



THE
P A R U S Í A
EXPECTATION

BY
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The Parousia-Expectation: Does it impact evangelization?

Parousia meaning rapture in the bible where Christian have a fervent expectation of the second coming of Christ

by

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ABSTRACT

What is the essence of the theology behind the return of Christ? If there is, to say, no delay in the expectation of Parousia, and Christ returns this day, then as true Christians we have to take it as our last and then evangelize, whosoever we can. But if it does not happen so. Should I baptize? As a faithful Christian we must believe at His coming. God never revealed when Christ would come, although He informed us all about his second coming but not the precise time of his coming. Evangelism is crucial for those who desire to hear it, second come discipleship. Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is like fulfilling the great commission. "Go therefore make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you?" Matthew 28:18-20

Dedicated to
The loving memory of my parents

Mohammad Nesar

Ahmedi Begum

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

What is the essence of the theology behind the return of Christ? If there is, to say, no delay in the expectation of Parousia, and Christ returns this day, then as true Christians we have to take it as our last and then evangelize, whosoever we can. But if it does not happen so. Should I baptize? As a faithful Christian we must believe at His coming. God never revealed when Christ would come, although He informed us all about his second coming but not the precise time of his coming. Evangelism is crucial for those who desire to hear it, second come discipleship. Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is like fulfilling the great commission. "Go therefore make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you?" Matthew 28:18-20

Another crucial factor fostering the climate of disinterest and antipathy is the fact that evangelism has been linked almost exclusively with a particular cluster of schools within modern Christianity, namely with fundamentalism and evangelicalism. Even dictionary definitions of evangelism reflect this, for some confuse evangelism with evangelicalism. This is not accidental, however, for evangelicals have owned evangelism as a distinctive if not exclusive characteristic of their contribution to modern Christianity. Certainly evangelicals deserve great credit for insisting that evangelism cannot be dropped from the activities of the modern church without shedding any theological tears.

On the whole, however, they have not expressed their concerns in this fashion; their primary concern has been practice rather than theory. In their theological work they have focused most of their attention to shoring up impossible theories of biblical inspiration and to keeping at bay the acids of modern biblical criticism.

It is objected further, in the same line, that the Parousia of Christ was to be accompanied by the resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgment, the end of the world, etc., and as these did not occur in that age, the Parousia itself could not have taken place. This is probably the most formidable objection that has been or can be urged against the views. But the difficulty, to my view, lies in the restricted ideas which we have been so accustomed to give to the Parousia, limiting it without warrant to a brief time, as a single day, or a point in duration. The word itself conveys no such limited meaning; rather does it denote relations of permanence with men, which, beginning with the overthrow of the ancient dispensation, its sacred city and its temple, once dwelling place of Jehovah but now "left to them desolate," is to last as long as the Messiah reigns.

The real meaning is controversial about apocalyptic (Glasson 1980). What is of particular interest here theologically is the way in which apocalyptic expectancy and hope for the imminent coming of the Parousia and the kingdom of God has radically slackened, even vanished, over the course of Christian history, and the connection this has with the theological shape of Christian mission in relation to the kingdom of God and the world.

Ernst Käsemann (Ernst Kasemann 1994) famously argued that early Christian eschatology is characterized by the apocalyptic expectation of the imminent coming of God's kingdom, of the Parousia of Jesus Christ, and the dawn of the new creation. For Käsemann this view is especially characteristic of the theology that governs Paul's letters. Yet, within the New Testament itself, Ernst Käsemann noted, one can already discern a modification of eschatology, which eventually ends in the "final extinction" of apocalyptic from the dominant forms of Christian theology and practice. With the disappearance of apocalyptic expectation there arises the establishment of the "great Church which understands itself as the *Una Sancta Apostolica*." (Ibid). Käsemann describes this shift polemically in terms of a transition from apocalyptic to "early Catholicism." And while there is no doubt that Käsemann formulates the issue in terms of a polemical opposition between the "Protestant view" and Roman Catholicism, such clear-cut and confessionally loaded designations cannot be so easily sustained. Rather the issues are deeply internal to Christian theology itself, arising no less in Protestant and even radical Protestant theological traditions than in Roman Catholic circles.

According to Ernst Kasemann the early eschatology is identified by the apocalyptic expectation, of Parousia and a new creation. This according to Kasemann is an important feature of theology governing the letters of Paul. But there is a modification that can be discerned in the New Testament itself and this is about eschatology, that ends in the "final extinction" of apocalyptic from Christian theology. This leads to the issue the way in which the slackening of delay in Parousia coincides with the lack of godliness, visible decrease in church numbers; and also in spirituality.

