nowhere does Scripture define the church as a “nation.” Rather, it teaches that the church is composed of people from many nations. Christ’s use of nation in Matthew 21:43 refers to the future generation of Jewish people who will accept Him and bear the fruit of the restored Kingdom. Christ chose the word nation rather than generation because He knew the Jewish people would soon be scattered; and He wanted to note a future day when Israel would again be a nation, accept Him as Messiah, and usher in the restored Kingdom of God.

Far from teaching Replacement Theology, Jesus emphasized that, because the Jewish generation alive during His First Coming refused His offer of the restored Kingdom, God would take the Kingdom from them and give it to a future Jewish nation that will accept Him.

Paul’s Words

One of the most often-quoted passages in defense of Replacement Theology is Galatians 6:16: “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God,” written by the apostle Paul. Replacement theologians say Israel of God refers to the church.

Their argument revolves around the Greek word *kai* that precedes the words upon the Israel of God. *Kai* is most commonly translated “and”; but they say *kai* is an explicative case (what follows explains what came before) and, therefore, should be translated “even.” This change makes Israel of God refer to as many as walk according to this rule, meaning Christians. They also say Paul taught in Galatians the unity of all ethnic believer groups. Therefore, the words Israel of God refer to all believers, that is, the church.

However, the explicative case of *kai* is extremely uncommon usage and not likely supported by context or grammar. The more commonly used and to connect the words Israel of God with the first half of the verse makes more sense.

In Galatians, Paul defended salvation by grace through faith alone. He spoke against the Judaizers who taught circumcision was required for salvation. They added works (circumcision) to faith. When Paul said, “as many as walk according to this rule,” he spoke of those who walked by faith in Christ alone. His use of Israel of God contrasts Jewish people who believed in Christ alone with the Judaizers who taught one must have faith plus works to be saved.

In all other Pauline passages, the word Israel refers to national or ethnic Israel. It is highly unlikely he would use Israel here to refer

to the body of all believers. Paul prayed in Galatians 6:16 that God would bless all who put their faith in Christ alone for salvation and that He would especially bless the Jewish believers who were distinct from the Judaizers. This verse does not say the church has replaced Israel. Even if one accepts the Replacement explanation, the most it says is that Gentiles are included with Israel.

Replacement theologians also use Galatians 3:7 and 29 to bolster their position: “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham” (v. 7). “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (v. 29).

They maintain the words sons of Abraham and Abraham’s seed imply the church has become true Israel, concluding that all believers are spiritual Jews. They tell us Abraham’s seed means believers are related to Christ, whom they say is the true seed of Abraham; thus the church is true Israel.

However, it is possible to be Abraham’s “son” or “seed” but not be Jewish. Ishmael was Abraham’s son, but he was not Jewish. In Romans 4:11– 12 Paul taught that Abraham is the father of both the uncircumcised (Gentiles) and circumcised (Jewish). Some of Abraham’s descendants are Jewish, and others are not.

Abraham himself was not Jewish. He was a Gentile from Ur of the Chaldeans. If he had been Jewish, then all of his descendants would be Jewish. Yet only the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are Jewish. It wasn’t until Jacob that God bestowed the title of Israel, after Jacob wrestled with God all night (Gen. 32:24–30).

Galatians 3:7 and 29 do not say Israel has been replaced; they merely teach that people (Jewish or Gentile) who put their faith in Christ become partakers of the spiritual promises God made to Abraham. Paul affirmed this fact in 3:28 when He said, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

** Unless otherwise specified, all references to the church refer to the church in its broadest sense, including Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and evangelical. Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Conclusion*

By: James Showers

The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Conclusion

By: James Showers

What does God say about Israel's future? If the New Testament teaches ethnic Israel has a future, then Replacement Theology is untrue.

While on Earth, Jesus established that He was premillennial—meaning He believed in a literal, future, restored Kingdom of God. In Matthew 6:9–10, He taught His followers to pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Jesus instructed His followers to pray that God will bring or restore His Kingdom on Earth, and He described what Earth will be like when that occurs.

How is God's will done in heaven? Precisely as He says. His will is absolute. If the church is the Kingdom of God, as Replacement theologians claim—or the Kingdom of God is here now—then what is done on Earth must mirror God's will in heaven. That is an impossible stretch even for the most generous mind.

Jesus' Throne

According to the New Testament, the nation of Israel and the Promised Land are vital to God establishing His restored Kingdom on Earth. The Bible teaches that Jesus fulfills the Davidic Covenant that guarantees a descendant of David will sit on David's throne in Israel forever. The Hebrew Scriptures teach the Messiah will rule over Israel and the Gentile nations from His throne in Jerusalem (Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1–12; Jer. 23:5–8; 33:14–16).

To date, these prophecies have not been fulfilled. But Jesus said, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt. 19:28). Jesus spoke those words in response to the apostle Peter's concern about the disciples' future. Jesus told them that someday, they each will sit on a throne ruling the tribes of Israel. Jesus certainly saw a future for ethnic Israel.

But the verse reveals more. The title Son of Man refers to Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus said He will sit on the throne of His glory, a throne that will bring Him honor. Nowhere does Scripture say He sits on a throne in heaven. Rather, it teaches that He is seated at the right hand of the Father's throne. The throne of Christ's glory is earthly. It will be located in Jerusalem where He will rule over Israel and the world. Jesus did not ascend to that throne at His First Coming. Thus, if He is to be faithful to His words, He must yet sit on His throne in Jerusalem.

Jesus explained when that event will occur: in the “regeneration.” The Greek word translated “regeneration” is a compound made up of two Greek words: *palin* and *genesis*. *Palin*

literally means “back again” or “back to a previous time.” Genesis is the word for genesis, “in the beginning.”

The Old Testament prophets taught the Messiah will restore God’s Kingdom to Earth and transform Earth to its pre-fall condition. No more disasters, disease, sickness, deformities, hard labor, thorns and thistles, pollution, wild nature in animals, injustice, or war. Thus Jesus said He will sit on His throne when Earth is restored to its condition as in the beginning—the restored Kingdom of God on Earth.

When the apostles saw Christ prior to His return to heaven, they asked, “Will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). Obviously, they fully believed Jesus will restore the Kingdom to Earth and that Israel will be central to the process. Jesus did not correct their belief that He will restore the Kingdom to Israel. He simply replied that it was not for them to know the timing of God’s plan to do so; their concern should be to get busy building His church.

Peter’s Eschatology

A mere two chapters later, Peter used the teaching of the restored Kingdom to preach salvation to the Jewish people from Solomon’s porch on the Temple Mount. The location would have ensured his listeners were Jewish. But he also addressed them in Acts 3:12–18 as those who denied Christ before Pilate and chose a murderer over Him. What Peter shared next revealed he, too, was premillennial.

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (vv. 19–21).

Peter laid out an eschatological order for Israel. The nation’s repentance will lead God to blot out its sins; Christ will return, and then the times of refreshing will come from God when He restores the Kingdom. Peter didn’t teach Replacement Theology. Rather, he taught that God has a unique program for Israel that is key to God restoring His Kingdom on Earth.

Paul also taught this truth: “Has God cast away His people? Certainly not!” (Rom. 11:1). It is obvious from the context of Romans 11:1–2 that Paul was asked if God had cast Israel away. His response was clear: Certainly not! In fact, he declared, “and so all Israel will be saved” (v. 26). Then he quoted from Psalm 14 and Isaiah 59 that God will honor His covenant and remove the Jewish people’s sins.

In Romans 11:29, Paul reminded us, “The gifts and the calling

of God are irrevocable.” Irrevocable means God will not cancel or retract His gifts or call. He Himself is the One who made the covenants with Israel. He is the One who told the people of Israel the covenants are everlasting. He is the One who remembers His covenants with Israel, and He is the One who keeps them.

Israel’s coming national reconciliation, Christ’s return, and the restoration of God’s Kingdom on Earth do not depend on anything the Jewish people have or have not done. They depend solely on God’s faithfulness to keep His irrevocable promises. According to Ezekiel 36, God will keep His promises for His name’s sake so that His name will be exalted above every name on Earth, under the earth, and in the heavens.

Conclusion

For Replacement Theology to be valid, God must teach it clearly in His Word. However, nowhere does the Bible teach God has rejected Israel or replaced it with the church. Nor does it say the church is the historic continuation of Old Testament Israel or that all of the covenant promises have been taken from Israel and given to the church.

What the New Testament does teach is that Israel has a grand future in God’s plan, although Israel’s role is distinct and different from God’s plan for the church. And without a future for Israel, there will be no glorious future Kingdom of God on Earth.¹⁹

This “Friends of Israel” spokesman gives more information about Covenant Theology than is found in any writings of the theologians who hold to it. The whole ideology is such an embarrassment to Bible truth that its proponents dare not focus much attention on it. This error filtered from the Roman Catholic

19 James Showers, “Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology”, from The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843, <http://www.foi.org/free-resources/article/facts-and-flaws-covenant-theology-part1/> ...[part-2/](#) ...[part-3/](#) ...[conclusion/](#) (accessed 9/9/2016). [James A. Showers is executive director for The Friends of Israel. Permission to copy and distribute this material is granted provided that you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction or alter the wording in any way. Please contact The Friends of Israel if you are making more than 100 physical copies. Proper accreditation must be visible on each copy. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred (where applicable). Any exceptions to the above must be formally approved by The Friends of Israel. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: From The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org . E-mail: webmaster@foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843.]

Church into the Orthodox, the Anglican, and then each Protestant denomination. Every Protestant denomination holds this ideology in its core, but if one asks a Presbyterian, a Calvinist, an Episcopalian, a Methodist, or a Pentecostal about Replacement Theology and Covenant Theology they can justly plead ignorance because it is not openly taught anywhere on the planet. It is an embarrassment to Bible truth. That being said, understand that the leaven of the false teaching is still in full bloom; each of these denominations has a despise, or at least gross reservation, about the teachings of the literal Millennial Reign of Christ, the premillennial return of Christ, the pretribulational rapture of the church, and the dispensational teachings of the Bible. From the pew, and from most of the pulpits, they can justly plead an ignorance of these basic Bible truths as well; in general they do not hear them taught or talked about.

The Bible student of ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, and eschatology, the doctrine of last things, needs a reasonable understanding of this Protestant and ecumenical Bible ignorance and false teaching. The measure of intimacy in a friendship is the measure of revelation and sharing of future plans and aspirations. Understand that God's future plans for Israel are real. A self-centered, self-righteous, Gentilic rejection of those plans is certain to start the student down a wrong path in the pursuit of that intimacy. Jesus said it this way, *“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you”* (John 15:15). Cast away all the allegorical methods, trust God to say what he means and mean what he says, and then proceed into a study of his church and the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3 Cambron's Bible Doctrine of Ecclesiology

A Systematic Theology must first have as its foundation a true Bible Doctrine. From that foundation a discourse must systematically analyze the doctrine keeping it pure from its detractors, and evaluating its fit into the larger arena of theology. Detractors from truth are myriad from outside but fall under three major considerations when guarding against internal sabotage. The Roman Catholic Religion has always directly opposed Bible truth; the Protestant Reformers are supposed to have come back to Bible truth, but, subtly, they carry all the Roman error as concealed weapons; and the ecumenical Bible correctors who make a pretense of using textual criticism and modern language to "fix" what God was "unable to preserve." These three are enemies to Bible doctrine, Rome, directly; Reformed, more subliminally; and Ecumenical Bible correctors, very shrewdly. Exposing their pernicious ways is not generally the focus of a Bible Doctrines book, and in a world where Bible doctrine is under constant attack a systematic theology that inoculates against these attackers is needful. Herein a solid Biblical Doctrine must form the basis and starting point for a systematic theology.

There is no truer, or more thorough, published, Baptist, and Biblical doctrine than that of Dr. Mark G. Cambron.²⁰ His teachings on Ecclesiology at Tennessee Temple Bible School establish a solid doctrine essential for building a solid systematic theology. His book, *Bible Doctrines*²¹ will, with the permission of

20 Dr. Mark G. Cambron, B.A., M.A., Th.B., Th.M., Th.D., D.D., L.L.D., Litt.D., was one of the foremost theologians of our times. Born in Fayetteville, Tennessee on July 31, 1911. He was born-again in 1919. It was during a Billy Sunday campaign in Chattanooga that he trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. He served for many years at Tennessee Temple College (1948-59) with Dr. Lee Roberson and served as Dean of the Tennessee Temple Bible College. From <http://www.thecambroninstitute.org> accessed 10/16/2013

21 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines*, 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 60-69

the Cambron Institute²², be given in block quotes throughout this effort. The book is readily available through <http://www.thecambroninstitute.org>, and it forms a strong foundation for this Systematic Theology.²³

Believing in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and believing that every single word is directly chosen by God, it is necessary to preserve and defend the doctrines extracted from Scripture and presented by Dr. Cambron. Below, in a block quote of his book, is his extensive analysis of Ecclesiology:[block quote of Dr. Cambron's *Bible Doctrines* page 211-228 Zondervan, 171- 186 pdf version]

Cambron's Ch VII Ecclesiology - The Doctrine of the Church

pg171 (the page numbers left in this block quote are from Cambron Inst. pdf and differ from his published work by Zondervan)

ECCLESIOLOGY (The Doctrine of the Church)

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OUTLINE FOR CHAPTER VII ECCLESIOLOGY

I. The Meaning of the Word. II. The Use of the Word. III. What the Church Is Not. IV. What the Church Is. A. A Mystery. B. A Body. C. A Building. D. A Bride.	V. The Gifts to the Body. VI. The Local Church. VII. Discipline in the Church. VIII. Ordinances in the Church. A. Baptism. B. Lord's Supper.
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Chapter VII ECCLESIOLOGY Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the Church.

I. The Meaning of the Word.

The word “church” does not mean the building in which the congregation meets; neither is it as the Catholics say, the Papal system. Others contend that it is a company, or a club, just an organization. The church is not an organization, but an *organism*.

22 The Cambron Institute, 35890 Maple Grove Road, Willoughby, Oh 44094

23 It is noted and reproved in the Bibliology section of this work that 41 times for 54 Bible verses Dr. Cambron's Bible Doctrines book recommends using the R.V., instead of the Holy Bible.

The following may surprise most students of the Word, but nevertheless, it is true. The word “church” cannot be found in the New Testament. The word “church,” is a *rendition*, and not a translation. This same word “church” is a rendition of the word *ecclesia*, which means a called-out company, or assembly. If we should call Bible things by Bible names correctly, we would call it the assembly of God in Christ, instead of the Church of God in Christ.

The word *ecclesia* always means a called-out company, or assembly. It refers to all classes of people; it is not limited to believers in Christ. There are three references in the Bible that refer to three different kinds of people. None of them are related, yet they are called-out companies, or assemblies.

A. A Mob.

“When Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not, And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself to the theater. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the *assembly* [*ecclesia*: that is a mob, and not believers] was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together...And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said. . . . Ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches [this word means temple; it is not from the word *ecclesia*], nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. . . . But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful *assembly* [this is the same word *ecclesia*, and does not mean believers] And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the *assembly* [again the word *ecclesia*]” (Acts 19:30-32, 35, 37, 39, 41).

B. The Children of Israel.

Certainly the children of Israel were a called-out company from Egypt, but we know that they were not the body of Christ. Christ had not been manifested in the flesh as yet. “This is he, that was in the church [this is the same word “*ecclesia*”, but they were not the body of Christ] in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers who received the lively oracles to give unto us” (Acts 7:38). pg174

C. The Body of Christ.

By this we mean the body of believers in the Lord Jesus. The New Testament abounds with references to the *ecclesia*, the called-out company, or assembly, from the world to Christ. The following are a few: God “hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the *church* [*ecclesia*, meaning called-out company, or assembly], which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22, 23).

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the *church* [*ecclesia*, meaning called-out company or assembly], and gave himself for it. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the *church* [*ecclesia*, meaning called-out company, or assembly]” (Eph. 5:25, 32).

II. The Use of the Word.

Knowing that the word “church” is a rendition from the Greek, *ecclesia*, meaning calledout company, or assembly, we shall turn our attention to those portions of Scripture dealing with the body of believers. The word *ecclesia* is used in the following ways:

A. A Local Assembly (church).

“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto *the church* of the Thessalonians....” (I Thess. 1:1). “Unto the *church* of God which is at Corinth . . .” (I Cor. 1:2).

B. Local Assemblies (churches).

This has reference to several local bodies. “Paul . . . and all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace” (Gal. 1:1-3).

C. The Body of Living Believers (unnumbered).

We must explain that by this we mean a group of believers, living in a certain section, without reference to a local assembly, and without number. For instance, a minister may speak of the Church of Chicago, the Church of Denver, etc. we immediately know that he is referring to all Christian believers in these cities. The best illustration in the Word is: “Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the *church* of God, and wasted it” (Gal. 1:13). Saul (Paul) did not limit his persecution to one certain

assembly, or several local assemblies. He went *everywhere*, hailing into prison, and voting the death penalty for the early Christians. He considered all Christians as *The Church*.

D. The Complete Body of Christ.

The complete body of Christ is called the *church*, and is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture.

“Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the pg175 *church*, and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5:25).

III. What the Church is Not.

A. The Church Is Not Israel.

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (I Cor. 10:32). Here is revealed that there are three classes of people today: Jew, Gentile and Church. When a Jew is saved, he ceases to be a Jew, and becomes a Christian. When a Gentile accepts Christ, he ceases to be a Gentile, and becomes a Christian. “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:27-29). The Church (Body of Christ) is not spiritual Israel: “He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain *one new man*, so making peace” (Eph. 2:14, 15). The Body of Christ (church) is a *new man*, and not Israel, whether spiritual Israel or revived Israel.

B. The Church Is Not the Kingdom.

CHURCH	KINGDOM
1. No heirs of the Church.	1. The Church is heir of the kingdom.
2. No receiver of the Church.	2. The Church is the receiver of the kingdom.
3. There are elders of the Church.	3. No elders of the kingdom.
4. No Sons of the Church.	4. Sons of the kingdom.

CHURCH	KINGDOM
5. Church called a temple (Eph. 2:21).	5. Kingdom never called a temple.
6. Church is here.	6. Kingdom is not here, for the King is not present (Matt. 6:10).
7. Church was never a subject of prophecy (Eph. 3: 5,9).	7. Kingdom is the one subject of prophecy.
8. Church is to be built up (Eph. 4:12).	8. Kingdom is to be set up (Acts 15:16).

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IV. What the Church Is.

A. It Is a Mystery.

“By revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. . . . And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:3-6,9). A “mystery” in Scripture means a “truth revealed for the first time.” In the above verses, the Holy Spirit shows us that *The Church* (Body of Christ) was first revealed to the Apostle Paul, and that it was not known by the Old Testament prophets. The truth of The Church was not hidden in Old Testament writings, but was hid in God.

B. It Is the Body of Which Christ Is the Head.

“As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is (the) Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. . . .

That there should be no schism in the body; but that the

members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (I Cor. 12:12-14, 25-27).

The Body is an organism composed of many members. All members do not have the same function. The Church is not a physical body, but a spiritual body. Believers in Christ are made members of that spiritual body by the Spirit’s baptism. There are those who hold that I Corinthians 12:13 is speaking of water baptism, but this argument can easily be refuted by another Scripture. I Corinthians 12:13 says that we are made members of the Body by *baptism* (Spirit’s), while Ephesians 3:6 declares we are made members of that Body by the *Gospel*. Both are correct. If I Corinthians 12:13 speaks of water baptism, then water baptism is an essential part of the Gospel of Ephesians 3:6. We know, however, that water baptism has no part in the Gospel whatsoever. *The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ* (I Cor. 15:1-4).

As is true of the physical body, so it is of the spiritual Body; when one member of the Body suffers, all members suffer with it. Not one Christian can suffer persecution without the whole Body hurting also. One member cannot grieve, but that the whole Body grieves with it. When the Body suffers, the Head also suffers. When we are persecuted, Christ is also persecuted: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4).

Remember that the Body is an organism and must be considered as such. A building, for example, can be repaired by replacing old doors and windows, and the like, with new ^{pg177} ones, but when part of a body is removed, such as an arm, leg, eye, and the like, the part can never be replaced. If it were possible for a member of the Body of Christ to lose his salvation, then the Body of Christ would be mutilated, and this could never happen. The following are four characteristics of the Body of Christ:

1. *Oneness*. A body is one, a complete whole, an organic unity. So is the Body of Christ.

2. *Deathlessness*. The Body of Christ will never die, for it is connected with a living Head.

3. *Manifestation*. The one purpose of the Body of Christ is to manifest, or reveal Christ. “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

4. *Service*. The thoughts and the plans of the head are to be carried out by the body. Likewise, the Body of Christ is to carry out the will of its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. What He commands we must do. His will shall govern our movements.

C. It Is a Building.

“Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).

The apostles and New Testament prophets are the foundation of the Building (Church). They were the first ones to believe in the Lord Jesus, and they were the first ones to proclaim the Lord Jesus.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (I Peter 2:5). We believers are living stones of this new building of God. When the temple of old was erected, there was no sound of hammer, chisel, or saw. All materials were formed beforehand. So are we, for we were selected before the foundation of the earth was laid. The inside stones of the temple could not be seen, for they were covered with cedarwood and gold. Only the gold could be seen. We, the living stones of the Building of God, are not to be seen. Christ only is to be seen.

The building was erected of different colored stones; even so the Building of God is composed of black, red, yellow and white races. God dwelt in the temple, and He abides in us. pg178

D. It Is the Bride.

Some have contended that the Bride of Christ is the same as the Wife of Jehovah, who is Israel. However, there is one Scripture

which disproves this theory, and that is Revelation 22:17: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” The above passage declares that the Spirit and the Bride are extending the invitation to sinners to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If the Bride is Israel, then it is the Spirit and Israel extending the invitation. We know that is not true, for the greater part of Israel is in unbelief today. Who is inviting, or urging people to accept Christ? It is the church, not Israel. Therefore, the Bride is the church, the Body of believers.

Ephesians 5:25-32 clearly points to the fact that husband and wife have the same relationship as that of Christ and His Bride, the church. Especially we see this in verses 28-30: “So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”

1. *The Bride Is Purchased By Christ.* “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and *gave himself* for it” (Eph. 5:25). See also I Corinthians 6:19, 20. In the Orient men purchased their wives; the price became her dowry. Christ bought his church with His own precious blood. His blood is her dowry forever!

2. *The Bride Is Espoused to Christ.* “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have *espoused* you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (II Cor. 11:2). The Oriental marriage differs greatly from marriage as we know it. The Eastern custom of marriage took place after the following manner: First, the bride was bought (we have been bought by Christ); second, the ceremony was performed, inaugurating the espousal period, which lasted about a year. During this time the bride was considered the wife of her husband, yet they did not live together. The one year waiting period was protection of the future home. If there were any blemishes against the character and conduct of the bride, they would come to light during this time. The Bride of Christ is now in her espousal period. During this interval the blemishes of the Bride, if any, will certainly manifest themselves.

History has proved that there have been many who have had the form of godliness, but have denied the power thereof. These blemishes (these men) vanish away; finally comes the consummation of the marriage.

3. *The Bride Is Married to Christ.* “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:7, 8). “Then shall the Realm of heaven be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride” (Matt. 25:1 — Moffatt²⁴). This is the consummation of Christ’s marriage to His church. The espousal period is over; she is now with her husband, and so shall she ever be with Him (I Thess. 4:17). pg179

V. The Gifts to the Body.

“Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph. 4:7, 8, 11).

A. *Apostles.*

This was the first gift to the church (Body). Upon the Apostles was built the early church. The word “apostle” in the Greek is the same as the word “missionary” in Latin, meaning “the sent one.” Of course, the church has missionaries (sent ones) today, but no apostles.

B. *Prophets.*

To these men God gave His revelations. At the first, the church did not have the New Testament, yet it needed to know the

24 The actual Bible says, “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom” (Matt 25:1). There is no reason in the world for Dr. Cambron to use James Moffatt's copyright 1950 translation that changed “the kingdom of heaven” to a “Realm of heaven”, and sent the ten “maidens” instead of “virgins” out to meet the bride not the bridegroom exclusively! Shame on Dr. Cambron for this travesty.

doctrines of God; therefore, God gave to men His unwritten Word; these in turn gave it to the people. The church has no prophets today for we have God's complete revealed truth, the New Testament.

C. Evangelists.

Another gift to the church was evangelists. These men fervently heralded the Gospel. They were men of humility, burdened for the lost. The pastor is told to do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5). The day of the evangelist is *not* over, and will not be until Christ comes to reign upon the earth.

D. Pastors and Teachers.

The word "pastor" means "shepherd." The pastor is to be the shepherd of his sheep, looking after his flock, weeping and rejoicing with them. The crying need of the church today is for pastors. Blessed is the man who has a pastor's heart. A pastor is not only called to preach three sermons a week, but he is called to pastor, shepherd, look after, care for, visit, love, protect, instruct the sheep. Every pastor, while doing the work of an evangelist, which is winning souls, should also be one who is able to *teach* the Word to his flock. Where will the church members get the Word if not from the pastor? All of the truth some people will get will be at a Sunday service.

Some distinguish between the pastor and the teacher, believing that there are those who are called only to be teachers. This may be so, but we know that all pastors are to be teachers also. All teachers may not be pastors, but all pastors *must* be teachers. pg180

VI. The Local Church.

While we believe that the Body of Christ is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture, we do stress the importance of the *local* church, or assembly. The local assembly is the physical body by which the Body (Church) is manifested. God stresses the importance of the local church by giving it officers and ordinances. He who is ashamed of the local assembly is ashamed of that which was established at Pentecost. The local church, as well as the Body of Christ, was established at Pentecost.

A. Its Organization.

The Scriptures indicate that there was some organization, but not as that today. It was not copied after the synagogue. It was entirely different.

B. Its Officers.

1. *Deacons.* I Timothy 3:8-13 gives the requirements for deacons. The deacons were not chosen to run the church, but to minister to the church.

2. *Bishops and Elders.* There is a vast difference between the early church and that of today as to bishops. The early church had *many* bishops in one local church; today, we have *one* bishop over many local churches. The elders were called by that name because they were the oldest in the family. If the father were dead, the first son took his place. An elder was an elderly man. Titus 1:5-7 says, “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre.” According to this, the elder and bishop were the same. The word “elder” refers to the person, while the word “bishop” refers to the office. Every bishop was an elder, but every elder was not a bishop. The word “bishop” means “overseer.” The “overseers” of the local churches were old men. This group of bishops composed what is known as the presbytery (I Tim, 1:4).

C. Its Purpose.

The purpose of the church is to glorify God in the building up of the Body of Christ in the holy faith; and to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth, winning, baptizing, teaching.

VII. Discipline in the Local Church.

Even though it is true that the church is under grace rather than law, the flesh is still in the believer, and the Lord has laid down rules of discipline for His local church. There were three steps in church discipline, and they are as follows: pg181

A. Judgment By Self.

“If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (I Cor. 11:31). The believer knows when he has sinned and should immediately confess it to God (I John 1:9). If he confesses that sin, he has judged himself. It is forgiven, and he shall never be judged for it again. Let us stress the word “confess” however. Confess does not mean to admit it, that is, to own up to it; that is implied, but it goes deeper than that. It means to take one’s stand against.

B. Judgment By the Church.

If a sinning brother will not judge himself, then he must be judged by the local church. I Corinthians 5:11, 12 says “I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?” Yes, fellowship in the local church should be withheld from the erring brother as judgment. Some term this “backdoor revival.” This extreme judgment should be meted out only after the effort to restore him. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).

C. Judgment By God.

If the fallen brother does not judge himself, and the church will not judge him, then God will judge him through chastisement (Heb. 12:5-13).

VIII. Ordinances in the Local Church.

The church has two ordinances: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Baptism is observed at the beginning of the Christian life; the Lord’s Supper is taken all during the Christian life.

We emphasize the fact that these are ordinances of the church, and not sacraments.

A. Baptism.

Baptism is from the Greek word *baptizo*, meaning to dip, to plunge, to immerse for the purpose of dying. It can never mean sprinkling, or pouring.

1. *Obligation* (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12). All

believers are obliged to be baptized. One does not have to pray about it to seek God's will in the matter. The Lord has commanded it.

2. *Administration.* Nearly every denomination, with the exception of some local Baptist groups, demands that their ministers, who administer the ordinance of baptism, must be ordained.

3. *Explanation.* Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Christ by the believer before pg182 man. It is his outward demonstration of an inward act, and is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Immersion fully portrays the place of death; there are some people, even today, who have met actual physical death after coming up out of the baptismal waters. Those who have come out of other religions evaluate the ordinance of baptism more highly than those who have been raised in Christian homes. Not only does baptism show the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it also shows the believer's identification *with* Christ. Baptism is his full declaration of his own death in Christ (II Cor. 5:14): dead to sin, dead to self and dead to the old life. It is also his declaration of being raised with Christ, after burying the old life, to walk in newness of life with Him.

The baptism of all believers, as recorded in the Word, pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The baptism of John the Baptist looked *forward* to Christ's death and resurrection, and our baptism today looks *back* to the death and resurrection of our Lord.

It is not a saving ordinance. Man is saved by faith alone. This occurs *before* baptism. It is true, however, that baptism is a public declaration of faith before man, and God looks not upon the baptismal waters, but upon the heart of man.

4. *Participation.* Who should be baptized? I believe *only* the believer! "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Faith is first, then baptism. Again the question arises, "Does man have to be baptized to be saved?" No, for this Scripture says that he that *believeth not* shall be damned. *If* water baptism were essential, the

Lord would have added these words, “He that is not baptized is damned.” The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said, “I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. . . . For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect” (I Cor. 1:14, 17). If baptism were necessary for salvation, Paul would not have boasted in the fact that he had baptized so few. He plainly states that baptism had nothing to do with the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), for Christ had sent him not to baptize, but to preach.

It is impossible to baptize an unbeliever, for if he is an unbeliever *before* he is immersed, he will be an unbeliever when he comes out of the baptismal waters.

What is the age limit for baptism? Some parents contend that twelve years of age is the youngest age at which a child should be baptized. This has no Scriptural foundation whatsoever. It may be a carry-over from the Jewish custom of adoption. The Word clearly states that baptism is for *all believers*, regardless of age or sex.

B. Lord's Supper.

“I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance ^{pg183} of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” (I Cor. 11:23-28).

1. *Origination.* From the above Scriptures little doubt is left as to who instituted the Lord's Supper. There is no record of this ordinance being held *before* the Lord Jesus inaugurated it. We, as it were, take the bread and the cup from His own precious hands.

The theory that Christ never lived is exploded by the Lord's Supper. It is His, and His only.

2. *Obligation.* The words “this do” are a command of the Lord, and the words “all of it” (Matt. 26:27) are better translated “all of you.” This ordinance is for the entire Body of Christ.

3. *Participation.*

a. *Who?* No one but a baptized child of God should participate in the Lord’s Supper.

Those who sat with Him at the last supper had been baptized. Baptism is the symbol of the commencing of the new life, and the Lord’s Supper is a symbol of the sustenance of that life.

b. *How often?* Some churches observe the Lord’s Supper every Sunday; some, once a month; others, four times a year; and still others, once a year; some never observe the Lord’s Supper. What is the Scriptural stipulation for this observance? “As often” (I Cor. 11:26): there is no set, rigid rule.

c. *In What Manner?* Some believers are very confused concerning their fitness to partake of the Lord’s Supper after reading I Corinthians 11:27-29. They notice the word “unworthily,” and immediately they review their past mistakes, ever since they became a Christian, and fear that they shall be eating and drinking damnation to themselves if they partake. Let us point out that the word “unworthily” is an adverb, and modifies the word “drink,” which means to drink in an “unworthy manner.” As far as being worthy is concerned, which one of us can call himself worthy? No one! This has reference to the *act* of participation. The context will give a perfect explanation. In the early church love feasts were held; the rich brought their store of food and wine, while the converted slaves brought nothing. As the feast progressed, the rich believer, keeping his food and drink to himself, soon became drunk. The poor slave, of course, had nothing, and remained sober. The Lord’s Supper was observed at the conclusion of the feast. The drunken believer could not appreciate the Lord’s Supper. In his drunkenness, the cup of the Lord’s Supper meant nothing more to him than another drink of wine. He could not discern the Lord’s body and blood; thus, he drank it “unworthily.” This fact led to many untimely deaths in the Corinthian Church: “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (I Cor. 11:30).

If the Christian feels unworthy, it is a good indication that he *is* worthy, and vice versa. The man who finds some personal quality in himself to make him worthy to partake of ^{pg184} the Lord's Supper had better stay away. The table is not spread for the righteous, but for the unrighteous, who are justified by faith.

4. *Constitution.* The elements of the Lord's Supper are bread and fruit of the vine. The bread was unleavened, as it was used in the observance of the Passover, from which the Lord inaugurated the Lord's Supper.

5. *Interpretation.*

a. *Transubstantiation.* This interpretation is held by the Roman Catholic Church. It declares that by the consecration of the priest the bread and wine cease to remain, as such, and become the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. This Faith contends that when the Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53), he meant the actual flesh and blood of Christ. Therefore, the Mass is that ritual which turns the bread and wine into the actual flesh and blood of Christ. The priest alone drinks the wine, as not one drop of Christ's blood must be spilt. The bread is in the form of a wafer, so that not a crumb of His body should be lost. In answer to this we ask, "How could Christ, while being in His perfect body, hold part of His body in His hand when he said, 'This is my body'?"

b. *Consubstantiation.* The Lutherans and the Church of England believe this interpretation, which states that, while the bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine, the body and blood is present in a spiritual sense; the body and blood are present only at the moment when they are partaken of, and after being taken, cease to be the body and blood of Christ.

c. *Symbolism.* This is the true interpretation, which states that the bread and wine are only symbols of Christ's body and blood, which were offered upon Calvary's cross for the remission of sins. "This do in *remembrance* of me"; it is observed in blessed memory, and that is where it ends.

6. *Limitation.* How long should the church continue this observance? Till He comes again. What is our answer to the scoffer

who jeers at the Second Coming, and who asks, “Where is the promise of His coming?” We point to the Lord’s Table and reply, “There is the promise of His coming.”

7. *Evaluation.*

a. *Its Value Doctrinally.*

(1) *The Person of Christ.*

(a) *His Humanity.* His humanity is as real as His Deity. The symbols speak of His actual human body and blood, and it is most essential that it is human, as the atonement must be in the nature of that which sinned (“Christ died for us”).

(b) *His Deity.* His Deity is expressed in the words “Lord’s Supper.” All titles of Deity are in this one word, “Lord.”

(2) *The Work of Christ.*

(a) *His Death.* The elements of the Lord’s Supper portray this fact, for the body and blood are together in life, but separated in death.

(b) *His Resurrection and Second Coming.* “Till I come” does not mean “till I come from the grave,” but “till I come from heaven.” pg185

(3) *The Way of Salvation.*

(a) *It Assumes Our Guilt and Helplessness.*

(b) *It Emphasizes Substitution.* (“Broken for you”)

(c) *It Reminds Us That Salvation Is Free.* (Given for you)

(d) *It Declares the Gift of Salvation Must Be Accepted.* (Take, eat and drink)

b. *Its Value Devotionally.*

(1) *We Come With Confession.*

(2) *We Come With Prayer.*

(3) *We Come With Consecration.*

(4) *We Come With Humility.*

(5) *We Come With Thanksgiving.*

(6) *The Whole Man Is Engaged.*

(a) *Ears to Hear His Invitation.*

(b) *Eyes to See Its Symbol.*

(c) *Hands That Handle the Elements.*

(d) *Mouth Which Eats the Elements.*

(e) *Body Which Assimilates the Element — Becomes Part*

of Us.

c. *Its Value Practically.*

(1) *It Is a Means of Grace.*

(2) *It Is a Means of Testimony.*

(3) *It Is a Means of Strengthening Faith.*

(4) *It Is a Means to Promote Our Love Toward Him.*

(5) *It is a Means to Promote Love Toward One Another.*

(6) *It Is a Means to Promote Fellowship.* This fellowship is one with another in Christ around the Lord's Table, He being the center.

