

Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived? : Part 1

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As some of my longtime readers will already know, it has never been my practice to shy away from discussing some of the more difficult issues regarding our faith which certain other preachers and pastors may be afraid to talk about, due to their bondage to political correctness and other concerns. I tend to be forthright, honest, and to the point in the way that I craft my articles and series. Over the past twenty-two years since my online writing ministry began, I have tackled some rather meaty, controversial topics. For example, I have exposed the compromises of modern organized religion, which I refer to as "churchianity". I have written about and exposed the false Jews, the Zionists and the lies of Judaism. I have also exposed the sins and rebellion of the militant gay and lesbian rights movement. I have exposed the excessive greed of both Big Business and commercialized Christianity. I have exposed the hypocrisy and warmongering nature of the American government. I have dealt with the vices of smoking, cussing,

drug addiction, alcoholism and pornography. I have exposed the wickedness of the evil, murderous practice of abortion.

As I point out in a number of other articles, if there is one word which appropriately describes our current times, it is "deception". No intelligent, observant person can deny that deception in fact abounds, and is everywhere we look. We are constantly being deceived by our governments. We are deceived by the news media. We are deceived by organized religion. We are deceived by Big Business. We are deceived by friends and acquaintances. We are deceived by boyfriends and girlfriends. We even deceive each other within our own families if doing so suits our purposes. In our blind hypocrisy, we all expect honesty from those people who touch our lives, but can we truly say that we are reciprocating in the very same manner?

Many people become deceived by a particular thought or belief and never even realize it; at least not immediately. We can spend a large portion of our lives believing in a certain lie or deception, until one day a light suddenly comes on in our head. It is at this point that we experience our so-called "ah-hah!" moment, and we find ourselves asking ourselves how in the world we could have ever possibly believed in such a thing to begin with. While it is indeed true that there are times in our lives when we intentionally and knowingly allow ourselves to become deceived, insofar as this current series is concerned, it deals with issues which relate to the first kind of deception; that is, unintentional deception.

As I have explained to my readers previously, it is my view that the truth of God's Word has been buried under piles and piles of misguided theological rubble, so that today, many Christians have become seriously deceived. Speaking quite candidly, even I was deceived regarding the proper meaning of certain Biblical passages for about forty-two years of my life. This deception on my part resulted from the fact that during my late teenage years, I was exposed to a theological perspective which blinded me to certain Scriptural truths for literally decades to come.

No doubt like many of you who are reading this series, I waited and waited for the Lord to give me understanding as I grew older and older; and yet I simply could not properly assemble the different pieces of God's "Prophetic Puzzle" in the correct order, no matter how hard I endeavored to do so.

Quite frankly, I was baffled by the meaning of a number of verses, and there were many blank spots in my understanding; particularly when it came to the subject of Bible prophecy. Of course, I thought that I understood certain parts of it, but the truth of the matter is that I now believe that it has only been during the past few years or so that God has really begun to open my eyes. As a result, I have begun to realize how misguided I have actually been; particularly in the area of Bible prophecy.

Based on my personal recollection, it was sometime in early 2012 -- and perhaps even in 2011 -- that I believe that the Lord began to gradually reveal to me through the Scriptures, that I have been deceived by certain doctrinal positions for a great many years now. In fact, it is plainly evident to me that I have been deceived by them for the bulk of my adult life over the past forty plus years. Furthermore, not only have I personally been deceived by said beliefs, but to my own shame, because I have taught these very same beliefs by way of my articles, I have also helped to perpetuate these misguided doctrines, and quite possibly deceived others. At the very least, I have helped to affirm other Christians' misguided beliefs. If there is one thing that I can tell you, it is that I never expected that one day the following Bible verse might be applicable to my own life as well:

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."
2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

Yes. I know. That is a very powerful verse to apply to my own life. Perhaps after you have finished reading what I have to say in this series, you may possibly feel that the verse really does not apply to me. We shall see.

Before I continue, let me state for the record that it has never been my intention to purposely deceive anyone. Similar to many other Christian writers and preachers, I have simply taught for many years what I personally believed to be true, and an accurate understanding of certain Scriptures which concern the issue of prophecy. Furthermore, as you will now learn, the reason why I was so convinced of these beliefs, and taught these doctrines, is because I was deceived by others, who in turn were deceived by other Bible teachers who even preceded them. You need to understand that the

doctrine I am about to expose has been in existence for a very long time, and has been dominant for many decades now.

Whatever the case may be, allow me to inform you that what I state in this current series is a result of my own personal studies into God's Word. Besides using the KJV Bible as my primary tool of investigation, in this series -- as well as in a number of yet-to-be-published articles and series which will delve into related historical and prophetic topics -- I have also referred to other extra-Biblical sources, in order to confirm certain facts as they pertain to ancient history, as well as to clarify my own understanding regarding what is being described and prophesied in the Scriptures. Some of these resources include the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon, the Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, the writings of certain ancient Jewish and Roman historians such as Flavius Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius, and various other online resources.

The point I wish to emphasize here is that what I am about to share with you is not the result of doctrines that I have learned from other theologians, preachers or Bible teachers. Not only that, but I purposely avoided reading the writings and opinions of such individuals, so that the Lord could reveal the truth to me directly from His Word, and enhance my personal understanding of the same, by way of the leading of the Holy Spirit. Is this not in fact what the Scriptures inform us is the purpose of the Holy Spirit? Please consider the following verses which speak about the Spirit of Truth, and how it will lead and teach us:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:16-17, 26, KJV

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"

John 15:26, KJV

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:13, KJV

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Galatians 1:11-12, KJV

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,"

Ephesians 1:17-18, KJV

"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that 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 fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."

Ephesians 3:2-7, KJV

"We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

1 John 4:6, KJV

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."

1 John 5:6, KJV

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

John 4:23-24, KJV

As you may have already begun to sense, depending on your own doctrinal perspective and personal understanding of the Scriptures, the series you are about to read may very well be the most radical, challenging thing you have ever read from me. Be advised that it may in fact shake your faith to its very foundation. Similar to myself, it may cause you to question and doubt some beliefs which you have embraced for years; quite possibly even for decades. Make no mistake. It may affect you in a very profound way. If there is one thing which I can say about this series, it is that it obviously falls under the category "things . . . hard to be uttered" and "strong meat", as we see by the following verses:

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Hebrews 5:11-14, KJV

By the time that you have completed reading this series, you will either love me all the more for being willing to tell you the truth without reservation -- at least what I am now convinced is the Biblical truth -- or else you will accuse me of being a liar and a false prophet. That is just how strong this material is. I am not boasting or exaggerating when I say this. In fact, I fully expect to lose some of my current online friends as a result of publishing this series, because it is not the milk of God's Word. This series addresses one of the toughest, chewiest, most difficult and widely-debated issues that is found in the Bible. As I explained a moment ago, what I am about to share here may very well challenge some of your current beliefs.

At the same time, I also believe that this series will come as a great blessing, a relief, and a confirmation to some of my observant Christian friends who have likewise been seeing the same things in the Scriptures which I have seen. In fact, for quite some time now, a few of you have been asking me a number of questions in private chat, as well as via email, regarding certain Scriptures which have greatly troubled you. Like myself, you have begun to suspect that they do not mean what modern Bible teachers and preachers have told us they mean. While I have purposely not provided you with direct answers, and for many months now have been asking you to have patience while I complete my own initial studies, the time has finally arrived for me to share with you what I have learned thus far over the past few years.

However, please understand ahead of time that my personal Biblical research is ongoing, and that there are still many issues which I need to study and resolve for myself, based on the new theological perspective I have acquired in recent years. There still remain quite a few gaps in my personal understanding regarding Bible prophecy. As a result, please do not expect this series to answer all of your questions, because it won't. This subject is just so huge, and it has so many prophetic ramifications. In fact, this series will no doubt leave you with a lot of new questions, just as this information has left me with a lot of new questions as well, which I hope to address in future articles and series, as I come to a greater knowledge of the truth.

For now, what I can tell you is the following. By the time you have finished reading this series, you are going to be faced with a very important decision. You are going to have to believe that either Jesus and the Apostles of the First Century spoke the truth regarding the timing of the Lord's triumphant Return, and that we have simply misunderstood what they taught and wrote; or else modern preachers, Bible teachers, Christian authors and movie makers are telling us the truth regarding Christ's Advent. Of course, if we accept that the latter group is telling us the truth, then we are indirectly saying that Jesus and the Apostles were misguided and got it wrong. The only other alternative is to recognize that these modern conveyors of truth are in fact twisting the true meaning of the Scriptures, promoting the doctrines of men, and in some cases earning a profit from it as well.

Of course, this also forces us to admit that some of us have been deceived by them too.

If you are a little confused by the last paragraph, please don't worry. I assure you that everything will become clear to you by the time you have completed reading this series. At any rate, before you read another paragraph, I ask you to please stop right now and pray. Ask the Lord to give you an open mind and heart, and eyes that can see, so that you will be able to understand what I am about to share with you in this series. Ask the Lord right now to give you the Gift of Spiritual Discernment, so that you can properly ascertain whether or not I am telling you the truth, based on what the Scriptures actually say and teach us regarding the Return of Jesus Christ. As we read in the verses below, we all need to test the spirits, and to study the Scriptures, in order to discern whether or not someone is speaking Biblical truth:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Acts 17:10-11, KJV

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

1 Thessalonians 5:21, KJV

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

1 John 4:1, KJV

Assuming that you have prayed as I requested, let us delve into the meat of the matter. As I began to explain earlier, for quite a number of decades now, a certain theological perspective regarding what modern Christians refer to as Endtime prophecy has prevailed. There are certain preachers, Bible teachers, Christian authors and movie makers who have

aggressively promoted and defended this particular position. Sadly, anyone who has dared to question or outright oppose the prevailing theological view has been criticized, accused of being a deceived and misguided false prophet, condemned, and branded as a heretic by the supporters of this doctrine. In fact, some of these people can be so aggressive, that in some online comments, I have even seen them use the phrase "doctrine of devils" to describe any idea which opposes this prevailing theological perspective.

Tragically, it is precisely because this particular prophetic perspective has been so heavily foisted upon modern Believers in recent decades, that the "Jesus-is-coming-at-any-moment" mentality now prevails. Furthermore, it is due to this very same reason that certain Christian leaders were seriously embarrassed -- and their flocks left feeling rather confused -- when Jesus did not return in the year 2000 as they claimed that He would do. Needless-to-say, this very same erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures continues to persist to this present day, and many Christians continue to be led astray by the misguided men and women who promote it, and who continue to make their false predictions regarding Christ's Return.

If one takes the time to visit the popular social networks, or many of the thousands of Christian websites which are now online, he will quickly discover how many foolish things are being said, claimed, taught and propagated by these "wannabe prophets" which have no support in the Scriptures whatsoever. It is my view that their false teachings result from a forced interpretation of the Scriptures, so that they fit what these particular Bible teachers want to believe, and what they want us to believe as well. However, concerning these modern false prophets, Jesus, Moses and the Prophet Ezekiel offer us some sound advice when they state the following:

"But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."

Deuteronomy 18:20-22, KJV

"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."

Ezekiel 33:33, KJV

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Matthew 7:15-20, KJV

Sadly, as I briefly mentioned earlier, over forty years ago, when I was a young, teenage Christian who was very desirous to know and understand Scriptural truth, and who earnestly wanted to serve the Lord, I too became deceived by this same theological point of view. Even back then, it had already become quite dominant, and was being promoted by some of the well-known preachers of the time from the U.S. East Coast to the U.S. West Coast. Like many babes in Christ, not being grounded yet in God's Word, and not knowing the importance of verifying everything with the Scriptures, I too readily accepted as Biblical fact whatever I heard, or happened to read. Thus, for the next forty years or so, I preached and taught pretty much the exact same Endtime message as all of the other preachers when it came to the important topic of Jesus Christ's triumphant Return.

However, as I have already begun to explain, I am becoming convinced that after such a long time of remaining in deep prophetic confusion, I may finally be on the right track, and I am now beginning to understand Jesus and the Apostles' teachings regarding Christ's Return in a new and different light.

As it should be clear to you by now, the purpose of this current series is to set the record straight; not by leaning on the erroneous doctrines and eschatological traditions of men, but rather by taking you straight to the Scriptures, and letting them speak for themselves, as it should be. If you earnestly desire to know the truth; if your spiritual

eyes and ears are open to the truth; and if you are willing to forsake any misguided ideas and beliefs which may hold you back from accepting the Scriptural truth, then it is my hope that you will begin to see the same things which I have begun to see, by the time you have completed this series. All I am going to do is present you with the Scriptures, and explain to you how I now understand them. It will then be up to you to arrive at your own conclusions, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In previous paragraphs, I have repeatedly used the phrase "theological perspective". Some of you who are young in our Christian faith may be wondering what I mean by this. I do not want to make this series overly complicated, being as the subject we are discussing will already be very difficult and challenging for some people as it is; so I will endeavor to make the following few paragraphs as short and as precise as possible.