Apocalyptic has three roots. There is, in the first place, Old Testament prophecy. In common with prophecy, apocalyptic sought to declare and relate God's word to the men of its generation.' To some extent there is a concern to re-interpret unfulfilled promises, a process already begun by Ezekiel. The scope of prophecy embraced past, present and future, and this total sphere is also apocalyptic's concern. Thus the older tendency to eliminate any predictive element from cc6 is as erroneous as the suggestion that apocalyptic is concerned only with the future. (Burkitt FC 1914).

There are, of course, differences, but these are mainly of emphasis: apocalyptic is especially concerned with the future and lays more stress on the expected age of bliss as a divine irruption into history than do the prophets. But its basic presuppositions it shares with the prophets of the Old Testament. The problem of a delayed Parousia ceases to be a problem, if it can be shown that Parousia involving a second coming of Jesus never formed part of Jesus' own understanding and teaching. The variations on the theme of realized eschatology are many. Dr. C. H. Dodd (C.H. Dodd 1936) himself, while adopting the position in *The Parables of the Kingdom* that the kingdom of God in all its fullness has arrived, nevertheless allows that there is every reason to believe that Jesus "contemplated a further period of history after his departure," and agrees that such a saying as Mark certainly belongs to the earliest tradition of logia. (C. H. Dodd, 1936). Yet Dodd's main contention is that the predictions by Jesus of his survival and of the triumph of the cause of God in his person, were interpreted by the early church in the light of its own experience. Where he had referred to one event, the primitive Christians

distinguished two-resurrection. Uneasiness is rightly and inevitably experienced in the face of any attempt to peg down eschatological realizations in temporal confines, and this is a further reason why we are not so far compelled to eliminate from the teaching of Jesus the possibility that he himself anticipated an interval between the resurrection and the Parousia mentioned, a period that would culminate in the appearance of the Son of man for judgment, with vindication. The truth prevails while the missing element is timing; uncertain; Mark 13. (N. Perrin, 1963).

In his book *Jesus and his Coming*, J. A. T. Robinson professes himself unwilling to build on the NT teaching about the second coming "more or less as it stands," and he prefers to "move downstairs" in an attempt to discover how the primitive Christian expectation of Christ's return which cannot be extracted from the *verba Christi*, arouser's. He claims that Jesus' own expectation involved the twin notions of vindication and visitation, but suggests that these referred respectively to the immediate vindication to God of Christ and of his own, and to the visitation in judgment already inaugurated by his ministry. In the face of a Parousia that did not actually occur, the early church provided a second focus for an expectation already contained in its own *Κηρυχ* (pa, and this involved "the splitting of a unity" rather than "the deliberate creation of a duality"(Robinson JAT, 1957).

In order to come to terms with anticipation which did not materialize, an explanatory scheme was launched by the early church which developed as time went on. Sayings were introduced which contained a note of uncertainty about the time of the arrival of the kingdom-Mark 13, as with the parable of the Ten Maidens (Matt 25),

suggesting that the promise was merely delayed. Finally, the situation demanded the promises (such as Mark and Luke) that the end would come despite its delay; and this was supported further by the synoptic apocalypses which outline all that must take place before that could happen.

It is impossible to assess in critical detail all the arguments so far outlined. It has simply been suggested that no *prima facie* reason exists for eliminating from the synoptic teaching of Jesus his own expectation of a postresurrection period. It's yet to provide within the gospels against which this conclusion may be tested, and to discover how much shaping (if any) of synoptic material was provoked by the delay of a second Parousia clearly (if, on the showing of some scholars, wrongly) expected by primitive Christianity.

The present interest in eschatology owes much to J. Weiss and A. Schweitzer.' The question they raised was that of the overall structure and significance of New Testament eschatology, but this was bound to involve considerable examination of the idea of the Parousia in particular.

Surprisingly this renewal of interest has not fostered in the church a firmer conviction regarding the Parousia expectation. In fact the idea of the Parousia, at least in the form in which traditionally it has been expressed, has had to face many criticisms from various quarters. From within the realm of critical theological investigation the Parousia hope has encountered considerable opposition. Schweitzer maintained that Jesus held to a Parousia hope only because it formed part of the contemporary Jewish apocalyptic which he accepted, and that such first century

apocalyptic has no place. It was introduced into this country with varying sympathy by W. Sanday and F. C. Burkitt, (1914)' is expressed strongly to-day by M. Werner and others.' An apologetic elimination of the Parousia hope, or at least a radical re-interpretation of its traditional expression, has flourished particularly in for recent reviews of the eschatological thought of the past 50-60 years.