(7) *It is a Means to Stimulate Holiness.*

d. *Its Value Prophetically.* If the Lord Jesus is not coming the second time, why celebrate the Lord's Supper? *He is coming!* Remember, in answer to those who ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?," we point to the Lord's Supper.²⁵ pg186

25 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines*, 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 211-228 (Cambron Institute release, 171-186).

Chapter 4 True Church History

There is no more thorough, accurate, and complete true church history than what can be absorbed from this chapter containing the expos' of Jesus' prophetic church history expounded by Harry Ironside, and the review of true Baptist history as expounded herein via Shakelford's "Compendium of Baptist History", and J. Newton Brown's "Memoritals of Baptist Martyrs." I cannot overemphasize the importance of this chapter for a Bible student who would comprehend ecclesiology. No study of ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, could be complete without such a revealing chapter, and, in the realm of systematic theology, no previous volume on ecclesiology included such a detailed true church history as this chapter contains.

The Prophetic History of The True Church

There could be no greater record of church history than was recorded by our Lord Jesus Christ himself, it is a prerecorded history that is truly His-Story. The Revelation of Jesus Christ contains two chapters recording his seven messages to seven churches that succinctly records two thousand years of church history.

Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation miraculously records true church history prophetically for first-century believers stepping into the church age: believers like Polycarp (69 AD – 155 AD) who, as the recorded Bishop of Smyrna, who died as a martyr 23 February, 155 AD, when he was bound and burned at the stake, then stabbed when the fire failed to consume his body; it was prophetically recorded for first-century believers like Ignatius Theophorus (?? - 108 AD), recorded Bishop of Antioch, martyred while en route to Rome. These were not "church fathers", as Satan would put it in a later cover-story, for there are no "church fathers", only a singular church founder, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Dr. William P. Grady a renowned church historian who

following a promotion to Philadelphia in 1974, was saved, baptized, and called to preach at the historic Marcus Hook Baptist Church (home church to Clarence Larkin), then was grounded in dispensational premillennialism at the equally historic Philadelphia College of Bible (co-founded by C. I. Scofield); Dr. Grady authored *“Final Authority”*, *“What Hath God Wrought!”*, *“How Satan Turned America Against God”*, *“Given by Inspiration”*, and *“Holy Ground”*.

Dr. Grady adds profound insights and detailed background information to his core subject of church history. His genius as touching Bible inspiration, and Israel's history, Bible time to present, is not overshadowed by any author. But what Dr. Grady expounds on church history is, in its core, by his own admission, to be found in the writings of Dr. Harry Ironside.

Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation miraculously records the history of the church historically for twentieth-century believers looking back on what has unfolded: Henry Allen “Harry” Ironside (1876 – 1951), a Canadian-American Bible teacher, preacher, theologian, and pastor, who authored *“Lectures on the Book of Revelation”* in 1920 and who pastored Moody Church in Chicago for twenty years expertly expounded on this history one-hundred years ago.

Dr. Ironside rightfully writes in his 1930 edition preface,

... the Great War and other colossal movements of the past five years have combined to so emphasize and clarify much that abler brethren had written in earlier years, that it now seems to me that a need exists for some later exposition of the last prophetic book of the Bible that would consider or include these many significant events.

Sober students of prophecy must be gratified to find that their position is only strengthened and their previous conclusions confirmed by recent happenings. On the other hand, those of the self-styled optimistic school, who have ever closed their eyes to the soles facts of prophecy, might well be humiliated to find their vain-glorious prognostications proven so utterly false and their confidence in human brotherhood, as a preventive of war and cruelty, shown to be a foolish hallucination that ignored the Word

of God and the corruption of the human heart.²⁶

Ironside's second lecture introduces this prophe-history of the church:

“He had in his right hand seven stars.” The stars speak of ministry committed to His saints, as responsible to shine by His light and for Him in this world. “They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12:3). He holds the stars in His right hand. “Out of his mouth went forth a sharp two-edged sword.” It is the Word of God (Heb. 4:12). Men are trifling with that two-edged sword, but they will find out soon that it is powerful and irresistible. ...

In verse 19, we get the threefold division of the book of Revelation: “*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter*” – or “after these things.”

“*The things which thou hast seen*” are the things of chapter 1 – the *first* division of the book of Revelation.

“*The things which are*” follow in the next two chapters and make the *second* division. “The things which are” have to do with the current dispensation. The seven churches give us a picture of the whole professing church's history from the apostolic period to the coming of the Lord Jesus. These two chapters portray the condition of the church on earth in seven distinct periods. The church's history ends at the Rapture, when Jesus comes as the Bright and Morning Star. That event closes the current dispensation.

“*The things which shall be after these things,*” chapters 4 to the end, make the *third* and last division of the book – the things which shall take place after the church's history ends: the Great Tribulation, the kingdom, and the eternal state.²⁷

The “Church History” that has been garnered and recorded by the Holy Roman Catholic Church, which is not holy nor catholic, is wholly tainted by the depravity of man and the diabolical hand of Satan himself. It records the history of the Catholic Church, it pretends “Church Fathers”, it supposes that the Catholic Church wrote the Bible, and it calls Donatists, Montanists, Paulicians, Ana-Baptists et al., heretical infidels instead of genuine Bible

26 Ironside, H. A., “*Revelation: An Ironside Expository Commentary*”, Kregel Publications, 1920, pg 9.

27 Ibid. pg 23-24.

believing, blood bought, born-again Christians. Always guard a study of church history with a differentiation from catholic church history.

No study of true church history could proceed without a study of what our Lord Jesus Christ taught in these two chapters of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and no study of true church history would be complete without a thorough review of the writings of John T. Christian's 1922 two volumes of "*A History of the Baptists*", J. A. Shakelford's 1892 "*Compendium of Baptist History, showing the origin and history of the Baptists, from the days of the Apostles to the present time, with an original chart, giving a comparative view of some of the denominations of Christians with which they have come in contact*", and J. Newton Brown's 1854 "*Memorials of Baptist Martyrs, with a Preliminary Historical Essay*", wherein it is certified that true church history is indeed synonymous with Baptist church history.

These two views of true church history are "briefly" covered in this chapter, with the intent that the true student pursue them to greater depth. Ironside wrote in introduction,

And so we might go on for an hour, contrasting and comparing... but enough has been cited, I trust, to stir each interested believer to study for himself. What we get from our Bibles for ourselves is, in the presence of God, worth far more than all that another person can pass on to us. We may learn from each other, but it is best to take nothing for granted, but rather, like Ruth the Moabitess, to "beat out that (which we have) gleaned" (Ruth 2:17) through meditation and prayer."²⁸

28 Ibid. pg 13

The 1st Century Bible Record – True Church History.

Our Lord Jesus Christ prophetically gave us the course of the church age and it behooves a Bible student to study that prophecy and line it up with the church history that unfolded. H. A. Ironside gives the best coverage of church history from this perspective and his Lecture 3 and Lecture 4, entitled “The Seven Churches” is given here in their entirety. His preface to the second edition gives this insight:

The eleven years that have elapsed since these lectures were first issued in printed form, have but given added proof that the system of interpretation followed is the Scriptural one. The word of prophecy is confirmed by the passing of the years. Everything in the Church, in Jewry, and in the world, moves on exactly as predicted in the Holy Scriptures.

Examine then the two lectures that give excellent coverage to church history that were prophetically given by our Lord Jesus Christ. They have unfolded exactly as prophesied.

H.A. Ironside's Lecture 3 The Seven Churches ²⁹

WE now turn to the letters addressed to the first four churches, as found in chapter 2. In the last address I tried to make it clear that the key to the structure of the book is the 19th verse of the first chapter. We have already been occupied with the things which the apostle John had seen - that is, the first vision of the book, where he beheld the glorified Lord in the midst of the candlesticks, as set forth on the chart. The third division is clearly indicated in the opening words of chapter 4, where we read in the Revised Version, “**After (these things)³⁰ I looked, and behold, a door was opened**

29 Ironside, H. A., “*Revelation: An Ironside Expository Commentary*”, Kregel Publications, 1920, pg 25-38.

30 The Holy Bible says, “After **this...**” it is unfortunate that Ironside's postmortem editors resorted to a copyright RV (The Revised Version) is

in heaven.” Necessarily then, the second division must take in simply what we have in chapters 2 and 3 - “**the things which are**” (present, continuous tense) - the things which are now in progress; and this is the only part of the Apocalypse that has to do specifically with the present, the church period, though it is all written for our instruction, our warning, and our encouragement.

In fact, I believe that the real value of the Revelation consists in this: that it gives us the fullgrown trees which we now see as developing saplings. We need this book in order to judge aright the various movements that are now going on. For myself, I am sure that if I did not know something of the teaching of this book, I would long since have been identified with many movements which I have come absolutely to distrust, because I believe I can see, by a careful study of the Apocalypse, what the end of them will be.

Let me illustrate: Someone asks concerning the so-called “Church Federation scheme.” Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing if all the churches united? If we simply had one great organization, wouldn’t it be grand? All could agree to accept a common creed so worded that everyone could subscribe to it, and so the shame of Christendom’s divisions be at an end. Now, why not go in for something like that? Would not this be the fulfillment of the prayer of our Lord, “**that they all may be one**”?

Well, I might be caught by such a proposal, but I turn to the Book of Revelation and I learn that just such a religious federation is going to arise after the church of God has been caught away to be with the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is designated in the 17th chapter as “**Babylon the Great.**” This will be the big world-church. The present movement is just a preparation for this, and when I have the light from heaven shining upon it in the Book of the Revelation, I say, that if that is the way it is going to end, the thing to do is to have no part in it now. Separation from evil - not

copyrighted 1885 by Church of England) to change the words to what they wanted it to say. Shame on those who translate verse to give what they think God should have said, and shame on those who use such copyright translations. The 2004 Kregel Publications revision also did some wordsmithing of Ironside's work, and stuck [brackets] into his Authorized King James Verses.

fusion of diverse systems - is the divine order: and so we see that the prophetic book throws the light of the future upon events and movements that are in progress at present, in order that we may take warning and be preserved from that which is contrary to the mind of God.

Before we begin our study of “**The Things which are**,” let me give you this parable. Sometime ago, rummaging through an old castle, some people came across a very strangelooking old lock which secured a stout door. They shook the door and tried to open it, but to no avail. They tried one way and another to move the lock, but could not turn it. By and by somebody picked up a bunch of old keys from some rubbish on the floor and he said, “Maybe I can unlock it.” He tried one key and it made no impression. He tried another and it gave a little; another and it gave a little more; and so on, but none would open the lock. At last he came to a peculiar old key. He slipped it into the lock, gave a turn, and the lock was open. They said, “Undoubtedly this key was meant for this lock.”

You will understand my parable if I draw your attention to the fact that, in the 20th verse of the 1st chapter, we are told that there was a mystery connected with the seven lampstands. The seven lampstands are said to symbolize the seven churches of Asia, but there was a mystery connected with them. While some have tried one key and some have tried another (and there have been all kinds of efforts made to interpret this mystery), no solution was found until some devout students of Scripture weighing this portion said, “Might it not be that inasmuch as this section of the book presents ‘**the things which are**,’ God has been pleased to give us here a prophetic history of the church for the entire dispensation?” But would the key fit the lock? They compared the first part of the church’s history with the letter to Ephesus. Here it fitted perfectly. They went on and compared the letter to Smyrna with the second part of the church’s history, and the agreement was most marked. They went on right down to the end, and when they came to Laodicea they found that what is written to the church of Laodicea answers exactly to the condition of the professing church in the days in which we live, and they said: “There, the mystery is all

clear. The lock has been opened; therefore we have the right key.”

For myself, I have no question that this was in very truth the mind of the Lord in sending these letters to the seven churches. Seven churches were chosen because seven in Scripture is the number of perfection; and you have only to read these seven letters, then take any good, reliable church history and see for yourself how perfectly the key fits the lock.

The very names are significant. It would be impossible to reverse any of these names. If the order were changed they would not apply. Take the first one. Ephesus means “*desirable*,” such a term as a Greek applied to the maiden of his choice. Ephesus gives us a picture of the church as it was in the beginning, when the Lord held the stars (His servants) in His hand, and controlled their ministry. He sent them here and there, just as He would, to proclaim the glad gospel of His grace and to minister to His saints. But human systems have largely changed all that. He walked in the midst of His churches. His eyes were upon everything. and He was there to admonish, to correct, and to control. Observe that in the beginning His Name was the only center, and unto Him was the gathering of His saints. Read the second and third verses:

“I know thy works and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”

The early church was walking in separation from the world. The Greek word *ecclesia*, translated “**church**” in our Bibles, means *a called-out company*. This is God’s ideal, and every effort to amalgamate the church and the world is opposed to His mind and must end in confusion, for the church will never convert the world in the present dispensation. Someone asked Dr. A. T. Pierson, on one occasion, “Don’t you really think that the world is getting converted already?” “Well,” he said, “I admit that the world has become a little churchy, but the church has become immensely worldly.” If it were possible that the church could

convert the world, that would be the end of the church. What do I mean? Simply this, that the church is a called-out company, and if the world were converted, there would not be anything else left out of which to call the church.

Believers, in the days of Ephesus, could not bear those who were evil. In our day, discipline in the church is almost at an end. In many quarters, anyone is welcome to full participation in all church privileges, particularly if they have a good bank account; but in the beginning it was very different. That little Ephesian assembly said, “We don’t want numbers if they are not holy numbers. We don’t want growth at the expense of holiness.” More than that, they were loyal to the truth. They tried those who claimed to be apostles, and if they found they were deceivers they refused them as liars, instead of saying, “Oh well, you know Dr. So-and-so comes with such good recommendations, he is such a lovely man and so cultured, and though he doesn’t happen to believe in the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, or His atonement, etc., still he has so many good qualities that we mustn’t be hard on him.” The early church would have said, “Are you a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ?” and put a few serious questions to him. If he was not what he professed to be, they soon unmasked him and refused his unholy ministrations. But in these days teachers can deny almost any truth of Scripture, and the professing church never knows the difference. Oh, for more of the zeal and piety of early days!

In verse three we learn that these saints were suffering for the Name’s sake of the Lord Jesus. It was not suffering for the name of any denomination, nor yet for some special theories or usages. It was suffering for Christ’s sake. For His Name’s sake they bore trial and endured persecution.

And yet, even then, we have the evidence of early decline. Fourth verse: “**Nevertheless I have *somewhat*³¹ against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**”

They had left their first love. The heart was drifting away from Christ. The decline that began in these first days of the church has

31 Ironside left *somewhat* out of his quote, errantly thinking, perhaps, that King James Bible *italic* words are ommitable. Shame, shame on such a practice.

continued. There has been no corporate recovery. That spirit of declension has gone on increasing until the present Laodicean days.

In the next letter we see that the Lord, whose love never changes, permitted something to take place to arouse His people from their lethargy.

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.”

Smyrna means *myrrh*. It is frequently mentioned in Scripture in connection with the embalming of the dead. Myrrh had to be crushed in order to give out its fragrance. This sets forth the period when the church was crushed beneath the iron heel of pagan Rome, yet it never gave out such sweet fragrance to God as in those two centuries of almost constant martyrdom.

“These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.” What a blessed thing to know that the children of God are linked up with a resurrected Christ! The power of His resurrection works in them. He says, **“I know thy works and tribulation and poverty, (but thou art rich).”** This was the day when the church was hated, outlawed and persecuted. Instead of worshiping in magnificent buildings, they gathered together in caves, catacombs and other hidden places, with sentries posted to warn them of the approach of their foes. Despised by the world, condemned as enemies of the Empire because of their faith in and loyalty to Christ, their lives were precious to God. They were in His eyes rich. They were poor in this world’s goods, but rich in faith.

But even then, all was not perfection; so He says, **“I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan”** - referring to the Judaizing movement that came into the church in the early centuries. It was the leaven of Galatianism which had never been wholly judged,

and which made astonishing progress in the second and third centuries. He says, “**Fear none of those things . . . ye shall have tribulation ten days.**” It is significant that in the two centuries of Roman persecution, which began with Nero and which terminated 312 A. D., there were ten distinct edicts demanding that governors seek out Christians everywhere and put them to death. The last was under Diocletian. He was the tenth persecutor. The early Christians believed he would be the last, and he was. “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church,” said Augustine. The testimony of the dying again and again led their very persecutors to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour because of the convincing power of the truth manifested in the martyrs. Satan’s effort to destroy Christianity by persecution was in vain. But those were days when it meant something to be a Christian. When God’s people were being crushed like myrrh, what a sweet odor of devotion, what fragrance of Christian love was wafted up to the very throne of God!

Pergamos has two meanings. It means “*marriage*,” and “*elevation*.” It speaks of the time when the church was elevated to a place of power, and was married to the world. It depicts the time when church and state were united, under Constantine and his successors.

Read the 12th and 13th verses:

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.”

The Lord Jesus judges everything by the Word. The word that He spoke will judge men in the last day. If you reject it now it will judge you then. “**I know where thou dwellest**,” He says, even on “**Satan’s throne**.” What was Satan’s throne? If you had asked any of the Smyrna believers, they would have pointed you to the Emperor’s throne in Rome. In Pergamos you find the very church

of God sitting upon the imperial throne. How did that happen?

Those of you who are familiar with Roman history and church tradition will recall that after the death of Diocletian and Galerius, Constantine and Maxentius contended for the throne. Constantine is said to have seen a vision of a cross of fire and to have heard a voice saying, "In this sign, conquer." He wondered what the vision could mean. He was told that the cross was the sign of the Christian religion, and that it must mean that the God of the Christians was calling him to be the champion of the Christian religion; that if he obeyed the voice he would be victor over the hosts of Maxentius and become emperor of the world. He called for Christian bishops and asked them to explain their religion to him. He accepted the new doctrine and declared himself to be its God-appointed patron and protector. Some writers make a great deal of this so-called conversion of Constantine, but it is questionable if he ever became a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. He won a great victory over his opponent and thus became emperor of the world, and one of his first acts was to liberate the Christians and to stop all persecution. He bestowed unwonted honors on the bishops; they sat on thrones with the nobles of the empire.

It is during this time that the truth of the second coming of Christ was given up. Before the days of Constantine the church was looking for Him. That was their expectation and hope. But after the great change in their circumstances, this truth was largely lost sight of. Christian bishops said, "We have been looking for Christ's reign but we have been wrong. Constantine's empire is Christ's kingdom." They thought the church was already reigning; so it went on until the days of the Reformation, when the light began to dawn again.

But now note a most interesting thing: At the very time that the Lord said, "**I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat (or throne) is,**" He goes on to say, "**Thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my faith,**" etc. Here is something very remarkable. At the same time that Christ sees them sitting on Satan's throne, He can yet commend them for holding fast His Name.

During that time the Arian controversy was fought out. Arius denied the eternity of the Word. John says, “**In the beginning was the Word**” - He always existed. When everything that had a beginning began, the Word was. Arius declared that the Word was the greatest of all beings that ever emanated from God. His opponents insisted that the Word was one with the Father, in one eternal Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: one God in three Persons. It was the most tremendous issue the church had ever been called to face, and, for over a century, it was the burning question that provoked heated controversy everywhere. For years the church was almost rent asunder over two words, “homoiosian” and “homoousian.” The one word meant “*of like substance*,” the other “*of the same substance*.” The first was the battle-cry of the Arians; the second of the orthodox, headed by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. So irreconcilable were the contending parties that Constantine at last decided to take a hand in the matter himself, and he called a great church-council, which convened in the city of Nicaea, and there debated the question as to what the apostolic teaching really had been. Was Jesus truly God, or was He only the greatest being that God had ever brought into existence? Over three hundred bishops met together, and Constantine, sitting on a golden throne, presided as the acknowledged head of the Christian church, at the very time that he still bore the title Pontifex Maximus, or High Priest of the Heathen - the same title that the Pope bears at the present time. They examined the matter in question was examined from all sides. Again and again Constantine was called in to quell disturbances; feelings ran so high. On one occasion it is related that a brilliant Arian seemed to have almost silenced opposition, and the great assemblage appeared to be about to cast its vote in favor of the damnable Unitarian heresy, when a hermit from the deserts of Africa sprang to his feet, clad chiefly in tiger’s skin. This latter he tore from his back, disclosing great scars (the result of having been thrown into the arena among the wild beasts, and his hack dreadfully disfigured by their claws), crying dramatically, “These are the brand-marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I cannot hear this blasphemy.” Then he proceeded to give so stirring an address, setting forth so clearly the

truth as to Christ's eternal deity, that the majority of the council realized in a moment that it was indeed the voice of the Spirit of God. Whether this story be actually true or not I cannot say, but it well sets forth the spirit pervading many who were in attendance, most of whom had passed through the terrible persecution of Diocletian. The final result was that the council of Nicaea put itself on record as confessing the true deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Very God of Very God," "Light of Lights," "perfection of perfection". God and man in one blessed Person, nevermore to be separated. Thus was settled once and forever, in a public way, the acknowledged faith of the church of God, which held fast His Word, and did not deny His Name.

Did you ever stop to think what would have been the case if the council had decided the other way? It would have meant this: Unitarianism would have henceforth borne the stamp of orthodoxy, and the truth of the deity of Christ would have been branded as heresy.

We have no record as to who the Antipas was referred to in the latter part of the verses above quoted, but it is singular that the word means "*against all*." Many years after the council of Nicaea, when the Arian party were again largely in the ascendancy, Athanasius, that doughty old champion of the truth, was summoned before the Arian emperor Theodosius, who demanded that he cease his opposition to the teaching of Arius - who by the way, was long since dead - and admit the Arians to the table of the Lord. This Athanasius refused. Theodosius reproved him bitterly for what he considered his insubject spirit, and asked sternly, "Do you not realize that all the world is against you?" The champion of the truth drew himself up and answered the emperor, "Then I am against all the world." He was a true Antipas, a faithful witness to the end of his days, despite banishment and opposition of various kinds.

Oh, my brethren, God wants to-day, just such men, men of God, who, for the truth's sake, are willing to stand, if need be, against all the world!

We now turn to consider another phase of things in the Pergamos period - the introduction of the doctrine of Balaam and

the teaching of the Nicolaitanes in the church. Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the sons of Israel by leading them to make unholy alliances with the Midianitish women, as recorded in Numbers 25:1-9. In figure this is the union of the church and the world. During the Smyrna period, Satan sought to destroy the church by persecution. In the next three centuries he tried different tactics: he endeavored to ruin the testimony by worldly patronage from without, and the introduction of false principles from within. You know it is far more dangerous for the church to be patronized by the world than when the world is openly arrayed against it. Take any of the different denominations in Christendom. When were they shining most brightly for the Lord? It was in the days of their first love, when they were suffering from the world and were the objects of its bitter persecution. But when those had passed, when the period of persecution ended and the world began to look upon them with complacency, to greet them with the outstretched hand and the smiling face, instead of with the sword and the frown, in every instance decline set in. So it was in the Pergamos period. Constantine's patronage did what Diocletian's persecution could not do. It corrupted the church, and she forgot her calling as a chaste virgin espoused to an absent Lord; then she gave her hand in marriage to the world that had crucified Him, thus entering into an unholy alliance of which she has never really repented.

In close connection with this we have the introduction of wrong principles within - the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. Others have often pointed out that this is an untranslated Greek word meaning, "*Rulers over the people.*" Nicolaitanism is really *clerisy* - the subjugation of those who were contemptuously styled "the laity" by a hierarchical order who lorded it over them as their own possessions, forgetting that it is written, "**One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren**" (Matt 23:8). In the letter to Ephesus the Lord commended them for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, those who, like Diotrephes, loved to have the preeminence among them. But, in the Pergamos letter, we have Nicolaitanism designated as a distinct system of teaching. It was then that *clerisy* was accepted as of divine origin, and therefore

something that must be bowed to.

All this prepared the way for the Thyatira period, according to the letter that follows.

I have already tried to point out that every one of these names seems to be significant. Thyatira is perhaps the most difficult of all to define. Scholars tell us that it comes from two words, *one meaning a sacrifice, or an incense-offering; the other, that which goes on continually*. A suggested interpretation, therefore, is “*continual sacrifice*.” And this is very significant, because Thyatira undoubtedly sets forth the period which was the result of the union of church and State, already noticed. It was in the 7th century that the Bishop of Rome was first regularly recognized as Christ’s vicegerent, and visible head of the church. This was, properly speaking, the beginning of the papacy. There was no Roman Catholic church, in the full sense, until the Pope was the acknowledged head of Christendom. It is important for Protestants to keep this in mind. You will often hear papists say, “You know the first church was the Roman Catholic church, and all the different branches of the Protestant church have simply broken off from Rome. There was no Protestant church until the days of Luther.” That is an absolute sophistry.³² There was no such thing as the papacy until the 7th century of the Christian era. For six centuries before that, the church was becoming more and more corrupt - had been drifting further away from the Word of God until, in the 7th century, men professing themselves to be servants of God were ready to acknowledge the Pope as head of all Christendom.

A Roman Catholic once asked a bright Protestant school-girl, “Where was your church before the days of Henry the VIII?” “Why, sir, where yours never was, in the Bible,” was her sensible and correct reply. It is a far cry from the simplicity of early Christianity, when in the 7th century they were ready to own the pretensions of the bishop of Rome.

I said that Thyatira seemed to imply a continual sacrifice. You will see the significance of this in the great fundamental error of

32 WordWeb Dictionary, s.v. Sophistry - A deliberately invalid argument displaying ingenuity in reasoning in the hope of deceiving someone

the church of Rome - the sacrifice of the mass. The Roman Catholic priests declare that, in the mass, they offer a continual sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Other errors of the church of Rome spring from that. There are many things that Protestants might be able to condone. This is the central, the root blasphemy - the denial of the finished work of the Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross - the one, only and all-sufficient offering for the sins of a guilty world. Every time the priest stands at Rome's altar to offer the sacrifice of the mass, he denies the unchanging efficacy of the work wrought by the Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross. I have often pressed this question home to Catholic priests: "What is your function as a sacrificing priest?" They say, "It is my privilege to offer up the Lord Jesus from time to time - a continual sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead."

I generally put it like this: "Well, Christ has to be slain that He may be offered up; doesn't He?"

"Yes."

"You claim then that every time you offer the sacrifice of the mass, every time you pronounce the blessing, you are sacrificing Christ for the sins of the living and the dead?"

"Yes."

"Well then, you kill Christ afresh every time you offer that sacrifice!" Then they begin to hedge. But there is no escape from this horrible conclusion. The Roman priest says that when he offers the sacrifice of the mass he is presenting Christ again for the sins of the living and the dead. And the only way that Christ can be a sacrifice is to be put to death; therefore, the priest kills Him afresh every time he offers. They cannot get away from it. The apostle Peter said at Pentecost, "**Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up.** etc." If Christ has to be offered continually, then every priest is guilty of murdering the Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God.

God is going to judge Rome in a little while: so Christ's letter to Thyatira properly speaks of this central blasphemy of the church of Rome. Continual sacrifice? Never! No other sacrifice is needed.

The dignity of the Lord is so great, the value of His blood is so absolutely infinite, that it is vain for you or any other man to speak about a new sacrifice.

You may say, "I agree with you, sir." Well; now let me ask, Have you a personal interest in that one offering made once upon the cross? Can you say, "Thank God, He gave Himself a propitiation for my sins, and He is my Saviour. I need no other sacrifice. My soul is resting on the finished work of Christ. I require nothing more on which to enter the presence of God."

But let us turn to the Lord's address to Thyatira:

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass."

It is very significant the way the Lord presents Himself in each one of these letters, so as to meet the special condition in which the church is found. When He addresses Himself to the church of Thyatira, He speaks solemnly as "**the Son of God.**" Why does the Lord Jesus Christ emphasize the fact of His deity here? Because Rome everywhere has accustomed people to think of Him as the Son of Mary. I once talked with a woman who told me she would sooner go to Mary than to Christ or the Father. She said, "There is nobody that has so much influence with a son as his mother, and if Jesus Christ is inclined to be a bit hard-hearted, I just go to His good, kind mother, and I ask her to please say a good word to Him for me." What a caricature of our Lord Jesus Christ! Think of having to go to anybody else to win His favor. Who else could be compared with Him? Thus Christ is degraded into the position of the Son of Mary, rather than the Son of God, who came in infinite grace to save poor sinners.

But, observe, He has "**eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.**" This speaks of His holiness and righteousness. He must judge all that is evil. And yet He never overlooks what can be commended. He goes on to say,

"I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and

thy patience, and thy works: and the last to be more than the first.”

The Lord gives Rome credit for a great deal that is good. Remember from the 7th century on to the present time there has been a great deal in the way of good works in the Roman Catholic church that cannot be overlooked. There have been Roman Catholic nuns and monks who have been ready to lay down their lives for the needy and the sick. There were centuries before Luther when every hospital in Western Europe was simply a Roman Catholic monastery or convent.

The Lord does not forget all that. Where there is a bit of faith, His love takes note of it all. If there are hearts in the church of Rome that, amid the superstition, reach out to the blessed Lord Himself, He meets them in grace and manifests His love to them. But having done this, He then puts His finger on the sore spot:

“Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”

To understand this well, we need to go back to Israel's history in the days of King Ahab. Jezebel was an adept in the art of mixing. She undertook to unite in one the religion of Israel and the religion of Phoenicia. That is just what Romanism is - a mixture of Heathenism and Christianity and Judaism. It is not Christianity - yet there is in it quite a little that is Christian. Where did its superstition and image worship come from? It was all taken bodily over from heathenism, under the plea that it would help to convert the pagans. The church became very accommodating. In the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries you find the church compromising with heathen rites and heathen ceremonies to such a degree that, by the 7th century, one could hardly tell heathen from Christian temples. The amalgamation is such that it is almost impossible to separate the one from the other. Go to a Roman Catholic church, and, after sitting through the whole ceremony, take your Bible and search it

from one end to the other, and ask yourself, "Is there anything like that in the Book?" You will say, "No." Where does it come from then? Go from there to a heathen temple. Observe its ritual, and you will say, "Yes, they are the same."

Romanism is Christianity, Judaism, and Heathenism joined together; and the Lord abhors the vile combination. Note two things that He holds against Rome - spiritual fornication and idolatry - The first is the union of the church and the world: and "**the friendship of the world is enmity against God.**" Idolatry is the worship of images, strictly forbidden in the second commandment (Exodus 20:4, 5). God gave her space to repent and she repented not. Go back to the days of Savonarola in Italy, Wickliffe and Cranmer of England, John Knox in Scotland, Martin Luther in Germany, Zwingli in Switzerland, Calvin in France - all those mighty reformers whom God raised up throughout the world to call Rome to repent of her iniquity, but "**she repented not.**"

Mark this, you could not transpose these churches. You could not put Thyatira in the place of Smyrna. It could not be said to the church in that early day, "**I gave her space to repent, and she repented not;**" but it is fully applicable to the church of Rome. And, in our day, we have a lot of foolish Protestants who believe that the old Rome is now a harmless old pussy-cat sitting on the banks of the Tiber: she purrs so contentedly. They say, "We never understood Rome. What a pity we ever had that Reformation at all." And so efforts are being made to re-unite the various great bodies of Christendom in one vast society headed by the Pope. This is the avowed purpose of many leaders in the larger Protestant bodies.

What foolish people these Protestants are! - Protestants who have long ceased to protest against evil doctrine, forgetting the millions of lives that were sacrificed for the precious truth. Depend upon it, if the day ever comes that the Pope gets into the saddle again, and gets control of the proposed union, it will only be at the expense of life if people will worship scripturally at all. But Protestant leaders are dazzled with the thought of a great united church, and are hurrying us on to a union with Rome which Scripture shows clearly enough will yet take place. But, thank

God, not until the church of Christ has been caught up to meet the Lord in the clouds, to be with Himself, according to His promise (John 14:2, 3). God gave Rome space to repent. If she had had any desire to get right with Him, she would have repented in the 16th century.

Since the 16th century she has added to her blasphemies and errors the declaration of the absolute sinlessness of the Virgin Mary, lifting her to the position of a female God, and declared that she was caught up to heaven without dying and crowned queen of heaven.

At the Council of the Vatican (1869) less than seventy-five years ago, the church of Rome produced another of her wretched dogmas - the infallibility of her Popes. This dogma was so utterly without reason that many bishops said, "This is going too far. We know that Popes have reversed each other over and over again." But Rome never repented; she has added sin upon sin to the heavy list God had against her in the middle ages, and will remain the same to the end. It behooves Protestants to keep clear of it all. God says He is going to cast her into the great tribulation.

Ephesus is at an end; Smyrna was at an end about A.D. 312; and Pergamos is at an end. Thyratira begins in the seventh century, goes right on into the Great Tribulation, and manifests herself at last as Babylon the Great. Her children are to be judged; but wherever there is a remnant found who "**have not known the depths of Satan,**" the Lord owns them as His, and exhorts them to hold fast what they have until He come. To the overcomer He promises what Rome has always sought - power over the nations. They will rule with Him when He comes again. Thus the hope of the Second Coming of Christ is put before them, and henceforth has a large place in each of these church-letters.

Time has not permitted so full an exposition as I would have liked, but I trust enough has been brought before us to stir our hearts to search the Scriptures for ourselves, and to study as never before this marvelous portion of God's holy Word.

~ end of chapter 3 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/> ***

H.A. Ironside's Lecture 4 The Seven Churches (Continued)

Revelation 3

NONE of you can have a keener sense than I of the cursory nature of these addresses. Time forbids going into that detail on all points which alone would enable one to give anything like a complete exposition of this marvelous portion of the Word of God. But if I can but whet your appetite for further study, and start Christians searching the Word for themselves, and weighing, too, what others have written and published on this theme, I shall feel that these addresses have not been in vain. * * It is always a pleasure to me to commend the writings of trustworthy servants of Christ, who are true to the Book. There are a number of excellent expositions of Revelation, each one of which would, I am sure, be a help in the further study of the subject: "*Exposition of the Revelation*" by Walter Scott "*Lectures on Revelation*" by Wm. Kelly "*The Book of Revelation*" by A. C. Gaebelein On the Seven Churches I especially commend, "*The Prophetic History of the Church*" by F. W. Grant³³.

We now go on to look at the next part in the marvelous series of this great annotated time-table of the church's history.

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent."

Sardis means "*a remnant,*" or, "*those who have escaped.*" This is surely very significant, and tells its own story too plainly to be misunderstood. It brings before us, prophetically, the great State-churches of the Reformation, who escaped from Rome, only to fall eventually (alas, that it should be so) into cold, lifeless formalism.

33 Grant, F. W., "*The Prophetic History of the Church*", NEW YORK LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, 1910, First Edition, 1902, Seventh Printing, 1955, available at www.gsbaptistchurch.com/theology/grant_prophetic_history_church.pdf

It is plainly to be seen, from the first verse, that there is a measure of return to early principles. The Lord's introduction of Himself to this church is very similar to that in the letter to Ephesus, and yet the difference is most marked. Here He is said to have the seven stars; there He was said to hold the seven stars in His right hand. It is, at least, the recognition that ministry belongs to Christ. Ministers are Christ's ministers - not the church's. Yet, even in the glorious days of the Reformation, the truth was not fully apprehended that ministers are to be controlled by, and subject to, Christ, without any human intermediary. While the Protestant ministry is very different from the Romish hierarchy, unfortunately human ordination has done much to becloud a proper conception of the servant's responsibility to the Master.