Over the centuries, interpretation of the Holy Scriptures -- or "exegesis" -- has resulted in basically three different points of view, or perspectives. Being as we are discussing theology -- or religious beliefs -- these three points of view are thus three theological perspectives. Of course, just by saying this, I am simplifying things, because even within these three primary theological perspectives, there likewise exist different levels, flavors, tangents -- or whatever you wish to call them -- where two people who embrace the same theological perspective, may not necessarily hold exactly to the same beliefs. There are now so many different labels and doctrinal subdivisions, that it can be downright confusing.

The first theological perspective is the Preterist point of view. This perspective became popular during the Nineteenth Century. According to the Preterist point of view, the Book of Revelation represents a message of hope and comfort that was primarily directed to the Christians who were living during the First Century. Thus, the goal of the Book is to give First Century Believers an expectation of deliverance from the oppression and persecution of the Roman government. This particular viewpoint is also known as the Contemporary Historical view. As such, it regards the various visions of the Book of the Revelation as primarily -- and perhaps even exclusively -- reflecting the events and people of the First Century.

However, as I mentioned a moment ago, within each of these theological perspectives, there exist variations in belief. Thus, it should be noted that there are different degrees of Preterists. For example, while some Preterists believe that all of the events which are described in Revelation center around the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple compound in 70 AD, and that all of the Book's prophecies have already been fulfilled, other Preterists hold to the view that the final chapters of the Book remain as of yet unfulfilled, and that they prophesy of a future Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In this context, some Preterists believe that the first half of the Book of Revelation describes the fall of Jerusalem; the second half of the Book prophesies the fall of the Roman Empire; and the final chapters describe the glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Are you beginning to see how quickly Biblical exegesis can become very complicated?

The second theological perspective is the Historicist point of view. The Historicist method of interpretation views the Book of Revelation as a symbolic prophecy which encompasses the entirety of Church history, and which forms a picture of the events and movements which have shaped the conflict and progress of the Christian Church. Due to its very nature, much conjecture is associated with this particular point of view as history progresses. Within it we find references to barbarian invasions, the Reformation, the French Revolution, World Wars I and II, the European Common Market, etc. These historical interpretations obviously have to be revised periodically when the popular interpretations prove to be unreliable. The Historicist view was professed by Reformers such as John Wycliffe, John Knox, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Matthew Henry, as well as by more recent notable Christians such as Charles Spurgeon.

The third theological perspective we are going to discuss is the Futurist point of view. This perspective was developed during the 17th Century. Futurists believe that from chapter four onward, all of the prophecies which we find in the Book of Revelation describe events which are still in the future from our current perspective. Furthermore, according to many Futurists, many -- if not all -- of these events will occur during a short seven-year period, which they are convinced signifies the Great Tribulation. However, some people believe that only the final three and half years of this seven-year

period will constitute the Great Tribulation. Furthermore, Futurists equate this seven-year period with the seventieth week of the Seventy Weeks prophecy of the Prophet Daniel. Whatever the case may be, the Futurist position holds that all of these events will occur prior to the future Return of Jesus Christ.

The Futurist perspective is a very powerful, influential and pervasive force; so much so, that it has been embraced by the majority of the currently popular evangelists, Christian book authors, Bible teachers, and even by Christian movie makers. Such is the strength of this viewpoint, that it has in fact dominated the Christian media. If you've seen movies such as the "Left Behind" series, the "Apocalypse" series, the "Omen" series, the "Omega Code" movies, "Rosemary's Baby", and other movies which center around the birth and reign of the Beast, or the Antichrist, you have been directly exposed to, as well as indoctrinated by, the Futurist theological perspective.

This is in fact the perspective which influenced my Christian beliefs forty-five years ago when I was a teenager, and kept me solidly under its thumb until only a few years ago. It has so dominated modern Christianity, that many people, both Christian and non-Christian alike, are not even aware of the fact that there are alternative points of view. As I stated earlier, sadly, I have observed some online Futurists who are so aggressive regarding their doctrinal views, that they will immediately condemn anyone who embraces an opposing point of view, even classifying such beliefs as "doctrines of devils".

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived? : Part 2

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Dispensationalism, William M. Branham And Seven Church Ages, Church Lost In And Divided By So Much Doctrinal Confusion, Doctrinal And Spiritual Unity, Futurist Perspective And The Claim Of Christ's Future Return, Why I Was Forced To Change My Theological Perspective, Faith In God's Word And Not Just In The Teacher, Some Verses Challenged My Futurist Beliefs, My Evolving Theology, Willingness To Change Our Erroneous Beliefs, God's Method Of Simultaneously Revealing The Truth To Different People, Jesus Promised To Return And Set Up His Kingdom During The Apostles' Lifetimes, Romans Would Witness Christ's Return, Peter And Apostles Preached That The First Century Was The Last Days, Prophet Joel's Last Days Prophecy, Modern False Prophets And A Modern Revival, Jesus Opened The Meaning Of Old Testament Prophecies To His Followers, Signs Of The Last Days, Our Incomplete Historical Record, Conniving Unbelieving Jews And The Stolen Body Story, Record Destroyers

Directly related to the Futurist theological perspective is a system of Biblical exegesis -- that is, interpretation -- known as Dispensationalism. This form of interpretation was first proposed by John Nelson Darby. Darby was a nineteenth century lawyer, an Anglican priest, and one of the primary founders of the Plymouth Brethren. Dispensationalism became popular in large part due to the notes that are found in the Scofield Reference Bible. Dispensationalism proposes that human history is divided into seven distinct periods -- or dispensations -- during each of which God relates to, deals with and tests man according to His revealed Will for that period, and offers humanity different means of Salvation.

Dispensationalism teaches a clear and eternal distinction between Israel and the Church. It also teaches that the purpose of the first advent of Jesus Christ was to offer an earthly kingdom to the Jews, which would reinstate the Old Testament legal system. This kingdom was to expand to the entire world under the Messiah. Due to the Jews' rejection of Christ, Jesus died on the Cross in order to initiate the dispensation of Grace. Dispensationalism likewise teaches a secretive Pre-Tribulation Rapture for Christians -- but not for Old Testament Saints -- followed by Christ's Second

Coming seven years later. Dispensationalism is taught and promoted in one form or another by such organizations and people as Moody Bible Institute, Dallas Theological Seminary, Jerry Fallwell, Pat Robertson, Jack Van Impe and Hal Lindsey.

Directly related to Dispensationalism is the "Seven Church Ages" doctrine, which was primarily supported and promoted by William M. Branham in his 1965 book called "An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages". Supposedly, this wayward doctrine is based on the following verses which are found in the Book of Revelation:

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

Revelation 1:19-20, KJV

According to Branham, each of these seven churches represents a church age which has existed from the time of the original First Century Church, up to our present time, with the final church age being the age of the Laodicean Church. Mr. Branham also claimed that the seven Angels which are mentioned in the previous verses aren't really spiritual entities, but rather seven human messengers -- or Prophets -- one of each of whom has existed during each of these seven church ages. However, in my opinion, this is a man-made false doctrine which is not supported by the Scriptures. In fact, all we have to do is to go back ten verses earlier, where we are clearly told exactly who these Seven Churches are, as well as where they were located, and when they existed, as we see by the following verses:

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

Revelation 1:10-11, KJV

Clearly then, these were seven Christian congregations which

existed at that time in Asia Minor, which we know today as the country of Turkey. There is really no mystery there, or a need to try to interpret what those two verses are saying. To do so is to twist and pervert the meaning of God's Word; and that is exactly what William Branham did, in my opinion.

At any rate, given my previous explanations regarding the three different theological perspectives, Dispensationalism, and the "Seven Church Ages" doctrine, I hope you can see how easy it is to become lost in so much doctrinal confusion. Is it really any wonder that the modern Christian Church is so divided by so many different doctrines, and so many different denominations? It is clearly not the united Church that was born during the First Century. The Devil has had two thousand years to wreak doctrinal havoc on the Body of Christ, and he has done a fine job of it. Clearly, we are not one, as Jesus and the Apostles of old had hoped we would be. Consider the following verses:

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are . . . That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

John 17:11, 21-23, KJV

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

John 10:16, KJV

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 15:6, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

2 Corinthians 13:11, KJV

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"

Ephesians 4:1-3, KJV

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"
Philippians 1:27, KJV

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

Philippians 2:2, KJV

Returning to our previous topic, if we were to take the time to explore every single facet of each of these theological perspectives, we would be here for a very long time, and I would end up writing a twenty-part series. However, that is not the purpose of this current series by any means. Our goal is to concentrate on the one which has dominated modern Christianity for many decades now, and to examine its claim regarding the future Return of Christ. The big question is this: Do the Scriptures really indicate that Jesus will return to the Earth in the near future, following a period of Great Tribulation, in order to defeat the Beast and the False Prophet at the Battle of Armageddon, so that He can set up His Millennial Kingdom, or is this merely another man-made false doctrine?

If you would have asked me to answer this question even a few years ago, I would not have hesitated to tell you that I was certain that at some point in the future, and hopefully during my own lifetime, Jesus would return to the Earth, in order to fulfill all of the key points which are believed and promoted by those Christians who embrace the Futurist theological

perspective. After all, as I explained to you in part one of this series, I was one of them for over four decades of my life, and it never occurred to me that I could be wrong. "So what happened?", you may be asking yourself. "Why the sudden change in your doctrinal position?"

Actually, it was not sudden. It was rather gradual. In fact, I was not even looking to change my views; because as I just said, I had no reason to believe that my beliefs were wrong. As some of you know, when I write my articles and series, I spend a lot of time digging into the Scriptures, so that I can offer Biblical support for what I share. After all, as I have said many times before, my goal is to place my readers' faith in the Word of God, and not just in what I say. Let me remind you again that if someone goes on and on preaching, and rarely ever even quotes verses from the Bible, watch out!

At any rate, sometime in late 2011, or perhaps early 2012 -- I really cannot remember now -- while working on a number of articles, I began to encounter a few verses here and there which challenged my Futurist viewpoint, and made me question my understanding regarding the timing of Christ's Return. It wasn't just a sudden revelation. However, by October of 2012, I had collected enough verses to realize that I really needed to re-evaluate certain beliefs, some of which I had embraced for over four decades. It was at that point that I began to write this current series, and I have slowly worked on it since that time. Yes, my friends, this series has been years in the making.

As I have shared with my readers before, I embrace what I refer to as an "evolving theology". In other words, if the Lord, through His Word, reveals to me that I have been in error regarding some of my beliefs, then I must be willing to change them. If I don't do this, then I am no better than other Christians who stubbornly cling to their beliefs, even when they are wrong. As I said, some of the verses I began to encounter were quite troubling. In fact, as you will now discover, they are some of the very same verses which some of you have asked me about in private chat, because these verses have troubled you as well. This does not surprise me in the least, because I have come to believe that the Lord will often choose to reveal a particular truth to different people at the same time. Doing this tends to act as a safety valve, and it helps us to confirm for each other that we are

on the right track.

So exactly what is it that I discovered in the Bible which troubled me so? Are you ready for this bomb of Scriptural truth? Well, as different verses began to accumulate in my list, it became increasingly clear to me that, contrary to what I had for so long believed, Jesus actually promised to return during the Apostles' lifetimes, and not two thousand years in the distant future, as Futurists believe. I simply could not ignore the preponderance of Scriptures which was being revealed to me. Consider the following verses very carefully:

"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."
Matthew 10:23, KJV

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."
Matthew 16:28, KJV

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."
Mark 9:1, KJV

"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."
Luke 9:27, KJV

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also . . . Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe."
John 14:1-3, 28-29, KJV

"Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true."

John 21:20-24, KJV

Please notice some of the very specific things which Jesus says regarding the timing of His Return:

1. His followers would not even have enough time to preach in all of the cities of Israel before He would return. How could this statement possibly be true if Jesus were to return some two thousand years in the future as Futurists like to believe?
2. Some of the Disciples would not die until they had seen Jesus return in the power of His Kingdom. In other words, they would still be alive at His Return. Please notice the usage of the word "some". This statement by Jesus clearly exposes one of the lies of the Roman Catholic Church, which for centuries has taught that all of the original Apostles died martyrs' deaths. Today such stories are referred to as "church tradition", but at least some of them are merely fabricated nonsense, based on what Jesus himself said in the previous verses.
3. Over the years, I have also come across the false belief which claims that John the Beloved is still alive today. You see, based on what Jesus said to Peter regarding John still being alive at His Return, because Futurists believe that Jesus hasn't returned yet, they need some way to explain what Jesus said about John. Thus, the only way for them to avoid calling Jesus a liar, is by claiming that John the Beloved is somewhere hidden and still alive today.
4. Jesus told His followers that following His Resurrection, He would return to His Father in order to prepare a place

for them, and that afterwards, He would return for them in order to take them to that very same place. Furthermore, He told them that when these events occurred, they would believe. Now, if we accept the Futurist point of view that Jesus would return some two thousand years in the future, then that indirectly implies that Jesus never returned for the Apostles, as He had promised to do, thus making Him a liar. It also implies that the Apostles have been rotting in their graves for the past two thousand years. But that is not what Jesus told them would happen to them.