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As a result of reflection on the Servant figure in II Isaiah and on the fate of John the Baptist, he realizes that he must bear the suffering alone. He must himself absorb all the Messianic woes, die vicariously on behalf of the many (Mk 10:45), and thereby precipitate the End. In the one act he could fulfil his Messianic vocation and bring in the Kingdom of God. Thus he expected the End to occur simultaneously with his own death. There would be no gap between the Resurrection and the Parousia, his own and the general Resurrection would be one and the same event. Jesus also both knew and prophesied that he would be revealed as the Son of Man when the Kingdom of God came. His whole life was shot through with events of an eschatological nature, the Entry into Jerusalem and the Last Supper. In fact, everything which Schweitzer considered to be authentic in the Gospel records of Jesus' life is both subordinated to and interpreted by the dominant theme of eschatology. Like Glasson, JAT Robinson also tries to show that the Parousia belief of the early Church does not correspond to the expectation of the historical Jesus. Unlike Glasson, however, he admits that Jesus did expect a future consummation of all things, a general Resurrection and a final Judgement, which would involve the separation of the saved and the lost." However, in his overall interpretation of Jesus' teaching this theme plays no great role and is never clearly defined. Robinson's emphasis is on generalized eschatology, and most of the references to future events in Jesus' teaching are interpreted in terms of historical rather than apocalyptic occurrences.

Finally, we can note the more theological understanding of the tension between realized and unrealized eschatology, which also allows for an extensive continuation of history after Jesus' death. For example, C. E. B. Cranfield's statement that , "

In some sense the Parousia is near. It is near, not in the sense that it must necessarily occur within a month or a few years, but in the sense that it may occur at any moment and in the sense that, since the decisive event of history has already taken place in the ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, all subsequent history is a kind of epilogue, an interval inserted by God's mercy in order to allow men time for repentance, and, as such an epilogue, necessarily in a real sense short". (Cranfield C.E, 2004). This approach assumes that Jesus did believe in an imminent End, but that this belief was such that it did not preclude him from foreseeing that history might well continue for several centuries.

On the first view, Jesus could not have expected, prophesied or commanded a Gentile mission such as we know took place after his death, since he did not envisage any continuation of history. Even if he expected there to be a short interval between his resurrection and the Parousia, SUCH an interval would scarcely be long enough to contain a mission such as is envisaged in Mk 13 10 pars, a problem which Kummel recognizes and then solves by denying that Jesus foresaw a Gentile mission On the second view, where Jesus foresees an indefinite period of ongoing history, he could have foreseen and prophesied the Gentile mission which took place after his death for those who think he did envisage such a mission, this can become as with Glasson - an argument against Jesus having expected an imminent End. Our task now is to make a detailed study of Jesus attitude to the Gentiles and the Gentile mission, and to try to work back from this to his probable views on eschatology.

In plain, unequivocal language Jesus limits his own and his disciple' stativity to the confines of Israel. That this is not an expression of undiluted nationalism can be seen from the other material

where Jesus condemns the Jews and in the same breath announces that the Gentiles will participate in the future Kingdom. It appears then that Jesus expressly excluded the possibility of a full - scale historical Gentile mission. However, closely connected with these verses and their interpretation is the problematic verse in Matt 10 23, and to this we now turn Matt 10 23.

On the question of the authenticity of this verse we can refer back to all except the second of the objections which were raised with regard to Matt 10 5b~6, 15 24 and the appropriate answers

There are, however, additional objections to Matt 10 23, they are as follows

1. The saying is placed in the context of teaching about the persecution of the disciples, teaching of this kind normally had a late origin similarly, and many see it as having arisen directly out of a persecution, as over against a mission, situation in the Church
2. It is said that Jesus made no such temporal predictions
3. The use of the title Son of Man makes the whole verse suspect to some authors
4. It is said that in its present form the saying is not genuine J A T Robinson, for example, thinks that originally it spoke of an imminent historical crisis- maybe the flight to Pella. The temporal limitation of v23b is a later addition, since it takes the account of the life of Jesus and places it on some future event.

With regard to the first argument we can reply that although in their present form the passages about persecution have been coloured by the experience of the Church, there is no reason why Jesus should not have foreseen that his disciples would encounter persecution. As a result of his own experience of opposition it would not be a particularly difficult prediction to make the statement that Jesus made no such temporal predictions is based on an impossible exegesis of several passages (for example MK 9:1-13, 30 pars).