The Lord declares solemnly, "**I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.**" How sad and solemn the indictment! One might well ask in amazement, How can such things be after the blessing and revival of Reformation days? But when we remember that the State-churches were, from the first, intended to include all the population of a given country, who were supposed to be made members of the church and kingdom of Christ by baptism in infancy, one can readily understand why such churches, though, possibly, strictly orthodox, may yet be largely composed of persons still dead in trespasses and in sins. Nothing can be much sadder than vast congregations of people, baptized, banded together as Christians, taking the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, zealous for church and Christianity, and yet largely devoid of personal, saving faith in Christ - trusting rather in forms and ceremonies, and what some have called "birthright membership," than in new birth through the Word and Spirit of God.

What is needed everywhere is a great revival of decided gospel preaching, pressing home on the consciences of men and women their lost condition, despite church membership, if they have not personally received the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word says, "**Break up the fallow ground**"; sow not among "**thorns.**" We often hear people say they would like to see more old-time conversions. Well, there must first be the old-time preaching of the exceeding

sinfulness of sin, and the lost condition of all men by nature as well as practice, until the old-time conviction will seize upon the souls of Christless men and women, and then the old-time gospel will be hailed as the only relief. No wonder the Lord says to Protestantism, **“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”** And He calls upon them to remember how they had received and heard, and to hold fast and repent. Now, surely, it must be plain to anyone who carefully examines the Scripture, that this message would in no sense have been as applicable to the Thyatira as to the Sardis period. Such words would not have the same force when addressed to Rome as when addressed to the churches of the Reformation. What did these latter receive and hear? Clearly the great truths proclaimed so fearlessly in the days of the Reformation, and embodied for the instruction of future generations in the creeds of the 16th and 17th centuries. And, may I say, I am not one of those who waste time denouncing creeds. *Credo* means “*I believe.*” Any man who believes anything has a creed. All the great creeds of Protestantism were but the carefully drawn-up declarations of the faith of those who had escaped from Romish superstition, who desired to make clear to their children what they recognized as the truth which they had received from God. We need not be surprised if we find in these creeds some statements which fuller light and knowledge would lead us to refuse or revise, but I think we may say that there is not one of these symbols which does not hold within it every fundamental truth of the Word of God. Take the Augsburg Confession of the Lutherans; the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians; the 39 Articles of the Church of England; and others too numerous to mention. Every one of them insists on the true deity of Christ and the efficacy of His atoning work on Calvary’s cross. All alike declare that salvation is only through faith, apart from works.

Those creeds stand, I repeat, for the fundamental truths of Christianity; and it is not to any minister’s credit to-day, if still attached to any such denomination as I have just referred to, to stand up in the pulpits of such churches and say, “I have thrown the creed of the church overboard.” When a man reaches that point he

either ought to be thrown out of the church whose principles he no longer believes, or he should be honest enough to take himself out. One of the worst features of the present apostasy is that there are thousands of men occupying supposedly orthodox pulpits, who would, if they could, destroy everything for which their respective denominations are understood to stand.

And so we may thank God for the truths contained in these creeds; while, on the other hand, we recognize that, where the Word of God is bowed to, no humanly-drawn-up creed is needed. Nevertheless, it is in view of these very confessions, I am persuaded, that the Lord says, “**Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard.**” He calls upon Protestants to remember the great truths committed to them at the Reformation, and hold them fast, and repent for the slack way in which they have treated them in the past.

And now, for the second time in these letters, the Lord speaks of His approaching advent: “**If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.**” How different this to the word in the 5th chapter of I Thessalonians. There, the apostle speaking of the same wondrous advent writes, “**But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.**” It is very evident, therefore, that the coming of the Lord should be the daily expectation of His own beloved people. It is only to the great mass of mere professors that His return will be as the coming of a thief, that is, as the unexpected and unlooked-for One, whose coming will spread dismay instead of gladness.

Blessed it is to know the declaration and promise of the Lord in verse 4. Even in Sardis He beholds a few names which have not defiled their garments, and such He declares shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy. His blood alone has made them so. There are thousands in Christendom who, though linked up with much that is unscriptural, and often almost undistinguishable from the mass, are yet plainly discernible to His eye, for it is written, “**The Lord knoweth them that are his.**” To these overcomers the promise is made that they shall be clothed in white raiment, nor will their names be blotted out of the Book of Life, when the

thousands of names, representing a Christless profession, will be expunged from the records of those who profess to have life, in the day of manifestation.

It is not a question of people, who have been truly born of God, losing that eternal life given them in Christ, for that, as many other Scriptures show, is an impossibility. In fact, were it otherwise, it would not be eternal life at all. But the Lord is referring to those who have a name to live, but are dead. Their names are registered among those who profess to have life in Christ. In reality they are, as Jude puts it, **“twice dead”** - dead in trespasses and sins, and dead to their profession of life. So, in the day of manifestation, their names will be eliminated, and only those left who have proven by continuance in well-doing that they truly have life in Christ. Such will be confessed before the Father and the angels at the Lord’s second coming.

The next in order is the letter to the church in Philadelphia, which means *“brotherly love.”*

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name . . . Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”(vv. 7-8, 10)

This, I believe, brings us to what we may call the revival period. Following the Reformation there came a time when a cold, lifeless formalism seemed to settle down over all Protestant Christendom - an era in which men were content simply to confess a creed, and as we have already mentioned, were supposed to be united to the church by baptism. But in the 18th and 19th centuries there came over all those lands where the Reformation had gone a great wave of blessing. God began to work afresh in mighty power. There

were marvelous awakenings all over northern Europe and the British Isles. A half century later the same mighty power began to manifest itself in America. Spirit-filled servants of Christ went through these various countries like firebrands of the Lord, calling on sinners to repent, and saints to awaken to their privileges. A little later, in the early part of the last century, God, in a very special way, began to arouse many of His people to a deeper sense of the value of His Word, and its all-sufficiency for the guidance of His people in this scene. This led to the recognition of the fact that Christ Himself is the gathering center for His people; and for His name's sake thousands left all human systems, and began to meet in simplicity, seeking to be guided alone by the Word of God.

Now I do not mean to imply that we are to understand any special movement or association of believers to be in itself Philadelphia, but, just as Sardis sets forth State churches of the Reformation, so I believe Philadelphia sets forth those in Protestantism who emphasize the authority of the Word of God, and the preciousness of the name of Christ. For any particular company to claim to be Philadelphia is but detestable ecclesiastical pretension, and God has very evidently blown upon all such conceit.

Notice what, in a special way, would mark those who seek to walk as Philadelphians. In the first place there is the very name of this church - "*brotherly love*." This implies that those contemplated here, love as brethren. They are born of God, and His love is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto them, and they are characterized by love to all who are Christ's. Alas, how little is this characteristic seen among many who make very loud pretensions to being the testimony of the Lord at the present time. There may be much high truth, and a great pretension to divine ground and maintaining of scriptural principles, but if this first mark of brotherly love be missing, depend upon it you have not yet found Philadelphia.

In the second place, observe the character in which the Lord presents Himself to this church. "**These things saith He that is holy, He that is true.**" This is, in itself, a challenge to separation from evil in life, and error in doctrine. If we would walk in

fellowship with the Holy One, we must remember the word, “**Be ye holy, for I am holy**” (1Pet 1:16). And if we would enjoy communion with Him who is true, we must refuse Satan’s lies, and love and live the truth ourselves. Hence it follows, as it has been put by others, that “separation from evil is God’s principle of unity.” Not, indeed, separation in a cold, pharisaic sense, but separation to Christ from that which is evil.

In the next place the Lord speaks of Himself as “**He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.**” In Isaiah 22:22, he who had the key of David was the treasurer of David’s house. And the word used here is clearly a reference to that passage. There it is said of Eliakim, “**The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open.**” The remainder of the passage shows that Eliakim was but a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one upon whom should be hung all the glory of His Father’s house. He, by His Spirit, opens the great treasure-house of divine truth, and none can shut it. On the other hand where there is perversity of spirit, and an unwillingness to walk in the truth, He shuts and none can open. So He has said elsewhere, “**If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness.**”

And it is blessed to realize that, while Christ is said to have the key of David, there is another sense in which we see that Himself is the key, for it is by the presentation of Himself to the souls of His people that He opens up the treasures of His Word. Thus Christ is the key to the Holy Scriptures, and no other is needed. To understand the Bible you need only to know Christ.

Perhaps there is another sense in which we might apply the words in regard to opening and shutting; that is, they may have an application to service. The Lord Himself opens the doors for those whom He sends forth, and He it is who closes them when He so wills. And this is one thing that Philadelphian believers, generally, have found. Acting on the truth that Christ is Son over His own house, and that He has commanded His servants to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, thousands have gone forth, in dependence on Him alone, not only in the home-

land, but to lands beyond the seas, even among heathen people, without any organization or Board behind them and have found the Lord Himself all-sufficient to meet every need, and to open and close just as He will. "Faith can firmly trust Him, come what may." I think the 8th verse emphasizes this second application, for there He says, "**I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.**" Observe these important characteristics of Philadelphia. - His Word is kept, - His Name confessed. The keeping of His Word involves a great deal more than just believing the Bible, or reading and studying it. It implies obedience to the revealed will of the Lord. It is a blessed thing to realize that "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**" What immense scope is there here for faith to act upon! This blessed book of God marks out all my path, and, so long as I seek to walk in obedience, I will never be, found in circumstances where this Book cannot guide me. And this, I believe, is what is involved in keeping His Word.

The denial of His Name is the increasing apostasy around us on every hand. Those who have not denied His Name refuse all fellowship with this God-dishonoring condition of things. Christ is to them more precious than all else; even for the sake of service, they refuse to link themselves with that which dishonors or blasphemes that worthy name whereby they are called.

It is significant that, wherever Philadelphian truth has been proclaimed, the devil has raised up a counterfeit to draw people's hearts away from the truth, and so, in verse 9, the Lord speaks of those who will be manifested as the synagogue of Satan, "**who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie.**" The day will come when they will have to worship before the feet of those who are faithful to the Lord, and shall know that He has loved them. It is, undoubtedly, that false Judaizing system which is contemplated, whose advocates everywhere oppose the truth of grace, and seek in every way to hinder the carrying out of those principles which we have been noticing as pleasing to the Lord. In their ignorance,

these teachers give up the true Christian position. claiming to be the spiritual Israel, appropriating to themselves Jewish promises and Jewish hopes, and would put the consciences of Christians under the bondage of Jewish legalism, thus really doing Satan's work.

The promise of verse 10, like all the promises to these different churches, is for every true child of God. **"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."** This is the Lord's own pledge to those who love His Name, and seek to keep His word - they shall not be left down here to pass through the appalling tribulation which is just ahead of those who **"dwell upon the earth."** This expression is found frequently in the book of Revelation. It does not simply mean those who live in the world, but a careful reading of the various passages in which this peculiar term is found, will make it manifest *that "the earth-dwellers" are in contrast to those whose citizenship is in heaven.*

They are persons who, while professing to be Christians, refuse the heavenly calling, and prove by their earthly-mindedness and worldly ways, that they really belong to this world. All their hopes are here, and their treasures likewise, and the Lord has said, **"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"** (Mark 6:21; Luke 12:34). The coming Great Tribulation will be, for them, a time of fearful trial.

Of this hour of turmoil the bulk of the book of Revelation treats, as we shall demonstrate in later lectures. But when that hour comes the church of the present dispensation will have been caught up to meet the Lord in accordance with the promise in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. And to this agrees the verse that follows in our chapter, **"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."** The Lord's return is the hope of every Christian heart. They long to see Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. At His return, they will be manifested before His judgment-seat, and be rewarded according to service here. Then He will give out the crowns for service in this day of His rejection. Observe that the warning is, **"Let no man take thy**

crown.” It is not, “ Let no man take thy life,” or “ thy salvation.” That is eternally secure in Christ. Being born of God, I cannot lose my salvation; but, if I am not a faithful servant, I may lose my crown.

The overcomer will be made a pillar in the temple of God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall dwell in the Father’s house to go no more out forever. Upon him will be written the name of God, the name of the Holy City, and Christ’s new name. All that is involved in this is beyond our poor, finite comprehension, but it speaks of stability, of security, of fellowship, of intimacy with the Lord Himself, which will make heaven to the believer - his blessed and eternal home.

Laodicea completes this septenary series, and brings us down, practically, to the last stage of the professing church’s history on earth - the close of the present dispensation.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”(vv. 14-16).

Laodicea is a compound word, and means “*the rights of the people.*” Could any other term more aptly set forth the condition of present-day church affairs? It is the era of democratization, both in the world and in the church. The masses of the people are realizing their power as never before. The terrific slogan, *vox populi, vox Dei* (*The voice of the people is the voice of God*), is ringing through the world with clarion-like distinctness. Imperialism and every form of aristocratic government is disappearing - at least for the time being. The age of anarchy is almost upon us. Bolshevism is not confined to unhappy Russia, it is making tremendous progress in all Christendom. Statesmen and capitalists never were more anxious and nervous than at the present time. In the great war we were told our soldiers were fighting to make the world safe for democracy. In a little while statesmen will be attempting to raise

armies to make the world safe from democracy. The spirit of this ultra-democratic age has invaded a large portion of the professed church. The authority of God and His Word is rapidly being denied. The spirit of the age is the spirit of a large part of the church; hence the striking correspondence between this letter to the Laodiceans and the latitudinarianism so prevalent about us.

In a day when faithful witnesses to God's truth are becoming fewer and fewer, the Lord addresses Himself to the church as the **Amen** (that is, the establisher of all God's promises), **the faithful and true Witness**, who will maintain to the last what is of God, though the great majority of those who profess to follow Him be swept away by the apostasy. He reproveth the church for its lukewarmness and indifference to Himself and the truth. He says, "**Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spue thee out of my mouth.**" There is neither burning zeal for His word, nor yet absolute repudiation of Christ and the Bible. Instead there is a nauseating, lukewarm condition, that is abhorrent to the Spirit of God. Lukewarm water is, in itself, an emetic; and this is the figure the Lord here uses. He cannot tolerate such conditions much longer, but will spue out the whole disgusting mass in judgment.

Meantime the church goes on in its pride and self-satisfaction, saying, "**I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing**"; knowing not that, in His eyes, it is "**poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.**" Never were church dignitaries and carnally-minded religious leaders more satisfied with themselves and their great work than at the present time. Anything and everything is advocated that will seem to make for the church's popularity. The rights of the people alone must be considered; the rights of the Lord Jesus Christ are not even thought of. We have come to a time when, in many places, it is easier to get on without Christ than with Him; easier to carry on religious programs without the Holy Spirit than if He were working among us in mighty power. No wonder He says, "**I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire** (that is, divine righteousness), **that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment** (that is, practical righteousness) **that thou mayest be clothed, and anoint thine**

eyes with eyesalve (that is, the anointing of the Holy Spirit) **that thou mayest see.**” Yes, there is lots of work, much fleshly energy and human effort being put forth to reclaim the world, and make it a comfortable place for men to live in, apart from Christ; but the great things of God’s truth are largely neglected, and myriads of so-called church-workers are utter strangers to the new birth, without which no one can see the Kingdom of God.

And so we see the Lord standing at last outside the door of the professing church, and saying so tenderly, **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”** Ah, beloved friends, it is getting late in the dispensation: the night-shades are fast falling; and the Lord who, in the beginning, was in the midst of His church, stands outside that lukewarm system which calls itself by His name, and He knocks in vain for entrance! Yet, individuals here and there open to Him, and find His presence is more to them than all else that the earth or the professing church can afford.

And so we have come down to the closing days of the present dispensation of grace. The Ephesus period passed away long ago, and the same is true of the Smyrna and Pergamos periods. Thyatira, which, as we have seen, speaks of Romanism, and began properly when the Pope was recognized as universal Bishop, is with us still, and will go on to the end. Sardis, which began centuries later, remains to the present time, and will remain till the Lord shall come.

Philadelphia, thank God, is also here, and, though it has but a little strength, will also abide to the end. But Laodicea is more and more in evidence, and seems to be almost swamping everything that is of God.

The next great event is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him. For this we wait, and our longing hearts cry, **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”**³⁴

~ end of chapter 4 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/> ***

34 Ibid. pg 39-48.

The 19th Century Baptist Record – True Church History

There is a thorough history of the true church aptly recorded by faithful historians as they recorded Baptist history. John T. Christian, aptly named, records two volumes of that in his 1922 “*A History of the Baptists*”³⁵, but he regularly cites two earlier authorities that will be used extensively here to support the thesis that unifies true church history with Baptist church history.

J. A. Shakelford's 1892 “*Compendium of Baptist History, showing the origin and history of the Baptists, from the days of the Apostles to the present time, with an original chart, giving a comparative view of some of the denominations of Christians with which they have come in contact.*” is an excellent resource for such a development, and its first chapter is included below as introductory material. It is readily and freely available to the Bible student online via

<http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/shackelford.compendium.index.html>

J. Newton Brown's 1854 “*Memorials of Baptist Martyrs, with a Preliminary Historical Essay*”, however, in twenty pages of his Preliminary Historical Essay, certifies that true church history is indeed synonymous with Baptist church history. That essay is included after Shakelford's first chapter.³⁶

True church history is amply introduced via Shakelford's introductory chapter given in its entirety below:

35 Christian, John T., *A History of the Baptists*, Vol 1&2, The Baptist Bible Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana, first published in 1922, public domain, soft copy [http://www.pbministries.org/History/John T. Christian/vol1/](http://www.pbministries.org/History/John%20T.%20Christian/vol1/) or <http://www.reformedreader.org/history/christian/ahob1/ahobp.htm>, (Accessed 10/23/2013).

36 Hundred year old scholarly works are generally written on a college reading level that does not follow the dummed down English prose of the 21st century, but a Bible student who reads carefully will benefit tremendously from the effort. Learning to read these more complex sentence structures, is not that difficult to one who reads God's word regularly.

Compendium of Baptist History – First Chapter

*Compendium of Baptist History*³⁷

From <http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/shackelford.compendium.1.html>

via

<http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/shackelford.compendium.index.html>

By J. A. Shackelford

Chapter I

Importance of an accurate knowledge of church history. Christ the founder of the true churches. There are true and false churches. Scriptural anathemas against false doctrine. Lack of information concerning a Scriptural church. How we are to find the true churches. Necessity of being loyal to the truth.

An unusual interest has, of late, been awakened in the study of church history. This is a hopeful indication. It shows that many are disposed to turn away from human organizations, and seek for the true church of Christ, as revealed in the Gospels. It is worse than folly to suppose that the Saviour left his work so incomplete that uninspired men, of later years, must take it up and bring it to perfection. It must be a recognized fact that Christ established his church, as a "pillar and ground of the truth."

All institutions, claiming to be churches, which antagonize the churches of Christ, must be false, and are, therefore, of Satan. The God of heaven could not have instituted organizations that rival his own, or bring his people into disrepute. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scattereth abroad."

That there should be organizations claiming divine origin, and yet lacking the sanction of Christ, is not strange. "Men have stolen the livery of heaven to serve the Devil in," and Satan has masked himself with truth, that he might drag souls down to ruin. Error has ever been gilded. There is nothing very valuable that has not been

37 Shakelford, J. A., (1892) "Compendium of Baptist History", Press Baptist Book Concern, Louisville, Kentucky, 1892, <http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/shackelford.compendium.index.html> (Accessed 03/18/2021).

counterfeited. The presence of the counterfeit attests the existence of the genuine. If there was not a true church there would be no false churches. The lines must be sharply drawn. Error must be unmasked, and the truth brought into contrast. The multiplicity of so-called churches awakens the thought that all cannot be churches of Christ.

Would God impede the progress of his own cause? Would he build but to tear down? He is not the author of confusion, but of peace. He may purge, but will never destroy his churches. The splendor of his truth will blaze out amid the darkest gloom. His kingdom must destroy all other kingdoms. In order that this may be accomplished, there must be a contest between truth and error. God's word must be kept before the people. All creeds must be tried by his word, and the wood, hay and stubble be burned.

The churches of the present day should correspond exactly with the divine original. Nothing short of this should satisfy the inquirer after truth. Church histories are plentiful. Men have traced the histories of their own organizations back to their origin, and with pride they sometimes point to their founders. But who was the founder of the New Testament churches? When and where was the first church on earth established and who were the members?

These are questions which many cannot answer. We need a treatise of this kind; one so plainly written that the simplest mind may compare its statements with the divine record. We need also to compare the doctrine of the true churches with those of the false churches of the world, in order that the errors of the one may be the more clearly seen when brought into contrast with the truths of the other. Surely the Holy Spirit did not so obscure the truth that we cannot find it. We propose to look into the Scriptures for a Scriptural church, and then trace its history through the intervening centuries. This can only be done in many instances by the light of the martyr fires, or the blood-stained foot-prints of the suffering witnesses.

Men have come to attach the word church to all organizations engaged in Christian work. Such organizations, unless they bear the marks of a Scriptural church, are usurping the authority of Christ, and will receive the anathemas of heaven. "As we said

before, so say I now again, if any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:9. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10-11. With these passages of Scripture before us we not only cannot afford to be wrong ourselves, but cannot recognize any organization which does not bear the marks of a Scriptural church. Loyalty to the truth, and to our Master, requires that the principles and doctrines of the New Testament churches be kept prominently before the people.

That a large proportion of Christians do not know what constitutes a gospel church, is seen from the diverse opinions respecting it. People talk about the "universal church," "the church at large," "branches of the church," etc. These expressions convey but an indefinite idea of a church, and one without any foundation in Scripture. They show, however, a necessity for an investigation of the subject from a Scriptural standpoint. The great question which should interest us is, what was the nature of the organization which Christ called his church, and the relation that we sustain to that organization? Does that organization exist to-day? If so, how can we ascertain the fact?

Evidently if we can find the particular organization in the New Testament which Christ called his church, and ascertain the declarative principles governing the New Testament churches, then finding these principles perpetuated in existing organizations of the present day, we have found a gospel church. To this one, and to this alone, do we owe allegiance. Before it let every other organization claiming the rights and privileges of a church perish. Let us oppose such organizations as we would oppose a false god, and "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

The blood of martyrs in other ages attested the love they bore to the cause of Christ and the truths of his word. We should be no less faithful in our day. Human traditions are as displeasing to God now as they were eighteen hundred years ago. Among all the conflicting doctrines as taught by men, we can only hope to find the truth in the word of God.

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[From J. A. Shackelford, *Compendium of Baptist History*, 1892, reprint, pp. 11-15. Scanned and formatted by Jim Duvall.]

Memorials of Baptist Martyrs - Preliminary Historical Essay

J. Newton Brown's *Preliminary Historical Essay*, certifies that true church history is indeed synonymous with Baptist church history. That essay is included in its entirety below:

PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY³⁸. BY J. N EWTON BROWN.

A MARTYR is a witness—a witness for God, for Truth and Righteousness—a witness tried both by action and by suffering, and found faithful to his conscience and to Christ, through every trial. Such, at least, are those who, by the grace of God, are entitled to the name of Christian martyrs. “To you it is given,” says Paul to the Philippians, “in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”

By usage, however, this title, which belongs to faithful Christians in general, has come in modern times to be restricted to those who suffer unto death. Hence, in our English Bible, the only three examples where the term occurs are of this kind :—Stephen of Jerusalem, Antipas of Pergamos, and the prophetic roll of the “martyrs of Jesus,” with whose blood the mystic “Babylon.” is drunken. Acts 22: 20. Rev. 2: 13. 17 : 6.

Martyrdom, in this restricted sense, may be said to have begun with the first generation of fallen man. Then in the world's fresh morning, the blood of righteous Abel, shed by a brother's hand, cried unto God from the crimsoned earth. The first revealed “heir of the righteousness which is by faith,” was thus a martyr—a Christian martyr's — typically, but truly—like John the Baptist in

38 Brown, J. Newton (John Newton), 1803-1868. “*Memorials of Baptist Martyrs*”, Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1854, pg 3-24

later time, bearing witness unto death to “the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” (4 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.)

But it is manifest that the testimony of the true martyr must vary in degree, though not in kind, with the measure of Divine Revelation in different ages, and under different dispensations. Hence, the martyr from the time of Noah to Abraham might die as a witness to the new truth revealed to Noah; and from Abraham to Moses for the new revelation to Abraham; and from Moses to Christ for the new revelation to Moses, or to any one of the successive prophets, by whose anointed lips, “God, in time past spake unto the fathers.” The martyrs down to the time of the Maccabees, are examples cited by Paul. Heb. 11: 35–38.

On the same principle, it is equally clear that, after the coming of Christ, every faithful martyr was liable to suffer for the new revelations and institutions introduced by Him; whether in person, or through his Apostles, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (John 15: 18–27. 16: 1–4. 12 —15.) Of this, Christians, from the beginning, were fully forewarned, and especially Christian ministers, (Matt. 5: 10–12. 10: 16–42. 16:21–28.) and appropriate cautions, counsels, and consolations were provided for their guidance and support.

It behooves us, therefore, to examine carefully what those new revelations and institutions are, belonging especially to the New Testament dispensation, and binding upon the conscience of every disciple of Christ, “even unto the end of the world.” For it is not every sufferer that is a martyr—though he may be a Christian; for it is possible that even a Christian may suffer for his own faults, and not for righteousness' sake, or for Christ's sake. (1 Peter 4: 15–16.) A single fault in the temper and tongue of the meekest of men, shut him out of Canaan. Moses, the noblest witness for God in his time, yet died for his own fault—a warning to every succeeding generation of God's witnesses. Still more striking is the case of the (pg 5) young prophet at Bethel; who died for disobeying the plain command of God, through what might be thought a becoming deference to the authority of a “father ” in Israel—a warning too little heeded by those who followed “the traditions of the elders” in after times, and the authority of “the early fathers” in the Christian church. (1 Kings 13: 20–24.) In like manner, Paul in reproving the

Corinthians for their abuse of the Lord's supper, says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Cor. 11:30).

Nor is it every one that suffers in a true and righteous cause, though he may die with indomitable courage, that wins the crown of martyrdom; for "though I give my body to be burned," says the Apostle, "and have not charity, (i.e., love), it profiteth me nothing." Thousands also have been slaughtered for their connection with Christianity, like the infants of Bethlehem, who were rather victims to cruelty than martyrs for Truth.

Much less, even in the judgment of charity, are they to be justly regarded as Christian martyrs, who die in the diffusion and defence of antichristian errors. We grant that this distinction may be, and has been sadly abused for many hundreds of years, by many pretentious parties in Christendom; still within proper limits, and with due allowance for all Christian freedom of thought, it is a sound one, and must not be ignored. The opposite opinion—however disguised under the name of liberality—involves absolute contradiction. Though often grievously misapplied, therefore, the old maxim is essentially true, "There are no martyrs out of the Church." But then the church is no narrow sectarian organization, no self-assumed infallible patron of orthodoxy, no State Establishment, whether episcopal, presbyterial, or congregational; but the universal body of evangelical believers

(6 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY). of every age — the body which recognizes and adores Jesus Christ as "God manifested in the flesh," "the propitiation for our sins," and the unchanging "head of all principality and power."

It may be well to state explicitly what we conceive to be the essential and invariable elements of true Evangelical Christianity. There may be others, but the four following we regard as both fundamental and vital.

1. THE SCRIPTURES ONLY, AS THE SUPREME RULE of FAITH;
2. FREE JUSTIFICATION IN CHRIST ONLY THROUGH FAITH;

3. SPIRITUAL REGENERATION ONLY, AS THE ORIGIN of FAITH;
4. PERSONAL SANCTIFICATION ONLY, MANIFESTED BY Good works, AS THE EFFECT AND EVIDENCE OF FAITH.

These propositions are logically and inseparably linked together, and constitute one self-consistent organic system of revealed Truth. This system is “the Gospel of Christ.” No other can be substituted for it. It bears on its front the stamp and seal of the Almighty. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. And of this it is as the Apostle says to the Galatians, “If we, or an angel from Heaven, preach unto you any other Gospel, let him be accursed.” The man who intelligently and honestly believes this—lives for it, and dies for it—wherever found, or whatever name he bears, is worthy to be esteemed by all mankind, as he is by Christ himself, a “faithful martyr.”

But we go farther. The above formulas of fundamental truth do not exhaust the distinctive principles of a PURE CHRISTIANITY. There are others that belong to the institutions of Christ, under the New Testament economy. Such, for example, are the following.

5. UNIVERSAL FREEDOM of CONSCIENCE ONLY As A CONDITION of FAITH;
6. BAPTISM ONLY on A CONSCIENTIOUS PROFESSION of FAITH;
7. IMMERSION ONLY, AS THE PRESCRIBED BAPTISM of FAITH;
8. BAPTIZED (pg 7) BELIEVERs ONLY, AS THE PROPER MATERIALS of THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—the living Body of Christ.³⁹

These propositions—to add no more—may be safely said to shine on the face of the New Testament, and to inhere in the very substance of the revealed dispensation under which we live. They

39 This likely first listing of attributes of a fundamental Christian is supplemented by a short review of the fundamentalist movement given at the end of Brown's preliminary historical essay.

are all organically and logically connected with each other, and are essential to the normal or regular visible constitution of the kingdom of God on earth. They are the characteristic features of that “kingdom which is not of this world;” in distinction from all preceding dispensations; and in contrast with all subsequent forms of religion, founded on human policy, and supported by civil power.

Now what we wish to be remembered is, that any one who, from a good conscience toward God, suffers for any one of these “words” of Christ, suffers as a Martyr. He is bound, as a Christian, “to observe all things whatsoever” commanded by Christ, even at the hazard of his life, or the loss of it. Unless he thus take up the cross of his crucified Lord, he cannot be a genuine disciple. “He that seeketh to save his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake,” says Christ, “shall keep it unto life eternal.” And “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Hence, our Lord himself—the King of Martyrs—bore testimony to the truth before the Jewish Sanhedrin, although he knew that his death would be the penalty—a death of public infamy, and of unutterable agony. Hence, animated by His Spirit, Peter and John, when summoned before the same council, and forbidden to preach in the name of Christ, made their noble appeal—“Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which

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we have seen and heard.” Hence, the intrepid Stephen laid down his life, under the hands of violence—praying like his dying Saviour, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Hence, John the Baptist, for his faithful remonstrance against sin, and James, the son of Zebedee, that fearless “son of thunder,” both fell under the bloody steel of Herod. Thus began, with names never to be forgotten, the long bright roll of New Testament Martyrs. And thus, from year to year, and from age to age, that illustrious roll received accessions, from the violence of Jewish or Heathen persecutors, for three centuries.

But, with only one known exception, all this time, these

Christian Martyrs were BAPTISTS. Neither Christ, nor his Apostles have left us a single precept or example of Infant Baptism. This is a conceded fact. The very first Pedobaptists in history—Cyprian of Carthage and his clergy, (A. D. 253,) did not plead any law of Christ, or Apostolical tradition, for infant baptism. They put the whole thing upon analogy and inference—upon the necessity of infants on the one hand, and the unlimited grace of God on the other. Their own language is an implied and absolute confession that their “opinion,” as they call it, had no basis in any New Testament law or precedent. It confesses, in a word, that in advocating the baptism of literally new-born babes, they were introducing an innovation into the Church of Christ—and they defend it only on the ground of necessity.

In stating this historical fact, we are perfectly aware of the views of Dr. Wall, in favor of a different conclusion. And we are perfectly aware of the special pleadings by which he has darkened the clear light of history on this point. Honest, but prejudiced to the last degree, he has propagated for a century and a half a host of delusions among his confiding followers. He has started Wrong at (pg 9) the beginning; and beguiled his own strong intellect by the most unfounded assumptions. His hereditary idea of a State Church is the first grand error—perhaps the real root of all the rest. Then came the convenient argument of Jewish Proselyte Baptism as the model of Christian Baptism—involving a whole series of false assumptions. Then, the language of Christ and his Apostles is tortured, to draw from it meanings it never can have by any fair interpretation.* Then the language of the early Christian Fathers must be put upon the rack, for the same purpose. Could Clement of Rome, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, or Origen himself, rise from the tomb, they would protest with solemn indignation at the force that has been put upon their words, and the absolute perversion of their testimony.** Then follows Dr. Wall's ingenious supposition to account for the language of Basil, and Cyril—his grand mistake of the testimony of Augustine and Pelagius—and his miserable attempts to set aside the fact, that every distinguished Christian writer of the first four centuries, whose baptism is recorded, was baptized in adult years,

on his own confession of faith—a fact that also holds true of every Christian emperor in the fourth century, from Constantine to Theodosius.

The infatuation of Dr. Wall is sad enough; but it is outdone by a writer in the *North American Review* for January, 1854; who has the weakness to affirm in the

* Even the great Schleiermacher says, “He that will find infant baptism in the New Testament, must first put it there.” So, in effect, say Neander, Hahn, Hagenbach, Bunsen, and the *North British Review*.

** The reader will find the clearest evidence of this in the articles of Dr. Sears, in the *Christian Review*, for March and June, 1838; and still more fully in those of Dr. Chase, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, for November, 1849, and in the *Christian Review*, for April, 1854.

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face of the world—in a lame criticism on Bunsen's Hippolytus—that the evidence for infant baptism “amounts to historical demonstration”. The words of the Apostle to Timothy seem here truly applicable: “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.” The accomplished scholars of the *North British Review*, in several recent numbers, have frankly confessed the want of scriptural and early authority for infant baptism; and have intimated that even the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, appears to be on this point undergoing a process of “historical conversion.”*

But there is one decisive evidence that the primitive Martyrs for three centuries were Baptists. We refer to the document prepared by Eusebius of Caesarea, the ecclesiastical historian, for the signature of all the bishops of the General Council of Nice, (A. D. 325). It is found in his own report of the proceedings, addressed to his flock at Caesarea, as given by Socrates and Theodoret. We subjoin it in Dr. Cave's translation.

“The form proposed by us, and which was read in the presence of the most sacred emperor, and seemed to be liked and approved by all, was in this manner:—The exposition of our faith, as we have received it from the bishops, who were our predecessors, both when we were first instructed in the rudiments of the faith, and when afterwards baptized into it; as we have learned from the

Holy Scriptures, and both believed and taught, not only when we sustained the office of presbyter, but since we came to the episcopal station, so do we still believe, and produce this as the account of our faith: We believe in one God,” &c.**

Here is a testimony from the “Father of Ecclesiastical History,” produced on the most public occasion, in the presence

* North British Review for August, 1852.

** Cave's Lives of the Fathers, Vol. II. p. 112, Oxford, 1840.

(pg 11)

of 318 bishops of the Catholic Church, besides near 2000 other delegates, presbyters and laymen, convened from all parts of the world—in the most solemn form and for the most solemn purpose conceivable—that according to Christ's Commission, instruction in the principles of Christianity, in all cases preceded baptism.

We have said that there was one exception. Cyprian of Carthage, the father of pedobaptism, was a man of God and a martyr. But we affirm, without fear of contradiction, and invite correction if we are wrong, that he is the only one recorded in the first three centuries. Indeed, that the “opinion” of this distinguished man in favor of the baptism of babes before the eighth day from their birth, refers only to cases of immediate danger of death, is clear, not only from his own words, but also from the fact that Eusebius does not even deem the opinion worthy of mention in his Ecclesiastical History. And, as we have seen, the custom was unknown seventy-two years afterwards, at the Council of Nice. Yet how often is this “opinion” of Cyprian quoted now, as if it were evidence of the universal prevalence of pedobaptism in the first ages!