In my opinion, just the previous group of verses alone presents a strong case for proving that Jesus never stated to His followers that He would return two thousand years in the future. He told them that He would return during their lifetimes, and that is what they expected Him to do. This attitude of expectation is made very clear in the Book of the Acts, in the Epistles, and in the Book of Revelation. In fact, the Book of Revelation offers us a very clear indication regarding the actual time frame of the Lord's Return. Consider this verse which so many people tend to overlook:

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Revelation 1:7, KJV

Please take note of the phrase "and they also which pierced him". It should be obvious to you that the word "they" can only be referring to the Romans. Why? Because they pierced Jesus' back with a whip. They pierced Jesus' hands and feet with nails. They pierced His head with a crown of thorns. They pierced His side with a lance in order to determine if He was dead yet. It should be evident to you then that, among other things, the previous verse is stating that the Romans would witness Christ's Return. The Roman Empire would still be in power when Jesus returned. At least some of the Roman individuals who pierced Jesus' body would still be alive at His Return. This Scriptural fact alone negates the erroneous belief that Jesus said He would return to Earth two thousand years in the future.

Now, I have a confession to make. I have been aware of the previous verse from the Book of Revelation for many years.

Although its meaning regarding the Romans still being alive at the time of Christ's Return now seems so clear to me, because I had fallen under the deception of the Futurist theological perspective for so many years, I had to somehow make sense of that verse. So what I did -- and perhaps you, or someone you know has done this as well -- was to assume that the Romans were looking up from Hell and watching Jesus return. However, that is not what that verse indicates by any means. In its entirety, it is describing living people looking up and wailing, as they witness Christ's Return.

As I said earlier, because of the various things which Jesus said to the Apostles regarding His Return, there was a clear attitude of expectation amongst the Apostles and the other Disciples. It should come as no surprise then that Peter and the other Apostles -- who had just been filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter two -- clearly stated that they were living in the Last Days, exactly as had been prophesied by the Prophet Joel. Consider the following verses as proof:

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Acts 2:14-21, KJV

As you may know, Peter and the Apostles were referring to the following prophecy which had been written by the Prophet Joel hundreds of years earlier during the final centuries of the Old Testament period:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out

my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

Joel 2:28-32, KJV

As hard as it is to believe, despite the fact that Peter and the Apostles clearly stated by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled during the First Century, and that the First Century represented the Last Days, as I point out in such series as "Have You Been Slain in the Spirit?", today there are many preachers and Bible teachers -- such as the Latter Rain people, as well as a number of other charismatic groups -- who insist that the Prophet Joel's prophecy concerns our own time, and a great outpouring of God's Spirit -- or revival -- which they claim is already happening, or else will soon happen. This false and pervasive belief has in fact led to the appearance of many wannabe false prophets in our modern day. As I have mentioned before, you can find them all over the Internet; particularly on YouTube, and on the various popular social networks.

In fact, because of my own deception under the Futurist umbrella, for many years I was likewise convinced of this false doctrine as well. However, based on everything that I believe the Lord has revealed to me directly through the Scriptures in recent years, I am becoming more convinced that "the great and the terrible day of the LORD" occurred during the First Century, and that the Last Days likewise transpired during that same time period, exactly as Peter and the Apostles stated to that crowd in the Book of Acts.

The truth of the matter is that to promote the belief that the Prophet Joel's prophecy concerns our own time, is to indirectly accuse Peter and the Apostles of having been wrong. Even though they had all just been filled with the

Holy Ghost, by assigning Joel's prophecy to our own time, we are saying that Peter and the Apostles were misguided in their understanding. Personally, I do not accept this for a minute. I am absolutely convinced that they spoke the truth. Aside from the fact that the Scriptures inform us that the Apostles had just been filled with the Holy Spirit, another reason why I am convinced that they spoke the truth, is because following His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus opened the Old Testament Scriptures to His Disciples. He gave them the understanding which they had previously lacked, as we can determine by the following example verses:

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? . . . And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

Luke 24:25-32, 44, KJV

During the forty days that Jesus remained on Earth following His Resurrection from the dead, I would assume that He had similar teaching sessions with all of the other Apostles and Disciples as well. If anyone was properly informed regarding the true meaning of the Old Testament prophecies, surely it was them. You may recall that in part one of this series, we learned that even the Apostle Paul was taught directly by Jesus Christ, as we see here:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of

Jesus Christ."

Galatians 1:11-12, KJV

In short, in stating that the prophecy of Joel was in the process of being fulfilled, the Apostles had two things in their favor: Jesus had instructed them personally regarding these matters; and they had just been filled with the Holy Ghost. Considering these points, I simply don't believe that they could have been misguided in their thoughts regarding Joel's prophecy.

As you will recall, the Prophet Joel spoke of great celestial signs and wonders which would occur during the Last Days. In the verses we looked at a moment ago from the Book of Acts, Peter and the Apostles clearly confirmed by the Holy Spirit that these events were to occur during their own time. One reason why they were probably so confident of this fact, is because in the Gospels, Jesus had confirmed Joel's prophecy when He said the following to them. It seems to me that the Prophet Joel, Jesus, Peter and the rest of the Apostles were all speaking of the very same events:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"

Matthew 24:29, KJV

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken."

Mark 13:24-25, KJV

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Luke 21:25-26, KJV

It is also important that we recognize that due to the lack of a complete record of the events which occurred during that time period, we do not know what celestial or earthly

signs the Lord may have performed. There are in fact gaps in our understanding, and we do not have a complete picture of all of the events, particularly the events which transpired during the last half of the First Century. Tragically, over the centuries, many ancient and valuable parchments -- such as papyrus scrolls -- have been lost to decay, or else they were intentionally destroyed. In particular, I am reminded of the fire -- or possibly fires -- in the Royal Library of Alexandria in ancient Egypt.

To complicate the situation even further, there is also the problem of the unbelieving Jews themselves. If you are at all familiar with the contents of the four Gospels, then you will know that from the time that Jesus appeared on the scene, the unbelieving Jews did everything within their power to mock and ridicule Him, to discredit Him, and ultimately to kill and destroy Him. However, not satisfied with that, they even stooped to lower levels when they propagated the false story that Jesus never rose from the dead, and that His body had merely been stolen by His Disciples. As Matthew informs us:

"Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."
Matthew 28:11-15, KJV

While some of my pro-Israel readers will no doubt take some degree of offense at this statement, I have long considered the fact that the unbelieving Jews have had two thousand years in which to erase and destroy any evidence that Jesus existed. It is not surprising then that even today there are many Jews who don't believe that Jesus Christ ever walked the Earth. In fact, there are some atheist groups in the U.S.A. -- and I assume elsewhere as well -- who endeavor to prove the very same thing. One such group is called "The Jesus Seminar". Beware of them!

However, despite the loss of many important ancient scrolls, and despite the endeavors of unbelievers to blur the picture

concerning the events of the First Century, given what we know today, it seems quite possible to me that the Sun being darkened, and the Moon being turned to blood, could easily have been describing a solar eclipse and a lunar eclipse during that age. Perhaps the stars falling from heaven also signifies a great meteor shower, and not actual stars.

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived? : Part 3

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Deliverance In Mount Zion And Jerusalem, Jesus Brought The Deliverance, A Called Remnant, Jesus' Warning To Flee From Jerusalem, The Great And The Terrible Day Of The Lord, Paul Peter And Other Apostles Believed That The Day Was At Hand, Paul's Epistles Were Directed To First Century Christians And Not To Us, The Time Is At Hand, The Kingdom Of God Is At Hand, Misinterpretation Of The Phrase "This Generation", The Arrogance Of Some Modern Christians, Sketchy First Century Historical Record In Israel, Jewish Suppression Of The Truth, Christ's Return: The World's Best-Kept Secret?, A Mysterious Dearth Of Christian Writings, Perversion Of Other Phrases

Another key point regarding Joel's prophecy concerns when these celestial signs were going to occur. What events would precede them? Joel informs us that there would be deliverance in Mount Zion and Jerusalem. As it turns out, deliverance did in fact come from Mount Zion and Jerusalem; not only because Jesus preached in the very Temple itself, but also because it

was there where He was crucified. In addition, it was also from Jerusalem that the Apostles began to spread the Gospel message. Regarding this Divine Mission of Deliverance, Jesus spoke of it in the Gospel of Luke when He first began His public Ministry. This occurred in the synagogue of Nazareth when He quoted the following from the Prophet Isaiah:

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Luke 4:16-19, KJV

There is another possible way in which we can understand part of Joel's prophecy. Please notice that he speaks of a remnant which will be called and delivered. This remnant may be a reference to those Jews who in obedience to Jesus' own warning, escaped to the mountains surrounding Jerusalem, prior to that city's destruction by General Titus and the Roman legions in 70 AD. As Jesus had said:

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Matthew 24:15-22, KJV

"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken

of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains: And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days."

Mark 13:14-20, KJV

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 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."

Luke 21:20-24, KJV

I will be discussing some of the aforementioned events in more detail later on in this series, as well as in a future series regarding the Abomination of Desolation. But for now, suffice it to say that these great celestial events were to be preceded by the city of Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, and ultimately being destroyed, along with Herod's Temple. What follows the destruction of Jerusalem and these celestial signs is made plain in Joel's prophecy. He refers to it as "the great and the terrible day of the LORD." As we discussed earlier, it was in fact that day which was greatly anticipated by the Apostles and other Disciples of the First Century. It makes absolutely no sense that they would even entertain such anticipation and expectation, if Jesus had told them that He wasn't going to return for another two

thousand years, as modern Futurists believe.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Apostle Paul was one person who was fully convinced that Jesus would return during his lifetime. Consider a few of the things which he wrote in his many Epistles where he states that "the Lord is at hand" and "the day is at hand":

"The night is far spent, THE DAY IS AT HAND: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Romans 13:12, KJV

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. THE LORD IS AT HAND."

Philippians 4:5, KJV

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, KJV

Please carefully notice how Paul uses the pronoun "we". Not only is he including himself, but contrary to how these same verses have been erroneously interpreted in our modern day -- including by yours truly during the years of my personal deception -- he is talking directly to his readers of the First Century. That is who the "we" is, and most certainly not us modern Believers. It is also very striking that Paul very specifically writes "by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord". In other words, just as we saw in part two of this series, Paul fully understood that some First Century Christians would still be alive on the day that Jesus returned to the Earth. Why does Paul know this to be true? Because it was the word of the Lord. It was the same words that Jesus had shared with His followers in the Gospels.

Was Paul deceived? Obviously not, because he clearly informs

us that he was directly taught by Christ Himself, as we see by the following verses. Furthermore, at some point, the other Apostles who had actually lived with Jesus during those three years, must have confirmed to Paul what he already knew to be true concerning Jesus' Return:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. 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: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."

Galatians 1:11-17, KJV

As we saw earlier, the Apostle Peter likewise believed that the day of Christ's Return was close at hand. Aside from his speech in the Book of Acts, this fact is also made plainly evident by verses such as the following one, where he writes that the time is at hand, just like the Apostle Paul:

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

1 Peter 4:7, KJV

Why did Peter, Paul and the other Apostles believe this? Quite simply, because aside from the fact that Jesus told them so, this is the very same public message that John the Baptist and Jesus preached as well, as we see by the following verses. Furthermore, we see the very same thing being stated in the Book of Revelation:

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."

Revelation 1:3, KJV

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."

Revelation 22:10, KJV

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND."

Matthew 3:1-2, KJV

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND."

Matthew 4:17, KJV

"And as ye go, preach, saying, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND."

Matthew 10:7, KJV

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, THE TIME IS FULFILLED, and THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Mark 1:14-15, KJV

"And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NIGH AT HAND. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

Luke 21:29-32, KJV

In my view, it simply does not make any sense whatsoever to say and write such things regarding the imminence of Jesus Christ's Return, and the coming Kingdom of God, if these events were not going to happen for another two thousand years until our current time, as Futurists believe. After all, if this were the case, such events would have little effect on Christian Believers of the First Century. So why even tell them such things? What good purpose would it serve? In fact, it would probably discourage them and give them false hope if Jesus truly wasn't going to return for another two thousand years.

At this point in our discussion, I am going to expose one of the biggest false doctrines which has been intentionally --

or in some cases, ignorantly -- promoted by modern Futurists. It concerns the phrase "this generation", as we see in the previous verses from the Gospel of Luke. The interpretation of this phrase by many modern Bible teachers and preachers is a very clear example of how the meanings of some verses have been terribly twisted and perverted, in order to find support for a particular doctrine. Following is a group of verses -- all of which are found in the Gospels -- where the phrase "this generation" is used. As you read them one by one, I am hopeful that you will realize that in every case, the phrase is referring to Jesus' actual listeners, and to the people who were alive during the First Century:

"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."