It is enough to note that for many scholars Matt 10 23 confirms the 'Naherwartung' of Jesus attested elsewhere the view that Jesus never used the title Son of Man is unconvincing The fact that the title appears only once outside the Gospels (Acts 7 56) is formidable evidence for the authenticity of at least some of the Son of Man sayings We can also note that in Matt 10-23 Jesus and The Son of Man are not directly identified, who for some is a mark of the authentic Son of Man sayings Even if the Son of Man title is not original , the saying itself may be a genuine saying of Jesus which was later recast on the form of a Son of Man saying.

Schniewind (Schniewind A, 2003) offers an exegesis which is even further the text the Jews are offered salvation but refuse it, hence it goes to the Gentiles When the Son of Man comes in an indefinite future - the conversion of Israel will be incomplete, but when the Parousia comes Israel may realize what she has rejected and repent. All this may well be true, but none of these ideas appear in the text of Matt 10 23. Grasser (Grasser E, 1985) reflecting on this verse in a missionary context, suggests two possible emphases it could be a stimulus for the disciples to encourage them to hasten in their task, or it could be a word of comfort in view of the trials and frustrations they will encounter in their missionary work. Both of Grasser's suggestions are fruitful, and a combination of them is possible with this in mind, we can conclude our study of this verse with the following observations

- a. The mission of Jesus and his disciples is once again limited to Israel
- b The clear implication of the verse is that this mission will not be completed because the Son of Man will appear very soon, in fact before all the towns of Israel have been covered.

The above observations and the plain meaning of the verse in a missionary context exclude any possibility of a historical Gentile mission. This is a convenient point at which to summarize briefly the results obtained:

1 Jesus limited himself, in his earthly ministry, to Israel and commanded his disciples to do likewise there is no evidence that he was diverted from this his main purpose or that he preached or even desired to preach to the Gentiles

2 Nevertheless, according to Jesus' teaching, the Gentiles have a definite place in the Kingdom of God this place is almost wholly reserved for the future, when the Kingdom of God will be manifested in all its fullness. As subsidiary points we note that this hope for the Gentiles is frequently played off against the present disobedience and obduracy of the Jews, and that it will apparently be effected after and as a result of Jesus' death

3 The link between the Gentiles and the Kingdom of God is frequently made in a context where Jesus appears to have thought that this Kingdom was imminent.

4. On exceptional occasions Jesus responded, though with considerable reluctance, to certain Gentiles who persistently appealed to him Jesus' response of healing shows that at least these few Gentiles were participants in the Kingdom of God which was, in a partial, hidden manner, in the process of realization This point is entirely consonant with what has been said in points 1-3

5. There is no evidence that Jesus either foresaw or intended any historical mission to the Gentiles such as actually took place in the early Church In fact, such a mission is indirectly excluded by Matt 10 23.

Having thus formulized and summarized our results so far, we turn finally to the material which seems directly to contradict some of these results. In doing so we shall consider the many attempts to resolve this contradiction and offer the solution which seems to us to be the most satisfactory. Any reference to the Gentile mission in these verses is therefore highly improbable, and certainly unprovable what then was the original meaning? Mark could scarcely have understood it as a reference to the Parousia, since he was writing approximately thirty years after the prophecy was given. Since we have excluded the possibility of a reference to the Gentile mission in Mark, presumably he understood it as a prophecy of a Resurrection appearance. Moreover, the tradition for Galilean Resurrection appearances is not quite so easily dispensed with as Evans supposes. But is this how Jesus intended the words to be understood? The fact that Mark interpreted them in this way is 'a priori' in favor of this view and yet, while admitting that none of the interpretations are immune to criticism it would be suggested that the original reference was to the Parousia. We conclude, therefore, that whereas Jesus intended a reference to the Parousia, Mark understood these verses as referring to a Resurrection appearance, neither made nor intended to make a reference to the Gentile mission.

.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RAPTURE

In 1973 Robert Gundry, a posttribulationist, wrote that "by common consent imminence means that so far as we know no predicted event will necessarily precede Christ's coming." Some posttribulationists have responded to the doctrine of imminence by claiming that all the intervening signs have already occurred, and thus the final Parousia can occur at any time. Others deny that the Bible teaches imminence in any sense. Most posttribulationists prefer to redefine "imminence" along the lines adopted by Douglas Moo, who objects that the term does not necessarily mean "any moment," but rather that it simply means the return of Christ "could take place within any limited period of time." This article follows the more strict definition and discusses Bible passages that teach or strongly imply that Christ's return for the church can occur at any time without any predicted intervening signs or events.