As now, it appears that pedobaptism had “no recognized existence,” even in the so-called Catholic Church, until after the Council of Nice, (nor indeed until the time of Gregory Nazianzen, A. D. 363,) so we have no proof whatever that it ever existed in the Pure Churches, or Cathari, who separated from the Catholics in the preceding century, in the time of Novatian, A. D. 251. This large body of Dissenters from the Catholic communion, were called Novatians by their adversaries; but as the historian Socrates testifies, they called themselves in Greek, Cathari, (in Latin,

Puritani,) signifying the pure; and the name was designed by them to announce the fundamental principle of their separation, which was the preservation

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of a pure church membership, communion, and discipline. They held that the Catholics had so departed from the original constitution of the Church in this respect, as to have forfeited their claim to that honor; and hence invariably baptized all who joined them from the Catholic churches. Hence they are the first in history who were called Anabaptists, that is, rebaptizers; although, of course, they denied the propriety of the appellation, as they believed the baptism administered by a corrupt church to be null and void.*

Much stress has been laid on the fact, that no catalogue of heresies from Irenaeus to Epiphanius, (A. D. 180, to A. D. 380,) enumerates any sect as deniers of infant baptism. The facts already established furnish the answer: there was then no such Catholic custom as infant baptism to be denied. Tertullian (A. D. 200), did oppose the innovation of Quintilla, who would have given baptism to children too young to give proper evidence of piety; and his voice was not, what it has been strangely misrepresented to be, even by Dr. Schaff, “a solitary voice, without an echo;” it was the voice of the then Catholic church,

* Dr. Wall says, they did not complain of the Catholics for infant baptism: but, as we have seen, for a very good reason, namely, that it did not come into common use for ages after, among the Catholics themselves. Neither do the Donatists—who seceded from the Catholics about sixty years after the Novatians, and for very similar reasons—make any such complaint; although they chiefly resided in North Africa, where Cyprian lived and died, and might be supposed to sympathize with him in opinion and practice. Dr. Wall takes this for proof that they were all Pedobaptists—a consequence of his own previous assumptions. All the positive evidence he adduces, is the canon of a Council which belongs to the fifth century; when some of them may be supposed to have fallen in with the prevailing practice of the State Church, though contrary to the distinctive spirit and tendency of their own secession.

(pg 13) against which none replied.* How could they indeed, when the catechumenical course was universally established, as necessary before baptism?

It is time that men of learning and candor abandoned all such unhistorical positions, and inconsequential reasonings. Infant baptism is an error from beginning to end; corrupt in theory, and corrupting in practice; born in superstition, cradled in fear, nursed in ignorance, supported by fraud, and spread by force; doomed to die in the light of historical investigation, and its very memory to be loathed in all future ages by a disabused Church**. In the realms of despotism it has shed the blood of martyrs in torrents; that blood cries against it to heaven: and a long-suffering God will yet be the terrible avenger. The book before us is a swift witness against it.

Down to the time of Constantine, with the solitary exception of Cyprian, as we have shown, all the martyrs— and their number has been computed at three millions— were BAPTISTS; though with various shades of error gradually gathering over them from the beginning of the third century—perhaps earlier. Already the corruption in Rome, and Carthage, had become so great — not in the ordinances, so much as in the membership — as to

* This whole subject of infant baptism, and the true theory of the sacraments, in Dr. Schaff's otherwise admirable History, needs, and will, we trust, yet receive from its esteemed author, a thorough revision.

** In no boastful spirit, but in the spirit of a martyr before God— stung by the solemn conviction of duty, after thirty-five years of earnest and impartial investigation on this subject—to speak out “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”—we nail these Theses to the door of every Pedobaptist Church in Christendom; and challenge all the Christian scholarship of the age, not to ignore, evade, or deny them, but to face the inevitable trial, summon the witnesses, sift the evidence, and, if it can, disprove all, or any one of them. And may God help the right.

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have led to two great Secessions, for the sake of purity, namely, the Novatians, and the Donatists.” When Constantine and Licinius first came into power, (A. D. 312,) they gave equal religious toleration to all their subjects. But the attempt to settle the controversy in North Africa, between the Catholics and Donatists by imperial intervention, (A. D. 316,) was a departure from this impartial protection and equality before the law; and from that fatal

moment, persecution began under the Christian name. The Emperors, whether Orthodox or Arian—the Bishops armed with imperial commissions, whether Orthodox or Arian—became the persecutors of their brethren of the opposite faith. The Pure Churches, (Cathari,) —confessedly orthodox in all things else—refused all the attempts to bring them into the ROMAN CATHOLIC IMPERIAL CHURCH, organized and established by Constantine; and although for a long time honored and protected by the Catholics themselves, for their virtues, began in the fifth century to feel the heavy hand of Catholic intolerance. Socrates, in his Ecclesiastical History, (A. D. 445,) though he records their sufferings from the Arians in the fourth century, tells us that Innocent I., Bishop of Rome, in the reign of Honorius, “was the first persecutor of the Novatians at Rome, many of whose churches he took away.” The same course was pursued by Celestinus, (A. D. 421,) as well as by Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, (A. D. 412).

If, now, we inquire into the cause of this persecution, we shall find it mainly owing to the increased zeal for infant baptism, awakened by the writings of Augustine in this age. Other causes, doubtless, combined with this; but no one who reads the canons of the Council of Carthage at which Augustine presided, (A. D. 414,) one of

* See Mosheim’s Commentaries, &c., for a careful examination of these Secessions. Also, Lardner, Robinson, and Neander.

(pg 15)

which runs in the following terms: “WE will that whosoever DENIES THAT LITTLE CHILDREN BY BAPTISM ARE FREED FROM PERDITION AND ETERNALLY SAVED, that they be ACCURSED,” can question this. Other evidence in confirmation, if necessary, might be adduced from the letters of Augustine himself. From this influence came, also, the edict of Honorius, and Valentinian III. (A. D. 413,) forbidding rebaptism, (as it was termed,) throughout the Roman empire, under the penalty of death. This edict, though aimed especially at the Donatists — whose numerous and flourishing churches were nearly ruined by its rigorous enforcement—was soon applied to the

Novatians, whose practice it had always been to baptize those who came over to them from the Catholic churches. From this time, therefore, THE PURE CHURCHES, became the victims of perpetual persecutions from the hands of the Roman Catholics.

“The first result of the protectorate of the Christian Emperors,” says the Chevalier Bunsen, “was, that in their codes they converted church ordinances, (that about baptism, for instance,) into statute laws. Thus Justinian, in the beginning of the sixth century, ordered new-born infants to be baptized, under a penalty for neglecting it; a law which still passes for a Christian principle in the code of many a Christian State. Evangelical and Christian freedom thus received its death-blow, from the same police crutch which was given it for support.”

Under Roman laws like these, enforced as they were in the Middle Ages, with new and most sanguinary edicts in all the States of Europe, what multitudes must have become MARTYRS, may be conjectured from what occurred at the Reformation, when Baptist martyrs were counted by tens and even hundreds of thousands. We are now gravely told by historians that, from the

* Bunsen's Hippolytus, Vol. III., p. 249.

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sixth century, the Cathari began to decline; and we are told or led to infer, that they ceased to maintain their pure distinctive principles, and gradually merged in the Roman Catholic Church. Not a shadow of proof is offered for this assertion or inference, but that they disappear from the notice of Roman Catholic writers. But the northern “barbarians,” (as they are called,) who broke the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, for a long time refused subjection to the Bishop of Rome, and gave religious toleration to their subjects. Especially was this the case with the Ostrogoths in Italy, under the long and happy reign of Theodoric the Great—when all Italy flourished like a garden. (A. D. 491–527.)

Afterwards, in the East, the Saracens did the same thing, especially to that branch of the succession of the pure churches which went under the name of PAULICIANS. These last maintained themselves, even under the GreekRoman emperors,

amid the fires of persecution, for at least six hundred years, (from A. D. 653, to A. D. 1260) indeed till lost to view by the conquest of the empire by the Turks. The Free Cities of Europe generally—the Italian Republics of the Middle Ages—the Moors in Spain—and the Princes of Provence, or Southern France—all these at times, and even for long periods, gave protection to the persecuted Baptists; who were known alike by their original name of Cathari, THE PURE; and by the subsequent names of Paulicians, Paterines, and Poor Men of Lyons, down to the beginning of the twelfth century—as appears from the successive edicts issued against them.* At this point of time they were joined by some illustrious

* We do not quarrel with Neander for his lamentably distorted and contradictory account of the “Catharists,” and some other denominations, of the Middle Ages. He was not satisfied with it himself. His candor would have set all right; but he wanted the real key to the problem.

(pg 17) reformers from the Church of Rome, such as PETER DE BRUIS, (A. D. 1104 to 1124,) HENRY and Joseph, his disciples, (A. D. 1116 to 1148,) and ARNOLD of BRESCIA, (A. D. 1135 to A. D. 1156,) with whom the present volume begins its “Memorials of Baptist Martyrs.”

From the rapid review we have now taken of the history of Baptist Martyrs from the beginning, we gather some interesting conclusions:

1. That the Baptists have no difficulty whatever in tracing up their principles and their churches to the Apostolic age. It has been often said by our enemies, that we originated in the German city of Munster, in 1534. Lamentable must be the weakness or ignorance of such an assertion, come from whom it may. It were easy to cite eminent Pedobaptist historians, to refute this calumny— especially Limborch and Mosheim, of the last century. But we prefer to quote two historians of the present century, selected by the King of Holland to draw up a history of the “Origin of the Dutch Baptists,” for the use of the government. Dr. Ypeig, professor of theology at the University of Groningen, and Dr. J. J. Dermont, chaplain to the king—both of the Dutch Reformed Church—in the authentic volume thus prepared, and published at Breda, in 1819, come to

the following deliberate conclusions:

“The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses, who were driven by persecution into various countries; and who, during the latter part of the twelfth century, fled into Flanders, and into the provinces of Holland and Zealand, where they lived simple and exemplary lives—in the villages as farmers, in the towns by trades—free from the charge of any gross immoralities, and professing the most pure and simple principles, which they exemplified in a holy conversation. They were therefore in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.” Again: “We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses; and who have long in the history of the Church,

(18 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.) received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles; and as a Christian Society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages. The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination, tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish Church, that the Reformation brought about in the sixteenth century, was in the highest degree necessary; and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics, that their communion is the most ancient”*

Let it be remembered that the learned men who say this, and say it aloud in the ear of majesty, after diligent investigation, are not themselves Baptists. It is a confession of the rarest candor. “Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges.” But what it has cost the Baptists thus to keep their churches pure, through all ages, amidst abounding corruption, heresy, schism, tyranny and persecution, this book of Baptist Martyrs will in some measure show.

2. Baptist principles have always flourished wherever the ruling powers have allowed them toleration. Baptists, it is true, have often lighted up the darkness of history by the flames of their martyrs, and compelled the notice of Chronicles and of Councils, by the very vastness, variety, and intensity of their sufferings. Again and again, as in the primitive times, has the blood of the martyrs been the seed of the Church; but when a little breathing space has been given them in any quarter of the world, they have sprung up like the grass from the scythe of the mower; or, rather, as the oak which

has bowed its lofty head beneath the axe, again renews its branches, its towering trunk, its verdure and its strength.

* It is an interesting fact that as a consequence of this, the government of Holland offered to the Mennonite churches the support of the State. It was politely, but firmly declined, as inconsistent with their fundamental principles.— See Ward's Farewell Letters, 1821.

(pg 19) Witness their rapid growth in the East, in the seventh century— in Italy and France in the twelfth—in all Europe in the sixteenth—under the English Commonwealth in the seventeenth—and in the United States from the period of the American Revolution.*

3. The Baptists have not only their own Martyrs, but it is clear that from the time of Christ down, they have furnished the purest, the most magnanimous, and the most numerous martyrs of all Christendom. This is true from the days of the Apostles, and throughout the Middle Ages. Hear what a Roman Catholic prelate, Cardinal Hosius, president of the Council of Trent, says on this subject, to the Protestants of the Reformation :

“If you behold their cheerfulness in suffering persecution, the Anabaptists run before all the heretics. If you have regard to the number, it is likely that in multitude they would swarm above all others, if they were not grievously plagued, and cut off with the knife of persecution: If you have an eye to the outward appearance of godliness, both the Lutherans and the Zuinglians must needs grant that they far pass them : If you will be moved by the boasting of the word of God, these be no less bold than Calvin to preach; and their doctrine must stand aloft above all the glory of the world, must stand invincible above all power, because it is not their word, but the Word of the living God.”**

4. We see another fact, which gives a peculiar and glorious feature to our denomination. Much as the Baptists have suffered from others, they have never retaliated—never, when in power, pleaded for the principle of persecution, or put it in practice; but have stood forth, among persecuting sects, solitary and alone, as the fearless champions and examples of liberty of conscience. This they have done, too, on settled Scriptural principles, peculiar to

* Those who think to do battle against the Baptists as a modern, reactionary, ephemeral sect, will find themselves greatly mistaken.

** Struggles and Triumphs of Religious Liberty, p. 88.

(20 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.) their views of baptism; and hence have pleaded for liberty of conscience to the fullest extent. Witness the periods of their power in Italy—in Armenia, Syria and Asia Minor—in Southern France—in the Medieval Roman Republic—in Poland in the sixteenth century—in England, Ireland, and especially Rhode Island, in the seventeenth—in the United States at the formation of the American Constitution; and since then in the new Constitutions of the States—in many of which States they were a clear majority of the population. No sect, whose origin dates back two centuries, can share with them this glory. The Quakers, the Moravians, and the Methodists, are of more recent origin. The principle of religious liberty—a distinguishing principle of the Baptists in all ages—we are however happy to add, is now universally adopted by other denominations in the United States— and is fast spreading over the world.

5. The Baptists—though for the most part of the poor of this world, rich in faith only, and unknown to fame, as were the primitive Christians—have yet, in almost all ages, had of their number men of the most eminent learning and ability, who died as martyrs to the faith. From the time of Novatian, indeed, it has been customary with their adversaries to call the whole body by the name of its most distinguished leader—as if they were only a new sect, of which he was the originator. Thus the Cathari were called Novatians—then Paulicians—then Petrobrusians, Henricians, Josephists—then Arnoldists—Waldenses —Lollards—Mennonites; nor were they ever permitted to bear their present name of BAPTISTS, until after their legal toleration, in England, in 1688. Yet to them, as we have seen, belong all the inspired writers of the New Testament—the sources of our Christian literature—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, Jude, Peter, and Paul himself, (pg 21) the accomplished pupil of Gamaliel. To them belong all the Christian writers of the second century, including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and in the next age, Hippolytus, and even Origen himself. And from the time of the Pure Secession, in A. D. 251, they can produce names among the noblest. Novatian himself had no superior in his own time—as his remaining writings show. But most of their writings have perished. The same

persecutions that robbed them of their churches, liberty, and lives, suppressed their schools, and their books—leaving them only that one Book from which they would never part—the foundation of their principles, the guide of their practice, and the support of their hope, amid the terrors of martyrdom—THE BIBLE. Churches supported by the State, with stereotyped creeds, canons, and forms, could afford to do without the Bible; but the Pure Churches, in their sublime dissent and protest, could not.

6. We learn that the Baptists have A GLORIOUS PAST, whose history is yet almost unwritten; and that, rising from the deep roots of the Past, and spreading with the spread of the Scriptures, and of spiritual religion, aided by historical investigation, and by universal liberty, they have in reserve A GLORIOUS FUTURE.

All they want now, in every country on earth, is that same freedom which they have ever given, and rejoice to give, to ensure the ultimate triumph of their principles. As surely as many shall run to and fro, and knowledge be increased—as surely as the light of the moon, according to the beautiful figure of the prophet, shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold, even as the light of seven days—as sure as the time shall come that the saints shall possess the kingdom—and the spirits of the martyrs shall live again in their successors on earth, and reign with Christ for a -

(22 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.) thousand years—so sure, judging from all the past, and all the present, is the final triumph of Baptist principles. Built on the book of God, in a fair field nothing can stand before them. Already they are winning from all others in the United States, in a steady stream of success* —they are reforming more thoroughly the Reformation in Europe—in Africa, and Asia, in the isles of the ocean, and indeed at every point where earnest piety is pressing on to the conversion of the world, they are gaining power —and the prospect now is, that they will soon be spread over the entire East, including India, Burmah, Siam, and China—nations comprising more than half the population of the globe. So, O Lord, let thy kingdom come!

7. But if these things be so, Baptists have a sacred duty to perform; first to themselves, and then to all Christendom. They must seek among themselves to revive THE MARTYR

SPIRIT—"not the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." They must present their bodies, with their souls, their hearts and all their substance, a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable, which is their reasonable service. They must not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their mind and practice in a more eminent degree. They must better estimate the worth of their own Scriptural principles, the glory of their past history,

* It is recorded by Luke, as an evidence of the triumph of Christian Truth in the days of the Apostles, that "the disciples multiplied greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." A competent writer has affirmed recently, that the number of members received into the Baptist churches, for some years past, from other denominations, exceeds 2000 annually; and that the number of ministers so received by change of conviction, is equal to one for every week in the year. This great movement is in principle the very reverse from that of Bishop Ives and the Puseyites. And it is in addition to about 50,000 converts yearly. See *Christian Review*, January, 1854.

(pg 23) and the grandeur of their position and destiny. They must examine, and cultivate themselves more perfectly, by the help of the Holy Spirit—"that they may know what is the hope of their calling, and what is the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints." They must more fully honor, love and pray for the Lord's people of every name; and study to do them good, to profit by all the grace that is in them, and seek to supply what is yet lacking in their knowledge, faith, or practice. They must more fully display that charity which suffereth long and is kind; which envieth not; which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly; which seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; which beareth, believeth, hopeth, endureth all things. This is the true spirit of Martyrdom—without which we may give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burned, and it profiteth us nothing.

This was the spirit of the BAPTIST MARTYRS, whose memorials will be found in this book. No memorial of this kind has before appeared in this country, or even in England. Though confessedly far from complete—embracing no sufferers for Christ,

but those who suffered unto death— going back only to the Middle Ages in time, and limited to Europe as its field, and on that limited theatre preferring the principle of selection to that of accumulation—it will be found to embrace a great variety of the most authentic and heart-touching, as well as pure, noble and triumphant examples of the principles of our faith and the power of the Gospel. It gives us names in which, for Christ's sake, Baptists may justly glory, and which the world itself “will not willingly let die.” To specify no more—here is ARNOLD of BRESCIA, the brightest name of Italy in the Middle Ages—JEROME of PRAGUE, the most

(24 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.) accomplished man of his time—and HUBMEYER of RATISBON, the friend of Erasmus, the fellow-laborer of the first Reformers, classed by the Romanists themselves with Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin, as one of the four great leaders of the Reformation. Inferior in rank and learning, but not in interest, is the wise and good HANS of OVERDAM—the bright youthful JACQUES Dosie of Leuwarden—the loving but faithful JERONIMUS SEGERSON of Antwerp—and the sturdy, outspoken, English yeoman, RICHARD WOODMAN of Sussex, whose mind seems as strong as the iron that he worked in his daily toil. Of the softer sex, here is the gentle but heroic ELIZABETH OF LEUWARDEN.— MARIA OF MONJOU, happier than a bride in the hour of her martyrdom—ANNE ASKEW, of the noblest blood of England, but still nobler by her Christian faith and fortitude —and ELIZABETH GAUNT, the never to be forgotten martyr to evangelical Christian Charity, whose name has been embalmed by Bishop Burnet.

Richard Baxter somewhere says, that he “could as soon die for Charity, as for any article of the Creed.” While he was uttering this just and beautiful sentiment, Elizabeth Gaunt was exemplifying it in the flames, at Tyburn. The picture of her martyrdom forms the appropriate frontispiece of this volume; which is also embellished by engravings of the drowning of Maria of Monjou, and of the examination of Anne Askew in the Tower of London, and of her suffering at the stake in Smithfield.

There are many noble names, of Baptist Martyrs, that we miss

here; but we cannot have everything, in a single volume of the size of this. We doubt not this excellent book will be warmly welcomed by every genuine Baptist in the Union.⁴⁰



PHILADELPHIA, May 1, 1854.

A History of the Fundamentalist Movement

Since J. Newton Brown introduced the concept of a fundamentalist Christian in 1854 it is appropriate to give a little history of the fundamentalist movement in this context.

The series of Bible conferences springing from Niagara, New York at the close of the 19th century (1833-1897) brought both

40 Brown, J. Newton (John Newton), 1803-1868. *Memorials of Baptist Martyrs*. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1854. [Public Domain, Formatted by Dr Edward Rice, Pastor Good Samaritan Baptist Church, Dresden NY. Some OCR work was produced by Google, Inc. Google requested that the images and OCR not be re-hosted, redistributed or used commercially. The text is herein presented as public domain under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 copyright and thereby provided for educational, scholarly, non-commercial purposes as Google, Inc. requested. Original from: University of California, digitized by: Google, Generated on 2021-03-18 12:02 GMT, retyped with corrections by Pastor Rice.]

Fundamentalism and Biblical Dispensationalism into the lime light in America. The Fundamentalist became known for separating, holding anti-denominational (independent autonomous local churches), anticlerical (no clergy) and anti-creedal (no creed but the Bible) stances and defending five fundamentals of faith. Any departure from a fundamental tenant would constitute apostasy and result in separation. Such a rule of strict separation was later, under the neoevangelicals, labeled “militant fundamentalism.” In his book “*Heart Disease in Christ's Body*”, Dr. Jack Van Impe describes the beginnings of the fundamentalist:

The twentieth century began with a tumultuous conservative uproar over the infiltration of numerous denominations by liberalism. The severity of the situation demanded immediate action. Heretical teachings were captivating and corrupting entire churches, schools and related organizations within multiplied denominations. Therefore, a coalition of interdenominational brethren, following a number of conferences, united around the five 'fundamentals' of the faith. They were:

1. The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture
2. The deity of Jesus Christ
3. The virgin birth of Christ
4. The substitutionary, atoning work of Christ on the cross
5. The physical resurrection and the personal bodily return of Christ to the earth.

The adherents to these five 'fundamental' truths were naturally labeled 'fundamentalists.' Those opposing them were called 'liberals.' The men joining together around these five points (commonly called 'the doctrine of Christ') were from varied and diversified religious backgrounds. Thus, this amalgamation of 'first generation fundamentalists' included Presbyterians, Baptists, Reformers, Reformed Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Wesleyan Holiness brothers. The astounding thing about the

members of this interdenominational movement was their love for one another.⁴¹

There was a distinct movement away from such staunch separation, neoevangelicals proposed that the apostate and unbelieving cultures must be constructively engaged. Rather than publicly confronting Church apostasy and separating from it, the neoevangelical advanced repairing it with inclusiveness. They supposed that social acceptance and intellectual respectability would be more effective on the perverse generation in need of correction. Fundamentalists soon dubbed these non-militants as the neoevangelicals.⁴²

In writing a report on the review of Dr. Chafer's *Systematic Theology*, particularly on his chapter on the origins of man, it is declared that none of his chapter recites God's aspect, and it actually represses God's revelation about the origin of man. Chafer's work is apologetic to the evolutionist, apologetic to the humanist, apologetic to the philosopher; it is apologetic to the archaeologist and the geologist; for crying out loud, it is even apologetic to the philologist,⁴³ because that philologist, a historical linguist, "knows" it has taken a hundred thousand years to evolve the human language to where it is today!

There is a need for apologetics and some small amount of apologetic might find its way into a systematic theology, but it should not be the focus of a systematic theology in any arena, and especially not as concerning the origins of man. Dr. Chafer is writing a text that will appeal to 70+ denominations, all of which Dallas Theological Seminary strives to appease and accommodate. Here he does it well, by saying nothing of significance in a chapter that should be very fundamental, very straightforward, and very enlightening.

The whole flavor of a neoevangelical readily seeps from Dr.

41 Dr. Jack Van Impe, "Heart Disease in Christ's Body", Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1984, pp. 127-128.

42 The term *neoevangelical* was popularized by one Harold Ockenga in 1947, neoevangelicals were then embarrassed to be called fundamentalists. (From www.theopedia.com accessed 18 Nov 2013).

43 Chafer, *Systematic Theology Vol 2*, 141.

Chafer's chapter on the origin of man. Dr. Chafer is wholly neoevangelical and his writing about the origins of man strives for intellectual respectability and social acceptance in a perverse world of infidelity and Church apostasy. Dallas Theological Seminary is founded on such neoevangelical principle and is, thus, pandering to 70+ denominations in its outreach. Consequently they must be very careful, never confrontational, in their declaration of truth, which never reaches a state implied in the phrase *declaration of truth*. A Baptist is a fundamentalist, even if they retired the name, and need not exercise such careful avoidance of confrontation, we can be militant.

Dr. Don Boys, who was a former member of the Indiana House of Representatives, author of 14 books, frequent guest on television and radio talk shows, and wrote columns for USA Today for 8 years, wrote an insightful 2013 article “Why Did Evangelicals Break Away From Fundamentalism?” Therein he states a history and clarity of the fundamentalist movement as follows:

Non-Catholic churches in America and Canada can be divided loosely into Modernists (who don't believe the Bible is the Word of God); Evangelicals (who claim to believe in the veracity of the Word but won't fight or even fuss about it); and Fundamentalists (who believe in the fundamentals of the Word of God and are accused of being mad at everyone else).

The title “fundamentalist” is taken from a series of 12 books published in 1910-1915 written by 65 leading Christian scholars; however, I believe that such Christians go back to the beginning of Christianity! All believers in the early churches were Fundamentalists until the Gnostics arrived! The early Christians simply believed in “the fundamentals,” not only what is essential but what is important.

I gladly wear the badge of “Fundamentalist” because I have discovered in my life that these people are the finest, godliest, kindest, theologically sound, and most sincere

people alive. Yes, we have had and will have a few scoundrels who have embarrassed Christianity but then that was true for Paul and the Corinthian church. The Bible commands us how to deal with public sinners; however, even many Fundamentalist churches usually refuse to follow that command. I'm still thrilled to be a Fundamentalist.

The Modernist-Fundamentalist battle raged back in the 40s and 50s when many mainline churches and seminaries, led by unbelieving pastors and professors, lost hundreds of churches to the Fundamentalist camp. Many of those Modernists confessed to be true Christians at their ordination and at the signing of doctrinal positions but were dishonest, only pretending to be Bible Christians. Some were so radical they climbed into bed with Communists!

The fat hit the fire in the late 40s when many dissatisfied Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and a few others exposed the rabid unbelief and Communist influence in the churches, colleges, periodicals, seminaries, and mission boards. Error cannot survive with truth just as darkness cannot coexist with light. Over several years, courageous fundamentalist pastors left their church buildings, denominations, friends, pulpits, income, and retirement plans to begin anew in a hired hall or storefront church. It was a singular time in religious history to be compared, with a little hyperbole, to the Egyptian Exodus and the Protestant Reformation.

After the division, the issue was clear: we had unbelieving Modernists on one side and believing Fundamentalists on the other side. Then, in the late 40s and early 50s a formal schism happened when more liberal pastors pulled away from fundamentalism and became "New Evangelicals." The Fundamentalists preached strict adherence to Bible teaching that included a "coming out" principle. They taught that believers should "come out" from unbelieving organizations as many of

them had done. Fundamentalists also taught that they must contend for the faith and exhort people to do the right thing at all times. They also preached what their critics thought was a little too much about Judgment and Hell to come.

Sometimes while preaching, Fundamentalists even took off their suit coat and rolled up their sleeves! Some even sweated profusely to the disgust of the sophisticated in their audience. It seems few want to be associated with the memory of an uncouth John the Baptist; after all, he lost his head. Most New Evangelicals don't have to worry about that. They do lose their senses, if not their composure, when they try to explain why they left their Fundamentalist roots.

Moreover, Fundamentalists preached that people who had been Born Again should live as if they had a new life. Christians were expected to tell the truth, be faithful to a spouse, obey the laws, pay their bills, live godly lives, and train their children to do the same. Some leaders went to extremes and made lists for members to follow. And yes, some things on the lists were silly with no scriptural support. Of course, that was exactly what the Jewish leaders did in Christ's day.

There was concern on the part of Evangelicals that Fundamentalists were not cognizant, concerned, or committed to social problems; however, Fundamentalists believed that their main message was Christ and His death and resurrection. They remembered the debacle in the 1920s when the social gospel was preached and Fundamentalists wanted to steer away from that deadly error.

A snooty Evangelical falsely charged that a Fundamentalist who "was prepared to even speak to a Roman Catholic was often considered liberal and fatally compromised." Intellectually speaking, that is poppycock and a generous portion of hogwash. In more than fifty years in Fundamentalist churches I have never been aware

of that—nothing close to that. That’s dishonesty.

Evangelicals were always embarrassed about Fundamentalists’ “responsible militancy.” Evangelicals only get militant opposing Fundamentalists! I have noticed that the leading Evangelicals are far more patient and kind to unbelievers than to Fundamentalists. Very strange, especially when Evangelicals speak and write so much about love and tolerance. But the love and tolerance do not go to Fundamentalists.

It’s a fact: if a Christian is not militant, he is not a Bible-practicing person! Not mad, or malicious, or mean, but militant.

The accusation is made that Fundamentalists always insist on a literal interpretation of scripture—even the metaphors and allegories. Nonsense, all Fundamentalists (even the dumbest among us) are aware that trees don’t have hands to clap; however, we do believe that God is trying to tell us something with every Bible passage. Even non-seminarians know that the Bible contains poetry, parables, proverbs, and prophecies as well as history.

A true scholar asks, “What does God want me know about that passage?” Evangelicals may ask the same question, but after finding the truth of the scripture, they refuse to obey it. With them, “love” is far more important than truth; however, truth without love is coldness and love without truth is corruption.

The fact is, we are to be Christians who love people, principle, and precepts.⁴⁴

This examination of fundamentalism rounds out well an examination of True Church History and could be explored with more depth. Here it is included because J. Newton Brown’s preliminary historical essay of 1854 first introduced this concept of

44 Don Boys, Ph.D., “*Why Did Evangelicals Break Away From Fundamentalism?*”, Article, February 23, 2013

<http://donboys.cstnews.com/why-did-evangelicals-break-away-from-fundamentalism> , (Accessed Jun 2013, and 17 Nov 2021).

a fundamental Christian, and because it forms an important chapter in True Church History, albeit part of the Laodicean Church age.

Chapter 5 Bible Ecclesiology vs A Holy Catholic Church

Roman Catholic Religion - The Mother Wolf

The Roman Catholic Church was apostate from its root. When God asked Ezekiel “Son of man, can these bones live?” Ezekiel answered wisely, “O Lord GOD, thou knowest” (Ezek 37:3).

The Roman Catholic Church answered foolishly; “No! The nation of Israel is gone forever, and we the Holy Roman Catholic Church will take its place completely!”

Supposing a Holy Catholic Church will replace Israel in God's plans, God's promises, God's provisions, and God's regathering of Israel at his Son's second coming is apostate to Bible principle, Bible promise, and Bible prophecy. Yet there you have it in Roman Catholic Replacement Theology. In actuality the church was never catholic at all. Catholic means *universal*. Universal mean *all*. There is no “all” church in this present dispensation. Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary itself declares of “catholic,” in all strictness, there is no catholic church or universal Christian communion.

The Lord Jesus Christ testifies that the church is not catholic, even as his twelve ordained disciples were not catholic, one was a betrayer. Matthew 13 in 58 verses gives seven parables that defy a catholic church. The sower of seed found stony soil where seedlings died out (vr.5); the tares were present in the wheat (vr.24-30); the unnatural mustard “tree” lodged birds (vr.31-32); the leaven was in three measures of meal (vr.33); the remnant vs catholic is exposed in the hid treasure parable (vr.44); and the goodly pearl parable (vr.45-46); and the parable of the fish net (vr.47-48) exposes how, in the end, God must sever the wicked from among the just (vr.49-50). *“Jesus saith unto them (disciples), Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord”*(vr.51).

In verse 52 Jesus capstones all this with an emphasis that this is new teaching for a new dispensation, and in verses 53-58 it is profoundly illustrated in the rejection of the “carpenter's son.” There is no catholic, universal church, only a remnant inside what

came to be called Christendom.

A careful study of the writings of the Apostles, writings which make up the twenty-seven books of the New Testament of the Holy Bible, reveals that they never authoritatively dictated what the local churches did or believed. They implored, they reasoned, they pleaded, in love they confirmed their authority, but they did not dictate, ostracize, banish, crucify, or burn their detractors or dissidents. It is Christ's church, he is the head and in the Holy Bible there is no other one individual, no pope, no vicar of Christ, no church, no archbishop, no denominational head, and no organization that usurps any authority over any other local church. His churches operate with autonomous independence. The Apostles themselves were careful to recognize this autonomous independence; they issued no laws, commands, or edicts. Lets contrast that with what the Roman Saint Constantine the Great (272 – 337 AD) aspired for his Roman Church. A brief history lesson is necessary here.

Roman Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) established the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and Roman Saint Jerome (Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius) (346-420 AD) captured them in his Latin Vulgate Bible. Jerome left an ascetic life in the Syrian desert and became secretary to Pope Damasus in 382 AD. In that post he immediately began the translation of the Latin Vulgate finishing his work in 405 AD.⁴⁵ His Latin Vulgate Bible encapsulates what can be called his three “P” error: Repentance is always translated “Penance,” Presbyter is always translated “Priest,” and “Predestination” is dramatically overemphasized.

While Roman Saint Jerome is subtly translating Roman Saint Augustine's doctrines into the Latin Bible, in the background, Augustine is developing the doctrine of two swords. In his letters to Donatists he insists that the Roman Catholic Church has the power and obligation to “compel” people by force into the Catholic

45 Christianity Today, “405 Jerome Completes the Vulgate,” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history> accessed 12/06/2016 [Christianity Today is ecumenical and modernist and never trusted for doctrine; it is only barely trusted by this author to get history right.]

Church.⁴⁶ The immature church under Christ, he supposes, did not yet have the power to do so, but the maturing Catholic Church now has authority to use both the sword of the Spirit, and the sword of the magistrate to compel people to convert and to conform. This became the full fledged doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church:

Catholic Dictionary: term - Two Swords-
Definition: a medieval doctrine on the relation of Church and State, as explained by Pope Boniface VIII (reigned 1294- 1303): "We are taught by the words of the Gospel that in this Church and under her control there are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal . . . both of these, i.e., the spritual and the temporal swords, are under the control of the Church. The first is wielded by the Church; the second is wielded on behalf of the church. The first is wielded by the hands of the priest, the second by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the wish and by the permission of the priests. Sword must be subordinate to sword, and it is only fitting that the temporal authority should be subject to the spiritual" (Unam Sanctam, Denzinger 873).⁴⁷

This doctrine is not Christian, nor is the Roman Catholic Church. That bold assertion needs more emphasis. In establishing itself as The Catholic Church, the Roman church left Christ's teachings about "whosoever will may come," and took up the sword of kings and soldiers to compel conversions and compel

46 Philip Schaff, "NICENE AND POST-NICENE FATHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH Vol 1 - *NPNF1-01 The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine, with a Sketch of his Life and Work,*" Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.html> (Accessed 12/07/2016)

47 The Catholic Dictionary, s.v. Two Swords, <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=36967> (Accessed 12/07/2016) [The Catholic Dictionary is Roman Catholic Church propaganda and never trusted for doctrine, and barely trusted for history; it is only used by this author to document their published error.]

compliance. Constantine the Great used his temporal sword to compel every Roman soldier under his command to become “Christian.” Were they converted by grace through faith? No. They were compelled by the new found authority of the Roman Catholic Church which used the twisted doctrines of Roman Saint Augustine of Hippo. The whole of the Roman Empire was now compelled, by force, to become “Christian.” Roman Saint Jerome inserted these twisted Roman doctrines into the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate Bible via the three “P” errors just mentioned. This was all diabolical, none of this could be called “Christian,” ... but it has been called that for over 1700 years, ever since Constantine the Great forced the Roman Empire to convert to “Christianity,” and used his Roman Catholic sword to silence the Bible believing Donatists who opposed Roman Saint Augustine's doctrines. It was diabolical. It is no less diabolical today.