Matthew 11:16-19, KJV

"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

Matthew 12:38-42, KJV

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in

your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Matthew 23:33-39, KJV

"And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation."

Mark 8:11-12, KJV

"And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children."

Luke 7:31-35, KJV

"And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of

Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here . . . Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."

Luke 11:29-32, 47-51, KJV

"For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

Luke 17:24-25, KJV

There should be no doubt that all of the previous verses are referring to a generation of people who lived two thousand years ago. Isn't it rather plain to see once we read all of the verses together as a group, that the phrase refers to people who were actually listening to the Lord speak, and to that generation of people as a whole?

Now here comes the clincher. Are you ready for it? If in all of the previous verses we understand that the phrase "this generation" is referring to the generation which was alive at the time that Jesus walked the Earth in the flesh, why do some Christians -- meaning the Futurists -- suddenly change course, violate the continuity of the Holy Scriptures, and totally change the meaning of "this generation" by claiming that this very same phrase now means a far future generation -- meaning our generation -- in the following set of verses? It is like properly identifying twenty red cars as being red, but then when car number twenty-one comes along, we claim that it is blue, even though it is also really red:

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And

as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? . . . Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Matthew 24:1-3, 32-34, KJV

"And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? . . . Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done."

Mark 13:1-4, 28-30, KJV

"And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? . . . For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled . . . And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

Luke 21:5-7, 22, 29-32, KJV

Please note that the Disciples specifically asked Jesus when the Temple would be destroyed, when He would return, and when the end of the "world" would occur. Jesus proceeded to respond by describing all of the many signs with which many of you will already be familiar. He then concluded with the very famous sentence "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." And as I said, that is where modern deception enters the picture. Many Christians cannot accept what that sentence really means, so they have allowed themselves to be deceived by individuals who promote the Futurist point of view. Or perhaps it isn't that they are necessarily unable to accept the truth regarding that verse, but rather that they were never given an opportunity to hear the truth concerning it. Maybe like myself, they did not have a strong foundation in the Word of God, and so they naively accepted whatever interpretation was offered to them.

Believe me; I fully understand how the thinking goes when it comes to the misguided interpretation of that verse, because I was deceived by it for over four decades. The reasoning simply goes something like the following: "The phrase 'this generation' must be referring to our current generation, or to some future generation, because some of those things that Jesus predicted have not happened yet. The world hasn't come to an end, and Jesus most certainly has not returned to the Earth in the clouds of heaven yet."

My dear friends, that is exactly how I thought as well. I was convinced that there was no way that Jesus could have already returned to the Earth and set up His Kingdom, as He had promised to His Apostles and Disciples. But you see, by taking that position, not only was I suddenly changing the meaning of the phrase "this generation" as it is used in all of the other verses, but I was directly contradicting what Jesus himself had stated regarding His Return. To add to that, I was also contradicting the attitude of anticipation and expectation which was expressed by the New Testament writers, and their belief that Jesus would return at some point during their lifetimes. Although not intentionally, I was indirectly saying that I was right, and they were all wrong. Can you see it? If you embrace the Futurist point of view, is it possible that you are doing the very same thing?

I came to recognize that many modern Christians suffer from arrogance; particularly when it comes to the previous verses

where the phrase "this generation" is used. We seem to have this attitude that if we are not aware of something, or if we did not personally witness something, then it must not have happened yet. This attitude leads us to the erroneous conclusion that "this generation" must be referring to our generation, because as far as we know, none of those major events that Jesus describes in Matthew 24 and elsewhere have occurred yet.

But let me ask you something. How do we know with absolute certainty that this is truly the case? As I noted earlier, the historical record for the latter half of the First Century AD in Israel is rather sketchy. Some very important works concerning the specific happenings of that era were lost many centuries ago. In fact, there are even some doubts regarding the accuracy of the ancient texts which we still do have. One case in point is Flavius Josephus. While he has been lauded as a great Jewish historian by some people, at the same time, others view him as questionable, due to the fact that similar to the Herods, he lived in luxury in Rome, following the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple Mount in 70 AD. So is it possible that his writings were purposely slanted to favor the Romans? Furthermore, as a non-believer, could he have possibly chosen to conceal certain facts and events regarding Christ and the First Century Church?

There is likewise the issue I discussed earlier concerning how the unbelieving Jews did everything within their power to destroy any evidence regarding Jesus' existence. So let me ask you another very surprising question. If Jesus told His followers that He would return during their lifetimes, and if the First Century Apostles expected that very thing to happen, is it possible that it really did happen, and that we Christians today are simply not aware of it because all of the evidence has been thoroughly destroyed, buried or locked away somewhere in someone's hidden vault? I have even often wondered if the Vatican Library might contain such earth-shaking evidence. However, this idea is merely my personal speculation at best. I have no grounds to prove it.

At any rate, is Jesus' Return during the latter half of the First Century possibly the best-kept secret the world has ever known, or should I say, not known? Seriously, if the unbelieving Jews tried to discredit Jesus' Resurrection from

the dead, doesn't it at least seem possible that they would also attempt to conceal the fact that He returned during that same century, exactly as He said He would do?

Obviously, I really don't know what happened so long ago. I wasn't there, and there is no public historical record of said events. Thus, all I can do is share with you what Jesus said and taught concerning His Return, as well as what His followers said, wrote and expected during the First Century. Thus far, all of the Scriptural evidence points to the fact that Jesus was supposed to return during the First Century, and not two thousand years later in our modern times. So how do we reconcile what the Scriptures actually state, with what Futurist Christians believe today regarding Christ's Return?

There is another issue which may be directly related to this topic. For many years now, I have been mystified by the fact that following the creation of the Gospels, the Epistles and the Book of Revelation -- which I personally believe were all written well before the closing of the First Century -- there appears to be a period of silence, during which time very few, if any, Christian writings were authored. Then, at least a century or more later, we suddenly have the writings of the so-called "church fathers", who were the progenitors of what would eventually become the Roman Catholic Church, which in my view, is a false church.

Some individuals have embraced the view that this period of silence resulted from the fact that the Christian Church was being heavily persecuted by both the Romans and the Jews. However, in light of everything we have been discussing in this series, allow me to offer a more amazing possibility. What if, in accordance with what Jesus and the Apostles all taught and expected, Jesus returned and raptured the Church about three quarters of the way through the First Century; that is, around 70 to 73 AD? If that's what really happened, it would certainly explain the dearth of Christian writings after said event, wouldn't it?

Now, before you outright reject this possibility, or accuse me of being crazy, a heretic, or a misguided false prophet, let us move on to our next piece of Scriptural evidence. As we have already discussed, in order to try to give validity to their misguided views, some Futurists have taken the

original meaning of the phrase "this generation" as it is used in the Gospels, and given it a more modern meaning, so that it now supposedly applies to our current generation. But what if there are other words and phrases in the New Testament, the meanings of which have likewise been changed and corrupted, so that they can be used to support a future Return of Jesus Christ? This is something we will examine as we continue our discussion in the next part of this series. I trust that you will join me.

Please go to part four for the continuation of this series.

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Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived? : Part 4

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Perversion Of The Word "Shortly", Corruption Of The Phrase "I Come Quickly", God Does Not Lie, God Is Consistent And Organized And Not The Author Of Confusion, Revelation And Gospel Warnings Were Addressed To First Century Christians, Visions And Prophecies Were Sealed Since The Time Of Daniel, Prophecies Were Opened During First Century, The Time Was At Hand, Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy, Artaxerxes's Command, 70 AD General Titus And Romans Destroy Jerusalem And Temple, Christ's Return During The Late First Century, The Disciples' Three-Part Question, Why Modern Futurists Believe As They Do

As I concluded in part three, "this generation" is not the only phrase which has been corrupted by modern Futurists who wish to convince us that the Second Coming of Christ is a future or near-future event. The word "shortly" has likewise

fallen victim to these schemers. We all know exactly what this word means when it concerns time. It means in a short time, whether it is a few minutes, a few hours, a few days, a few weeks, or perhaps a few months at best. It certainly does not mean years from now, or many centuries from now. It means in the near future. This proper meaning is exactly how the word "shortly" is used in the following Bible verses:

"But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither."
Acts 25:5, KJV

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."
Romans 16:20, KJV

"But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power."
1 Corinthians 4:19, KJV

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state . . . But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."
Philippians 2:19, 24, KJV

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:"
1 Timothy 3:14, KJV

"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:"
2 Timothy 4:9, KJV

"Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you."
Hebrews 13:23, KJV

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me."
2 Peter 1:14, KJV

"But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee.

Greet the friends by name."

3 John 1:14, KJV

So do you agree that in the previous verses, "shortly" is referring to a very short period of time; that is, in the foreseeable future? Great! So let's continue.

Sadly, the Futurists can't possibly accept the conventional meaning of the word "shortly" in the following two verses. After all, to do so would blow huge holes in their Futurist views regarding Christ's Return. Thus, despite the fact that in all of the previous verses we understand "shortly" to mean a short period of time, the Futurists suddenly change course, again violate the continuity of the Scriptures, and totally change the meaning of the word and take it out of context by now claiming that this same word refers to a span of several thousand years into the future in the following verses:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"

Revelation 1:1, KJV

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY BE DONE."

Revelation 22:6, KJV

So exactly how do Futurists justify changing the meaning of the word "shortly" in the previous two verses? Well, the way I have heard it explained is that whereas in most verses the word "shortly" is used from an earthly, human perspective, in these two verses, it is supposedly used from a heavenly, divine perspective. In other words, because God, Jesus and other Heavenly Beings live in the Spiritual Realm outside of physical time, "shortly" can mean something very different. In this case, the Futurists would have us believe that it means two thousand years in the future.

Personally, I believe this reasoning is a load of nonsense, and I obviously do not agree with their interpretation. In my view, it is seriously flawed, and I will now explain why I feel this way.

When the previous two verses say "servants", I am convinced that they are referring to the Lord's servants who were alive during the First Century, and not to His servants who are living in the Twenty-First Century. The message of the Book of Revelation was addressed to First Century Christians to give them hope, and to inspire them to carry on, despite the odds, and despite the waves of persecution against them. In so many words, Jesus is telling them "Hang in there. I am coming soon. So don't let anyone steal your Crown of Life."

We see this very same kind of twisted perversion occurring with the term "I come quickly" as well. There is no way that we can possibly interpret the phrase to refer to events that will supposedly happen during the Twenty-First Century; yet that would seem to be what the Futurists believe, being as in their view, Jesus has not returned to the Earth yet. The Lord's Angel very clearly told John that the First Century Church of Philadelphia -- and obviously, the other First Century Churches in Asia Minor as well -- would witness the Return of Jesus Christ, because He was coming quickly, as we see by the following verse:

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
Revelation 3:11, KJV

Let's be honest here. Does it make any sense whatsoever that the Lord would tell the Seven Churches in Asia Minor that He was coming quickly, if He really wasn't intending to return for another two thousand years? Wouldn't it in fact be a bald-faced lie? But we know that God is not a liar, and the Lord Jesus is not a liar, so who does that leave? Only the misguided Futurists who twist the meaning of certain verses in order to support their wayward doctrines. Consider the following verses:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"
Numbers 23:19, KJV

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

Romans 3:4, KJV

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:2, KJV

If the verses that are found in Revelation chapter one -- where we are told that these things must shortly come to pass -- and Revelation chapter three -- where we are told that Jesus is coming quickly -- are referring to Jesus returning to the Earth during the First Century, then in order to be consistent, we are forced to conclude that the following verses that are also found in Revelation chapter twenty-two, must likewise be referring to Jesus returning during the First Century, and not during the Twenty-First Century:

"Behold, I COME QUICKLY: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book . . . And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I COME QUICKLY; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be . . . He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I COME QUICKLY. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Revelation 22:7, 10-12, 20, KJV

Please notice how John concludes those verses. He says "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Now, would John really write that if he thought that Jesus wasn't going to return for another two millennia? So once again we see an attitude of anticipation and expectation. John knew that Jesus would return during his lifetime, exactly as we saw in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of John.

To reiterate the primary lesson which should be learned from these various Scriptural examples, we cannot say that a word or phrase means one thing in a certain group of verses, and then turn around and claim that it means something entirely different in another set of verses. To do so would cause major confusion for the reader, and I am convinced that God is not the author of confusion. He is in fact consistent and

very organized in all of His thoughts. Furthermore, it is His desire that we understand His Word. That being the case, we must assume that "this generation" means exactly what it says; "shortly" means exactly what it says; and "I come quickly" means exactly what it says. I hope you agree.