Criteria for Imminence

How is one to know for certain whether a passage teaches the imminence of the rapture, when no rapture passage gives a specific temporal designation? Four criteria may be suggested, any one of which indicates imminence: (1) the passage speaks of Christ's return as at any moment. (2) The passage speaks of Christ's return as "near,"⁴ without stating any signs that must precede His coming. (3) The passage speaks of Christ's return as something that gives believers hope. The passage speaks of Christ's return as giving hope without relating it to God's judgment of

unbelievers. Based on these criteria, many passages on the Second Coming do not teach imminence. Matthew 24-25, for example, describes Christ's return as delivering the elect from the midst of tribulation and death, and thus those chapters do not prove imminence. Likewise Thessalonians and Revelation fail to speak of imminence, since both depict eschatological events that include signs for Christ's return. However, seven New Testament passages do clearly teach the imminent return of Christ.

Passages on Imminence

JOHN 14:1-3

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for 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 to myself; that where I am, there you may be also." John 14:3 is the only verse in the Gospels that is commonly accepted by contemporary pretribulationists and posttribulationists alike as a reference to the rapture. When Jesus said, "If I go," He was not speaking only of His death and resurrection. His going "to the Father" (v. 12) included a departure in totality (cf. Acts 1:9-11). His next statement, "I am coming again" {πάλιν ἔρχομαι is a futuristic present meaning "I will come again"). When Christ returns, He will take believers along with him. Twice in verses 2 and 3 Jesus discussed what He will do in his "Father's house"—He will "prepare a place" for believers. Sometime after that has been accomplished,

He will then "come again" and "receive" (παραλήψομαι, "I will take to myself) them to Himself.¹⁰ Where will He take them? He said He will take them "where I am." But where exactly is that? Two clues help answer the query. Jesus' talking about "preparing a place for them" in heaven is irrelevant (even worthless) information if He did not intend to take them there. The foregoing context thus requires the conclusion that He intends to take them to heaven—where He "will be" (εἰμί is also a futuristic present here). Second, Jesus then said, "You know the way where I am going" (v. 4). Unless Jesus was being intentionally devious, it must be assumed that He was still speaking of heaven. In fact, following Thomas's question about the way (v. 5), Jesus candidly stated that no one is able to go "to the Father" except through Him (v. 6), Christ's promise that believers will ultimately (and always) be with Him—wherever that is—so that the promise should not be understood as necessarily implying a rapture "to heaven."¹¹ In this view the rapture will occur at the same time as Christ's coming to the earth, so that the words "where I am" would refer to His being on the earth during the millennium, not in heaven.

Christ spoke of the rapture as an antidote to their fears and as a great hope and encouragement in light of His soon departure to heaven.¹² Jesus made no mention of suffering or judgment from which the rapture might rescue them, nor did He mention that any signs must precede the rapture. Jesus' words spoke directly of a reunion of the apostles with their Lord, which will issue in an eternal "at-home-ness" with both Jesus and God the Father.

Thessalonians 1:9-10

"For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come." Thessalonian believers had participated or would participate in all of them. First, when Paul visited them with the gospel, they "turned to God from idols". Second, they were now serving "a living and true God". Third, one day Jesus will appear out of heaven and rescue them "from the wrath which is to come" (ἐκ τῆς οργῆς • τῆς ἐρχόμενης).

What "wrath to come" is this? Since Christ's appearance "out of heaven" is later described in 4:15-17 as the rapture, this "coming wrath" must be the same wrath described in 5:3, 9, God's wrath in the future Tribulation. Indeed, the fact that 1:10 calls it a "coming wrath" implies that the "rescue" is related to Christ's return. In what sense will believers be rescued from this wrath? Paul wrote that they will be rescued "from," "out of," or "away from" the coming wrath. The UBS4 text, following three Alexandrian manuscripts, reads ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς. It is argued by Wallace that the internal proof supports as original the reading ἀπό τῆς οργῆς, 15 which implies that Christ will keep believers "away from" wrath that is coming.

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To answer the question, 'Which reading best explains the rise of the others(s)?' άπό must be judged as the obvious originator of έκ. This writer would give άπό and A-rating on internal probability. "Even apart from the strength of the άπό reading, the statement points to a deliverance before wrath begins. The attempt by many nonpretribulational expositors to interpret this wrath as God's final judgment identifies the point. The aim is to show that salvation by Christ provides a present deliverance that will keep believers "out of the final wrath and judgment of God makes it necessary that one interpret the deliverance as total. If the same explanation of έκ or άπό is used with regard to the believer's deliverance from the coming eschatological wrath (the Tribulation, as depicted in 1Thess. 5), the present passage must be viewed as providing strong evidence for Paul's belief in an imminent rapture. Some say that the participle which names Jesus as the One who rescues (τον ρνόμενον) believers (since it is a present tense) should show deliverance from God's general (non-eschatological) wrath. However, this misunderstands both the relevance of the tense of the articular participle and the meaning of close connection between the future deliverance and the fact that the object of the deliverance is a wrath which itself is still "coming." In any event 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 seems to function as