“The Donatists arose in Numidia, in the year 311, and they soon extended over Africa. They taught that the church should be a holy body.”⁴⁸ This Roman Catholic Church sword was used to annihilate Montanists, Novatians, and Donatists, Paulicians, Adoptionists, and Anabaptists et.al.⁴⁹ All Catholic naysayers were labeled heretics, hunted, ostracized, banished and/or killed by the Roman Catholic Church.

Is the Pope Catholic? Yes. Is the Pope Christian? No. Is the church Catholic? No. Churches are local, independent, autonomous bodies of called out, gathered together Bible believers. They are under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and must not surrender that headship to any Pope, Arch-Bishop, Denominational Organization, Denominational property owner, Mother Church or Mother founder applying for that control. Ergo which of the 11,000+ Christian denominations listed in the 1982 3rd edition of

48 Christian, John T., “*A History of the Baptists*”, Vol 1&2, The Baptist Bible Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana, first published in 1922, public domain, soft copy www.reformedreader.org/history/christian/ahob1/ahobp.htm, accessed 06/03/2019, Vol 1, pg 28.

49 Carroll, James Milton, “*The Trail of Blood*”, 1932, open source, public domain, from <https://archive.org/details/TheTrailOfBlood>, accessed 06/03/2019.

the “*World Christian Encyclopedia*”⁵⁰ are correct? None of them are correct! True Christianity accepts no Pope, Arch-Bishop or Denominational control.

All Protestant and Reformed teachings that the Church is Catholic has its basis in the Roman Catholic Church and are in error. And all Protestant and Reformed churches have such teachings. All denominations are errant in this position. There is no Catholic Church that is Christian.

Protestant's Reformed Theology – An Offspring Wolf

The editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica say:

Protestant Reformation, the religious revolution that took place in the Western church in the 16th century. Its greatest leaders undoubtedly were Martin Luther and John Calvin. Having far-reaching political, economic, and social effects, the Reformation became the basis for the founding of Protestantism, one of the three major branches of Christianity.

They go on to say that the three major branches of Christianity are, “the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and the Protestant churches.” Such a secular source, of course, completely misses the spiritual implications of what the Protestants embodied.

Protestants, as the offspring of the mother wolf, carried the diabolical poisonous fruit of the Roman Catholic Church's error as

50 David B. Barrett, “*World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, A.D. 1900-2000*”, 1982, Oxford University Press, wherein “a denomination is defined as existing within a specific country and there are 33,000+ total of these “Christian denominations” in 238 total countries.” These are subdivided into “6 major ecclesiastico-cultural mega-blocs”, and ordering them by denomination size we have: Independents (about 22000), Protestants (about 9000), “Marginals” (about 1600), Orthodox (781), Roman Catholics (242), and Anglicans (168). Making for 11,000+ non-independent denominations. From <http://www.philvaz.com/apologetics/a106.htm> accessed 06/03/2019.

a leaven which rises in all 33,000 “Christian Denominations.” It was blatant, brazen, and authoritarian in the Roman Catholic Church; it is subtle and disguised in the Protestant Churches springing from the Protestant Reformation.

Protestants Carry on in Error

It has been said that the Protestant Reformation was fine as far as it went, but it did not go near far enough. *Sola fide, sola scriptura* and *sola gratia* established exceptional first steps but Protestants carried a ton of Roman Catholic baggage past October 31, 1517, the eve of All Saints’ Day, when Luther posted his 95 theses to the Roman Church door.

Protestants, in general, still hold to four systematic errors of the Roman Catholic Church, 1) the catholicness of the church, 2) the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation, 3) the replacement of Israel by the catholic church, and 4) the dismissal of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

The latter two of these errors, the replacement of Israel and the dismissal of the Millennial Reign, are exposed in great detail in this work’s “Volume 11 Eschatology”, particularly in its Chapter 4 “Dispensational’s Alternative, Supersessionism”, and more particularly in its sections “The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology”, Part 1, 2, 3 and conclusion. Because of that extensive coverage in volume 11, there is only cursory attention given to those errors in this volume.

Baptists Are Not Protestants

It needs to be said out loud that Baptists are not Protestants. This is as good a time as any.

Baptists were present prior to the Protestant Reformation and indeed carry a perpetuity all the way back to the New Testament Apostles. Some inaccurately jest that their founder is John the Baptist, but in actuality the Baptist name did not come from John, but from Christians who never accepted Roman Catholic infant baptism, never assimilated with the Roman Catholic Church, and were given hateful labels by that apostate church. The previous

chapter gave extensive coverage this truth from both Shakleford, and Brown, but more can be said. John T. Christian (you have to love that name) captured this truth in his two volumes of “*A History of the Baptists*” In his first volume's Chapter VII “The Origin of the Anabaptist Churches” he succinctly captures and documents the truth about Baptists perpetuity.

The beginnings of the Anabaptist movement are firmly rooted in the earlier centuries. The Baptists have a spiritual posterity of many ages of liberty-loving Christians. The movement was as old as Christianity; the Reformation gave an occasion for a new and varied history. The statement of Mosheim who was a learned Lutheran historian, as to the origin of the Baptists, has never been successfully attacked. He says:

“The origin of the sect, who from their repetition of baptism received in other communities, are called Anabaptists, but who are also denominated Mennonites, from the celebrated man to whom they owe a large share of their present prosperity, is involved in much obscurity [or, is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, as another translator has it]. For they suddenly started up, in various countries of Europe, under the influence of leaders of dissimilar character and views; and at a time when the first contests with the Catholics so engrossed the attention of all, that they scarcely noticed any other passing occurrences. The modern Mennonites affirm, that their predecessors were the descendants of those Waldenses, who were oppressed by the tyranny of the Papists; and that they were of a most pure offspring, and most averse from any inclinations toward sedition, as well as all fanatical views.

“In the first place I believe the Mennonites are not altogether in the wrong when they boast of a descent from these Waldenses, Petrobrusians, and others, who are usually styled witnesses for the truth before Luther. Prior to the age of Luther, there lay concealed in almost every country of Europe but especially in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, very many persons, in whose minds were deeply rooted that principle which the Waldenses, Wyclifites, and the Husites maintained, some more covertly and others more openly; namely, that the kingdom which Christ set up on the earth, or the visible church, is an assembly of holy persons; and ought therefore to be entirely free from not only ungodly persons and sinners, but from

all institutions of human device against ungodliness. This principle lay at the foundation which was the source of all that was new and singular in the religion of the Mennonites; and the greatest part of their singular opinions, as is well attested, were approved some centuries before Luther's time, by those who had such views of the Church of Christ" (Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, III. 200).

This opinion of Mosheim, expressed in 1755, of the ancient origin of the Baptists and of their intimate connection with the Waldenses, and of other witnesses of the truth, meets with the approval of the most rigid scientific research of our own times.

Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest men who ever lived, declared it was "his conviction that the Baptists were the only Christians who had not symbolized with Rome" (Whiston, Memoirs of, written by himself, 201). William Whiston, who records this statement, was the successor of Newton in Cambridge University, and lectured on Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. He himself became a Baptist and wrote a book on infant baptism.

Alexander Campbell, in his debate with Mr. Macalla, says:

"I would engage to show that baptism as viewed and practiced by the Baptists, had its advocates in every century up to the Christian era and independent of whose existence (the German Anabaptists), clouds of witnesses attest the fact, that before the Reformation from popery, and from the apostolic age, to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and the practice of baptism have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced" (Macalla and Campbell Debate on Baptism, 378, 379, Buffalo, 1824).

Again in his book on Christian Baptism (p.409. Bethany, 1851), he says (of Baptists):

"There is nothing, in all ages and in all countries, (that) has been, as a body, the constant asserters of the rights of man and of liberty of conscience. They have often been persecuted by Pedobaptists; but they never politically persecuted, though they have had it in their

power.”

Robert Barclay, a Quaker who wrote largely upon this subject, though not always free from bias, says of the Baptists:

“We shall afterwards show the rise of the Anabaptist took place prior to the Reformation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the Continent of Europe small hidden Christian societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists, have existed from the times of the apostles. In the sense of the direct transmission of Divine Truth, and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probable that these churches have a lineage or succession more ancient than that of the Roman Church (Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Societies of the Commonwealth*, 11, 12. London, 1876).

More congenial to civil liberty than to enjoy an unrestrained, unembargoed liberty of exercising the conscience freely upon all subjects respecting religion. Hence it is that the Baptist denomination, in these statements might be worked out in circumstantial detail. Roman Catholic historians and officials, in some instances eye-witnesses, testify that the Waldenses and other ancient communions were the same as the Anabaptists.⁵¹

Protestants, in general, still hold to four systematic errors of the Roman Catholic Church, 1) the catholicness of the church, 2) the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation, 3) the replacement of Israel by the catholic church, and 4) the dismissal of the Millennial Reign of Christ. These four errors are, in general, rejected and refuted because, for Baptists, the sole authority of all faith and practice is the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired word

51 Christian, John T., “*A History of the Baptists*”, Vol 1, CHAPTER VII The Origin of the Anabaptist Churches, The Baptist Bible Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana, first published in 1922, public domain, soft copy www.reformedreader.org/history/christian/ahob1/ahobp.htm, accessed 06/03/2019, Vol 1, pg 56.

of God. Baptists are not Protestants, they have always rejected infant baptism in any form, and they reject these four Roman Catholic doctrines. Many Baptists have been ignorantly seduced, or “leavened”, into these errors by those toting Reformed Theology and John Calvin's ill gotten ideas about election (rooted in the Catholic Church being the new elect of God, while supposing Israel is rejected as the elect of God). Do not be deceived when such leaven rises. Baptists still reject such Protestant error.

Ecumenical Bible Changers – Offspring of the Offspring

The thesis of this section is that the Roman Catholic Church is the mother wolf of deception for this brazen error about the catholicness of the church, that the Protestant reformers, as offspring of their mother catholic church, are carrying that error with more subtle ways, and that now, the drive to sell copyright ecumenical bibles to everyone is the ultimate in diabolical subtleness for propagating Satan's line “Yea hath God said?”

A young Christian had heard in Sunday School that the world and the Devil so hated God's word that they would confiscate and destroy every copy. “It would happen in his life time!” he was told. He took and hid his Sunday School award Bible up in his attic and said, “They will never take away my Holy Bible!”

When he was all grown and a junior in seminary he became troubled when an old Baptist preacher gave him a flier that said:

All modernists ecumenical Bibles completely leave out 20 verses that have always been in the Holy Bible. They say that Matt 17:21 is not supposed to be in the Bible. They take their pen knife and cut it out! Then they take their knife and cut out Matt 18:11, 23:14, Mark 7:16, 9:44 & 46, 11:26, 15:28, Luke 17:36, 23:17, John 5:4, Acts 8:37, 15:34, 24:7, 28:29, Rom 16:24, and 1 John 5:7, then they take Col 1:14 and cut out the clause "Through His Blood" because they think God did not mean to say that. For over nineteen hundred years believers have considered these 20 verses to be inspired, inerrant, infallible Scripture. **Modernist ecumenical scholars contend that no Bible in existence today is inspired.** Baptists will

never agree with such folly. We use the ONLY complete English Bible with these verses still intact, the Authorized King James Bible.

There are 64,000 other reasons detailed in this short study. Many are misinformed about this crucial issue. Many partake in the modernist's diabolical attack against the KJB.⁵²

The copyright New International Version New Testament has 64,000 fewer words than the King James Bible's New Testament! Words that are certainly in the Greek New Testament have been completely eliminated. Baptists will not use the NIV⁵³ or ESV⁵⁴, holding instead to the complete and accurate authorized King James Bible.

Baptists, above all others, base all their faith and practice on only the words of the Holy Scriptures. When critical modernists mess with the words they are messing with our faith and practice. It is better to learn that 'thee' is the 2nd person singular of 'you' and 'thou' is its subjective case than to have a sinister textual critic mess with your faith and practice.

When he looked, he found that those verses were not in his Bible. The Bible student scoured through his whole seminary looking for a King James Authorized Bible to see what they said and found none on the premises. He took a bus to his father's old house, climbed up into the attic, and retrieved his old Sunday School award Bible, and there were all twenty of those verses. He made this profound observation, “The Devil never did come and confiscate our Bibles, Christians just forsook them and turned them over for new modernist versions that do not reflect the infallible, inerrant, verbally inspired Words of God.”

The truth in that scenario is already substantiated in the Prolegomena and Bibliology sections of this Systematic Theology,

52 See “The Defense of Twenty” by Pastor Ed Rice, Good Samaritan Baptist Church, 54 Main St., Dresden NY 14441

www.gsbaptistchurch.com/seminary/landmark/content/defense_twenty.pdf

53 NIV is a registered trademark of the New York Bible Society International, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, standing for “New International Version” and their ecumenical modernist copyright, all rights reserved, 1973 bible.

54 ESV is a registered trademark of the Crossway – Good News Publishers, Wheaton Illinois, standing for “English Standard Version” and their ecumenical, modernist, copyright, all rights reserved, 2001 bible.

but rehearse here the subtle power of this diabolical deception. Ecumenical bibles do indeed change doctrine.

A case in point, the catholic church, from its roots, has works embedded in its salvation process. It might be Roman, Orthodox, or Episcopalian penance, Presbyterian infant baptism, Methodist methods or Pentecostal baptismal regeneration, there is always something added to belief before salvation is secured. John 3:36 states, “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*” Herein, as throughout the Holy Bible, Salvation is solely based on faith (4102 πιστις *pistis* as a noun) i.e. what we believe (4100 πιστευω *pisteuo* exact same Greek word as a verb). Salvation is not based on works that we might do or obedience that we might render.

There are times when the fifty-seven highly skilled linguists, employed and paid by King James from 1603 through 1611, divided into six companies which met in cities of Cambridge, Westminster, and Oxford, as they, under the unction of the Holy Spirit of God, took seven years to translate God's inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Old Testament and New Testament books into an authorized Holy Bible which answered only to the original Hebrew and Greek, well there were times when the context of the text and the doctrine of the whole Bible determined how a word might be translated. Such is the case with the phrase “believeth not” in John 3:36. The Greek word used, (544 απειθεω *apeitheo*) literally means “not to allow one's self to be perused” and could thus be translated disobedient. The highly skilled linguists translating the Authorized Version knew in the context of salvation to translate it “believeth not” as they did eight other times (Acts 14:2, 17:5, 19:9, Rom 11:31, 15:31, Heb 3:18, 11, 31). These expert linguists only translated this Greek word “disobey” when the context called for it in four verses not dealing with soul-salvation (Rom 10:21, 1Pet 2:7,8, 3:20). Modernist ecumenical translators, however, did not take this care.

How do ecumenical modernist bibles translate the “*believeth not*” phrase in their ecumenical friendly copyright versions?

Perhaps Jesus said, “*he who disobeys* the Son shall not see

life”? As copyright by James A.R. Moffatt D.D., D.LITT., in his 1950 "The Bible – A New Translation". All rights in this book are reserved. No part of the text may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission.

Or was it “**he who does not obey** the Son shall not see life”? As copyright by The Lockman Foundation in California, in their 1960 NASB (NASB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for the New American Standard Version).

Or was it, “he who **disobeys** the Son shall not see that life”? As copyright by the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press in their 1961 NEB (NEB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for the New English Bible).

Or was it “**he who does not obey** the Son shall not see life”? As copyright by the World Publishing Company in their 1962 RSV (RSV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for Revised Standard Version).

Or was it “**whoever disobeys the** Son, will not have life”? As copyright by the American Bible Society in their 1966 Good News Bible- Todays English Version.

Or was it “he who does not believe the Son shall not see life”? As copyright by the Oxford University Press, Inc. in their 1967 NKJ (NKJ is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New King James). [Oxford University agreed not to change any underlying Greek in their New Testament translation, only to strip away all second person singular indicators (and make them all plural, you and your) and to remove all verb case indicators (“believeth ... hath” vs Oxford's “believes ... has”). However, these changes could not secure a copyright on their New Testament. They got their copyright because all their required “significant deviations” are found in their Old Testament which did not even use the Masoretic Text.]

Or was it “**whoever disobeys** the Son shall not see life”? As copyright by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Washington D.C., in their 1970 NAB (NAB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New American Bible).

Or was it “**whoever rejects** the Son will not see life”? As copyright by the New York Bible Society International,

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in their 1973 NIV (NIV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New International Version).

Or was it “**he that disobeys** the Son will not see life”? As copyright by the Watch Tower Bible And Tract Society of Pennsylvania and International Bible Students Association in their 1984 NWT (NWT is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New World Translation). [It is curious that the Watch Tower Society, that does not believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ nor the trinity of the Godhead, predominately change, with brazen boldness, what offends their faulty doctrines.]

Or was it “**no one who rejects** him will ever share in that life”? As copyright by the American Bible Society in their 1995 CEV (CEV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for Contemporary English Version).

Or was it “**whoever does not obey** the Son shall not see life”? As copyright by Crossway – Good News Publishers, Wheaton Illinois, All rights reserved, in their 2001 ESV (ESV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for English Standard Version).

These translations of the Greek may not be technically in error, but in the context of receiving “so great salvation” by faith and faith alone, when that is the context, they are grossly in error. In the Bible he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the son shall not see life. In 8 of 11 of these ecumenical modernist bibles it is not unbelief, but disobedience that sends a soul to hell and in 2 of the 11 it is not unbelief but rejection. Shame on those dollar driven, bible societies and more so shame on the Christians who gave up their Bibles without a fight.

Modernist ecumenical translators also use a corrupted Greek text as seen in the next case in point.

The catholic church, from its roots, has made salvation a process that is tied to works and growth. You cannot, they say, be sure of your salvation as an instantaneous “born-again” completed event wherein one day you were headed to hell and the next you were headed to heaven. Consequently, what will be the leaning of the ecumenical modernist bibles on this new-birth concept? First Peter 2:2 states “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the*

word, that ye may grow thereby:” but modernists, via their corrupted Vaticanus and Sinaiticus Greek manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt, add to the Word of God to deny the instantaneous new birth, and make salvation a growing thing. Look what their corrupted Greek text added to their ecumenical translations.

Perhaps, they suppose, Peter said, “Like newly born children, thirst for the pure, spiritual milk to make you **grow up into salvation**”? As copyright by James A.R. Moffatt D.D., D.LITT., in his 1950 "The Bible – A New Translation". All rights in this book are reserved. No part of the text may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission.

Or was it “long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may **grow in respect to salvation**”? As copyright by The Lockman Foundation in California, in their 1960 NASB (NASB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for the New American Standard Version).

Or was it, “Like the newborn infants you are, you must crave for pure milk (spiritual milk, I mean), so that you may thrive upon it to your soul's health”? As copyright by the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press in their 1961 NEB (NEB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for the New English Bible).

Or was it “that by it you may **grow up to salvation**”? As copyright by the World Publishing Company in their 1962 RSV (RSV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for Revised Standard Version).

Or was it “Be like newborn babies, always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so that by drinking it you may **grow up and be saved**”? As copyright by the American Bible Society in their 1966 Good News Bible- Today's English Version.

Or was it “as *newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*”? As copyright by the Oxford University Press, Inc. in their 1967 NKJ (NKJ is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New King James). [Oxford University agreed not to change any underlying Greek in their New Testament translation, only to strip away all second person singular

indicators (and make them all plural, you and your) and to remove all verb case indicators (“believeth ... hath” vs Oxford's “believes ... has”). However, these changes could not secure a copyright on their New Testament. They got their copyright because all their required “significant deviations” are found in their Old Testament which did not even use the Masoretic Text.]

Or was it “Be as eager for milk as newborn babies – pure milk of the spirit to make you **grow unto salvation**”? As copyright by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Washington D.C. in their 1970 NAB (NAB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New American Bible).

Or was it “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may **grow up in your salvation**”? As copyright by the New York Bible Society International, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in their 1973 NIV (NIV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New International Version).

Or was it “as newborn infants, form a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word, that through it you may **grow to salvation**”? As copyright by the Watch Tower Bible And Tract Society of Pennsylvania and International Bible Students Association in their 1984 NWT (NWT is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New World Translation). [It is curious that the Watch Tower Society, that does not believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ nor the trinity of the Godhead, predominately change, with brazen boldness, what offends their faulty doctrines.]

Or was it “Be like newborn babies who are thirsty for the pure spiritual milk that will help you **grow and be saved**.? As copyright by the American Bible Society in their 1995 CEV (CEV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for Contemporary English Version).

Or was it “that by it you may **grow up into salvation**”? As copyright by Crossway in their 2001 ESV (ESV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for English Standard Version).

The Holy Bible never intimates that one can “grow to salvation.” It is a new birth, a conversion, a quickening that God does, not a process that man does. In Holy Bible salvation a soul is instantaneously converted, quickened, justified, indwelt, and

baptized into Christ. That is not something one can “grow” or “grow up” to. In the ecumenical movement it is, but in the Holy Bible it is not. Their ecumenical modernist bibles are errant and dangerous.

Many will read all these copyright renditions and repeat Hillary Rodham Clinton's line “What possible difference could it make anyhow!” Three important observations on these multiple renditions. First, words are important. Many of the words added by these translators are not represented at all in the Greek New Testament⁵⁵. Secondly Manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt, where Holy Roman Catholic Saint Origen became the Father of Bible criticism, and the Father of the Roman Catholic's allegorical method, should not determine what is in or not in our Bible; we do not need an ecumenically acceptable bible we need an accurate and authorized Holy Bible. It is our sole authority, it is our final authority.

Thirdly, when there are multiple version which must, by copyright law, have significant deviations from all other versions there is no final authority. Christians wandering from this version to that, none knowing exactly what the Holy Bible says about anything, makes the whole lump, even the soiled evangelicals absolutely apostate, i.e they have abandoned and left what was once believed. The local church needs an absolute authority, found, for English speaking peoples, in the Authorized King James Bible.

The Bible and the Local, Non-Catholic, Church

Honest Bible students, ignorant of this Roman Catholic development of the Catholic Church, have been led down the garden path to accept a Catholic Church because the Scriptures often speak of the church in the singular, i.e. “*And I say also unto*

55 The corrupted Westcott and Hort Greek text, based on the corrupted Alexandrian Egypt manuscripts, copyright 1966, by The United Bible Societies of the USA, inserted two Greek words “εις σωτηριαν” “unto salvation” in 2Peter 2:2. The Greek Received Text (The Textus Receptus) and the Holy Bible does not include them.

thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matt 16:18). The misconception we are addressing is the supposed existence of a catholic (universal) church, whereby all saved people are members of this catholic, universal body of believers. That is not what is portrayed in the Holy Bible, and the distinction is important in church polity.

The Bible mentions the church in the singular in 78 verses while it mentions churches in the plural in only 36 verses. The many uses in the plural certainly cause consternation to a doctrine of a Catholic Church, but might not, in the minds of some, carry the weight to refute it. Of the singular uses of the church the majority are used in consideration of a singular local independent autonomous New Testament church. Certainly, as noted previously, Christ addressing the seven local, independent, autonomous churches in the Revelation of Jesus Christ would cause the serious Bible student to completely abandon the Roman idea of a Holy Catholic Church. The first and last church messages address the church “of” Ephesus, and the church “of the” Laodiceans, the other five messages address the church “in” Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia. These are so obviously non-catholic references that these seven instances can debunk the whole ideology of a Holy Catholic Church. But lets examine other singular references of the church.

Some singular references of course occur when there was only one local church at Jerusalem (Acts 2:47, 5:11, Gal 1:13, Php 3:6). Most of the other singular references are obviously speaking of a local independent autonomous church, such as “*the church which was at Jerusalem*” (Acts 8:1, 3, 11:22, 26, 12:1, 5, 15:4, 22) or “*the church that was at Antioch*” (Acts 13:1, 14:27, 15:3) or “*elders in every church*” (Acts 14:23) or they are used in addresses similar to, “*Unto the church of God which is... at Corinth/of the Thessalonians*” (1Cor 1:2, 2Cor 1:1, 1Thes 1:1, 2Thes 1:1). Then there are many other singular intimations where a local church is obviously intended, and a Holy Catholic Church cannot be supported, “*And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch*” (Acts 18:22, also

20:17, Rom 16:1, 5, 23, 1Cor 4:17, 6:4, 11:18, 22, 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 35, 16:19, Php 4:15, Col 4:15, 16, 1Tim 5:16, Phm 1:2, James 5:14, 1Pet 5:13, 3 John 1:6, 9, 10).

That leaves only a few verses that might be construed, in some misguided fashion, to speak of a Holy Catholic Church, but in actuality it is obvious that they speak of the church corporately. Some are corporately referencing “*the Church of God*” (Acts 20:28, 1Cor 10:32, 15:9, 1Tim 3:5, 15) and clearly indicate how God addresses the corporate body of the church (the whole called out, gathered together body of believers), without implying that it is a Holy Catholic Church. Let's examine the others (Matt 16:18, 18:17, Acts 7:38, 1Cor 12:28, Eph 1:22, 3:10, 21, 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32, Col 1:18, 24 (his body), Heb 2:12, 12:23).

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.... And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Mat 16:18, 18:17).

In these two texts of Matthew, Jesus is speaking of the formation and function of his *ecclesia* or called out body of believers. It is obvious that he is speaking of the church corporately and not a local, independent, autonomous body of believers assembled at Jerusalem or at Ephesus. But there is no need to establish a Holy Catholic Church ideology for this usage to make sense. In the exact same sense it has been said, “England built their jury to ensure a fair equitable judicial system, and the jury is to hear all the evidence in a criminal proceeding.” That is using the term “jury” corporately to reference how twelve people on a local, independent, autonomous jury assembled in the Camden district of London England corporately function. Such is a widely used and accepted means of communicating and there is no inclination to think that England has a supreme Catholic (Universal) Jury System, and all local juries belong to the Catholic (Universal) entity.

In 1Cor.12:28 *“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of*

tongues.” This corporate usage of the term church is now obvious. And likewise in Ephesians when Paul writes, “*And (God) hath put all things under his (Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*” (Eph 1:20, 22-23), the church is used in this corporate sense, not in any catholic sense. So to in Eph 3:10, 21, 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32, Col 1:18, 24 (his body), Heb 2:12, and 12:23.

The ideology of a Holy Catholic Church was devised by Origen of Alexandria Egypt in order to supplement his development of a Replacement Theology, wherein, in the mind of this Roman Catholic Church Father, a Holy Catholic Church takes over all the promises made to God's chosen and elect people Israel. When a person gets saved they do not become part of a catholic church, they do not become part of the Bride of Christ, they become part of the family of God; a bride is called that only on the day of the wedding, before that day she is espoused, and is to be a “chaste virgin not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing” thus she should be “holy and without blemish,” and after that wedding day, wherein she is called a bride, she is called the wife, i.e. a bride is a bride for a day.. And so it is for the Bride of Christ, called the bride only when the Bridegroom comes. As part of the family of God, family members are to be baptized by immersion in obedience to Christ's command, and are to unite with a local, independent, autonomous church where they can continue in the doctrine of the Apostles. It is really quite simple, straight forward, and non-catholic.

Chapter 6 When Did Christ's Church Begin?

Many weigh in with opinions about exactly when the church began. Unfortunately most do so without the necessary background to consider why the question is important. There is a transition from the dispensation of law to the dispensation of grace that must be in focus in this consideration. Very simply stated it is the church of Jesus Christ and consequently he is the founder, framer, and former of the church. If it were found, framed, and formed in Acts 2:1-3 it might be called the Church of Pentecost, if in Acts 2:4, the Church of the Holy Ghost, if in Acts 2:14, the Church of Peter, if in Acts 13:2 (as the hyper-dispensationalists attest), the Church of Barnabas and Saul, if in Acts 28:26-28 (as the ultra-dispensationalists following E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913) attest), the Church of the Gentiles, or the Church of Paul. And I suppose if the church were founded in Genesis 3 and Jeremiah 31, as Covenant Theologians attest⁵⁶ it might be called the Church of Roman Catholic Saint Augustine of Alexandria Egypt. Before one weighs in declaring “I believe the church started when” they need to better understand some of the disparaging ideologies that are on the table in this consideration.

Independent Baptists love to fight, and like Hatfields and McCoys they often enjoy the fight so much that they forget what the fight started over in the first place. This is exactly the problem when considering the question of when Christ's church got its start. In fifty years as an Independent Baptist I have heard all the arguments for why Christ's church did not begin in Acts chapter two, and all the arguments of why Christ's church must have begun in Acts chapter two. In that exposure, and on both sides of the debate, I have heard eloquent arguments given by very intelligent gifted men of God. I cannot recall any of them bringing into the discussion why the question was of extreme importance. None. Not once in fifty years have I read what you will read in this short

56 Covenant Theologians include Roman Catholic Saint Augustine, John Calvin (via his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2:9-11), Charles Hodge, Jonathan Edwards, B. B. Warfield, R. C. Sproul, John Piper, Harold Camping, et-al.

article. Pay attention. Take notes. Fight smarter, ... or better, contend for the faith with wisdom.

Covenant Theology

The Covenant Theologian supposes that the Catholic Church started in the Old Testament, particularly that it was part of God's Covenant of Grace. This Covenant of Grace, they suppose, was made individually with Noah, Abraham, and David, made nationally with Old Testament Israel as a people, and made universally with man in the New Covenant. Thus a prominent feature of all Protestant theology (whether Presbyterian, Reformed Churches, Methodism, Pentecostal, or Reformed Baptists... or Reformed Anything) is that believers in all ages are all 'in Christ,' are all part of the Body and Bride of Christ, and consequently Christ's church began with the Old Testament saints, not with Jesus Christ, and not with the coming of the Holy Spirit of God in Acts chapter two.

Let me reiterate that this is a prominent feature in “all Protestant theology.” This leaven leads to their conclusion that Israel has been completely replaced by the Holy Catholic Church, and this leaven is a major influence in all denominations. Baptists are not Protestant, nor reformed, nor per se a denomination, nor denominational. Baptists are independent and autonomous under the headship of our founder the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptists churches have no human entity, head, or denominational authority that they answer to. Beware of the leaven of Protestants.

Hyper-Dispensationalism

Hyper-Dispensationalists suppose that the Christian church had its beginning with the ministry of the Apostle Paul in the early part of the book of Acts. Ergo there are Acts 9 hyper-dispensationalists and Acts 13 hyper-dispensationalists but none that hold to classical dispensationalism nor an Acts 2 church beginning. Their predominate founder is Pastor/Teacher/Author John Cowin O’Hair (1876 – 1958).⁵⁷ Hyper-Dispensationalist

57 Dale S. DeWitt, *“The Origins of the Grace Movement – The Early Theology*

Cornelius Stam (1908 – 2003) explains how Peter built the Messianic church, but Paul built the Gentile Body of Christ's church.⁵⁸ Hyper-Dispensationalist Charles F. Baker (1905-1994) took the Acts 13 founded church to even greater extremes believing that, since Paul does not seemingly mention baptism by immersion after Acts 13, it is not valid for the current dispensation!⁵⁹ Baker, and Hyper-Dispensationalists in general, have strong leanings toward Calvinism, and confusion about Israel's place in God's economy. Ergo Hyper-Dispensationalism has no place in any Baptist church, nay, not in any Bible Believing church.

Ultra-Dispensationalism

Ultra-Dispensationalists suppose that the Christian church had its beginning with the ministry of the Apostle Paul in the end of the book of Acts. The most notable proponent of Acts-28 Dispensationalism was E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913). He taught

of John Cowen O'Hair.” Grace Gospel Fellowship, 2002. And Dr. Dale DeWitt and Bryan Ross, “*The Origins of the Grace Movement – The Theology of the John Cowen O'Hair into the Nineteen-Thirties*” as printed in Grace Gospel Fellowship's *Truth Magazine* Vol 63 and 64 in 2014.

- 58 Cornelius R. Stam, “*Things That Differ – The Fundamentals of Dispensationalism*”, Berean Bible Society, Chicago, 1951 [Cornelius R. Stam is founder of Berean Bible Society].
- 59 Charles F. Baker, “*A Dispensational Theology*”, 1971, (Baker's 688-page masterwork). [Baker attended Scofield Memorial Church, founded by C. I. Scofield, was editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, and his pastor was Lewis Sperry Chafer, who also founded the Evangelical Theological College, which later became Dallas Theological Seminary. He was first an associate pastor with J.C. O'Hair at North Shore Church in “uptown” Chicago. Later, Baker partnered with C.R. Stam to develop and open the Milwaukee Bible Institute, which later became Grace Bible College. Baker was a graduate of Wheaton College but they qualify his alumni reference with the opening line “If Charles F. Baker represented an extreme form of dispensational theology, his credentials were impeccable.” Baker's other books include “Understanding the Book of Acts”, “Dispensational Relationships”, and “Understanding the Gospels.” From <http://a2z.my.wheaton.edu/alumni/charles-f-baker> and <https://www.fellowshipbiblechurchorlando.org/charles-f-baker> accessed on 11/07/2019].

that the gospels and Acts were under the dispensation of law, with the church actually beginning at Paul's ministry after Acts 28:28, "*Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*"⁶⁰ E.W. Bullinger held that both baptism and the Lord's Supper fall outside of the current, post-Acts dispensation, and suppose that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as well as the epistles written before Acts 28:28 (Acts 13 for mere hyper-dispensationalists) are not meant to be part of the faith and practice of the Gentile Christian Church, i.e. the Church that Paul Built.

The genius of Bullinger is not to be diminished in this rebuke. He eloquently broke from much of the gross error of Covenant Theology, and all the error of Replacement Theology. He strategically broke from the man-made moorings and stated the danger of going to far. And then he went to far. He made this premise:

We must bring (dispensationalism), as all else, to the bar of the written Word to see whether we have learned from man, or from God, from tradition or from revelation. ... We shall all be agreed that the great subject of the Old Testament prophecies is a restored Israel and a regenerated earth (Matt. 19. 28). ... We are at one with all our readers in taking these prophecies in their literal meaning; and in not attempting to explain them, or rather fritter them away by any spiritualizing interpretation which deprives them of all their truth and power. We all look forward also to the time when "He that scattered Israel will gather him" (Jer. 31:10).⁶¹

When Ultra-Dispensationalist Bullinger and Hyper-Dispensationalist John Cowin O'Hair, Cornelius Stam and Charles

60 To be fair hyper-dispensationalists who enjoyed Bullinger as a mid-Acts hyper-dispensationalist don't feel that all of his works should be dismissed or invalidated because of an errant conclusion about an Acts 28 Pauline started Gentile Church that he made toward the end of his life.