As I said a minute ago, I am convinced that Jesus' warnings in the Gospels, as well as the warnings which are found in the Book of Revelation, were messages directed to the First Century Church. I find no evidence to suggest that they were messages addressed to Christians who are living two thousand years later today. It will no doubt interest you to know that this extremely vital information for First Century Christians had purposely been sealed up for hundreds of years since the time of the Prophet Daniel. In other words, their meaning was not understood. Why? Quite simply, because the time for the fulfillment of these prophecies and visions was not yet at hand during the time of the Prophet Daniel. This truth is made evident by the following verses:

"But thou, O Daniel, SHUT UP THE WORDS, AND SEAL THE BOOK, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

Daniel 12:4, KJV

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."

Revelation 1:3, KJV

"And he saith unto me, SEAL NOT the sayings of the prophecy of this book: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."

Revelation 22:10, KJV

Isn't that amazing? In my opinion, that is clear proof that all of those warning messages, prophecies and visions were specifically designed for our Christian brethren who lived during the late First Century. It is clear to me that the purpose of that information was to prepare them for the Return of Jesus Christ during their lifetimes, and I have strong reason to believe that that is exactly what happened. The Scriptural proof can be found in this current series.

Thus far in this series, we have examined several examples where the meanings of certain words and phrases have been

intentionally altered and taken out of context, in order to support the Futurist theological perspective. This amounts to forced interpretation of the Scriptures in order to promote a particular doctrine, even though that doctrine has no sound basis in the Scriptures. Sadly, the previous examples are not the only places where the meanings of some words have been twisted in order to promote the Futurist point of view.

As we saw a moment ago, many of the warnings, prophecies and visions from the Old Testament into the New Testament were like great highway signs which were pointing to a specific time, and to specific events, which would culminate in the Return of Jesus Christ during the late First Century. If my understanding is correct, the specific year may have been 70 AD -- when Jerusalem and the Temple Mount were destroyed -- or very close to it, as late as 73 AD. But why then, and not some other time? Why not today two thousand years later as the Futurists are inclined to believe?

Once again, a clear answer can be found by undertaking a deeper examination of the Scriptures. You see, it seems that the years 70 to 73 AD may have marked the end of a Prophetic Age. This particular Prophetic Age was clearly outlined by the amazing prophecies of Daniel, and was initiated when the "Seventy Weeks" prophecy was first activated. I am of course referring to the following prophecy:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it

desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Daniel 9:24-27, KJV

As I explain in a few of my other articles, in the previous verses, the word "week" is derived from the Hebrew "shabuwa", or "shabua", which actually means "seven". In other words, in Hebrew, the verse actually means "seventy sevens", or a total of four hundred and ninety. But four hundred and ninety what? As it turns out, these "seventy weeks" are actually referring to seventy seven-year periods -- or a total of four hundred and ninety years -- and not to seventy seven-day periods.

In the course of studying the Scriptures over the years, I discovered that the symbolism of a day-for-a-year is used in various places in the Scriptures, such as in the following example where the Lord tells the Children of Israel that, just as the spies spent forty days spying on the land of Canaan, they will wander for forty years in the wilderness because of their constant complaining and murmuring against the Lord:

"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise."

Numbers 14:34, KJV

Another clear example of the day-for-a-year symbolism can be found in the writings of the Prophet Ezekiel where we read the following:

"And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year."

Ezekiel 4:6, KJV

So what the Prophet Daniel is describing is a Prophetic Age which lasted for exactly four hundred and ninety years, and which was terminated somewhere between 70 and 73 AD, when Christ returned to establish His Kingdom. What signaled the beginning of that Prophetic Age? As you can see from the previous group of verses, Daniel plainly tells us when he writes the following:

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

Daniel 9:25, KJV

As I point out in my series entitled "The Seven Heads", this commandment was ordered by King Artaxerxes, who is mentioned in the Book of Ezra. According to historical records, this particular Artaxerxes was probably Artaxerxes Longimanus, who was the son and successor of Xerxes I. This would make him the grandson of Darius. He ruled over the Medo-Persian Empire from about 465 B.C. to about 424 B.C. According to the Scriptures, it was in the twentieth year of his reign that Artaxerxes Longimanus issued the above commandment to Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem as Governor of Judah to rebuild the street and the retaining wall, as we see here:

"The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,"

Nehemiah 1:1-4, KJV

"And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the

God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time."

Nehemiah 2:1-6, KJV

Not only did Artaxerxes comply with Nehemiah's wishes, but he also granted him all of the materials that he would need in order to complete the job. Again, consider the following verses:

"Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me."

Nehemiah 2:7-8, KJV

Regarding the remainder of Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy, here it is again; but this time I have added a lot of words in brackets for the sake of clarity, because many Christians have a difficult time understanding what this means:

"And after threescore and two weeks [or 434 years] shall Messiah be cut off, [meaning Jesus is crucified] but not for himself [because He died for our sins]: and the people of the prince that shall come [meaning General Titus and the Roman legions] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary [meaning Jerusalem and the Temple]; and the end thereof shall be with a flood [not of water, but an army of men], and unto the end of the war [meaning the First Jewish-Roman War] desolations [destruction] are determined. And he [Titus] shall confirm the covenant [may be some kind of military or political deal] with many for one week [the 70th week]: and in the midst of the week [in the middle of the seven-year First Jewish-Roman War] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease [because he destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple compound in 70 AD], and for the overspreading of abominations [possibly refers to Roman

standards which bore the image of an eagle, which is unclean and an abomination to the Jews, and the Roman legions and siege wall which surrounded Jerusalem] he shall make it desolate [destroy Jerusalem], even until the consummation [until the war is completed], and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate [the people who were destroyed, meaning the Jews]."

Daniel 9:26-27, KJV

The tragedy here is that much of this death and destruction could have been avoided, had the Jews simply bowed to their Roman conquerors, and accepted it as God's chastisement, due to their cruel treatment, rejection and murder of His own dear Son, Jesus Christ, forty years earlier. There again is that famous Biblical number forty.

Despite God's clear warnings, while the Disciples obeyed the Lord's command and fled to the hills of Judaea, the majority of the unbelieving Jews in the city of Jerusalem did not. As some of you history buffs will know, in the year 66 AD, the First Jewish-Roman War began, in direct fulfillment of the prophecies of Daniel.

Regarding the specifics, Roman general Vespasian was sent by Emperor Nero to quell rebellion in Judaea. Over the course of the first half of this seven-year war -- which I believe represented the seventieth week of Daniel's famous prophecy -- Vespasian slowly subdued Israel, beginning in Galilee, until all that remained was Judaea and Jerusalem itself. In fact, even King Herod Agrippa II -- who was the seventh and last king of the Herodian line, and a puppet-king of Rome -- fled from Jerusalem, and fully supported Vespasian in his campaign against Judaea. Following the war, Herod and his sister Berenice went to Rome where he served as a praetor, and lived in affluence.

At any rate, as a result of the suicide of Emperor Nero in 68 AD, and the political rivalries and civil war that ensued -- referred to as the "Year of the Four Emperors" -- and having gained much support in the provinces of the empire, Vespasian returned to Rome where he was crowned the new emperor. Thus, the task which had originally been assigned to Vespasian by Nero, was completed by his son, General Titus, who was his second-in-command during the campaign against Judaea, and who likewise eventually became a Roman emperor for a few years.

Titus had a siege wall built around the outer walls of the city of Jerusalem. A common tactic in its day, a siege wall meant that no one could get in or out; and neither could any other thing, including food, water, military supplies, etc. The end result was that the people who were the victims of a siege slowly starved to death, turned on each other, died from different diseases, etc. As an added bonus to all this misery, in the case of Jerusalem, General Titus added mass crucifixions to the mix as well. According to historians Tacitus and Flavius Josephus, somewhere between 600,000 and 1,000,000 Jews were trapped inside Jerusalem. Why did they not flee from the wrath to come as they had been warned to do by Jesus himself?

By the middle of 70 AD -- which was also the middle of this seven-year war -- the three walls which surrounded Jerusalem were breached, resulting in most of the city being burned to the ground, and the Temple compound being utterly destroyed, in precise fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy about four decades earlier. According to Josephus, 1,100,000 Jews were killed during the siege. Furthermore, many thousands more were taken captive, and carried away as slaves to other Roman provinces. This was in fact the beginning of the Third Diaspora. While the fall of Jerusalem marked the end of the major part of the seven-year war, mop-up exercises continued for another three and a half years until 73 AD, because there were still some pockets of Jewish resistance, such as the famed fortress of Masada.

So these are the prophesied horrendous events which led up to the Lord's Return, which in my view, must have occurred somewhere between 70 and 73 AD, if my understanding is on target. Furthermore, just as Daniel had also predicted, these events marked the end of that 490-year Prophetic Age, or "Seventy Weeks" prophecy.

Now, what you may find interesting is the fact that while many Christians are familiar with the various signs that Jesus gave in three of the Gospels regarding this tragic period in Jewish history, which would culminate with His actual promised Return, they don't realize that the end of this Prophetic Age is also hinted at in a few other verses in the Gospels as well. The reason why a lot of people do not recognize it, is because these verses are a bit obscure

due to the way in which they were translated. A primary example of this is a verse which I shared with you earlier in this series. Here it is again to refresh your memory:

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:3, KJV

Please note that Jesus had just informed His followers that the Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that is when they asked Him this three-part question. The phrase "these things" is obviously referring to the destruction of Herod's Temple. The first thing I want you to see here is that the destruction of the Temple is directly related to the other two events; that is, Jesus' Return, and the end of the world. It is a three-part package, and it is the latter event which we need to address first.

You may recall that in part three where I first discussed this verse, I actually put the word "world" in quote marks. Perhaps you even wondered why I did that. Well, there is a very specific reason for my doing so. Some of the reasons why Futurists are convinced that the Lord has not returned yet, are because they do not see the new heavens or the New Earth, and they most certainly do not see a glistening Heavenly City; that is, New Jerusalem. Furthermore, they do not see everlasting righteousness, or Jesus reigning on the Earth. In addition, they have not witnessed the rise of the Beast and the False Prophet, or seen a third Temple raised in Jerusalem. Neither have they seen the Antichrist in the Temple, or heard any news about two Sackcloth Witnesses. The Battle of Armageddon likewise appears to be nowhere in sight. Thus, they conclude that Jesus has not returned yet.

As I explained earlier in this series, I fully understand why they believe as they do, because I was a Futurist for over four decades as well. As such, I was fully convinced that Jesus had not returned yet for the very same reasons. But another big reason why Futurists believe as they do is because they have not seen the end of the world, as per the previous verse.

Based on these points alone, at first glance it might seem

that the Futurists are right, and that they have a strong case for believing that Jesus has not returned yet. However, that can only appear to be the case if we purposely choose to ignore all of the verses I have already shared with you where Jesus explicitly informed His First Century followers that He would be coming quickly, and would return while some of them were still alive. If that is not enough, what if I told you that the Disciples never even asked Jesus when the world would end? What if they actually asked Him something entirely different? I will address this question as we continue this series in part five. I hope you will join me.

Please go to part five for the continuation of this series.

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Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived? : Part 5

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Greek Words "Kosmos" And "Aion", Other Words Translated As "Age", The Greek Word "Genea", Continuity Of The Scriptures, Possible Manipulation Of The Scriptures By KJV Translators, End Of The World Or End Of The Age?, World Without End Or Age Without End?, Fiery Destruction Of The Earth, Eternity, Jesus Appeared In The End Of The Age, Apostles Asked Jesus About The Signs Which Would Herald The End Of That Age And His Return, Millions Of Christians Deceived As A Result Of A Mistranslation, Jesus Warned Followers To Not Be Deceived, Review Of All Of The Key Points, Jesus Tells Peter That He Should Forgive Others Until The End Of The Age, The Apostles Were Convinced They Were Living In The Last Days Of That Age

If the Disciples did not ask Jesus when the world would end, then what did they ask Him? To discover the correct answer to our question, we need to examine several Greek words that are used in the New Testament.

The word "world" is derived from the Greek word "kosmos" one hundred and eighty-six times in the New Testament. It refers not only to the Earth itself, but also to the inhabitants of the Earth, and to the governments of the world. Furthermore, it can also sometimes refer to the actual Universe itself. It is easy to recognize that it is also from this same Greek word that we derive our English words cosmos, cosmopolitan, cosmology and similar words. This word "kosmos" is used in such verses as the following:

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

John 1:10, KJV

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16, KJV

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;"

Matthew 4:8, KJV

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

Matthew 5:14, KJV

"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;"

Matthew 13:38, KJV

"Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

Matthew 26:13, KJV

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Mark 16:15, KJV

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Mark 8:36, KJV

"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world . . ."

Hebrews 9:26, KJV

Taking into consideration the previous verses, there should be no doubt in your mind what the Greek word "kosmos" means. However, as it turns out, this is not the only word that has been translated as "world" in the New Testament. In all of the verses below, the word "world" is derived from the Greek word "aion":

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels . . . So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,"

Matthew 13:39, 49, KJV

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:3, KJV

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Matthew 28:20, KJV

". . . world without end. Amen."