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Three time periods are described here, and the Thessalonian believers had participated or would participate in all of them. First, when Paul visited them with the gospel, they "turned to God from idols," means they answered to Christ by faith and were born again. Second, they were now serving "a living and true God" as they waited for Christ to return from heaven. Third, one day Jesus will appear out of heaven and rescue them "from the wrath which is to come" (ἐκ τῆς οργῆς• τῆς ἐρχόμενης). What "wrath to come" is this? Since Christ's appearance "out of heaven" is later described in 4:15-17 as the rapture, this "coming wrath" must be the same wrath described in 5:3, 9, God's wrath in the future Tribulation.¹⁴ The general context of both Thessalonian epistles is the Day of the Lord, especially that aspect of God's judgment that precedes and leads up to Christ's second coming. Indeed, the fact that 1:10 calls it a "coming wrath" implies that the "rescue" is related to Christ's return. In what sense will believers be rescued from this wrath? Paul wrote that they will be rescued "from," "out of," or "away from" the coming wrath. The UBS4 text, following three Alexandrian manuscripts, reads ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς. Wallace, however, argues that the internal evidence strongly supports as original the reading ἀπό τῆς οργῆς, 15 which implies that Christ will keep believers "away from" the coming wrath. "On all fronts the internal evidence is decidedly

CHAPTER THREE

THE RAPTURE AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

To answer the question, 'Which reading best explains the rise of the others(s)?' *ἀπό* must be judged as the obvious originator of *ἐκ*. This writer would give *ἀπό* and A-rating on internal probability." Even apart from the strength of the *ἀπό* reading, the statement points to a deliverance before wrath begins. The attempt by many non-pretribulational expositors to interpret this wrath as God's final judgment identifies this aspect. If the same explanation of *ἐκ* or *ἀπό* is used with regard to the believer's According to 5:2, it is the "day of the Lord," not specifically the destruction, that will "come as a thief in the night." The devastation will be the proof of the "day." This Day of the Lord is apparently a period of time that will include the millennium as well as the Tribulation. The church, Paul said, is not subject to darkness so as to be surprised by the coming of the Lord's Day, but is associated with light and daytime (w. 5:4-5, 8). Day and night cannot exist at the same time in the same way in the same place. But here one group (the church) is always of the day, and the other group (unbelievers) is trapped in the night and is destined to suffer God's eschatological wrath. Only to tell that the Day of the Lord will arrive on the church, which is of the day, in the same way and at the same time that it will come on unbelievers, who are "in the night," would seem to contradict Paul's deliverance from the coming eschatological wrath (the Tribulation, as depicted in 1 Thess. 5), the present passage must be viewed as providing strong evidence for Paul's belief in an imminent rapture.

Paul's specific declaration that it will come "like a thief in the night" and to make worthless his counsel to stay alert, watchful, and sober. It seems evident that Paul presented salvation here as an alternative to the wrath to be manifested in the Tribulation. Even the words of encouragement and comfort in 5:11 ("Therefore encourage one another [παρακαλείτε αλλήλους] and build up one another") are identical with those in 4:18 ("Therefore comfort one another [παρακαλείτε αλλήλους] with these words"). Paul was clear in explaining that a rapture will occur and that it will include all living believers (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:17).

The fact that in 1 Thessalonians 5 Paul described the rapture as part of the outworking of the salvation that will deliver the church from God's eschatological wrath (the Tribulation) shows that for Paul the means of saving the church from the wrath of the Tribulation (or Day of the Lord) is specifically the rapture. The promise of deliverance by the rapture is for the entire church. People who become believers during the Tribulation and are martyred will thereby be "delivered" from denial or apostasy, but this is not the wrath spoken of here. Paul's promise is that the church will be literally and actually delivered from the coming wrath. Had it not been so, then Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians to "watch and be sober" (5:6) is unrealistic. The differences of eschatological genre, in fact, are apparent rather than real. It will be important, before we come any nearer to this conclusion, to glance at the influences which helped to shape Paul's eschatological outlook. The influence and bearing of the apostolic kerygma, and therefore of the teaching of Jesus himself, are obvious. It is well known in addition that, taking the terms as they stand, Pere Cerfaux has attempted to discover the Hellenistic as well as the Jewish forces at work in this area of Paul's thought. He has pointed out the technical, festive connotations attaching to

the word *parousia*, which stated the triumphal entrance of rulers (as in the case of Attalus III, according to the decree issued in a city of Pergamum); and also in the sphere of religion.