61 E. W. Bullinger, "*The Foundations of Dispensational Truth*", Samuel Bagster and Sons,

F. Baker broke from Covenant Theology and its Replacement Theology errors about Israel, they went extreme, trying to divide Christ's church into a Peter built Messianic church and a Paul built Gentile church. Therein lies the importance of the argument about when Christ's church began. It did not begin in the Old Testament, as Protestants contend, and it did not begin with the Apostle Paul as hyper-and-ultra-dispensationalists contend. For the Baptists who are wording lengthy arguments on the subject, get familiar with the real contenders in this argument. There is a battle for truth going on, and we dare not be ignorant about it. There is no Jewish church and separate Gentile church. There is but one church, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female (Gal 3:26-29).

Biblical Dispensationalism

As stated previously, an understanding of dispensationalism is essential for a Biblical ecclesiology. Comprehending the church age, this dispensation of grace and truth, its beginning and its ending will not be Biblically sound without comprehending the Biblical dispensations that God is walking us through. The error of covenant theology and all of its ugly tentacles will not be corrected without understanding dispensations. The over corrections of hyper and ultra dispensationalism cannot be corrected without the basic outline of the dispensations being well in hand. Because one cannot understand the second coming of Christ without discerning that the sixth dispensation, the dispensation of grace, called the church age, must come to a close the dispensations and the errors of covenant theology are thoroughly covered in volume 11. In understanding the doctrine of the church, ecclesiology, one must thoroughly understand that the church age has a beginning and a closing, thus this solid understanding of the seven dispensations is vital to a Biblical ecclesiology. That understanding can be achieved by going through chapter 5 of the Anthropology volume or chapter 3 of the Eschatology volume. The outline of these seven dispensations is included below:

God's Seven Dispensations Outlined

- The First Dispensation – Innocence (Gen 1:28 Scofield Note)
- The Second Dispensation – Conscience (Gen 3:23 Scof. Note)
- The Third Dispensation – Government (Gen 8:20 Scof. Note)
- The Fourth Dispensation – Promise (Gen 12:1 Scof. Note)
- The Fifth Dispensation – Law (Exod 19:8 Scof. Note)
- The Sixth Dispensation – Grace and Truth (Jn,1:17, Eph,3:1-6)
- The Seventh Dispensation – The Kingdom (Eph 1:10)

In this study of the doctrine of the church a Biblical look at the sixth dispensation is essential. Between each dispensation there is a transition and one cannot rightly divide the Word of Truth without a consideration of these transitions.

The short survey of the seven dispensations builds the framework for the study the stewardships of man in anthropology, the study of the church age in ecclesiology, and the study of last things in eschatology. Christendom's many misunderstandings of the Bible and its end times comes from those who have rejected dispensationalism and embraced supersessionism, i.e. Replacement Theology, and Covenant Theology. Be careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth in these areas, and dispensationalism is key to the divisions.

When The Church Age Will Close

“He (Jesus) answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you (disciples) to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (the great multitudes) it is not given.” (Matt 13:11b)

In Scripture a “mystery” is a previously hidden truth which is now revealed by God to contain supernatural, and spiritual discerned elements that were not previously understood. There are eleven greater mysteries referenced in the New Testament and this one is the first mention. (The eleven are delineated well by C. I. Scofield in his 1909 “The Scofield Reference Bible”.) the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed in seven parables of Matthew 13 and that revelation tells the disciples, “It will not be

quite like your thinking.”

In the opening of the Acts of the Apostles they again ask about the kingdom, “*saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*” (1:6). Jesus' response entails “not just yet,” but conveys the already revealed truth that Israel will be restored. Such a restoration is spoken of in the Apostle Peter's second preached message.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:19-21).

The Apostle Paul's writings brazenly address this restoration in his writings to the Romans.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Romans 11:25-29).

The second of the eleven greater mysteries is in verse 25 of this text and it is the mystery of Israel's blindness during this age, (the age of the church, the dispensation of grace). Clearly this age is the church age, it is around “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”, and then it will close. That is what ages (dispensations) do, they open and they close. And

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (2Pet 3:9-10).

The church age will end, Israel will be restored, the seventh and final dispensation will begin and last for its 1,000 years.

Fussing over when the church began must be more focused on refuting Covenant Theology and Hyper-Dispensationalism's false narratives. The church's founder is the Lord Jesus Christ, her empowerment is in the fulfillment of his promise that was fulfilled fifty days after his resurrection. Fussing so over which of these two carries the day is to quite miss the larger case for dispelling false teachings.

Chapter 7 The Church and the First Amendment

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. ... Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Revelation 3:7,8,10,11

Some suppose it a coincidence that the first amendments to our constitution set before us an open door, and that that door was first opened in the city of Philadelphia, where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were written and signed. The Declaration of Independence was formally adopted on July 4th 1776. The Constitution was written during the Philadelphia Convention which convened from May 25 to September 17, 1787 and it was signed on September 17, 1787. The First Amendment, along with the rest of the Bill of Rights, was submitted to the states for ratification on September 25, 1789, and adopted on December 15, 1791, all in Philadelphia. These are important milestones in the freedom of religion wherein a door was opened, a door that no mere man can shut.

Satan hates this open door. His attempts to close it are myriad and ongoing. He has tried to flood it with his own followers to where Islam was/is the fastest growing religion in the US. His attacks are furious and unrelenting. In this chapter the Bible student can get familiar with the legal actions taken against this open door.

A pastor need not be a constitutional lawyer, but, in the United States of America, he needs a genuine appreciation for the first amendment and its two clauses, “The Establishment Clause,” which prohibits the government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another, and “The Free Exercise Clause” which prohibits the government, in most instances, from interfering with a person's practice of their religion.

The clause "separation of church and state" is found nowhere in the first amendment, nor in these two fundamental clauses, but liberal lawyers suppose that the Establishment Clause enforces such a misrepresented and slippery principle. In an article “What does 'separation of Church and State' actually mean?”, by Neal Hardin, Aug 29, 2019 it is stated:

“Separation of Church and State” is one of the most misunderstood phrases in modern political discourse. Yet, it is also a phrase with deep roots in Baptist tradition and one that we, as Christians, should have a healthy understanding of as we seek to engage in the public sphere.

Origins of “Separation of Church and State” The phrase “separation of Church and State” originates in a letter that our third president, Thomas Jefferson, wrote to the Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut in 1802. Understanding the background of this letter is key to understanding the meaning of this infamous phrase.⁶²

The misrepresentation of this “separation of church and state” clause might be soundly illustrated by the following. The Village of Dresden, NY, insisted that we of Good Samaritan Baptist

62 Neal Hardin, “What does 'separation of Church and State' actually mean?”, The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Article, 29 Aug, 2019. <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/what-does-separation-of-church-and-state-actually-mean> accessed 5/6/2020

Church stop entering the village park and using it for any of our purposes. We had on occasion taken a Sunday School class into the park and sat together under a tree for our Bible lesson. They sited that the constitution insisted on a “separation of church and state” for this redress. Such a brazen ignorance about “separation of church and state”, a clause not even found in constitutional law, prompts the Bible student's consideration of this chapter.

Further, this chapter is added to this volume as a redress of government actions taken during the COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease of 2019) pandemic. In March of 2020 many local and state governments attempted to close the doors of churches on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday with orders meant to protect the general public from the spread of a virus. What the government considered “non-essential” businesses were force to close, and many churches attempted to fit under an umbrella of being an “essential business.” A letter correcting this misnomer was written to an involved Baptist Pastor:

Dear Pastor

I greatly appreciate your endeavors exposing and righting the government's slighting of the churches constitutional rights. I might only address one contention. In pressing to have the church considered an “essential business”, or even just “essential” one can lessen the actual position of the church as a constitutionally protected entity, with a protected right to exist and operate with its doors open. The church is not an essential business, indeed it is not a business at all. It is not important that local, state, or federal governments consider or call a church essential, it is important that it consider it as the constitutionally protected entity that it is. The focus should be to emphasize, highlight, and re-establish the truth that churches have a constitutional right to exist and operate freely, with doors open to all who would assemble there. This is most clearly stated in both alliterated clauses of the first amendment, “The Establishment Clause,” which prohibits the

government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another, and “The Free Exercise Clause” which prohibits the government, in most instances, from interfering with a person's practice of their religion.

I am a little concerned that we not go off on a path about being “essential” to the neglect of being constitutionally protected whether an official is convinced of our essentialness or not. I am just saying.... and always praying. God bless your efforts in this fight.

Pastor Rice GSBaptistChurch.com, Dresden NY.

As I say we do not need to become constitutional lawyers in this consideration, but knowing the amendment, clauses and legal precedence is going to be helpful. Consider first the first amendment.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.⁶³

An overview of this first amendment is provided by the Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, Open Access to Law since 1992 (Cornell University is no friend to Christianity):

First Amendment: An Overview

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the right to freedom of religion and freedom of expression from government interference. It prohibits any laws that establish a national religion, impede the free exercise of religion, abridge the freedom of speech, infringe upon the

63 The United States Constitution, Amendment I.

freedom of the press, interfere with the right to peaceably assemble, or prohibit citizens from petitioning for a governmental redress of grievances. It was adopted into the Bill of Rights in 1791. The Supreme Court interprets the extent of the protection afforded to these rights. The First Amendment has been interpreted by the Court as applying to the entire federal government even though it is only expressly applicable to Congress. Furthermore, the Court has interpreted the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as protecting the rights in the First Amendment from interference by state governments.

Freedom of Religion

Two clauses in the First Amendment guarantee freedom of religion. The Establishment Clause prohibits the government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another. It enforces the "separation of church and state." However, some governmental activity related to religion has been declared constitutional by the Supreme Court. For example, providing bus transportation for parochial school students and the enforcement of "blue laws" is not prohibited. The Free Exercise Clause prohibits the government, in most instances, from interfering with a person's practice of their religion.⁶⁴

The first clause of the first amendment has been labeled the "Establishment Clause." The Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute (note that Cornell University is no friend to Christianity) says of the Establishment clause:

The First Amendment's Establishment Clause prohibits the government from making any law "respecting an establishment of religion." This clause not only forbids the government from establishing an

64 https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/first_amendment, accessed 5/2/2020

official religion, but also prohibits government actions that unduly favor one religion over another. It also prohibits the government from unduly preferring religion over non-religion, or non-religion over religion.

Although some government action implicating religion is permissible, and indeed unavoidable, it is not clear just how much the Establishment Clause tolerates. In the past, the Supreme Court has permitted religious invocations to open legislative session, public funds to be used for private religious school bussing and textbooks, and university funds to be used to print and public student religious groups' publications. Conversely, the Court has ruled against some overtly religious displays at courthouses, state funding supplementing teacher salaries at religious schools, and some overly religious holiday decorations on public land.

One point of contention regarding the Establishment Clause is how to frame government actions that implicate religion. Framing questions often arise in the context of permanent religious monuments on public land. Although it is reasonably clear that cities cannot install new religious monuments, there is fierce debate over whether existing monuments should be removed. When the Supreme Court recently considered this issue in *Van Orden v. Perry*, 545 U.S. 677 (2005), and *McCreary County v. ACLU*, 545 U.S. 844 (2005), it did not articulate a clear general standard for deciding these types of cases. The Court revisited this issue in *Salazar v. Buono* (08-472), a case which considered the constitutionality of a large white Christian cross erected by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on federal land in the Mojave Desert. While five justices concluded that a federal judge erred in barring a congressionally ordered land transfer which would place the memorial on private land, there

was no majority reasoning as to why. Three Justices held that the goal of avoiding governmental endorsement of religion does not require the destruction of religious symbols in the private realm, while Justice Scalia and Justice Thomas concluded that the plaintiff lacked standing to bring this complaint.⁶⁵

Several attacks against this open door to our freedom have set legal precedence for its staying open. It behooves a Bible student to be reasonably familiar with these attacks and the rulings bantered about in their consideration. Five of these court cases are considered below.

Considering that the “Supreme Court has permitted religious invocations to open legislative session” a Washington Post article cited by Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute states:

Supreme Court upholds legislative prayer at council meetings, By Robert Barnes, May 5, 2014

A divided Supreme Court ruled Monday that legislative bodies such as city councils can begin their meetings with prayer, even if it plainly favors a specific religion.

The court ruled 5 to 4 that Christian prayers said before meetings of an Upstate New York town council did not violate the constitutional prohibition against government establishment of religion; the justices cited history and tradition.

“Ceremonial prayer is but a recognition that, since this Nation was founded and until the present day, many Americans deem that their own existence must be understood by precepts far beyond the authority of government,” Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote for the court’s conservative majority.

The ruling reflected a Supreme Court that has become more lenient on how government may accommodate religion in civic life without crossing the

65 https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/establishment_clause, accessed 5/2/2020.

line into an endorsement of a particular faith. All nine justices endorsed the concept of legislative prayer, with the four dissenters agreeing that the public forum “need not become a religion-free zone,” in the words of Justice Elena Kagan.⁶⁶

The Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute sites similar articles for the Supreme Court Rulings in areas of:

1) public funds to be used for private religious school bussing,

Appellant: Arch R. Everson

Appellee: Board of Education of the Township of Ewing

Location: Everson Residence Docket no.52

Decided by Vinson Court, Lower court, State appellate court, Citation 330 US 1 (1947) Argued Nov 20, 1946 Decided Feb 10, 1947

Facts of the case: A New Jersey law authorized reimbursement by local school boards of the costs of transportation to and from schools, including private schools. 96% of the private schools who benefitted from this law were parochial Catholic schools. Arch R. Everson, a taxpayer in Ewing Township, filed a lawsuit alleging that this indirect aid to religion violated both the New Jersey state constitution and the First Amendment. After losing in state courts, Everson appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court on purely federal constitutional grounds.

Question: Did the New Jersey statute violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment?

Conclusion: 5–4 decision for Board of Education majority opinion by Hugo L. Black. The New Jersey law reimbursing parents for transportation costs to parochial schools did not violate the Establishment

66 https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/supreme-court-upholds-legislative-prayer-at-council-meetings/2014/05/05/dc142ede-cf9d-11e3-b812-0c92213941f4_story.html

Clause. A divided Court held that the law did not violate the Constitution. Justice Black reasoned that the law did not pay money to parochial schools, nor did it support them directly in anyway. It was rather enacted to assist parents of all religions with getting their children to school.

Justices Jackson, Frankfurter, Rutledge, and Burton dissented.⁶⁷

2) university funds to be used to print and public student religious groups' publications.

Citation: 515 US 819 (1995), Argued Mar 1, 1995, Decided Jun 29, 1995

Facts of the case: Ronald W. Rosenberger, a University of Virginia student, asked the University for \$5,800 from a student activities fund to subsidize the publishing costs of *Wide Awake: A Christian Perspective* at the University of Virginia. The University refused to provide funding for the publication solely because it "primarily promotes or manifests a particular belief in or about a deity or an ultimate reality," as prohibited by University guidelines.

Question: Did the University of Virginia violate the First Amendment rights of its Christian magazine staff by denying them the same funding resources that it made available to secular student-run magazines?

Conclusion: 5–4 decision for Rosenberger majority opinion by Anthony M. Kennedy Yes. The Court, in a 5-to-4 opinion, held that the University's denial of funding to Rosenberger, due to the content of his message, imposed a financial burden on his speech and amounted to viewpoint discrimination. The Court noted that no matter how scarce University publication

67 "Everson v. Board of Education of the Township of Ewing." Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/330us1. Accessed 2 May. 2020.

funding may be, if it chooses to promote speech at all, it must promote all forms of it equally. Furthermore, because it promoted past publications regardless of their religious content, the Court found the University's publication policy to be neutral toward religion and, therefore, not in violation of the establishment clause. The Court concluded by stating that the University could not stop all funding of religious speech while continuing to fund an atheistic perspective. The exclusion of several views is as offensive to free speech as the exclusion of only one. The University must provide a financial subsidy to a student religious publication on the same basis as other student publications.⁶⁸

3) the Court has ruled against some overtly religious displays at courthouses:

Petitioner: County of Allegheny

Respondent: American Civil Liberties Union,
Greater Pittsburgh Chapter

Docket no. 87-2050, Decided by Rehnquist Court,
Lower court, United States Court of Appeals for the
Second Circuit, Citation 492 US 573 (1989), Argued
Feb 22, 1989, Decided Jul 2, 1989

Facts of the case: Two public-sponsored holiday displays in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, were challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union. The first display involved a Christian nativity scene inside the Allegheny County Courthouse. The second display was a large Chanukah menorah, erected each year by the Chabad Jewish organization, outside the City-County building. The ACLU claimed the displays constituted state endorsement of religion. This case was decided together with *Chabad v. ACLU and City*

68 "Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia." Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1994/94-329. Accessed 2 May. 2020.

of Pittsburgh v. ACLU of Greater Pittsburgh.

Question: Did the public displays violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment?

Conclusion: 6–3 decision for County of Allegheny majority opinion by Harry A. Blackmun. In a 5-to-4 decision, the Court held that the creche inside the courthouse unmistakably endorsed Christianity in violation of the Establishment Clause. By prominently displaying the words "Glory to God for the birth of Jesus Christ," the county sent a clear message that it supported and promoted Christian orthodoxy. The Court also held, however, that not all religious celebrations on government property violated the Establishment Clause. Six of the justices concluded that the display involving the menorah was constitutionally legitimate given its "particular physical setting."⁶⁹

4) state funding supplementing teacher salaries at religious schools:

Appellant: Alton J. Lemon, et al.

Appellee: David H. Kurtzman, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, et al.

Location: Eastern District Court of Pennsylvania, Docket no. 89, Decided by Burger Court, Citation 403 US 602 (1971), Argued Mar 3, 1971, Decided Jun 28, 1971.

Facts of the case: Both Pennsylvania and Rhode Island adopted statutes that provided for the state to pay for aspects of non-secular, non-public education. The Pennsylvania statute was passed in 1968 and provided funding for non-public elementary and secondary school teachers' salaries, textbooks, and

⁶⁹ "County of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union, Greater Pittsburgh Chapter." Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1988/87-2050. Accessed 2 May. 2020.

instructional materials for secular subjects. Rhode Island's statute was passed in 1969 and provided state financial support for non-public elementary schools in the form of supplementing 15% of teachers' annual salaries.

The appellants in the Pennsylvania case represented citizens and taxpayers in Pennsylvania who believed that the statute violated the separation of church and state described in the First Amendment. Appellant Lemon also had a child in Pennsylvania public school. The district court granted the state officials' motion to dismiss the case. In the Rhode Island case, the appellees were citizens and tax payers of Rhode Island who sued to have the statute in question declared unconstitutional by arguing that it violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The district court found in favor of the appellees and held that the statute violated the First Amendment.

Question: Do statutes that provide state funding for non-public, non-secular schools violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment?

Conclusion: Unanimous decision for Lemon, majority opinion by Warren E. Burger. The Pennsylvania statute is unconstitutional under the religion clause of First Amendment for excessive entanglement of state and church.

8-1 decision for Lemon, majority opinion by Warren E. Burger. The Rhode Island statute is unconstitutional under the religion clause of First Amendment for excessive entanglement of state and church.

Yes. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger delivered the opinion for the 8-0 majority as to the Pennsylvania statute and 8-1 as to the Rhode Island statute. The Court held that a statute must pass a three-pronged test in order to avoid violating the Establishment Clause.

The statute must have a secular legislative purpose, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither promotes nor inhibits religion, and it must not foster “excessive government entanglement with religion.” The Court held that both the state statutes in question had secular legislative purposes because they reflected the desire of the states to ensure minimum secular education requirements were being met in the non-public schools. The Court did not reach a holding regarding the second prong of the test, but it did find that the statutes constituted an excessive government entanglement with religion. In the Rhode Island program, the amount of oversight of teachers and curricula required to ensure that there is no unnecessary injection of religion into secular topics would require the government to become excessively involved in the nuances of religious education. The same danger holds true for the Pennsylvania statute, which additionally provides state funding directly to a church-related organization. Government financial involvement in such institutions inevitably leads to “an intimate and continuing relationship” between church and state. The Court also noted the potential political implications of public funding, as there is a risk of religious issues becoming politically divisive.

In his concurring opinion, Justice William O. Douglas wrote that the intrusion of the government into the running of non-public schools through grants and other funding creates the entanglement that the Establishment Clause prohibits. He also argued that non-secular schools are so thoroughly governed by religious ideologies that any amount of public funding supports those doctrines, which the Framers of the Constitution dictated the government must not do. Justice Hugo L. Black joined in the concurrence, and Justice Thurgood Marshall joined in the parts relating to case numbers 569 and 570. Justice William J.

Brennan, Jr. wrote a separate concurrence in which he argued that the danger was not only that religion would infiltrate the government, but also that the government would push secularization onto religious creeds. An analysis of the statutes in question shows that they impermissible involve the government in “essentially religious activities,” which the Establishment Clause is meant to prevent. In his opinion concurring in part and dissenting in part, Justice Byron R. White wrote that the majority opinion goes too far and, in restricting the use of state funds in non-secular schools, creates an obstacle to the use of public funds for secular education. He argued that there was no proof that religion would invade secular education or that the government oversight of the use of public funds would be so extensive as to constitute entanglement.

Justice Thurgood Marshall did not participate in the discussion or decision of case number 89.⁷⁰

It is likely more important for the most part to use this open door of freedom of religion than it is to defend it. God has done the job of keeping the door open, but always be vigilant. God has used jailed Baptist preachers to initiate the First Amendment, and to cry the loudest when Satan attempts to close the door. Cry out with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for sure, but while crying out keep an eye on that First Amendment and the door it has opened to us.

70 "Lemon v. Kurtzman." Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1970/89. Accessed 2 May. 2020.

Chapter 8 Critique of Other Systematic Theology Ecclesiology Works

Critiques of some other systematic theology works are taken directly from the authors “Advanced Systematic Theology II TH80X Written Report, A Written Report Presented to the Faculty of Louisiana Baptist University, In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Doctorate of Philosophy in Theological Studies,” wherein Dr. Chafer's six volumes of “Systematic Theology” was the text assigned for analysis and comparison to other theology works. The critiques are at times harsh and often pointed but are not intended to discredit in any way the genius, character or integrity of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952), founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, the genius, character or integrity of Charles Hodge (1797-1878), a Presbyterian Minister and Princeton theologian called “the father of the printed systematic theology,” or the genius, character or integrity of Augustus H. Strong (1836-1921), an American Baptist Pastor and president of Rochester Theological Seminary. Each of their magnum opus, “Systematic Theology” works embody the best of the theological reflection and thought in their generations.

A systematic theology is more than a Bible doctrine book in that it systematically reviews other approaches to a doctrine. It needs to review what others assembled as systematic theology works with their belief systems. The "ology" in theology emphasizes a discourse which meanders down every conceivable avenue of consideration for a topic. While a Bible doctrine must detail every straight and narrow consideration of what God has revealed, a thorough "ology" must do that, plus expand and expound on every thread. It must further introduce and explore some of the major broad paths and wide gates of mans creation. It should thereby open some vistas which may not have been considered by the student of doctrine, being ever vigil because the wide paths do lead to destruction. Review of other works of systematic theology pursues this mind broadening purpose.

Critique of Chafer's 1948 Ecclesiology

Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871 – 1952) wrote eight volumes of Systematic Theology, and Volume IV is 249 pages called Ecclesiology and 199 pages called Eschatology. In my studies at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary I reviewed and critiqued all eight volumes. Consider first that Dr. Chafer and his theology were not as fundamental as is regularly supposed. He was the founding president of Dallas Theological Seminary and long-time editor of *Bibliotheca Sacra*. His Seminary had the motto “Teach Truth, Love Well” and was representative of 70+ denominations. Dr. Chafer was called a fundamentalist but a militant fundamentalist could not be representative of 70+ denominations. As song leader under C. I. Scofield he became a gifted teacher for the newly formed World's Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA). And in 1924 his Evangelical Theological College, which became Dallas Theological Seminary, was called fundamental.⁷¹ However, evangelicals became neoevangelicals when they scoffed at the fundamental separatist position and refused the fundamentalist's militant attitude. Dr. Chafer never scoffed, but he never separated either. Dr. Chafer never mocked militants, but he never became one, and he never camped with any. Instead he coddled to 70+ denominations and the neoevangelicals which lived there.

Chafer displays two primary goals in writing his systematic theology. First he was intent on reaching the Presbyterian Denomination with a dispensational doctrine which would hold to a Biblical premillennial return of Christ. This would necessarily debunk their long held Covenant Theology and its underlying Replacement Theology.

Secondly, Chafer strives to write an “unabridged” systematic theology. Dr. Chafer contends that a Systematic theology is “the collecting, systematically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts concerning God and His works from any and every source.”⁷² It was stated previously that in making such a

71 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 160

72 from www.ChristianBook.com book promotion accessed Dec 2013

brash definition Chafer unwittingly puts philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato, and Roman Catholics such as Saint Augustine and Saint Aquinas, and Protestants, who persecuted Baptists, i.e. men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, on equal grounds with Holy Scripture. In writing his eight volumes on Systematic Theology he repeatedly makes this blunder. A Systematic Theology is not to be an unabridged rendition of everything ever believed about God, as Chafer has boasted, it is to be a systematic organization of each truth that God has revealed in his inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired record. These truths are to debunk the theoretical conjectures of previous philosophers and theologians. Chafer uses none of this authority against Presbyterian error or the errors of the 70+ denominations he represents.

The first of these systematic purposes effects Chafer's ecclesiology because he is careful to tiptoe around the 70+ denominations he is representing. In so doing he holds onto much of Presbyterian's Calvinism. However his second purpose, writing an "unabridged theology," causes a systematic flaw which shows up in every avenue of his theology. "Unabridged" means uncondensed. In balancing the huge volume of "everything ever believed about God" Dr. Chafer never captures a systematic organization of any Bible doctrine. His voluminous effort is marked by sentences, paragraphs, and whole sections which have little redeeming value. His theology includes an overage of quotes of other 'theologians', and a famine of quoted or expounded Holy Scripture. In light of these drawbacks, little value can be extracted from Chafer's verbose 249 pages of ecclesiology.

Critique of Chafer's Volume IV Ecclesiology Introduction

A review of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's Ecclesiology and Eschatology in Volume IV of his Systematic Theology must begin with a review and documentation of his three most critical and systematic flaws. His whole Systematic Theology is seriously flawed in its organization, in its doctrines, and in its communication. Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology is profoundly effected by all these shortcomings, but his Eschatology represents, at least, baby steps away from the flawed doctrine of Protestants, their

Reformed Theology, and John Calvin's Covenant Theology.

Dr. Chafer has a very verbose and conglomerated communication method. His work is laden with run-on passive voice sentences. His commentary drones on for pages without significant content, and it takes careful scrutiny to discern his main point. This may be a purposeful style. Pleasing 70 + denominations at Dallas Theological Seminary is easier when many of them do not know exactly what you are saying. It is not, however, a competent way to write a systematic theology.

The doctrines of Dr. Chafer must be drawn out of his verbose commentary. As was stated in critique of his volume on Soteriology, it is easier to draw doctrine out of the Holy Bible than to draw it out of Chafer's voluminous effort. It is doubtless more accurate to do so as well. Again, trying to capture a doctrine agreed to by 70+ denominations is an undue challenge. None the less, this critique will address his doctrines on Ecclesiology and Eschatology, especially as they differ from Bible Doctrine.

The most profound flaw in Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology is his lacking organization and lack of a system in what he considers systematic. This profoundly effects each volume and each doctrine of his work. Here, in Volume IV of his work, this lack annuls his presentation of a Biblical Ecclesiology and a Biblical, dispensational, premillennial Eschatology.

When one sets out to write a Systematic Theology they must organize every revealed doctrine in the Holy Bible. To some extent every man is a theologian because he organizes, in some fashion, what he knows about God. In that organization he distinguishes which parts he believes. Hopefully that is done consciously. Making such organization systematic entails a considerable effort and focused purpose. To do a systematic analysis each substantial part of a system is partitioned and isolated into a separate subsystem which is carefully defined and understood. Then all the systems are analyzed in concert to understand the larger system.

In a Systematic Theology, in a volume on Ecclesiology and Eschatology, those topics would be partitioned and isolated and therein carefully and Biblically defined. Dr. Chafer's Volume IV has none of that.

A Critique of Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology

Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology section begins with his attempt to divide angels from Gentiles and Jews from Christians. This snafu occurred because Dr. Chafer wants to hold on to John Calvin's election of Christians, but reject John's Covenant Theology where Elect Christians replace God's elect nation, Israel. Calvin brought into Reformed Theology this old Roman Catholic Replacement Theology. Dr. Chafer is intent on advancing Dispensational Theology, but refuses to disbar, or deny, or even define its archenemy Covenant Theology. This dilemma results in a volume on Ecclesiology intent on differentiating between Jew and Christian and Gentile. This is very awkward and not normally a concern of Ecclesiology at all.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal.3:27-28)

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (1Cor.12:13)

Chafer's Systematic Error, What is Truth?

In his Ecclesiology Dr. Chafer needs both a strong organization of the truth about the church and the church age, and then a relentless attack of the Reformed Theologian's Covenant Theology, Replacement Theology, and Catholicism of the church. Chafer's lacking organization and discipline make such a success unachievable. Chafer's unsystematic system and flawed organization of material brings about a very flawed doctrine. A flawed doctrine which it conceals in exaggerated verbosity.

Previous theologies have been built as if theology were a science. Dr. Chafer falls into the same trap. A scientific method

starts with a hypothesis which it twists and refines with experiment until it holds enough merit to advance to a theory. Theologians have considered theories reliable enough to place in their science based systematic theologies. In the scientific method, after a theory receives more extensive testing and refinement, it becomes a law. As an engineer this author loves and respects the scientific method. Kepler used it expertly to derive the laws of planetary motion. As a theologian this author insists that the scientific method has no place in deriving the "Thus saith the LORD" kind of truth which a true theologian is looking for.

Pilot asked Jesus, "What is Truth?" In my statistics class I taught that truth is discovered by four primary means, only one has proven reliable.

1) Philosophy says "I think therefore I am." In the philosophy field one thinks, reasons, deduces and believes, expecting he has therein discovered truth. Philosophy expounds only subjective rational truth.

2) In the turn of the last century scientists formalized the scientific method, and used it in founding natural laws operating in our universe. In this method a hypothesis is tested, refined, and observed into a theory, which is tested, refined, and observed into a natural law. Leading theologians pounced on this, and considered theology as the chief of the sciences. They filled their Systematic Theology books with theories that they documented into laws expecting that they had discovered the truths about God. But science is only an able tool to lead and surmise the truth about natural laws, not supernatural laws.

3) Statistics had an ugly beginning. It had trouble overcoming its nemesis, "Figures don't lie, but liars figure." The surveys and studies, the analysis and presentation of averages and standard deviations could surely lead to truth. But consider how statisticians and politicians readily misleads people into some grandiose untruths. Know also that philosophy and science can do the same misleading. In the field of statistics, a majority believing something makes it the truth, and the danger of that reasoning is self-evident.

For philosophy one need only mention Christian Science

founder Mary Baker Glover Eddy's idea that this world is only in the mind. And we have come to where science has, with no evidence, elevated the spontaneous generation of life to a theory, and then to law for "scientists". Evolutionists even settled on the insane idea that "survival of the fittest" had changed beagle dogs into Clydesdale horses, and lizards into bald eagles. Ergo, these three forms of discriminating truth, statistics, science, and philosophy, have their notable flaws.

4) The forth method of discerning truth is the "Thus saith the LORD" method. This is not the religious method. Indeed religion's source of truth is generally some ugly combination of the previous three mentions. Even in Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology this "Thus saith the LORD" method to often takes a back seat to religion and survey. One would expect a section on Ecclesiology would begin with God's notable definition of the church and its formation. Instead Dr. Chafer first philosophizes about angels, Jews, Gentiles and Christians. He then gives the scientific method a spin and presents theories that have been advanced. Chafer then presents a statistical survey of who believes what.

Organizing theology systematically requires that a baseline of truth be established up front. That base line must proceed with a "Thus saith the LORD" as its sole source. The other methods are fraught with blunder.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer has purposed to "collect and systematically arrange, compare, exhibit and defend all facts concerning God and his works from any and every source." Systematically such an approach is theological malpractice. His lack of organizing thoughts and direction is serious, but his total miss-organizing the "system" in systematic, coupled with his strong reliance on extra Biblical sources make this volume, and his previous three, inexcusable.

Chafer's Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the *ecclesia*, translated to English as the *church*. The origin of the word *church* comes from the Greek word *kuriakos*, meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended some to make it capture the full concept of

Christ's *ecclesia*. It had to capture that the *ecclesia* is, "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this basic definition need to be emphasized. The church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body". Failure to organize an Ecclesiology around this heart beat is a failure indeed. Dr. Chafer exhibits that failure.

I am remiss to effectively critique Dr. Chafer's section on Ecclesiology because of its misdirected or total lack of organization. This critique of Dr. Chafer's volume will expeditiously draw out from his work what should have been said in a logical pursuit of a systematic Ecclesiology.

In his second and seventh chapters on the church, Dr. Chafer makes a noticeable effort in clarifying the long time confused definition. But in these two chapters he speaks of the church as an organism, and the church as an organization. With this classification Chafer attempts to separate the church catholic/universal and the church local. He rightly discerns that a poor distinction between universal-catholic and local "has wrought confusion and damage to an immeasurable degree."⁷³ He then worsens the confusion. Dr. Chafer never clarifies that the Holy Bible has no catholic church.

Recall that Chafer is leaning and hobnobbing with the neoevangelical in every sense of the word. When fundamentalists drew a clear line and took a staunch separatist position against the apostate church, the neoevangelical determined that they would stay in/with the apostate church to "change them from within." Christ said we were to be "in the world but not of the world," but when it comes to apostasy, he demanded complete separation from it (2Cor 6:14-18⁷⁴). The neoevangelical decided, on purpose, to be

73 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology Volume IV*, Dallas Seminary Press, 1948., 36

74 2Cor 6:14-18 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye

in the apostasy but not of the apostasy, and that thwarts every attempt they have made for its reformation. Chafer knows the truth about the Catholic Church. He words the dilemma of the reformers who would not recover the truth about this catholic organization i.e. a church being only a local organization. But Chafer will not confront the ugly distortion of truth. Chafer allows the 70+ denominations he is pursuing to wallow around in some concept of a catholic church which is "invisible," but universal, which is catholic, but no longer "Roman Catholic." However, his "organized" church, his catholic church, is NOT local, NOT independent, NOT autonomous, and NOT Biblical.

The truth that the reformers would not recover out of the early church is, "there is no universal, catholic, or umbrella church which holds together all believers." Chafer panders on about an organism and an organization, but he refuses to uncover the whole truth, insisting rather that he keep a foot hold within the apostate organization; truly leaning neoevangelical to the core.

The fundamental truth is that every New Testament, pre-Roman church was independent and autonomous. There was no other church or head church, denomination, counsel or organization, which usurped dictatorial authority over any other local body of believers. Even the apostles would not use their authority to dictate their will, and their will was indeed the foundation stone of truth. After Paul took and circumcised Timothy, Dr. Luke records, "*And as they went through the cities they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem*" (Acts 16:4). That is as strong as it gets in the Scriptures. When Rome set up its universal, catholic church it not only issued its own decrees, it used Roman Empire swords to enforce their dictates.

Paul clarifies the organization which Dr. Chafer tries to divide into two different entities. In Ephesians he states clearly "*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the house hold of God; and are built*

separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph 2:19-22).