Ephesians 3:21, KJV

". . . but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Hebrews 9:26, KJV

It is at this point in our discussion that we have to deal with what I can only describe as being either theological ignorance -- which I seriously doubt -- or else, even worse, as intentional deception and manipulation of the Scriptures

by the scholarly translators of the King James Version of the Bible. According to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, the primary meaning of the word "aion" is a period of time, or an age. The word "aion" can also refer to perpetuity of time and eternity. In all cases, it primarily concerns units of time. In fact, as you may have already figured out, it is from this Greek word that we likewise derive our English word "eon". We all know what an eon is. It is a very long period of time. This word is not primarily concerned with the physical planet, or with the inhabitants of the Earth, or with the governments of the world like "kosmos" is.

On a side note, there are a number of other Greek words which are translated as "age" in the New Testament. However, in all cases, each of these words relates to either human age, or to a specific period in one's life. Allow me to share them with you, along with how they are each used, as well as where they are found:

Greek -----	English Word/Phrase -----	Location -----
autos echo helikia	he is of age	John 9:21
dodeka etos	of the age of twelve years	Mark 5:42
dodeka etos	twelve years of age	Luke 8:42
echo helikia	he is of age	John 9:23
geras	old age	Luke 1:36
huperakmos	she pass the flower of her age	1 Cor. 7:36
para kairos	when she was past age	Heb. 11:11
polus hemera	was of a great age	Luke 2:36
teleios	of full age	Heb. 5:14
triakonta etos	thirty years of age	Luke 3:23

Another Greek word which is translated as "ages" -- note that it is plural -- is the word "genea". In this case, it refers primarily to a generation of people, or to successive members of a particular genealogy. It is plain to see that such words as "generation", "genealogy" and "genealogical" are in fact derived from this Greek word. Following are the verses where this word is used:

"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;"
Ephesians 3:5, KJV

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages . . ."

Ephesians 3:21, KJV

However, our primary concern here is the Greek word "aion". If this word means an age or a period of time, then why did the English translators of the King James Bible choose to translate it as "world" in the previous verses, while they translated it properly as "ages" in the following verses?:

"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 2:7, KJV

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:"

Colossians 1:26, KJV

To reiterate a point I made in part four, if there is one thing of which I am convinced concerning the Bible, it is that there is continuity and unity throughout God's Word. As such, we cannot understand a certain word or phrase one way, and then at a later point change its meaning -- or translate it differently -- simply because we do not like what a verse is saying. If some passage we read does not agree with our personal theology, the problem is not with God's Word, it is obviously with our theology.

While I cannot prove this point in a conclusive manner, as I mention in the eight-part series entitled "Is the KJV Bible the Inerrant Word of God?", I have long suspected that the men who translated the 1611 King James Version of the Bible, purposely translated a number of verses in such a way, that those verses would agree with their personal theology, and with the doctrines of the Church of England.

Furthermore, I strongly suspect that this may very well be the case with all of the verses which I shared with you earlier, where they chose to translate "aion" as "world", instead of as "age". Just by simply examining some of those verses, we can see that there are problems with them when the word "world" is used. Allow me to demonstrate my point. Let us begin with the verse from the Gospel of Matthew:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Matthew 28:20, KJV

Now, lest you misunderstand what Jesus is saying there, He is not referring to being with the Apostles to the physical ends or extremes of the Earth. The word "end" is derived from the Greek word "sunteleia". This word means completion, end or consummation. As you can hopefully see, Jesus is talking about something much more than just accompanying them as they travel around Israel, the Middle East, southern Europe, etc. Common sense dictates that the Apostles did not live to the end -- or consummation -- of the world. Thus, it makes no sense that Jesus would say this to them. On the other hand, if we properly translate the Greek "aion" as "age", just like in all of the other verses, then the verse makes perfect sense, because Jesus did accompany them in Spirit to the end -- or consummation -- of that particular age. Can you see how "age" works while "world" does not? Consider the verse again with the word "age" injected into it:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the [age]. Amen."

Matthew 28:20, KJV

Exactly which age is Jesus talking about? I'm convinced that it is the very same 490-year Prophetic Age that we discussed in part four. It is the Prophetic Age which was prophesied in Daniel's "Seventy Weeks" prophecy, which culminated with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the Return of Jesus Christ. Let's take another look at the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesian brethren. A minute ago I shared with you the first half of a verse. Paul concludes that same verse with this phrase:

". . . world without end. Amen."

Ephesians 3:21, KJV

Now wait a minute. Why would Paul write that, when we know that the Scriptures inform us that the world does come to an end? In fact, as we read in Peter's Epistle, the Earth burns up, and the Book of Revelation informs us that it

eventually flees away. Consider these verses:

"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. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"
2 Peter 3:10-12, KJV

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."
Revelation 20:11, KJV

Once again, if we more correctly translate "aion" as "age", as it should be, instead of as "world", the verse makes a lot more sense, and its true meaning becomes clearer; particularly when we look at the entire verse, as we see here:

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages [or generations], [age] without end. Amen."
Ephesians 3:21, KJV

What does Paul mean by "age without end"? In my mind, that can only mean one thing. Paul is obviously talking about a very, very long time. He seems to be referring to eternity, in my view. This becomes even more evident when we look at the previous verses as well, and realize that Paul is in fact talking about the eternal nature of God the Father, and the glory which is given unto Him, by the Church, which He Himself has established through Jesus Christ, as we see here:

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which

passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages [generations], world [age] without end. Amen."

Ephesians 3:14-21, KJV

The problem with the word "aion" being incorrectly translated as "world" -- instead of as "age" -- becomes more apparent in the following verse, which I shared with you earlier:

". . . but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Hebrews 9:26, KJV

What? Wait a minute! Has the Apostle Paul lost his marbles? Why is he using the word "now" -- meaning the First Century -- and then referring to it as "the end of the world", and then saying that Jesus appeared in order to sacrifice Himself for our sins? We are still here, the world is still here, and we all know full well that Jesus sacrificed Himself about two millennia ago, which was not the end of the world. As you can see, there is something seriously wrong with the translation. On the other hand, once again, if we properly translate the Greek word "aion" as "age", the verse makes perfect sense, as we see here:

". . . but now once in the end of the [age] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Hebrews 9:26, KJV

With what I have shared with you thus far regarding this issue concerning the Greek word "aion", and its incorrect translation as "world" instead of as "age", I hope you are beginning to see the error which seems to have been made by the translators of the King James Version of the Bible, and in other versions of the Bible as well.

The question is this: If this was done intentionally -- as I suspect that it was -- then why did the translators do it? I believe that the answer lies in the fact that they discovered something in the Scriptures which they simply were not able to accept; because what they found totally contradicted their own theological perspective and understanding, as well as the

doctrines of the Church of England. We begin to get a sense of what this was in the following verses, which I also shared with you earlier. To refresh your memory, in these verses, the word "world" is translated from the Greek word "aion":

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels . . . So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,"
Matthew 13:39, 49, KJV

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"
Matthew 24:3, KJV

In contrast, if we properly translate "aion" as "age" so that we maintain the continuity of the Scriptures, and agree with the other verses where "aion" is correctly translated as "age" or as "ages", those same three verses read as follows:

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the [age]; and the reapers are the angels . . . So shall it be at the end of the [age]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,"
Matthew 13:39, 49, KJV

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the [age]?"
Matthew 24:3, KJV

For the purposes of this discussion, it is that last verse that is found in Matthew's Gospel with which we should be the most concerned. By translating "aion" in this fashion, I am personally convinced that what the Apostles really asked Jesus was not what signs would precede the destruction of the Temple, His Return, and the end of the world, but rather what signs would signal the destruction of the Temple, His Return, and the end of the age. As I mentioned to you earlier, we are still here, and the world is still here. Therefore, it makes no sense that the Apostles would ask Jesus about events which were two thousand years in the far distant future.

Let me ask you a simple question. Are you really concerned about events that may occur in the year 4016? Does the year 4016 even ever cross your mind? I didn't think so. You will be dead and gone in a few decades, so you probably couldn't care less about what happens two millennia from now. You are more concerned with events which are happening right now, and perhaps in the coming decades. In like fashion, when the Lord told the Apostles that Herod's Temple would be utterly destroyed, they were obviously most concerned about their own immediate future, and not events which would occur long after they were dead. Thus, it makes perfect sense that they would ask "and of the end of the age", and not "and of the end of the world". Of course, in a real sense, what actually happened about four decades later was no doubt viewed by the Jews as the end of the world -- that is, their world -- but that is not what the Apostles asked Jesus according to the word "aion".

The main point we need to consider here is that everything which Jesus said in response to their questions in Matthew chapter twenty-four, as well as in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Mark, and in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of Luke, concerned the end of the age, and not the actual end of the world as we know it. Everything; and that is precisely where the translators of the KJV Bible ran into trouble. I don't believe that they were able to handle what they discovered; that is, that Jesus actually promised to return at the end of that age around 70 to 73 AD. And so, the KJV translators manipulated their translation, and they covered up the truth by using "world" in some verses instead of the word "age" as they should have done. As a result, we now have millions of Christians who have been deceived in our present time, who have been fooled into believing in the "Jesus-is-coming-at-any-moment" mentality, also known as the Futurist mentality.

Jesus specifically warned us to not be deceived; and yet, we have in fact been deceived by modern preachers, theologians and Bible teachers. As I have already made clear, I in fact was also deceived by this very same lie for forty long years until in His great Mercy, the Lord began to open my eyes to the Scriptural truth. I hope that some of you experience the same thing by reading this series. Consider the following verses:

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you."

Matthew 24:4, KJV

"And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:"

Mark 13:5, KJV

"And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived . . ."

Luke 21:8, KJV

Before delving into other matters, let us review some of the key points that we have established thus far in this series. I think it will help you to see how clear the truth is, if we group all of these various points together below:

1. Jesus said that He would return before the Apostles even had opportunity to preach in all of the cities of Israel. Thus, He had to return during the First Century.
2. Jesus promised to return and set up His Kingdom before all of the Apostles had died. Thus, He had to return during the First Century.
3. Jesus promised to return for the Apostles and take them with Him after He had prepared a place for them in Heaven. Thus, He had to return during the First Century while some of them were still alive.
4. The Romans -- who pierced Jesus' body -- would witness His Return. Thus again, Jesus had to return during the First Century while some of those Romans were still alive.
5. The Apostles were convinced by the Scriptures that they were living in the Last Days of that Prophetic Age, and they expected and anticipated that Christ would return soon. This point is very evident throughout many of their comments and writings.
6. Jesus would return to Earth after Jerusalem and the Temple had both been destroyed, which both Jesus and the Prophets confirmed.
7. The New Testament Scriptures repeatedly state "the day is

at hand", "the Lord is at hand", "the time is at hand", and "the Kingdom of God is at hand", meaning during that same time frame, and not two thousand years in the future.

8. In every instance in the Gospels where the phrase "this generation" is spoken, it is referring to the generation of people who were alive during Jesus' lifetime, some of whom would still be alive at His Return during that same century.

9. In every instance in the New Testament where the word "shortly" is used, it is referring to a short amount of time; that is, in the very near future. This word is used specifically to refer to the events which are described in the Book of Revelation.

10. Through an Angelic Messenger, Jesus specifically told the Seven Churches which were located in Asia Minor at that time, "I come quickly". He repeated that same thing in the final chapter of the Book of Revelation. He would not tell those Churches "I come quickly", and then not come for two thousand years.

11. Jesus' Return during the First Century following the seven-year First Jewish-Roman War was precisely prophesied through Daniel's "Seventy Weeks" prophecy.

12. Contrary to popular belief, in the Gospels, the Lord's Disciples did not ask Him when the end of the world would be. They asked Him when the end of that particular age would be. That Prophetic Age of 490 years concluded with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and Jesus Return sometime thereafter.

Aside from all of the information I have already shared with you, another reason why I am convinced that the Apostles were aware of Daniel's "Seventy Weeks" prophecy, looked forward to the end of that age, and specifically asked Jesus about the signs which would lead up to the end of that Prophetic Age, and not to the end of the world, is because of an incident which is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. It only covers two verses, but it contains some very esoteric wisdom. Now that I have shared all of the previous information with you, I think you will spot the treasure in these two verses right away:

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Matthew 18:21-22, KJV

Why would Jesus choose to reply to Peter in that specific manner? I suspect that it is because the Lord already knew that Peter would fully understand what He was really saying. And what is that? Seventy times seven. Can it be any clearer than that? Four hundred and ninety years. It is my belief that Jesus was really telling Peter that he should forgive his brother his entire life, until the end of that Prophetic Age of 490 years, when Jesus would return. Amazing!