But however constraining it might be considered the Greek pressures on the language of NT eschatology to be, it is not possible to side-step, any more than Pere Cerfaux himself would wish, the fundamentally Jewish setting from which Paul's own eschatological position derives. This has been traced and described by Professor H.J. Schoeps, in his important book, *Paulus: Die Theologie des Apostels im Lichte der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte*. Schoeps considers that eschatological expectation belongs to the most primitive part of Israel's faith, and is to be seen against the background of covenant theology itself. He detects messianic expectation, and reminds us that the second trend of thought, according to which the Messiah was awaited as Savior, whose appearance would usher in the final stages of cosmic catastrophe, finds expression in a body of apocalyptic literature (Daniel, Enoch, and IV Ezra) which was "much more calculated to harmonize with the speculation of the apostle Paul." The appearance of the figure of the *Christ* invested by the apocalyptists with all the visionary apparatus belonging to a transcendental futurity, drives a wedge between this aeon and the next, and causes a reinterpretation of the messianic idea (not least in the consciousness of Jesus himself and finally becomes "deeply harmonious with the conceptual world of Paul."

This brings us back to the question of the interval. Jewish eschatology, whether that of the Psalms of Solomon or of the apocalyptists. The eschatology of Paul is different, in that for him the *parousia* has already begun. But for both some event lies in the future-either the coming of the new aeon, supramundane, or the *parousia* (*Christ* itself).

The question remains: "My master is delayed in coming" (Luke 12 45). But how long is he delayed? The Jews themselves were not slow to speculate about this. The question, "when will the end of the first aeon and the beginning of the second take place?" (IV Ezra 6 7) was not uncommon.

The Dispensational position involves what can be termed a postponement of the Kingdom after Israel rejected the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church, therefore, is little more than a substitute for Israel in the overall plan of God. The Kingdom of Israel was God's true intent. As such, God will offer it again to Israel after the time of the Gentiles when the so-called Church Age is complete. Dispensationalism advocates that the Church has not displaced Israel and God has neither forgotten nor rejected His people Israel (Erickson: 1997).

3. The seven dispensations commonly agreed upon among dispensationalists.

Innocence (in the Garden).

Conscience (up to the Flood).

Human government (since Babel).

Promise (since Abraham).

Law (since Moses).

Grace (since Christ). Age of Grace Ends with the pre-tribulation rapture.

Resting on a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophets, dispensational eschatology is overwhelmingly premillennial and pretribulational (Kyle, 1998).

Concerning Premillennial Dispensationalism, the events between the pre-tribulation rapture and Kingdom, are the most important to the futurist position (Schwarz).

4. The various tribulation viewpoints and the secret rapture.

Some other terms commonly used in this area of study are Pretribulationism, Mid-Tribulationism, and Post-Tribulationism (Tenney 1961). Each of these terms refers to the timing of the occurrence of the rapture. The rapture, as Premillennial Dispensationalists contend, is the first stage in what they believe to be the two-stage Second Coming of Christ.

This secret catching-away will cause the disappearance of millions of Christians who will vanish and meet the waiting Christ in the clouds. In so doing, they will avoid the 'Great Tribulation' following in the wake of their disappearance (Kyle: 101). The futurist understands this seven-year period to be "the times of Jacob's troubles", the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Daniel 9:23ff).

The Great Tribulation will last for seven years. The first half of that period will see a gradual deterioration of human conditions. Meanwhile, political and military power will shift to a European confederacy that will resemble a reconstituted Roman Empire. This Confederacy is to be led by the Antichrist (Kyle 1998) who will be an actual person and not just a system. The Tribulation will bring fear and suffering beyond imagination and culminates in mighty armies marching upon Israel with the goal of taking Jerusalem. They meet their doom on the plains of Meggido as the Lord appears in glory to defeat the forces of darkness. This battle of Armageddon will rage for over a year prior the Lord's arrival, killing millions of combatants and civilians alike.

This mighty victory for the Lord then ushers in the Millennium, a literal period of one thousand years of the earthly rule of Christ from Jerusalem. The temporary release of Satan from the abyss follows the Millennium and rebellion ensues. The uprising fails and the Lake of Fire becomes Satan's eternal dwelling place. The general resurrection then follows, after which the final judgment, the Great White Throne Judgement, commences. God then undertakes the creation of a new heavens and a new earth – the dawn of eternity (Schwarz, Grenz 1994).

Major Millennial eschatology positions:

It is important to know of a further three important terms relevant to the subject at hand: Postmillennial, Amillennial and Premillennial (Tenney 1961). These three views result from different interpretations of the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation. The crux of the matter is to determine whether the Millennium (the 1000 years) is literal or figurative. Furthermore, does it precede or follow the Second Coming of Christ? (Tenney 1961).