In this Scripture the body of believers is referred to as the temple and habitation of God and not the Holy, Catholic, Universal Church. And the apostles are shown to be the foundation stones upon which this temple stands. This image is prevalent in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, a book, as you recall, that Martin Luther and John Calvin et al. wanted to tear from the Holy Scriptures and cast into a monastery trash can.⁷⁵ The Revelation of Jesus Christ shows us a temple where God tabernacles with man and, "*The foundations of the wall of the city, were garnished with all manner of precious stones...*" (Rev 21:18-20). Sure enough, the twelve precious stones listed represent the twelve (count them 12) apostles that are indeed foundations (Rev 21:14). This Revelation, while we are examining the foundation truths which Reformers refused, depicts this city, called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, as having twelve gates which are the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (21:12), "*And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass*" (21:22). Recall, once more, that Romanism, Protestantism, and the Reformed Theology which flowed from them both, purposely castigated the twelve gates of this city to pretend that the Holy Catholic Church was the replacement for the nation of Israel. Their theology, which threw a disparaging eye on the Revelation of Jesus Christ, established an organization, the holy Catholic Church, which, they indoctrinated, would usher in the kingdom age of Christ here on earth.

In this larger understanding of the systematic error inside of the Roman Catholic Church, an error carried out of the mother church by her protesters and reformers, one can see the enormity of Reformed Theology's error in both Ecclesiology and Eschatology.

⁷⁵ Do not miss the irony here, as the Vatacanus and Sinaticanus manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt were pulled from the monastery trash cans and made the mainstay of the Modernist's New Testament texts.

The task for a critique of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology, should capture how much of this error he understood, and exactly what he did about it in 2000+ pages of expose'. Dr. Chafer's meanderings about an organized church and an organism called church do not bode well for a direct confrontation with this apostasy of catholicness. It is his blind neoevangelical leanings/tolerance which prevents Dr. Chafer from exposing the apostasy in this catholic church concept. It is ripe with the cliché "Don't let doctrine divide us, let the spirit unite us." The spirit in that trite saying, however, is not the spirit of truth.

The concept that one universal catholic church, visible or invisible, unites and organizes all believers into one body is hatched from the pits of a Roman hell. Protestants protested the Roman Catholic concept of salvation by penance. They protested the exaltation of a Roman priesthood. They even protested the motherhood of the Roman Catholic Church. When their protesting forced their severance from the Roman Catholic Church, their battle cry was for salvation by grace alone. Even then, they carried with them a little baptismal regeneration, some infant baptism, extensive exaltation of clergy, and all the catholicness of the church. When they reformed theology, it was Roman Catholic Covenant Theology, and it included a holy catholic church. Their version of the holy catholic church could no longer be called Roman, so in desperation for its root they called it, "The invisible church." Before this novel ecumenical solution to the contradiction of a catholic church, the Church of England assumed the role of being the true catholic church; then so did the Lutherans, then so did the Presbyterians, then, alas, so did the next Protestant Denomination that popped up. An ecumenical solution to this dilemma finally 'evolved' out of this competition of catholicness and they concluded that the catholic church was an invisible body of believers, the "invisible church." Shame on their reasoning.

How is it that Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer could write 250 pages on Ecclesiology and never address this catholic church issue? Quite simply, a neoevangelical cannot rock the boat or use reproof. They are attempting to stand in the midst of an apostate church, they cannot kick at a cardinal doctrine of the Protestant religion. So

Dr. Chafer defends a catholic "organization."

Chafer's Error In Denominationalism

A doctrine rooted in Romanism and connected to the catholic church phenomena is Denominationalism. A denomination is a collection of lesser churches organized under the headship of a greater church or greater authority. One church controlling what another church practices or believes is not found in the Bible, nor in New Testament churches, until the Roman Empire established it as her means of controlling its kingdom.

Rome dictated that there would be one catholic church, and they at Rome would be its head. Denominationalism was hatched by Rome. Prior, all churches were independent, autonomous bodies of baptized believers. After Rome devised and constructed denominational control, autonomous, independent, believer baptizing bodies were called Donatists, Paulicians, Waldensians,... et al., and heretics of Roman control. They still existed, and were present when, after a thousand years, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin finally had their fill of Romanism. We are still here today. Baptists are the original non-denominationals. It is curious, and distressing, how Dr. Chafer tip-toes through the consternation of denominational divisions.

The fact remains that no denomination can possibly be correct, nor Biblical. Any group which attempts to usurp an authority on another, violates the autonomous independence of that other. Every denominational structure that fell out of the Roman Empire and its propensity to control local churches is inherently wicked and in its core, evil.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer is blind/silent to this truth, and tries to reconcile denominational evil with his own rationalizing of "facts". "The fact remains," says Chafer, "that both declarations are true... We are not divided, and, we are sore oppressed by schisms rent asunder." Chafer's rationalizing continues, "The true church is not divided, nor could it be; yet the visible church is a broken and shattered attempt at the manifestation of a Scriptural ideal."⁷⁶

76 Ibid. 37

Chafer's 250 pages of Ecclesiology is an unmitigated rationalism which purports both a visible and invisible church, an organized and organism church, a universal and denominational church, a catholic and a fractured church. As a neoevangelical sympathizer Lewis Sperry Chafer is sunk right up to his chin in the apostate church he set out to refute. His whole Systematic Theology, all seven volumes, and particularly this volume on Ecclesiology, is refute with verbose rationalization which keeps him from clarifying the truth. Here his rationalization about the catholic church being invisible and the visible church being denominational clarifies that Dr. Chafer is so buried in the apostasy that he can no longer see the truth. There is no catholic church in the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God, and in that Holy Writ, every denomination which strives to usurp authority over Christ's autonomous, locally assembled body of believer is inherently evil.

Clarifying the Corporate Body

With that much striking clarity stated, it needs consideration that Scriptures do, on occasion, make reference to all believers, Jews, Gentiles, bond, or free, being immersed (baptized) into one body. "*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are as one body, so also is Christ*" (1Cor 12:12). This corporate reference to believers is mitigated in the clear definition of an ecclesia. This clear mitigation is worded well by Baptist Theologians Dr. Emery Bancroft and Dr. Mark Cambron. Bancroft states, "The church as an organism includes all regenerate believers gathered out of the world between the first and second advents of Christ, while as an organization it includes local believers united for service of Christ in any given assembly."⁷⁷ Dr. Cambron clarifies that the word "church" is used for A) A Local Assembly (church), B) Local Assemblies (churches), C) The Body of Living Believers (unnumbered), and D) The Complete Body of Christ.⁷⁸ As Bancroft

77 Emery H. Bancroft, *Elemental Theology*, 1932, Baptist Bible Seminary, 1945, 60, Zondervan, 307

78 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines*, 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 214-215

and Cambron rightly divide the word of truth, they allow no venue for a universal catholic church, Roman nor Protestant. Nor do they allow for a denominational existence in any form.

Dr. Chafer's Poisonous Root

Dr. Chafer's Catholic Church with Denominational Divides is a poisonous root which renders his whole Ecclesiology of little doctrinal value. The rationalizations that he imagines in this section, illustrate the ever present danger of mixing with apostasy, rather than separating from it. Such is the plight of the neoevangelical who purposefully rejected the staunch separatist position of the early Fundamentalist. When trying to appease 70+ denominations, Chafer is "*conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter*" (Isa 59:13b-14).

Some would contend that Lewis Sperry Chafer was not neoevangelical leaning, and Dallas Theological Seminary was indeed Fundamental. I must let George W. Dollar, Professor of Church History at Bob Jones University answer that. In his 1973 book "A History of Fundamentalism in America", he states,

Alumni of Dallas Seminary would raise the old claim that all is sound and Fundamental there, although such known sympathizers with New Evangelicalism as H.G. Hendricks, H.W. Robinson, G.W. Peters, and R.H. Seume serve on the faculty.... Each year an array of speakers who travel with New Evangelicals mold the mind of students to a middle-of-the-road position. These speakers have included R.A. Cook, Arnold T. Olsen, H.T. Armerding, Clark Pinnock, F.A. Schaeffer, Carl Henry, Clyde Taylor, and Ted Engstrom.⁷⁹

Dr. Dollar also clarifies succinctly,

79 George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 1973, Bob Jones University Press, 209

That the new evangelical strategy must be one of infiltration and not separation. In addition, he (New Evangelical Harold Ockenga, President of Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California⁸⁰) named the new evangelical forces as the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Fuller Seminar, Billy Graham, and *Christianity Today*... In 1960 Ockenga wrote: 'my personal concern as the originator of the New Evangelicalism has been to stir the interest of Evangelical Christianity in meeting the societal problems through content of Biblical Christianity. This is the tradition of Calvin, Luther, and Knox.'⁸¹

Dollar goes on to clarify that Charles J. Woodbridge, a Fuller Seminary faculty member who left in protest to Ockenga's new direction, called this new and dangerous direction,

a theological and moral compromise of the deadliest sort. Such a threat is it that the sharpest language must be used to expose its threat and insidious danger... Neo Evangelicalism advocates toleration of error. It following the downward path of accommodation to error, cooperation with error contamination by error, and ultimate capitulation to error.⁸²

It is reiterated here that Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of

80 Harold John Ockenga (1905-1985) was an American evangelical leader, a Congregational minister, and one of the co-founders of Fuller Theological Seminary. Harold John Ockenga (June 6, 1905 – February 8, 1985) was a leading figure of mid-20th-century American Evangelicalism, part of the reform movement known as "Neo-Evangelicalism". A Congregational minister, Ockenga served for many years as pastor of Park Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts. He was also a prolific author on biblical, theological, and devotional topics. Ockenga helped to found the Fuller Theological Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, as well as the National Association of Evangelicals. from http://www.theopedia.com/Harold_Ockenga accessed 15 June 2014

81 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 204

82 Ibid. 205

Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924, does not use the sharpest language and does not expose the error of the 70+ denomination that he is pandering to. He is the epitome of neoevangelicalism as herein defined.

A final note of the dangers and growth of Protestant-NeoEvangelicals and their Reformed Theology is from the May, 2014 Ancient Baptist Press Bulletin, which states:

Following his Strange Fire Conference John MacArthur recently said, "The resurgence of Reformed Theology... is the greatest revival in the history of the church, clearly." This should cause all Bible-believing Baptists to take notice. While independent Baptists are busy planting churches, the Calvinist/Reformed system is finding its way into the libraries of our young pastors and then into their pulpits. This requires a Biblical response. As Laurence Vance has said, "The final authority for a Calvinist is not the Bible at all, it is Reformed Theology."⁸³

Chafer's Ecclesiology and dabbling in Reformed Theology is embryo to the neoevangelical sympathies found in Dr. John Walvoord, the successor at Dallas Theological Seminar. Dr. Chafer's tip-toeing and coddling to John Calvin's election of saints, Presbyterian Denominationalism, and Reformed Theology's Covenant Theology made him unable to sound the trumpet of truth when it came to Ecclesiology.

It is distressing that even as I type this report the the Chosen People Ministries reported that "The Presbyterian Church USA recently approved an initiative to divest stock holdings in companies allegedly profiting from Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories."⁸⁴ This comes from the 221st General Assembly of the PCUSA held last week (June 2014) in Detroit. It is herein clear, when the PCUSA votes 310 to 303 to oppose Israels

83 Pastor James Alter, Ancient Baptist Press Bulletin 5/15/2014, 137 W Edgewood St., Sidney, OH 45365

84 June Newsletter Mitch Glaser, President, Chosen People Ministries, <http://chosenpeople.com>

presence in the Promised Land, that Calvin's Covenant Theology is still alive and well inside the Reformed Theology of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA).

Critique of John Miley's 1892 Methodist Ecclesiology

John Miley (1813-1895), a Methodist, published his *Systematic Theology* in 1892. Methodists have always been a curious lot striving to unite, as it were, Anglican Church of England with the Holy Bible's holiness.

Methodism is “itself made up of several parts, deriving from the preaching and ministry of John (1703-91) and Charles (1707-88) Wesley, and initially of George Whitefield. The term 'methodist; was in origin used derisively by opponents of the Holy Club at Oxford, but Wesley used it from 1729 to mean the methodical pursuit of biblical holiness.”⁸⁵

The “brethren in America” became the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1787 and in 1844 divided into Methodists, Episcopal, and Episcopal Methodists. These never really united until 1932 in Great Britain, and 1968 in America's United Methodist Church.

Methodists generally endorse the Anglicanism.

“Anglicanism is an episcopal (with bishops) Church, in continuity with Catholicism, but also accepting much from the reformation. It is thus described as 'both Catholic and reformed'. ... There is nevertheless a common focus in that Anglican theology is based on an appeal to scripture, tradition, and reason, expanded in the dictum of Lancelot Andrewes: 'One canon, ... two testaments, three creeds, four general councils, five centuries, and the series of fathers in that period, ... to determine the boundary of our faith.' ”⁸⁶

85 John Bowker, “*Oxford Concise Dictionary of World Religions*”, Oxford University Press, 2000, c.v. “Methodism”, pg 375.

86 Ibid. c.v. “Anglicanism”, pg 40.

Miley's work was reviewed in its entirety during this effort, but, interestingly, there was no insight to what John Miley might have believed about the church, catholic or local, organized or organism, Jew or Gentile, neither or both. Miley, like Hodge, wrote nary a thing on ecclesiology. Two things of note in that, first Methodist John Miley published his *Systematic Theology* twenty three years after Presbyterian Charles Hodge, the "Father of Systematic Theologies." Second Methodist John Miley was most interested in correcting Presbyterian Charles Hodge's presumptions about Calvinism and not much interested in other ologies.

Further I have not found very much written about ecclesiology by Methodists of any stripe. They seem to pretty much go with the Protestant and Reformed flow of Covenant Theology with no investigation or prying into its gross assumptions. I have found that true as I pastor a Baptist church in Yates County, the only NYS county that is predominately Methodist (all other counties up here are predominately Roman Catholic). The few born-again-saved Methodist I have encountered will not leave the church that their great great grandparents were in, and they never heard of the Millennial Reign of Christ, any dispensation, nor any Rapture of the Church, and they are quite content to stay in that blissful ignorance. And, sadly perhaps, I have pretty much resigned myself to leaving them there.

As seen in our volume 4 on Christology the genius of John Miley has made a substantial contribution on some subjects and the interested student is refereed back to that volume for his insights.

It can be seen from his systematic theologies contents below that John Miley's effort did not address ecclesiology at all:

- Volume 1 Introduction 1-56
- Part I Theism 57-158
- Part II Theology 159-354
- Part III Anthropology 355-530
- Volume 2 Part IV Christology
- Part V Soteriology
- Part VI Eschatology
 - Ch 1 Future Existence
 - Ch 2 The Intermediate State
 - Ch 3 The Second Advent
 - I. Doctrine of the Advent.

A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century

1. A Personal, Visible Coming of Christ 440
 2. Theory of a Merely Figurative Sense 441
 3. The Premillennial Theory 443
- II. The Advent in the Light of its Concomitants.
1. The General Resurrection 443
 2. The Final Judgment 444
 3. The End of the World 445
- Ch 4 The Resurrection
Ch 5 The Judgment
Ch 6 Future Punishment
Ch 7 Future Blessedness
- Appendices
- Append I Inspiration of the Scriptures
Append II The Angels
Append III Arminian Treatment of Original Sin

The systematic approach John Miley takes codifies the nineteenth century's propensity to make theology a science. In fact he words such a position very clearly:

The special subjects of systematic theology are the doctrines of Christianity. It is not meant that the doctrines so designated have their only source in the New Testament. All the doctrines of religion which have a ground of truth in either nature or the Old Testament also belong to this form of theology. But as the doctrines from such sources have their recognition and fuller unfolding in the New Testament we may properly designate all as the doctrines of Christianity. The sense of the term doctrine is not hidden. Any principle or law reached and verified through a proper induction is a doctrine, whether in science, philosophy, or theology. Thus there are doctrines of physics, chemistry, geology, ethics, metaphysics. So in theology: certain truths reached and verified through a proper induction are doctrines in the truest sense of the term. We may instance the personality of God, the divine Trinity, the person of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith. Systematic theology deals with such truths, and for completeness it must include the sum of Christian doctrines.

The doctrines severally must be constructed in a scientific manner. A system of theology is a combination of doctrines in scientific accord. But the several doctrines are no more at hand

in proper form than the system itself. Hence the requirement for the construction of the doctrines severally. This is possible only through a scientific process. Through a careful study of the facts of geology the doctrines of the science are reached and verified, while in turn they illuminate the facts. Through a careful study and profound analysis of the relative facts the great doctrine of gravitation was reached and verified. The multiform facts are thus united and interpreted and set in a light of new interest. So must systematic theology study the elements of doctrinal truth, whether furnished in the book of nature or the book of revelation,...⁸⁷

Although I appreciate Miley's genius and writing abilities his systematic error is clear. Below he defends a departure from Revelation and dependence on nature for a proof that there is a God. This, again, was typical for 19th century systematic theologies.

On the broadest division there are two sources of theology—nature and revelation. They are very far from any equality; in fullness, clearness, and authority fairly comparable only by contrast. Some great truths of Christian theology are peculiar to revelation. Yet the first question of all religion, the existence of God, must be taken first to nature. The best Christian thinkers agree in these two sources. For the present we are merely stating them. The question of secondary sources will follow their more direct treatment.⁸⁸

Although John Miley's systematic theology does not tell us much about a Methodists position on the church, the complete omission of an ecclesiology section tells us something.

87 Miley, John, *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1 & 2, The Library of Biblical and Theological Literature, New York: Eaton and Mains, 1894, The Internet Archive <http://www.archive.org/details/systematictheolo01mile>, [John Miley (1813-1895), Methodist Theologian] Vol 1 pg 5.

88 Ibid.

Critique of Charles Hodge's 1878 Ecclesiology

Charles Hodge (1797-1878), from Princeton Theological Seminary, may be considered “The Father of the Published Systematic Theology.” He was genius, a gifted communicator, and very Presbyterian. He worded a very “Reformed Theology.” Even so he made two glaring errors in his overall approach to theology and consequently, these effect all his volumes. Charles Hodge considered theology a science that must follow a scientific method, just like other natural sciences. Thus, for Hodge, theology does not have the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God as its sole source. Instead, theology, following a scientific method, has its source in the hypothesis of men, which is developed and tested into theory, which is developed and tested into “all we know about God,” i.e. the truth from “scientific law.” That is the scientific method.

True theology starts with the truth, and only debates about how these things can be. We are not theorizing to find truth, the Lord Jesus Christ is truth (John 14:6). Hodge's means of developing theology as a science was very popular in the 19th century because the scientific method was formalized and exalted as infallible at the end of the 18th century. This systematic error is frequent in published systematic theologies of the 20th century. They weigh in about various theories and strive to select the most promising ones, trying to discover truth.

Secondly, Hodge relied on the counsels, creeds, and edicts of the Holy Roman Catholic. He trusted their refining and development of these scientific theories about theology. This is again, a common source of error for all Protestant theology, and particularly all Reformed Theology. (Protestants in general are broken into two major camps which divide along beliefs of Calvinism or Arminianism. Recall that Baptists are not Protestants, and dare not divide between these camps, remaining, instead, as strict Biblicists on the matters of election and predestination.)

Roman doctrine is, obviously, what Reformers were reforming, and what Protestants were protesting. It is seen in Hodge's development of theology, that they never did abandon the

systematic errors of the Roman Catholic Church. Most of these errors were just encased in a wordy rationalism which, using the scientific method, were developed into Reformed Theology. These source errors bled into all of Hodge's theology with particularly brazen and well documented clarity.

Although Hodge states “a formal vindication of the Protestant doctrine of the nature of the church... belongs to the department of ecclesiology,” he has no such department in his *Systematic Theology*.⁸⁹ Instead he contrasts the Romish doctrine of the nature of the church with the Protestant one in considering Vol 1. Chapter V. “Roman Catholic Doctrine Concerning the Rule of Faith.” He therein describes the error of the Romanish Church as follows:

Romanists teach that the Church, as an external, visible society, consisting of those who profess the Christian religion, united in communion of the same sacraments and subjection to lawful pastors, and especially to the Pope of Rome, is divinely appointed to be the infallible teacher of men in all things pertaining to faith and practice. It is qualified for this office by the plenary revelation of the truth in the written and unwritten word of God, and by the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed to the bishops as official successors of the Apostles, or, to the Pope as the successor of Peter in his supremacy over the whole Church, and as vicar of Christ on earth.

There is something simple and grand in this theory. It is wonderfully adapted to the tastes and wants of men. It relieves them of personal responsibility. Everything is decided for them. Their salvation is secured by merely submitting to be saved by an infallible, sin-pardoning, and grace-imparting church.⁹⁰

The problems for maintaining a Rominist church doctrine are myriad. Hodge outlines these well:

Romanists have transferred the whole Jewish theory to the Christian Church; while Protestants adhere to the doctrine of

89 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology: Volume I*, Charles Scribner & Company, 1871, pg 157.

90 *ibid.* 149-150

Christ and his Apostles. Romanists teach, (1.) That the Church is essentially an external, organized community, as the commonwealth of Israel. (2.) That to this external society, all the attributes, prerogatives, and promises of the true church belong. (3.) That membership in that society is the indispensable condition of salvation; as it is only by union with the church that men are united to Christ, and, through its ministrations, become partakers of his redemption. (4.) That all who die in communion with this external society, although they may, if not perfect at death, suffer for a longer or shorter period in purgatory, shall ultimately be saved (5.) All outside of this external organization perish eternally. There is, therefore, not a single element of the Jewish theory which is not reproduced in the Romish.⁹¹

But Hodge is unable to describe an understandable Protestant solution. He says:

Winer in his "Comparative Darstellung," thus briefly states the two theories concerning the Church. Romanists, he says, "define the Church on earth, as the community of those baptized in the name of Christ, united under his Vicar, the Pope, its visible head. Protestants, on the other hand, as the communion of saints, that is, of those who truly believe on Christ, in which the gospel is purely preached and the sacraments properly administered."

With no section on ecclesiology Charles Hodge gives almost no other insights to the doctrine of the church. He contends that the Romish ideas cannot be sustained, but he does not explain the Protestant carryover of the Romish Replacement Theology or Covenant Theology into the Protestant thinking. It seems that making the catholic church (visible or invisible) consist of only true believers, instead of any derelict with a Roman Baptismal certificate, was as far as Charles Hodge dared to go.

Critique of Augustus Strong's 1907 Ecclesiology

Augustus H. Strong, 1836-1921, was a Yale graduate who

91 *ibid.* 154-155

taught theology at Rochester Theological Seminary for forty years and became the first president of the Northern Baptist Convention. In title he was a Baptist, but in conviction he was contaminated by both reformed theology and evolutionary Darwinism. His systematic theology has a tremendous depth and scope but his motivation in writing it depicts the grave danger in reading it. Strong strives to mold a traditional reformed emphasis and an evolutionary critical scholarship into the distinctive Baptist conviction. This dangerous combination of reformed theology and atheistic evolution blended into Baptist-Bible doctrine permeates every avenue of his work.

The primary problems of understanding what Strong addresses have to do with the misleadings of the Roman theologians that muddied theology previously. His repeated emphasis on various theories reveals his reliance on the scientific-method to resolve the truth. The Lord Jesus Christ is Truth, and theological truth cannot be resolved via hypothesis, theories, nor scientific methods. Problems of understanding, for the Bible student and theologian, are best resolved by the simply axiom, “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me.” Below is Augustus H. Strong's extensive ecclesiology outline.

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Some has already been said about the failings of Storng's 1907 Systematic Theology, but his thoroughness and comprehensiveness in handling problems of understanding is still noteworthy.

Critique of Thiessens' 1949 Ecclesiology

A thorough critique of Henry Thiessen's "*Lectures in Systematic Theology Part VII Ecclesiology*," is presented in the author's report to the Faculty of Louisiana Baptist University in June 2011, for his Master's in Theological Studies Degree. This very thorough coverage of Henry Clarence Thiessen's *Lectures in Systematic Theology's* ecclesiology chapters 35-38, is presented herein because he was so close to the truth, yet so muddled with error and compromise. It is extensive and included here because in 2011, the review of Thiessen's theology convinced and persuaded this author to document a legitimate, Bible based, Systematic Theology. This critique is not intended to detract from Thiessen's genius, character, or integrity, although it is often a direct and a harsh critique of his work. It is only intended to guard against such error and compromise in present day students of the Holy Bible.

For the sake of completeness the Q&A portion of this report was included here. It presents though provoking questions and answers on Thiessen's chapters 35-38, and is, as stated previous, a harsh critique of Thiessen's error and compromise. The inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God is profitable for doctrine (what is right), for reproof (how to get right), for correction (how to stay right), and for instruction in righteousness (how to teach right). A "reproof" takes one all the way back to the drawing board, as it were, while "correction" is more like course correction for a slightly skewed rocket trajectory. The Q&A section critiquing Thiessen's work is often more of a reproof than a correction, but both are done without apology.

LBU's TH504 course assignment was to read Thiessen's ecclesiology chapters and prepare and show the answers to at least eight (8) questions which could be an appropriate final exam in developing this course for a college or Christian school. Thiessen's page numbers for each question and answer are given, and that written report is presented below.

Who is Dr. Henry Clarence Thiessen ?

The Master's College was originally founded as Los Angeles Baptist College and Theological Seminary on May 25, 1927 to meet the need for a fundamentalist Baptist school on the West Coast. The intention was to provide a biblical and Christ-centered education consistent with those doctrines of the historic Christian faith.

Dr. William A. Matthews, pastor of Memorial Baptist Church of Los Angeles, became the founder and first president. The seminary was extended an invitation to be temporarily housed at Calvary Baptist Church in the Los Angeles area. Several more moves followed until the seminary moved onto its own property in Los Angeles in 1942.

Dr. Mathews died at his home on August 18, 1943. He was succeeded by presidents C. Gordon Evanson, Floyd Burton Boice, and **Henry C. Thiessen**. In 1946, the seminary became a graduate-level school and initiated a separate undergraduate and liberal arts program. **Following Dr. Thiessen's death in 1947**, Dr. Herbert V. Hotchkiss and Dr. Milton E. Fish, a Harvard graduate, strengthened the school scholastically and spiritually.

... To facilitate accreditation of the undergraduate program, the seminary moved to Tacoma, Washington in 1974, resulting in the founding of Northwest Baptist Seminary.

In May 1985, John MacArthur became the next president of the college... The Master's Seminary started in 1986 with the specific goal of producing Bible expositors. ... The seminary is steeped in the tradition of conservative, premillennial Dispensationalism.⁹²

In a 5 March 2011 correspondence, after reading a draft version of this report, Dr. Robert L. Sumner, editor of *The Biblical Evangelist*, sent these staunch corrections to the characterizations of his friend Dr. Thiessen:

1. Thiessen was not Reformed. He was a Baptist.

92 From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Master's_College, although wikipedia is not a trusted source for citing one's research it was the only available source that revealed Dr. Thiessen as a past president of the Los Angeles Baptist College and Seminary which later became Master's College.

2. Thiessen was not Augustinian. He was a moderate Calvinist who denied unconditional election, limited atonement and irresistible grace.

3. Thiessen was not a neo-evangelical. He was a Fundamentalist and a separationist.

4. Thiessen was not a past president of MacArthur's Master's College. He was a past president of the Los Angeles Baptist College and Seminary and went to Heaven long before the school was divided, the Seminary going north to Tacoma and becoming the Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary and the college taken over by MacArthur. Mac renamed it Master's College, but Thiessen had nothing to do with that, of course.

I knew Thiessen personally. He was a good man. I heard him teach the entire Book of Revelation in one sermon one night (he was pretrib and premil) when he had just become president of L.A.B.C & S.

Dr. Robert L. Sumner, Editor, THE BIBLICAL EVANGELIST, 134 Salisbury Circle, Lynchburg, VA 24502-5056

The staunch criticism of Thiessen's work was not significantly altered after Dr. Sumner's critique was received, while criticisms of Thiessen's character and integrity more guarded in the final draft.

TH504 Report on Thiessen's Ecclesiology

The conservative theology books of Mark G. Cambron, Millard J. Erickson, Charles C. Ryrie, Roy Mason⁹³, and C. I. Scofield were read and considered in light of what Thiessen covered on the course objectives (1. the theological issues of the church; 2. its definition and founding; 3. its organization and ordinances; 4. as well as its mission and destiny; 5. how this age closes with final apocalyptic events is researched.)

Specific differences from Thiessen's work are analyzed according to the Objectives below:

Objective 1. The theological issues of the church;

The theological issues of ecclesiology is most contrasted from Thiessen's catholic church concept by Cambron's local church description. Therein Cambron states:

93 Mason, Roy, "The Church the Jesus Built", Challenge Press, Lehigh Valley Baptist Church, Emmaus PA

“While we believe that the Body of Christ is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture, we do stress the importance of the *local* church, or assembly. The local assembly is the physical body by which the Body (church) is manifested. God stresses the importance of the local church by giving it officers and ordinances. He who is ashamed of the local assembly is ashamed of that which was established at Pentecost. The local church, as well as the Body of Christ, was established at Pentecost.”⁹⁴

That opening paragraph modestly captures the Bible and Baptist emphasis on the local church rather than the catholic church which Thiessen continually emphasizes. I did not find a theology book which emphasizes the local church enough to counteract Thiessen's exaggeration of the Catholic Church. Cambron, however, comes close. Thiessen's strong emphasis on the catholicness of the church overspreads all of his ecclesiology.

Objective 2. The Church definition and founding.

While Thiessen soft shoes and completely side steps the exactness of the word *ecclesia*, Cambron and Ryrie both accentuate its importance. The fact that the Bible and Baptists exaggerate the Local Church over the Catholic Church is captured effectively in the assembling and assembly ingredients of the definition of *eccleisa*. Thiessen leaves it off completely because it does not fit his concept of his Catholic Church which will not be assembled until the Rapture. A thorough definition of *ecclesia* is essential to seeing the Bible and the Baptist's emphasis on the assembly of the Local Church.

When it comes to the founding of the church no theology book addresses the Bible truth as thoroughly as Roy Mason does. His purpose in writing is to show the perpetuity of the Baptist's Biblical doctrine and he thus puts great emphasis on the founding and organization of the local church over any “universal, invisible

94 Cambron, Mark G., “Bible Doctrines, Beliefs That Matter”, 1954, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pg 221-222.

theory” of a church. Mason establishes well that Jesus founded the church, not at Pentecost when all the theologians insist, but prior to his ascension. When Jesus was with them, he establishes, the body of assembled believers, (*the ecclesia*) which 1) had the Gospel, 2) were baptized believers, 3) had an organization, 4) had the proper Head, 5) had both the proper ordinances, 6) had the Great Commission, and 7) had met and were meeting prior to Pentecost. That is a description of a founded Local Church; NOT invisible, NOT catholic, but founded and local.

Objective 3. The Churches organization and ordinances.

Ryrie and Cambron do not pussy foot around with a church office of Deaconess as does Thiessen. The implication of the neo-evangelical⁹⁵ is that the King James translators describe our sister Phebe as a 'servant', instead of what they like, a 'deaconess', in Romans 16:1. It certainly detracts from such a woman held office of the church. Certainly the epistles to Timothy and Titus are the greater detraction of such an unBiblical office without help from any translators, but neo-evangelicals, and Thiessen himself, have already dismissed these epistles as just Paul's opinions. It is unfortunate that Thiessen pussy foots with neo-evangelicals

95 From Theopedia <http://www.theopedia.com/Neo-evangelicalism> “The Neo-Evangelical movement was a response among orthodox evangelical Protestants to the separatism of fundamentalist Christianity beginning in the 1930s. The term was coined by Harold Ockenga in 1947, to identify a distinct movement within the broader evangelical fundamentalist Christianity of that day. What has been termed a split within the fundamentalist movement, came about as they disagreed among themselves about how Bible-believing Christians ought to respond to an unbelieving world. ... Neo-evangelicals held the view that the modernist and liberal parties in the Protestant churches had surrendered their heritage as Evangelicals by accommodating the views and values of the world. ... The term neo-evangelicalism no longer has any reliable meaning except for historical purposes. It is still self-descriptive of the movement to which it used to apply, to distinguish the parties in the developing fundamentalist split prior to the 1950s. The term is now used almost exclusively by conservative critics, to distinguish their idea of Evangelicalism from this movement. They claim that a loss of Biblical authority was evident early, which would later bear fruit in more and more accommodation: ... **neoevangelicals deny, or too severely qualify their belief in, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy**

instead of standing on the clear inerrant Scriptures and decrying such foolishness.

Concerning the ordinances Cameron shoots strait, keeps it concise, defeats Catholic Sacramental Doctrine, and hangs tight to all the Baptist distinctives, including the two ordinances. While Thiessen hobnobs with Ironside to pretend that any saved person is a member of the catholic church and eligible to receive the Lord's Supper of some group, Cambron denies it. He states:

“No one but a baptized child of God should participate in the Lord's Supper. Those who ate with Him at the Last Supper had been baptized. Baptism is the symbol of the commencing of the new life, and the Lord's Supper is a symbol of that life.”⁹⁶

Clear, concise and Biblical, you have to love Cambron's argument here.

Objective 4. as well as the Churches mission and destiny.

While Thiessen dismisses the Biblical commissioning of the church when considering the mission of the church, Ryrie and Cambron make it paramount. It is hard to understand how one's systematic theology could not, but Reformed Augustinian Theologies do not consider the Great Commission the mission of the church. Thiessen does not; Erickson does not, Hodge does not; even Strong, the Reformed Baptist does not. Remember that their Covenant Theology has the formation of the Church in the Old Testament and the Catholic Church as the replacement of Israel! What Thiessen considers “The Missions of the Church” Ryrie lists under “Other Ministries of the Church.” Therein he considers 1) The Ministry of Discipline, 2) The Ministry of Widows, and 3) The Ministry of Charity. Ryrie thus gives a more Biblical approach which leaves the real mission of the church as the real mission of the church.

96 Ibid. Cambron, pg 222-223.

Objective 5. How this age closes with final apocalyptic events is researched.

I found no other theologians who addressed this particular objective under ecclesiology. It seems a fitting ending, and Thiessen herein appropriately points out that the church will not convert the world and it will occupy a place of blessing and honor throughout eternity, however such considerations are given under eschatology by others. C. I. Scofield does make both points abundantly clear in his short work on prophecy entitled “Prophecy Made Plain.”⁹⁷ In light of Catholic eschatology, and the lack of dispensational grasp among most Protestants it certainly needs a greater herald than Thiessen.

97 Scofield, C. I., “Prophecy Made Plain”, chap II “God's Purpose in this Age” pg 21-37.

Thiessen's Chapter 35 Q&A Obj. 1 & 2

Introductory: Definition And Founding Of The Church pg 403-411

In consideration of Objective 1. The theological issues of the church AND Objective 2. The church definition and founding:

1. What is Thiessen's primary definition of Church?

Ans pg 405-407. Thiessen's does not readily give a definition of church, nor does he address the misgivings about its definition. He points out 3 things the church is not, (not Judaism improved, the kingdom, or a denomination) and then says the church (yet undefined) is considered in two senses, catholic (universal) and local. Finally on pg 408 under his universal sense he gives a secondary definition of "A group of people called out from the world and belonging to God."

2. What is a good working definition of Church?

Ans Ryrie pg 394, Cambron pg 213. The 'church' is an English rendition, (not a translation or a transliteration) for the NT word '*ecclesia*' which is properly defined as: the called together (often misnomered 'called out') assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. Although the assembly is not to be confused with a catholic church, a universal body, or an invisible church, there are a few uses of the *ecclesia* to refer to the people themselves whether assembled or not.