As I already explained, this is why I believe that some of the Apostles chose to use the phrase "last days" in their writings, and also quoted the very same phrase from the Prophet Joel. They perfectly understood that they had now entered the final years of Daniel's 490-year Prophetic Age. We find more proof of this fact in the following two verses:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath IN THESE LAST DAYS spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

Hebrews 1:1-2, KJV

Please go to part six for the continuation of this series.

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Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived? : Part 6

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Stubborn Resistance: New Wine Must Be Poured Into New Bottles, The Dangers Of Following The Doctrines And Traditions Of Men, Willful Blindness To The Truth, Our Personal Responsibility To Study The Scriptures, Don't Make Forced Interpretations Of The Scriptures, New Questions As A Result Of This Truth, Discouraged By This Truth, Grave Responsibility Of Teaching God's Word, Questions From The Futurists, I Don't Have All The Answers, God's Word Is Settled Forever, Countless False Predictions Regarding Christ's Return, Spend Time In God's Word, Deceived By Our Own Choice When We Reject God's Word, Kingdom Of God Comes Without Observation And Is Spiritual In Nature, Futurists Want Physical Evidence So Don't Believe The Kingdom Of God Has Already Arrived, The Nature Of True Faith, Futurists Chop Up And Extend Parts of Ancient Prophecies Into The Distant Future, Daniel's 70th Week Was Already Fulfilled, Flesh And Blood Cannot Inherit The Kingdom Of God, It Is All Spiritual In Nature, Do Christians Go To Heaven Or To The New Earth?, Other Ages Since Prophetic Age Of The Apostles, About My Articles, Harvest Of Souls: The Rapture, Harvest Of Wrath

Despite all of the Scriptural evidence which I have provided in this controversial series, which in my view confirms what I have stated here, as I noted in part one, there will still be many Christians who will soundly reject these truths. Not only will such people reject what is plainly stated in the Scriptures, but they will accuse me of being a liar, a false prophet, and a misguided deceiver. Some of my online friends may very well unfriend me as well. Why will they do these things? Once again, a clear answer is found in God's Word. Consider the following verses:

"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."

Matthew 9:16-17, KJV

"No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine

into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles."

Mark 2:21-22, KJV

"And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."

Luke 5:36-39, KJV

". . . Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

Matthew 15:6, KJV

"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition . . . Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

Mark 7:7-13, KJV

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

1 Corinthians 2:4-5, KJV

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Colossians 2:8, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

2 Timothy 4:3-4, KJV

Thus, despite what I have shared in this series, some of my readers will cling to their current beliefs regarding the Return of Jesus Christ. They will refuse to accept -- just as I did for many years -- that what they believe is simply wrong. They have been so heavily indoctrinated, and in fact brainwashed by the Futurist theological perspective, that it will be too difficult for them to accept that Jesus has already returned. They will cling to the false hope that He is going to return during their lifetimes. In my opinion, it amounts to willful blindness, after having heard the truth.

If you are one of such people, believe me, I sympathize with you. After all, I clung to that same hope for forty years of my life. As I explained earlier, I was totally convinced of what I believed. I also waited for the very same sequence of prophetic events -- such as a Third Temple being built on the Temple Mount, a Seven-Year Holy Covenant, the arrival of the Antichrist, etc. -- just as you probably do right now. That is in fact the Futurist belief package. However, once the Lord began to open my eyes and reveal the true meaning of certain Scriptures, I simply could not rebel against it or reject it. I had to accept it. What about you?

The irony of this current situation is that those very same truths have always been there. They have been there in black and white for us English speakers every since people such as John Wycliffe and William Tyndale began to translate God's Word into our native language. The problem -- as I have said so many times before -- is that instead of reading the Bible for ourselves, and asking God for spiritual guidance in our understanding, we have relied upon organized religion, and modern Bible teachers and preachers of every persuasion -- and they are indeed many -- to tell us the truth. To that I say the following:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in

Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO."

Acts 17:10-11, KJV

Let me say again that we cannot make forced interpretations of the Scriptures. We must accept them for exactly what they say. As I have taught for a long time now, when we possess a proper understanding of God's Word, verses and meanings will just flow together in harmony, without us having to try to force them together. We just can't twist, distort or pervert certain verses so that they seem to support our particular doctrines and what we want to believe. I have not done that in this series. I have shown you word-for-word, verbatim, what Jesus and the Apostles said, taught and believed. I have likewise relied in part on the original meanings of certain Greek words, as well as on the actual historical record to prove some of these points, such as the Roman invasion and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.

As I said at the beginning of this series, it would probably create many new questions in your mind, just as it provides clear answers to other questions you have probably wondered about for a very long time. After all, suddenly realizing that Jesus returned two thousand years ago just as He had promised to do, really turns our beliefs topsy-turvy, does it not? So it is only natural that you are now confronted with a list of new questions to ponder in your mind and heart.

I also realize that for many of my Christian friends, what I have shared here may very well result in a very heavy degree of discouragement, because it dashes a hope which you have clung to for so long; that is, the hope of Jesus Christ's imminent or near-future return during your lifetime. I am truly sorry, but there is nothing that I can really do about that, because the truth is the truth, and God's Word remains the sole and final authority in the lives of we Christians. Furthermore, I too was forced to deal with this realization, and for a time it discouraged me as well. Perhaps even more so in my case, because not only did I utterly believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ for so many years of my life, but I have taught the very same thing to others as well. I am reminded of this verse:

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

James 3:1, KJV

Please note that while the word "masters" is used in the previous verse, it is in fact translated from the Greek word "didaskalos", which is likewise translated as "teachers" in other verses which are found in the New Testament. Teaching God's Word is very serious business which should not be taken lightly. The Scriptures need to be handled with extreme care. Clearly, this is one thing which we are definitely not seeing on the Internet. The way in which certain "wannabe prophets" carelessly toss around verses and sloppily interpret the Word is alarming. I have observed it for years now, and it causes me to shake my head.

At any rate, if I am right about all of these things, even if Jesus isn't returning during our lifetimes as many of us have expected, should it really make a difference in how we live, think or feel? Shouldn't we continue living for the Lord to the best of our ability? Shouldn't we continue to share the message of Salvation with others if that is our particular calling? In the end, we are all still going to go to our Heavenly Reward, whatever it is. Instead of allowing ourselves to become discouraged, perhaps we should do the exact opposite and be encouraged to know that we have more time to serve the Lord. Personally, I still have a lot of work to do for the Lord, so I am glad that He is not taking me Home just yet.

As I mentioned earlier, despite all of the Scriptures I have shared in this series, many Futurist Christians will probably continue to cling to their "Jesus-is-coming-at-any-moment" mentality, and will probably begin firing off the usual line of questioning -- such as the following questions -- in order to convince themselves that they are still right, and what I have stated here is wrong:

1. If Jesus has already returned and set up His Kingdom, why is the Earth still in such a hell of a mess? It looks like the Devil still rules this place.
2. Where is this Kingdom? I certainly don't see it anywhere.
3. If Jesus returned two thousand years ago, shouldn't we be

living on the New Earth with new heavens by now?

4. Where is the Heavenly City, New Jerusalem? Shouldn't it be on the Earth by now?

My friends, I will be completely honest with you. I do not pretend to have all of the answers. In fact, at this current time, I probably have just as many unanswered questions as you do. With this Scriptural revelation regarding the timing of Jesus Christ's Return, my personal belief system has been turned upside-down just as much as yours has. So many things which I have assumed to be true for so many years have to be discarded. In a prophetic sense, the result is obviously a huge vacuum in my personal understanding. Perhaps with time, as I continue to delve into the Scriptures, my understanding will be broadened, and I'll be able to provide more concrete answers to some of the questions which have now been created in your and my mind. No doubt, it will be a slow process.

However, let me emphasize how important it is that we do not reject this new understanding, just because it results in a lot of new unanswered questions. God's Word is God's Word; and as we read in the Old Testament, it is indeed settled forever in Heaven:

". . . For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."
Psalms 119:89, KJV

Thus, if the Prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus, and the Apostles and Disciples of the New Testament all wrote about, said, taught, believed and anticipated that Jesus would come back sometime during the First Century at the conclusion of that Prophetic Age, then that is what we must also choose to believe as well, even if we don't quite understand it all, and even if it creates a lot of new questions in our minds. That is called having faith in God's Word. The only other option is to remain deceived by the Futurist theological perspective which erroneously claims that the Lord has not returned yet. Let me remind you again of a verse which I shared with you in part one:

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."
2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

Really stop and think about this. In your lifetime alone, how many different churches, denominations, organizations and individuals have made some kind of prediction or any kind of statement regarding the imminent return of Jesus Christ? They are countless, aren't they? In fact, even before you and I were ever born, these kinds of prophetic predictions were being made. However, it is an absolute glaring fact that to our own embarrassment, not one single one of them has ever proven to be true or correct. Thanks to misguided men and women of God, we have made ourselves the laughing stock of the world, without any help from our enemies. What a sad statement that makes about our faith.

So why have all of those predictions been so wrong? Now, of course, some of the promoters of the Futurist perspective will more than likely argue something like "Well, they just misunderstood the Scriptures. It just isn't time for Jesus to return yet." I'm sorry, but that is not what all of those previous verses tell me. They tell me that the Lord already returned two millennia ago, and that is why every single one of those predictions has been wrong, wrong, wrong.

Now, regarding some of those previous Futurist questions, what I can tell you is the following. For quite some time now, I have considered the possibility that this deception on our part regarding the correct time frame for Christ's Return, is in some cases our own fault. Yes, we can point to all of the misguided Futurist Bible teachers and preachers who have pounded into our brains for many decades now, the belief that Jesus is coming back at any moment now, or at least in the near future. We can blame them if we so desire.

However, as I pointed out earlier, the bottom line is that we each have a personal responsibility to seek out the truth for ourselves. We spend so much time online, or watching TV, or watching movies, or playing games on our mobile phone, or reading books, or going to sports events, or doing so many other things; yet how much time do we dwell in God's Word? Of course we are going to be ignorant of the truth if we do not even take the time to diligently study the Scriptures. For many Christians who do know God's Word, in some cases, our sin has been that we have knowingly rejected some of it, because it does not agree with what we want to believe.

More to the point, in my view, one of the big reasons why we

have become deceived by the Futurist theological perspective is because in some cases, we have rejected what is plainly stated in the Scriptures regarding the nature of the Kingdom of God. The previous four-point list offers clear evidence of this. In other words, if we truly believe the Scriptures, we wouldn't even be making such comments. Do you know why? Here is your answer, straight from the Bible:

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

Luke 17:20-21, KJV

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

John 4:24, KJV

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

John 6:63, KJV

In short, many aspects of the Futurist perspective are based on physical observation and physical realities. Futurists want to see the Kingdom of God physically here and now, on the Earth -- on this Earth -- in the flesh. However, as you can see from the previous set of verses, such expectations appear to be totally contrary to the Scriptures, and to what Jesus plainly taught regarding the true nature of the Kingdom of God. Futurists soundly reject the idea that Jesus already returned and set up His Kingdom, simply because they cannot see any evidence of it. Thus, because their physical senses cannot detect it, they conclude that it must not be true. Is that true faith? Consider these verses:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen . . . But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Hebrews 11:1, 6, KJV

As I said earlier, I don't claim to have all of the answers.

I am trying to sort out all of this new information just as much as you are. At best, right now, all I can tell you is that I have a working theory in progress. In fact, I have pondered some of these ideas for quite some time now, years in fact. It goes something like the following:

If we accept the plain black and white truth of all of the Scriptural evidence which I have presented in this series, and if we also accept what Jesus taught regarding the nature of the Kingdom of God, then the logical conclusion is that not only did Jesus return during the late First Century as He said He would do, but He also set up His Kingdom at that time as well. That means that He has been ruling it, along with the Apostles and other Elders, ever since that time. It simply does not make any sense that the Lord would claim His Kingdom two thousand years ago, and then do nothing.

This is precisely one of the problems with the Futurist way of thinking. They cut up, and chop up, and slice and dice certain prophecies -- such as the 70th week of the "Seventy Weeks" prophecy -- and stretch out certain events into the distant future, so that it neatly fits into their personal interpretation of Bible prophecy, and their particular expectations for the future. That is precisely why so many Futurist Christians believe in and accept a so-called "Last Seven Years" scenario, which includes a third Jewish temple, the rise of the Antichrist, the signing of a Holy Covenant, the Abomination of Desolation, the Great Tribulation, the Rapture, and the Return of Jesus Christ. For all those years, I did too, so I know exactly what I am talking about here.

As I already pointed out to you earlier, as far as I know, the "Seventy Weeks" prophecy was fulfilled in the 490-year Prophetic Age that ended around 70 to 73 AD. It was one long continuous period of time which began during the reign of King Artaxerxes. Contrary to what modern Futurists believe, I have come to accept that the 70th week of that Prophetic Age was fulfilled by all of the tragic events which occurred during the seven-year First Jewish-Roman War, which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by General Titus, and which culminated with the Return of Jesus Christ. I no longer believe that the 70th week is a final seven-year period -- which some Christians refer to as the "Last Seven Years" or the Great Tribulation -- which is yet to occur in our future. I now view it as a deception and false doctrine.

Furthermore, based on the events which are described in the Book of Revelation, and the amount of time which has passed since the First Century, we might also conclude that not only are both the New Earth and the new heavens already in existence, but the Heavenly City called New Jerusalem has already descended upon the New Earth as well. Remember again what Jesus said:

"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

Luke 17:21, KJV

So again, just because we cannot physically see it does not mean that it does not already exist. If these things don't come with physical observation, then as Jesus plainly told us, they must exist in the Spirit World. It is a spiritual Kingdom, with spiritual inhabitants, living on a spiritual world, in a spiritual city, who worship God, who as Jesus plainly told us, is a Spirit. As you may know, the Apostle Paul completely agreed with what Jesus said in John 6:63 above. Paul wrote the following:

"Now this I say, brethren, that FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

1 Corinthians 15:50, KJV

So none of it is flesh and blood. None of it is physical. That is why we cannot see any of it, despite the fact that it already exists. Maybe it is simply another dimension, or another plane of existence, or a parallel spiritual world which co-exists with our physical world. Perhaps they even exist side-by-side. I really don't know for certain. In fact, for some years now, I have considered the possibility that when Christians die, they do not go to Heaven, as is commonly believed by millions of Believers. Now before you become alarmed by such a statement, let me tell you why -- or show you why -- I entertain this possibility:

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell

with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Revelation 21:2-3, KJV

As you can see, Heaven -- and thus God -- come down to dwell with men. The Heavenly Headquarters -- a.k.a. the Heavenly City, or New Jerusalem -- settles upon the New Earth. Thus, I am leaning towards the belief that if the entire Book of Revelation has already been fulfilled -- please note that I am not absolutely certain yet regarding this point -- then perhaps when we Christian die, we don't actually shoot up to the stars to some place in the distant Universe. Perhaps we are simply transported to the New Earth, wherever it happens to be located. That is the great mystery, isn't it? Exactly where is it, assuming that it already exists in the Spirit Realm?

In fact, for some time now, I have likewise wondered if the harvest of souls which is briefly described for us in the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, might possibly be a process which has been ongoing down through the ages, since the Prophetic Age that ended during the First Century. Consider these verses:

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."

Revelation 14:14-16, KJV

That there have been other ages since the completion of the "Seventy Weeks" prophecy so long ago, seems to be indicated by a verse which I shared with you earlier in this series. The Apostle Paul wrote as follows:

"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."
Ephesians 2:7, KJV

So, while the 490-year Prophetic Age in which Paul and the other Apostles and Disciples lived came to an end, time has

continued to march on, and there have apparently been other ages since then, during which God has performed His Will. Whether or not the harvest that is described in Revelation chapter fourteen is an ongoing process, or a one-time event, I am really not certain at this point. As with other things I have stated in this series, some events simply are not very clear for those of us who live at this current time. Because we do not have a lot of additional information to go by, at times, all we can do is speculate and wonder out loud.

On a related note, please understand that everything I say in my articles should not be taken or interpreted as strict doctrine. My articles are not only my way of sharing what I firmly believe, but they are likewise my way of thinking out loud, and pondering things that may possibly be true. Oft times, I share ideas with my readers which I myself am still considering, and which I am not sure of yet. Please keep this point in mind as you read my body of work. Thank you.

Returning to our previous topic, allow me to also add that being as the harvest of souls in Revelation chapter fourteen is immediately followed by the harvest of wrath, I suspect that what may actually be described there is the Rapture of the Saints near or at the end of that 490-year Prophetic Age. In other words, somewhere between 70 and 73 AD. This event was immediately followed by God's Wrath being poured upon those people who remained behind. This becomes evident by this group of verses:

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

Revelation 14:17-20, KJV

In fact, the previous verses are directly related to verses

which I shared with you earlier in part five. Here they are again for your personal consideration:

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the [age]; and the reapers are the angels . . . So shall it be at the end of the [age]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,"
Matthew 13:39, 49, KJV

Please go to part seven for the conclusion of this series.

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Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived? : Part 7

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The Great Tribulation Period Is Seven-Year First Jewish-Roman War, A Harvest Of Souls And A Harvest of God's Wrath, Jesus Triumphantly Returns To The Earth With Power And Great Glory Caiaphas The High Priest Would Live To See Jesus Return, Key Historical Dates Regarding The Great Tribulation, Our Limited Understanding Of God's Word, Be Humble In Our Understanding, Long Road To Updating All My Articles, By God's Grace Alone, My Position Regarding Doctrinal Debates, Reading Resources

If we wish to take this subject even further, then it is my belief that the harvest of souls which is mentioned in the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, is directly related to the following verses as well, all of which must have occurred at the end of that Prophetic Age between 70 and 73 AD when Jesus returned, as promised.

As you read the verses below, bear in mind that I no longer believe that the tribulation mentioned here is some future event as Futurists believe. The tribulation, in my view, is the previously-discussed, horrendous, seven-year-long First Jewish-Roman War, which resulted in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, as well as the Temple. This great war is discussed by Daniel, Zechariah, and other Prophets of the Old Testament era. These verses describe both the harvest of souls, as well as the harvest of wrath, just like the Book of Revelation. John the Baptist was really in tune to the Spirit:

"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: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 3:11-12, KJV

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Matthew 13:24-30, KJV

"He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Matthew 13:37-43, KJV

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Matthew 24:29-31, KJV

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

Mark 13:26-27, KJV

"John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable."

Luke 3:16-17, KJV

Notice that "immediately after the tribulation of those days" -- meaning the seven-year First Jewish-Roman War -- the Lord very specifically says "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory". This is exactly what He meant when He told His followers that some of them would not die but would still be alive at His Return. Here again are excerpts from the verses that I shared with you in part two:

". . . till the Son of man be come."

Matthew 10:23, KJV

". . . till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew 16:28, KJV

". . . till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

Mark 9:1, KJV

". . . till they see the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:27, KJV

Following are some more verses which likewise speak of Jesus returning with power and great glory, and which are directly related to what Jesus says in Matthew chapter twenty-four, as well as in the other two end-of-the-age sermons in the Gospels of Mark and Luke:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:"

Matthew 25:31, KJV

"Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Matthew 26:64, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark 8:38, KJV

"And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Mark 14:62, KJV

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

Luke 9:26, KJV

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Luke 21:27, KJV

"Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God."

Luke 22:69, KJV

Let me point out that in Matthew 26:64 and Mark 14:62 above, Jesus is actually responding to Caiaphas the high priest. In other words, the Lord is telling him very directly that just like some of the Disciples, Caiaphas would still be alive when Jesus returned. That is yet more proof that Jesus came back during the late First Century. We have seen three cases now where Jesus says that some of His followers would still be alive when He returned; some of the Romans who pierced Him would still be alive when He returned, and even Caiaphas would still be alive when He returned. What more proof do we need to pinpoint Jesus' Return following the First Jewish-Roman War, or tribulation period? Are you convinced yet? Are you beginning to understand why there is no way that I could possibly ignore all of this information when the Lord began to reveal it to me a few years ago?

For those of you who may be a little confused regarding the specific dates we are using here, let me clarify for you. As we learned earlier, according to the historical record, the First Jewish-Roman War began in 66 AD. Being as it endured for seven years, that means it must have ended in 73 AD. But as we also learned previously, Jerusalem and the Temple were actually destroyed in the year 70 AD. We must assume then that this is when all Jewish sacrifices and offerings ended. This would have occurred right in the middle of the Prophet Daniel's 70th week, or the last seven-year period. This is a perfect match, and it is why Daniel wrote the following:

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and IN THE MIDST OF THE WEEK he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Daniel 9:27, KJV

So that is how we arrive at the conclusion that the Rapture

of the Saints and Jesus' Return occurred somewhere between 70 and 73 AD. Based on my current understanding, I am more inclined to believe that it was in 73 AD, since Jesus did say "immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days".

Well, we have definitely covered a lot of territory in this series; even more than I personally expected. At this point, some of you may be wondering exactly how much I am convinced of these things. Am I 100% certain of everything I have said in this series? I think it would be foolish for me, or for anyone, to adopt such a staunch position. In fact, it could be outright dangerous, because doing so could easily stump our spiritual growth, and result in our not being willing to accept any further truths which God may wish to reveal to us.

The truth is that we all understand so very little when it comes to the Scriptures. Only our pride leads us to believe otherwise. Sadly, there are so many teachers and preachers in the world today who employ a technique which makes their audience feel like there must be something wrong with them if they don't agree with what the preacher is saying. Such men of God -- if that is truly what they are -- leave no room for doubt when it comes to their teachings. They seem to have the attitude "This is the way it is, and you better believe it." They make you feel foolish if you don't agree with them. They expect you to just hop on their doctrinal bandwagon without question. But look where that has led us. Mass doctrinal deception everywhere. That's where.

Personally, I prefer to not be like that. In my articles, I carefully explain via the Scriptures why I believe as I do, and then I leave it up to my readers to arrive at their own conclusions. As I have often said, the more that I learn in God's Word, the more I realize how little I actually do know and understand. In fact, to be honest, there have been a lot of times when I have felt very discouraged, and I have asked myself what right I have to be teaching the Bible to anyone, when I understand so very little myself. That is why I wrote articles such as "Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word". I am reminded of this verse:

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:2, KJV

So, to answer the question, no, I am not one hundred per cent certain about every single thing which I have stated in this series. Am I strongly leaning towards the belief that Christ returned to the Earth during the late First Century? Indeed I am. All of the verses I shared seem very clear in that regard. In my view, there is simply too much evidence in the New Testament to believe otherwise. However, beyond that point, I am less certain about some things. There is a degree of fuzziness, particularly regarding the time frames of certain events which are described in the later chapters of the Book of Revelation. As I said earlier, it is going to take me quite a while to sort it all out.

Whatever the case may be, as a result of my accepting this new understanding regarding Christ's Return, I am now forced to go back and edit a major portion of my articles which deal with what is commonly referred to as Endtime Prophecy. Some of these articles were written as long as nineteen years ago, so they're going to require some serious updates. This represents a major amount of work on my part. No doubt I will be working on it for a few years to come, besides doing everything else that I do with this online ministry, such as create graphics, write poetry, compile KJV Bible verse lists, run my blog, etc. During this time, please be very patient with me, because I don't have nearly as much energy as I did when I began this online ministry over two decades ago. My vision isn't the greatest, and my health is in a slow state of decline as well. But, it's just a natural part of growing old, and by His Grace, I continue on. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

2 Corinthians 12:9-10, KJV

Having said that, my advice to you is that if you decide to read any of my prophecy-related articles that were written or updated before this current date -- that is, before July 27, 2016 -- you should read them with a grain of salt. Some of them will contain information which is no longer in line

with my current understanding regarding the Return of Jesus Christ and other related prophetic events. Hopefully, by God's Grace, and with time, I will eventually make the necessary changes in each one of them.

Before concluding this series, I would like to mention one other thing. As I have stated a few times now, due to the contents of this series, I fully realize that it may stir up a hornets' nest in the Futurist camp. A lot of people, which may include some of my online friends, will not like what I have written here. They will resist it for some of the very reasons I have already stated. Some of them may even become very angry with me. They may even make accusations of liar and false prophet against me. If that is what they want to do, that is entirely up to them.

However, please understand that it is not my practice to support or participate in doctrinal debates. As I explain in the article entitled "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?", I consider them a waste of time. Thus, if for whatever your reasons you do not agree with how I personally understand the many Scriptures which I have shared in this series, even though you may be tempted to do so, please do not send me heated emails in which you try to force me to debate with you. If you do, your message will simply go to the trash and be forgotten. Likewise, please do not attempt to start a doctrinal argument on any of the social networks where I participate, such as on Facebook. Not only will your comments be ignored, they will in fact be deleted. I hope that you will respect my wish as a fellow Christian.

With these thoughts I will bring this series to a close. I trust that you have enjoyed it, learned something from it, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. Most of all, I hope that you have an open heart and mind to receive the Scriptural truths which I have shared in this series. I hope that you are liberated by the truth which I have shared here. I hope you are not an old bottle who is unwilling to forsake any misguided doctrines which you may currently embrace. I know it is not easy, but it must be done.

If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which contain topics which are related to this series. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics website:

Age of Deception, Age of Delusion

Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?

Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word

Is the KJV Bible the Inerrant Word of God?

Modern False Prophets and Worldly Ecumenism

Remember Lot's Wife: What Was Her Fate?

Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?

Sorry . . . Jesus is Not Coming at Any Moment

The Misguided End of the World Predictions of Harold Camping

The Office of a Prophet

The Seven Heads

Tradition or Truth? Old Wine or New Wine?

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