3. Where does the English word 'church' come from?

Ans pg 407. "The English word 'church' comes from the Greek word *kuriakos*, which means 'belonging to the Lord.' This adjective occurs only twice in the New Testament: It is used of the Supper of the Lord (1Cor 11:20) and of the Lord's Day (Rev 1:10)"

4. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that Matt 16:18 (the built Church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal Church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says in Mat 16:18 "*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...*"; #2 local assemblies, "*unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...*"; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered "*beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...*"; and #4 the complete body of Christ, "*Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...*"; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In Mt. 16:18 Jesus is speaking speaking of the church as in definition #4, as the complete body of Christ.

5. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that 1Cor 15:9, Gal 1:13, and Phil 3:6, with cf Acts 8:3 (the persecuted church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says 1Co 15:9 "*For I am the least of the apostles,*

that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God....”, Ga 1:13 *“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: ...”*, Php 3:6 *“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless ...”*, Ac 8:3 *“As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.”* The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...”*; #2 local assemblies, *“unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...”*; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered *“beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...”*; and #4 the complete body of Christ, *“Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...”*; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references the church is referenced as in definition #3, as the body of living believers unnumbered .

6. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that Eph 5:25,26, and 27 (the sanctified church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal Church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says Eph 5:25-27 *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”* The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...”*; #2 local assemblies, *“unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...”*; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered *“beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...”*; and #4 the complete body of Christ, *“Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...”*; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references Christ is speaking speaking of the church as in definition #4, as the complete body of Christ.

7. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that Eph 1:22, 5:23, and Col 1:18 (the headship of the church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says Eph 1:22 *“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ...”*, Eph 5:23 *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ...”*, Col 1:18 *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”* The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...”*; #2 local assemblies, *“unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...”*; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered *“beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...”*; and #4 the complete body of Christ,

“Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...”; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references God is speaking of the church as in definition #4, as the complete body of Christ.

8. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that 1Cor 12:28, Eph 3:10 and Heb 12:23 (other references to the church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says 1Co 12:28 *“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues ...”*, Eph 3:10 *“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, ...”*. Heb 12:23 *“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,”* The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...”*; #2 local assemblies, *“unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...”*; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered *“beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...”*; and #4 the complete body of Christ, *“Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...”*; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references the church is referenced as in definition #3, as the body of living believers unnumbered.

9. What is horribly wrong with Thiessen's lead sentence of his Section II, “The founding of the Church”?

Ans pg 408. Thiessen's lead sentence of his Section II, “The founding of the Church” implies that there are two churches founded, a Universal (Catholic) Church and local churches. Later he calls the Universal (Catholic) Church the 'true church' (pg 414) making it clear which one he believes in.

10. Why does Thiessen insist that 'both' Churches he defines were founded at Pentecost? And refute his premise.

Ans pg 409-410. Thiessen says that 1Cor 12:13 *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit ...”*, dictates that the church was founded at Pentecost because that is when believers were first baptized in the Holy Spirit. If this were the case the Holy Spirit would be more founder of the church than Christ was. It was not necessary for the church to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be founded as a local assembly of baptized believers. They were already commissioned, given the ordinances, had a business meeting, and were assembled for a prayer meeting before the Pentecost filling. That is amply sufficient for its founding by Jesus Christ.

Thiessen's Chapter 36 Q&A Obj. 3.

The Foundation of the Church,
The Manner of the Founding,
and The Organization of the Churches
pg 412-421

In consideration of Objective 3. The Churches organization and ordinances:

1. With growing disdain for Thiessen's ecclesiology give his primary, secondary and tertiary sources for the foundation of his catholic church.

Ans pg 412-413. It is very un-Baptist and ergo very troubling that Thiessen never uses the Holy Bible as his primary source. In defending the founding of a catholic church he uses “The consensus of Biblical writers on this subject” (pg 413) as his primary source; citing that *'petra'* and *'petros'* is “nowhere confounded in literature” makes secular literature his secondary source; and his tertiary sources involve “those who heard him say this” and “Jesus spoke Aramaic and we cannot tell whether the distinction in terms was made in the Aramaic!” Nowhere in this consideration does he use or treat the Holy Scripture as the authoritative, inerrant, infallible, inspired word of God on the subject. Indeed that he would be more concerned about exactly what Jesus said in Aramaic than exactly what was recorded and preserved in His Greek is very very troubling.

2. Thiessen completely eludes the elementary Greek consideration of Matthew 16:18 which any freshman Greek student could infer, what is it?

Ans pg 412-413. It is elementary in Greek that pronouns will always agree in gender with the nouns which they point to. In Matthew 16:18 the *os* ending on *Petros* (Peter) makes it a masculine noun, and the *a* ending on both *tauta* (this) and *petra* (rock) make them feminine nouns. Thus the 'this(F) rock(F)' upon which Christ will build his church cannot be Peter(M). It is clearly the *aletheia*, truth(F), presented previously by Peter(M); the truth(F) presented was that “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” and this(F) is indeed the cornerstone upon which

Christ founded his church. (Notice the feminine ending *a* on *aletheia*, truth, making 'truth' a feminine noun.) Elementary Greek.

The words of Matthew 16:18 with their direct English translation below each Greek word are:

Καγω δε σοι λεγω οτι συ ει πετροω και επι ταυτη τη πετρα
And also I unto thee I say that thou art Peter (M) and upon
this (F) the rock (F)

οικοδομησω μου την εκκλησιαν και πυλαι
I will build my the church (F) and the gates
αδου ου κατασχυσουσιν αυτηω
of hell not shall prevail against it (F)

3. Thiessen completely eludes the elementary Greek consideration of Matthew 16:18 and instead gently pokes at the errant Roman Catholic doctrine of ecclesiology; how so and why?

Ans pg 412-413. In regards to Thiessen's catholic church not being built upon Saint Peter, as the Romans built their catholic church, Thiessen can only cite "the consensus of Biblical writers", the confirmed use of 'petra' or 'petros' in secular literature, and the speculative possibilities of what Jesus may or may not have said in Aramaic. He then muddies up his allegations even more by testing the likely hood and trends of Jesus speaking of himself in the third person. These are indeed not the defenses of a Bible believer, nor do they display any propensity to believe the written Word of God as a final authority.

4. A mainstay and errant treatise of Saint Augustine's ecclesiology is that the church that Jesus founded was but an embryo and must needs 'evolve' into the more matured fully developed establishment that Augustine himself helped fashion; what is Thiessen's position on this errant philosophy?

Ans pg 414. Thiessen and other Reformed Augustinian Theologians must needs conform to a mainstay and errant treatise of Saint Augustine's ecclesiology that the church that Jesus founded was but an embryo and must needs 'evolve' into the more matured fully developed establishment that Augustine himself helped fashion. Such a premise is supported when Thiessen says

“The universal or true Church ... was not 'organized' but 'born’”, and thus called “the church of the firstborn ones.⁹⁸” Thiessen is completely ignoring the Holy Scriptures that say, “*that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*” (1Tim 3:15). Thiessen then says, “At first there was no organization, ... gradually, however, ... Because the believers were already members of the true Church, they felt impelled to organize local churches ... for the common good.” He even musters the rash accusation that “it is doubtful whether the Scriptures contemplate rigid denominational organizations” (pg 415), as if God did not know how to document for the leaven that would get into the church! This with his later reference to the 'primitive church' contrasted with the developed catholic church is absolute and unfounded balderdash.

5. What is obvious but never examined in Thiessen's Section III “Organization of Churches”?

Ans pg 415. Thiessen must talk of the organization of local churches because there is never any organization of Thiessen's, Rome's, or the Reformed Augustinian Theologian's catholic Church. The Bishops with their Dioceses, along with Synods of Presbyters with theirs, is all fabricated without a shred of information from the Bible. Indeed in the Bible there is never a body of believers given any authority over another local church; even the apostles only provided recommendations to churches where they were founders but not members.

6. Why should Thiessen and Reformed Augustinian Theologians say “We prefer to speak of the organization of churches, rather than of the Church”?

Ans pg 415. Thiessen and Reformed Augustinian Theologians say

98 This reference is taken completely out of context by Thiessen to make it say what he wants to believe. The whole sentence says “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” (Heb 12:22-24)

“We prefer to speak of the organization of *churches*, rather than of the *Church*”, because the leading indicator that there is no catholic church is found in the Bible being silent about its organization. No where in Scripture will you find an apostle usurping an authority over any group of local churches. All instructions, organization, and communications are directed at local churches, none at any catholic church.

7. What is wholly absent from Thiessen's defense for “the fact of organization”?

Ans pg 415. It is disturbing that Thiessen attempts to defend the 'fact' of church organization without opening a Bible and looking at the 'act' of church organizing. Paul did write to Timothy on the subject stating, “*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*” He then expands on how the churches should be organized with two distinct offices, as prescribed in one of our Baptist distinctives.

8. What does Thiessen site for his authority for officers of the Church, and what does he omit?

Ans pg 417-419. Rather than use the Holy Scriptures as his authority for the local church offices, Thiessen states, “If early practice is to be our guide today, then there are to be in the churches the same offices.” Shame, shame on Thiessen.

9. What is brazenly wrong with Thiessen's presentation of an office of 'Deaconess'?

Ans pg 420. Three gross errors of Thiessen's preference for an office called 'deaconess': 1) Thiessen has already established that his perception of 'early practice' is to be his guide when, for a true theologian, the Scripture should be our guide and final authority; 2) The Holy Scripture provides no characterization or qualifications of such an office, even if Thiessen can imagine such; and 3) I Timothy 2 would clearly invalidate any such office with women not allowed to lead, usurp authority, teach, or lead in prayer. Shame, shame on Thiessen for attempting the defense of such an idea.

Thiessen's Chapter 37 Q&A Obj. #3

The Ordinances of the Church

pg 422-431

In consideration of Objective 3. The churches organization and ordinances:

1. No matter how long you study your Bible you will never find the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church which Thiessen lists; what are they?

Ans pg 422. Thiessen lists the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church as: “ordination, confirmation, matrimony, extreme unction, penance, baptism and the eucharist.”

2. Thiessen's definition of 'sacrament' does not build a large enough wall of separation from an ordinance; reinforce this wall.

Ans pg 422. Thiessen tampers with the word 'sacrament' without the brazen exposure that it deserves and he implies that the catholics have 'evolved' the word from its origins to make it more palatable. He says “Originally this word meant *to make sacred, to dedicate to gods or sacred uses.*” He is careful not to expose that all of its uses, including uses to which Roman Catholics 'evolved' the word towards, includes a mystical attachment to the act or item. In other words when something is declared a sacrament, it leaves the ordinary, leaves the physical and becomes metaphysical; it takes on a mystical, spiritual ability to alter the physical.

Baptist's insistence on the ordinances being called just that and never called a 'sacrament', especially a 'holy sacrament' is to: 1) ensure the complete separation from the catholic use of these symbols; 2) to emphasize that they are symbols that have a witnessing and mental image only, and no mystical or metaphysical effect; and 3) to ensure that these symbols do not take on any initiation rites of their own, or 'means of grace', as protestants call it, as in the catholic use wherein they, supposedly, mystically perform the uniting with the body of Christ (which they call the Holy Catholic Church); wherein they supposedly, mystically perform the crucifying of, and the eating and receiving of the body of Christ; and wherein they supposedly, mystically drink of his actual blood. Baptist's will always be staunch in denying all these definitions of catholic sacraments. There are but two ordinances and, by a genuine Bible believer, they should never be referred to as 'sacraments.'

3. After Thiessen's inadequate coverage of the mysticism within sacraments, he accuses G. Campbell Morgan of being mystical concerning baptisms that are not directly connected to water; use Heb 6:1-2 to refute what he says about Morgan's doctrine.

Ans pg 423. Although Hebrew 6:1-2 states that one of Christianity's first principles of the oracles of God is the 'doctrine of baptisms' (plural), Thiessen refused to believe there is any baptism other than water baptism. G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945) was an extraordinary, expository Bible preacher and teacher, who's 90 essays in *The Fundamentals* were foundational to

fundamentalists; and Thiessen accuses that his explanations of Baptism are 'mystical.' Morgan, the Bible, and John the Baptist, point out that there is a baptism other than water baptism; "Mt 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*" Jesus will baptize (wholly immerse) with the Holy Ghost, but Thiessen will not hear of it. Morgan, the Bible and the Apostle Paul distinguish a baptism into the Body of Christ, creating our union with Christ. "1Co 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*" Our union with Christ is accomplished by being (God's words) "*baptized into one body*"; but Thiessen will not hear of it. The precedence has been well established and Thiessen ignores and dismisses Holy Scripture to believe that all baptisms in the Bible are water baptisms. Shame, shame on Thiessen.

4. Thiessen shares and sites Ironside's argument that like views on baptism are not required for communion at the Lord's table, refute this.

Ans pg 425-426. As Ironside states it "Scripture never intimates that like views of baptism are required to fit saints for communion at the Lord's table. ..." Thiessen, and evidently Ironside, believe that everyone who is saved is immediately made a member of the holy catholic church and is thus eligible to receive communion at the Lord's table. In actuality a believer is eventually made a member of a local body of believers, which is what Christ organized, commissioned, and authorized; the local body of believers administers the ordinances to its members; (more particularly the ordained ministers in the office of bishop/pastor (singular) and deacons (plural) administer the ordinances to its members) and that new believer is not one of those members until they have administered the ordinance of baptism and made a member eligible for the receipt of communion at the Lord's table. Ergo a Scriptural baptism, accepted by like views of a body of believers, called a local church, is indeed required to fit saints for communion at the Lord's table of that local assembly. Thiessen again dismisses this logic in his closing paragraph of this chapter on page 431.

5. What verses commissioning the ordinance of communion does Thiessen, dismiss from Scripture?

Ans pg 426. Words of instruction about the ordinance of the Lord's Supper found in Luke 22:17-20 are reported by Thiessen as being 'not certainly authentic.' Thiessen, Robertson, and Plummer then only have the testimony of St. Paul, and Thiessen has already clarified that he does not consider St. Paul's testimony to be God's testimony. There is a very dangerous precedence in Thiessen, a precedence of dismissing Scriptures like "*And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood,*

which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:17-20)

6. How did Thiessen connect the dots of John 8, Eucharist, transubstantiation, and the Roman Catholic teaching?

Ans pg 426-427. Thiessen tries to connect John 6:35, “*And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst*”, to Bengel's assertion that this is related to the Holy Supper, which W. K. Kelly connects to the Roman development of the sacrament of Eucharist, which includes transubstantiation, “a doctrine which must be 'repudiated by all Romanists or Protestants save by such as are utterly blinded by superstition.' Thiessen then reports that, “The Roman Catholic Church interprets the words of Christ literally, when He says: “This is my body,” He does not say, *This is the figure of my body* – but *This is my body* (2 Council of Nice, Art. 6)” This provides a fine summary of the whole error about this ordinance, and Thiessen has waded in, to stand in the middle of the error.

7. What is the Lutheran position on The Lord's Supper?

Ans pg 428-429. According to the Lutherans “the communicant partakes of the true body and blood of Christ, *in, with,* and *under* the bread and wine. The elements themselves remain unchanged, but the mere partaking of them after the prayer of consecration communicates Christ to the participant along with the emblems. This is known as the doctrine of consubstantiation.”

8. Luther and Calvin did not land very far from the Roman Catholic teaching of Holy Eucharist; where did the reformed view take it and what does Thiessen think of their position?

Ans pg 429-430. The reformed position on the Lord's Supper is “Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporeally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporeally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves to their outward senses. (Westminster Confession, XXIX, vii.)” To this Thiessen says “It may be questioned whether even this view does not go beyond the teaching of Scripture. The Biblical view seem to represent the Lord's Supper as a memorial to the death of Christ...” Bravo Thiessen, finally! The Reformers did not go far enough from Catholicism, the Reform view did not go far enough from the Reformers, and Thiessen, here, finally, goes away from the Reformed View, but again, he does not go far enough away.

Thiessen's Chapter 38 Q&A Obj. 4

The Mission and Destiny of the Church
pg 432-439

In consideration of Objective 4. The church's mission and destiny.

1. According to Thiessen what are the 7 missions of the Church?

Ans pg 432-436. Thiessen supposed that the 7 missions of the Church are: 1) to Glorify God, 2) to Edify itself, 3) to Purify itself, 4) to Educate its Constituency, 5) to Evangelize the World, 6) to Act as a Restraining Force, and Enlightening Force in the World, and 7) to Promote All that is Good. Note that Thiessen's missions include no preaching of the gospel!

2. If the mission of the Church is in the Commission of Christ what did Thiessen hit or miss?

Ans pg 432-436 and Matt 28:19-20. In Matthew 28 Jesus commissions the church to “*19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” This threefold commission might be aligned with Thiessen's shortlist of seven as follows 1) to 'preach the Gospel to every creature' may align with Thiessen's 5th, to Evangelize the world; 2) to 'Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the the Holy Ghost' aligns with nothing that Thiessen mentions; and 3) to 'teach them to observe all things' might in some way align with Thiessen's 4th, 'to Educate its Constituency?' It would certainly be better to take the mission of the church from the Holy Bible.

3. Explain the inconsistency between Christ's commission to the church and Thiessen's listing of missions of the Church.

Ans pg 432-436. Thiessen's inconsistency with what Christ commissioned for His church and what he lists as the mission of the Church likely stems from differing understandings of 'mission of the church'. In obvious literal understanding the Mission of the church would involve what the church was commissioned to do, but Thiessen seems to consider the mission of the Church to be what the Church seems to accomplish, (his item 1, 5, and 6) what is done to the Church, (his item 2 and 3) and what Thiessen wants that the church would do (his item 4 and 7).

4 Is it the mission of the church to edify itself and purify itself?

Ans pg 433. Although Thiessen considers edifying itself and purifying itself as missions of the church they are not what the organized church proper sets out to include in its mission statement. Saints are to edify one another, and saints are to purify themselves. Thiessen considers church discipline under its purification but in general admits that the Bible teaches that Christ is the one who edifies the church, and Christ is the one who purifies that church. Ergo these do not truly fit as missions of the church.

5. Is 'Acting as a Restraining Force in the World' really a direct mission of the Local Church?

Ans pg 435. Although the believers are “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world”, it is the Holy Spirit present in the believer which is the restraining force in the world. (see 2Thes.2) Again Thiessen considers the church to be the

whole of all saved believers and not an organization, yeah an organism, headed and commissioned by Christ. Acting as a Restraining Force in the World, is not a directed mission of Christ's organized body of believers.

6. Rather than use Scripture, Thiessen uses analogy to support his idea that it is a mission of the Church to 'Promote all that is Good'; how does this connect him to neo-evangelicalism?

Ans pg 436. According to Theopedia “The Neo-Evangelical movement was a response among orthodox evangelical Protestants to the separatism of fundamentalist Christianity beginning in the 1930s. The term was coined by Harold Ockenga in 1947, to identify a distinct movement within the broader evangelical fundamentalist Christianity of that day. ... What has been termed a split within the fundamentalist movement, came about as they disagreed among themselves about how Bible-believing Christians ought to respond to an unbelieving world. The neo-evangelicals urged that fundamentalists must engage the culture directly and constructively, and they began to express embarrassment about being known to the world as fundamentalists. The term is now used almost exclusively by conservative critics, to distinguish their idea of Evangelicalism from this movement. They claim that a loss of Biblical authority was evident early, which would later bear fruit in more and more accommodation: which they perceive to have happened wherever neo-evangelicals deny, or too severely qualify their belief in, the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy ... the Fundamentalist name does not apply to the Evangelical movement because of the neo-evangelical division.”⁹⁹ Although Thiessen states “The work of reformation must be definitely subordinated to the work of evangelization So also in the case of philanthropy...” he gives this 'promoting of social good' and 'reformation' equal weight in the church's mission statement. It has a neo-evangelical, social-gospel flavor no matter how he rationalizes the church's devoting itself to 'social service.'

7. What is the unstated necessity for Thiessen giving good justification that 'The Church Will Not Convert the World'?

Ans pg 436-437. The Roman Catholic Church has a mixed up eschatology wherein the Catholic Church would convert the world and usher in some sort of kingdom for Christ that is not a millennial kingdom at all. Thiessen refutes this concept without alluding to the Roman Catholic error.

8. What overriding error in Thiessen's ecclesiology is insignificant in his section on the destiny of the church?

Ans pg 436-437. Thiessen considers every believer a part of the church rather than just a part of the family. This generalization causes error in his consideration of the founding, organization, and mission of the church, because founding, organization and commissioning of the church is only done in a local church level. After the rapture, when considering the destiny of the church, there will be but one *ecclesia*, or gathering, of the believers and Thiessen's generalizations about there being only one-all-inclusive church will indeed be

99 From Theopedia <http://www.theopedia.com/Neo-evangelicalism>

accurate.

Critique of Geisler's 2002 Ecclesiology

Norman L. Geisler wrote a tremendous single volume, 1600 page book that he called “Systematic Theology.”¹⁰⁰ It is an unabridged compilation of “everything ever believed about God” from an “evangelical” point of view. The thesis of this effort, in contrast to Geisler's effort, is to systematically layout everything revealed by God in sixty-six books, 1,189 chapters, of his revelation. That is less effort, involving less research than what was undertaken by Dr. Geisler. His work is exceptional reference material, but his premise that truth is determined by what the majority of orthodox theologians believed is dangerous and often fickle.

Of Norman L. Geisler's *Systematic Theology in One Volume*¹⁰¹, Dr. Paige Patterson, President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary said,

Great theologians are best when they are outstanding philosophers also. Then, of course, you often cannot fathom what they are saying. Norman Geisler has the unique ability as a philosopher and theologian to deal with profound concepts in ways that the common man can easily grasp. Consequently, this systematic theology will not only sit on the desk of the scholar but also of the pastor, and on the coffee table of many a layman^{102, 103}.

Geisler's single volume of systematic theology is indeed

100 Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology In One Volume*, Bethany House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2002, 3, 4, 5, 11.

101 Ibid.

102 This author objects to the Roman Catholic categorization of Christians being clerics, or clergy, who are denominationally trained to read and interpret the Holy Bible, and laity or laymen, who were not trained and professional in their denomination. True, Bible believing, Born-again ones, are indwelt by the Christ and have eyes made to see, and ears made to hear. Such exude the priesthood of all believers.

103 Ibid., flyleaf

superior to Charles Hodge, and Augustus Strong's work. Charles Hodge was a meticulous and scholarly Princeton graduate but he was first and foremost a Presbyterian with a staunch reformed theology. Augustus Strong was a Baptist, equally meticulous and scholarly, but desiring to meld Baptist doctrine with reformed theology and atheistic evolution. Where Dr. Henry Thiessen did not believe that an inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Bible was in existence in his day, Dr. Geisler uses such as his *prima facie* source, and at times his sole source for his doctrine. Dr. Geisler's work in one volume is also superior to Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's verbose eight volumes of systematic theology.

Whereas Dr. Chafer blundered into ecclesiology without script, clarity or soundness, Dr. Geisler's concise style and organized coverage of it excels past Dr. Chafer's verbosity. Just the same, Geisler is hopelessly mired in the Roman made quagmire concerning the catholicness of the church, and whether it is visible or invisible. His hundred pages outline in his TOC illustrate this confusion.

Part Seven: The Church [Ecclesiology]¹⁰⁴

70 The Origin of the Church	1077
71 The Nature of the Universal Church	1092
72 The Nature of the Visible Church(es)	1105
73 The Government of the Visible Church	1130
74 The Ordinances of the Visible Church	1152
75 The Ministry of the Visible Church (Spiritual Gifts)	1176
76 The Relationship of the Church to the State	1193

Although Geisler is often thorough he is always thoroughly embedded in the decrees of God for everything he believes. Notice that it even lunges headlong into his ecclesiology.

The Ordination of the Church by God¹⁰⁵

Like every other work of God, the church is not an afterthought; He ordained the church from all eternity. Since God is eternal and immutable, (see chapter 32), whatever He wills, He unchangeably

104Ibid. TOC.

105Ibid. pg 1078.

wills from eternity. “He chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Eph. 1:4; cf 2Cor 5:17). God’s decrees are eternal and final (Rom 11:29); He is the source and initiator of all salvation, (see chapter 59), including of those in the New Testament church, for we are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God.” He knew and ordained not only the church in general but also each person in particular who would be in it. His foreknowledge is infallible (see chapter 36), and His providence is specific and minute (see chapter 51).

It is thus obvious that Geisler will insist that his Calvinist, Reformed, Westminster Confession derived, decree driven election of souls for heaven and hell before the foundation of the world will invade every doctrine of his effort. Here it brazenly invades his ecclesiology.

A second besetting problem with Geisler's ecclesiology is his everlasting confusion about the universal-catholic church and its apportionment between a visible entity and an invisible entity. In fairness, Geisler does lay out distinctions with less smoke and mirror than others, but the artificial brokering of a visible flawed local church against an invisible unflawed catholic church is still a preposterous attempt to reform and correct Roman Catholic error wedged into Protestant Reformed theology. Geisler does break from their Covenant Theology in favor of Bible truth, but he remains in the quagmire about an invisible church.

The Invisible Church Is Universal.

Other than the early post-Pentecost church in Jerusalem, there never has been and never will be a truly catholic (universal) church on earth. Neither the Roman nor the Greek branch of Christendom is truly catholic; the only truly catholic church today is the spiritual body of Christ, which is all true believers in whatever local church or denomination. Never does the Bible use the word *church* to denote one visible ecclesiastical union that is the sole organization representing Christ on earth; the repeated use of the word *churches* reveals that only in a general, collective sense can we speak of the many self-governing, independent churches that are based on New Testament teaching as the “church” on earth. Only the invisible church is truly universal.

Thus Geisler, as a Protestant Evangelical theologian, evades a Holy Roman Catholic Church with an invisible universal church evasion. He does tiptoe through the invisible quagmire with more finesse than others, and he seems to reasonably land on his feet in the end, but he is still thoroughly muddied with the election of individual souls for heaven or hell, even after he breaks them out of their Covenant Theology, and Replacement Theology.

Geisler, as I said previous, has his moments. For a Bible student that has a sound Biblical systematic theology, Norman Geisler's "Systematic Theology" is a good reference book. But for the Bible student that does not have a solid KJV foundation for what God has revealed to man, reading Geisler will quickly gender instability whereby a student is awash in learned opinions of orthodox theologians using ecumenical, sometimes Evangelical, bible translations which express what scholarly men think God meant to say. Geisler is thorough at documenting what orthodox theologians believed, but such Roman bias makes it dangerous for the Bible student striving to determine absolute Bible truth.

Chapter 9 Ecclesiology Conclusion

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church (1577 εκκλησια ekklesia ek-klay-see'-ah); and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:16-18)¹

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the ecclesia, translated to English as the church. The origin of the word church comes from the Greek word kuriakos, meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended to some extent to make it capture the full concept of Christ's Ecclesia. It had to capture that the Ecclesia is "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this basic definition need to be emphasized. The church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body."¹⁰⁶ The King James Bible consistently translates the Greek word 1577 εκκλησια ekklesia ek-klay-see'-ah "church" one-hundred-and-fifteen times, and appropriately translates it assembly three times in Acts 19:32, 39, 41.

The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant theology and doctrine have all and always considered the church to be one united catholic, universal, entity, The Holy Catholic Church, originated in The Holy Roman Catholic Church. After Protestants broke from their mother, The Holy Roman Catholic Church, there was consternation about this doctrine and many devised a solution whereby the Holy Catholic Church was... invisible, but still Catholic.

Baptists have historically held to the Biblical view that the church is a local, independent, autonomous body with no

¹⁰⁶ Rather than distinguish these three attributes separately some theologians, i.e. Ryrie and Bancroft, call it "called together" rather than "called out." Such semantics are accurate and may be, at times, more helpful.

denominational head, only Christ is head of the church. The corporate body of Christ being built and referenced in Matthew 16:18, is not a Holy Roman Catholic Church, nor a Holy Catholic Protestant Church, nor an invisible Catholic Church. It was seen in soteriology that a genuine born-again-saved individual is by the miraculous power of God, instantaneously converted, justified, quickened, indwelt, and baptized into Christ. In the latter of the simultaneous, instantaneous acts the individual is wholly immersed (baptized) into the corporate body of Christ and is made one with him. In this world that believer is called upon to be baptized and united with other believers in a local, independent, autonomous body called a church and continue in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:40-41). There is no unified, universal, catholic church with a visible or invisible, human or denominational head otherwise involved in this operation.

That local church doctrine is espoused in this work, but before detailing it, and distinguishing it, it is important to understand the historical background of why Christendom went through the wide gate and travels on the broad way of the Roman Catholic Church, its Covenant Theology and its Replacement Theology.

Without understanding the errors of Covenant Theology, and grasping the truths of Biblical Dispensationalism, it is quite impossible to comprehend Biblical ecclesiology. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ has a beginning and founding in the Lord Jesus Christ, and an ending that is pending in its rapture before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant and Ironside both give superb exposition of Jesus' prophetic history of the church given in Revelation 2-3, and that stands in stark contrast to any Roman Catholic Church history.

The perpetuity of Christ's church, and consequently of Baptists, is clearly presented by both Shakelford, in his "Compendium of Baptist History", and by J. Newton Brown's "Memorials of Baptist Martyrs – Preliminary Historical Essay" given in Chapter 4 of this volume. True church history is thereby set in stark contrast to Roman Church history. Also with a Biblical dispensational understanding of the Bible comes a church age with a distinct beginning and a distinct ending. Hyper-Dispensationalist

seem to understand the distinct ending but completely muck up the distinct beginning. Their idea that Paul started a Gentile Church distinct and separate from a “Jewish Church” is foreign to scripture and dangerous to a Bible student seeking Bible truth. No one ever became a Hyper-Dispensationalist by reading the Bible. No one ever became a Calvinist by reading the Bible. No one ever became a Roman Catholic by reading the Bible. So so LDS, JW, SDA, et al. Hyper-Dispensationalist ideas are refuted in chapter 6 of this volume.

Satan in The Holy Roman Catholic Church has formed and guided hallmarks of error that assault Biblical ecclesiology. The church of our Lord Jesus Christ is not "Holy Roman", "Wholly Roman" nor "Catholic", united under an infallible human Pope. When Protestants crawled out from under their Roman Pope they kept Satan's leaven that the church is still catholic. Reformed theologians knocked heads about how a denominationally splintered yet universally united catholic church could still exist and devised a ludicrous position that the united catholic church is now invisible, but still united, and still catholic. They supposed, in their bitter denominational struggles, that there is a visible church where we attend and fight with other denominations, and an invisible church wherein we are all united as one in catholic union and harmony. Yeah, invisible. Balderdash in every whit.

The church of our Lord Jesus Christ is not catholic, in whole or in part. There is coming a day when Christ will call out and assemble his church, it will, on that day, be his bride, but until then saints need to leave off with the Holy Roman Catholic Church's teachings that the church is catholic.

Next the Holy Roman Catholic deceiver came up with his scheme of Replacement Theology wherein the Catholic Church replaces God's chosen people Israel and the Holy Roman Catholic Church becomes the new “elect of God” chosen before the foundation of the world. The doctrine is that they, the Roman Catholic Church and not Israel, will dominate the whole world in the last days, and that they, and not Israel, will rule the world and reign with Christ for a completely figurative, completely allegorical thousand-years. This, they suppose, covers what is

mentioned in the very suspect rantings of the apocalyptic allegorical Book of Revelation. They invented the allegorical method of hermeneutics and took Bible-criticism to an art form, to bolster such balderdash. Protestants were offended by the Roman Church's sale of indulgences, but as they left it they were carrying boat loads of their Replacement Theology, and a despise for God's real chosen people, Israel.

With the catholic church being the replacement of Israel as the new “Elect of God” comes a concept that the Catholic Church has always existed, and did not start with Christ, but with their teachings of Covenant Theology. All Protestants and particularly John Calvin's Presbyters, Institutes, and Reformed Theologies are sullied by a Catholic Church holding to a Replacement Theology, and an ever existent church in their Covenant Theology. John Calvin's errant teachings on a God who chose and elected some souls for heaven and the rest for an eternity in hell is only one ugly part of his whole maligned package where a Holy Catholic Church replaces Israel in a Covenant Theology.

The culmination of these three hallmarks of error in ecclesiology is the forth where they hold a complete and vehement denial of the dispensational teachings of the Holy Bible. To suppose that the church age will come to a close and God will again take up his dealings with his chosen people Israel, and initiate a millennial reign from his Holy Hill of Zion is completely contrary to all Catholic Church teachings and all of “Orthodox Christianity.”

No previous systematic theology has completely stepped out of these errors, nor exposed them for what they are. The vast majority of Christendom is in lock step with these error. This Systematic Theology for the 21st Century Volume 09 – Ecclesiology, is unique in its effort to expose “The Emperor With No Clothes.”

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About the Author

Pastor Ed Rice is a retired USAF Systems Engineer surrendered to be a Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Saved in 1960 at the age of eight he grew up tutored in the Scriptures through Tuscorora Baptist Church in Addison NY, where he married his high-school sweetheart Beverly Cook Rice. Drafted into the military off of the dairy farm in 1972, Ed and Bev Rice raised 3 boys while serving as a Missile Technician in the USAF. After completing a USAF AECF bootstrap program he graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned in the USAF where he served until 1995 as a systems engineer and weapons integration specialist at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and Rome Laboratories, Rome NY. He finished his Masters degree in Electrical Engineering through The Air Force Institute of Technology in 1990.

After being commissioned as a USAF officer in 1982 he pursued his systems engineering work in several classified research and development programs. While moving around the USA in his twenty three year military career he was a youth pastor and associate pastor in Independent Baptist Churches near his station. In 1995 he became Captain Rice, USAF retired, and surrendered to be a Baptist Pastor.

In 1998 he took the senior pastorate at Good Samaritan Baptist Church, in Dresden, New York where he pursued his theological studies at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary. At LBU Pastor Rice received his second masters degree in 2013, and his PhD in Theology in 2017. His son Michael is US Army retired living near Fort Hood Texas, Shane is an Independent Baptist Missionary pastoring Chiesa Biblica Battista, Mazara Del Vallo, Italy, and Matthew is serving our Lord Jesus Christ near Hamilton NY. Capt Rice has spent seven years teaching math and science with the ABeka Christian High School Curriculum, and seven years teaching college mathematics, a love of his life, at community colleges near his church.

Dr. Rice's staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures and his extensive background in systems engineering make him uniquely qualified to assemble "A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century."

Personal Testimony of Pastor Edward Rice.

I was saved in 1960 at the age of eight. My father and mother were saved and founding members of Fellowship Baptist Church in Gang Mills New York. In 1958 my dad, Levi O. Rice, an agnostic, was invited by Cecil Palm to be a founding member of that church; both of my parents were born-again-saved two weeks later. My mother, Doris was converted from Roman Catholicism, and became a Christian. She stopped her Roman penance and practiced Bible repentance, stopped praying to Mary and called upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save her. She was thus converted from Roman Catholicism to the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone needs converted from something. Mom and Dad were now born again, and two years later I was saved in revival services with Evangelist Dale and Opel Linbaugh. Opel cut the flannel graph burden of sin off little Christian's back in her Pilgrim's Progress presentation, and I was born-again-saved before it hit the basement floor. In 1995 I retired from the USAF as a systems engineer and became an ordained Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3). Being converted is quite like a new birth, Jesus said so. If you have not been converted you should trust Christ today, and you must tell him that that is your intent. (see Romans 10:9-13).