Postmillennialism regards the so-called Millennium as a figurative long interval that precedes the Second Advent. At the beginning of this period, a point difficult to determine, the Gospel will finally triumph over the nations ushering in “a reign of peace” which will last until Christ appears and establishes His rule upon the earth (Tenney 1961).

5.2 The Amillennialist, on the other hand, does not subscribe to the view of a literal Millennium at all. Some Amillennialists view the Millennium as the intermediate state of the dead. However, Amillennialism teaches, in the main, that Christ could return at any time. When He does, He will judge the world and usher in the eternal state of bliss for the righteous and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (Tenney 1961).

Premillennialism teaches that Christ will return personally and initiate His earthly kingdom reign from physical Jerusalem directly after the Great Tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon. The resurrected righteous dead will reign with Him personally on earth for one thousand years. Immediately after that period there will be a brief rebellion initiated by the release of Satan. Subsequently, the wicked will face Judgement and eternity will begin.

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The Second Coming was no arbitrary belief plucked out of the stock of Jewish eschatology. It was part and parcel of convictions about the resurrection. The Second Coming was the consummation of a promise of which the resurrection of Jesus was a guarantee (Rowland: 115). Such a conviction and understanding stretched into the Second Century. Ignatius of Antioch stated, "The end of all things are near" (Staniforth, 1968). The Didache (i.e. the teaching), a collection of regulations that made up what could be termed, in modern parlance, a 'church life manual' contains a section on eschatology and fittingly, perhaps, it comes at the end of the 'manual'. For the first two hundred years or so, Christians expected Christ to return and usher in a golden age within their lifetimes. The two hundred years that followed saw a change in that expectancy. The urgent expectation of Christ's return waned and the Church began to make peace with the world. Before long, official Church doctrine declared that the millennium was in progress. Consequently, the breathless expectation of Christ's return dissipated for about one thousand years (Kyle 1998).

The joyous and confident attitude of the Church prevalent in the immediate wake of the Apostles now began to give way to the concept of exclusively future blessing instead of the acceptance that the age to come had already broken through to their present time. The Letters of the New Testament powerfully reflected the blessing of living in the first fruits of the Spirit in the Messianic Age of the Church. This wondrous understanding gave way to the Kingdom being a region or a state located exclusively in the future. As such it was no longer a certain inheritance by faith through grace but a place reserved for those who manfully struggle in this present life (Kelly, 1968).

Daniel 9:24-27 is entirely about Jesus, centre in the finished work of the Lamb of God! This prophecy therefore reveals how that God would ultimately deal with transgression, sin and iniquity. Gabriel, the same archangel who announced the Messiah's birth (Matthew 1 & Luke 1), now prophesies His death. He arrives at the time of the "evening offering" (the ninth hour) – the hour of Jesus' death by crucifixion (Matthew 27:45-46; John 19:30). Gabriel came to give Daniel and us "understanding" of this prophecy. His explanation prophesied the New Testament revelation of Jesus' finished work, the putting away of all sin and the cessation and all sacrifice and oblation (Hebrews 9&10).

The accomplishment of the six objectives can only be achieved at the close of the seventieth week, say the dispensationalists. There would not be a problem here if it were not for the insertion of the dispensational parenthesis.

Their assertion that the Seventieth Week is future results in the six objectives vital to our salvation being invalid until somewhere in the distant unknown (Karayan 2015).

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The seventy years of captivity as prophesied by Jeremiah (29:10) serve as a basis for the seventy weeks of Daniel (70X7 years). Around this agonized declaration flows the truth of God's plan of redemption and salvation. Our understanding of the transition from the Old Covenant to the New revolves around these pivotal words.

The angel Gabriel broadens the seventy literal years of captivity into seventy weeks of years in order to give Daniel understanding of what was to come:

The prophecy of seventy weeks of years spans 490 literal calendar years.

It must be understood that Jeremiah speaks of seventy consecutive years with absolutely no 'gap' or 'parenthesis' appearing at any point in that period (Jeremiah 29:10). The Prophecy of Seventy Weeks enlarges on Jeremiah's predictions. It is wholly Christological and Messianic, putting an end to the Old Covenant and inaugurating the New Covenant (as prophesied by Jeremiah 31:31-34), among the JEWS (who were Daniel's people) and in JERUSALEM (Daniel's city) through Jesus Christ's death on the CROSS.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTENT OF THE APPEAL

Content of the appeal, v. 2a that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure, either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, there is some question about the relationship between verse 1 and the clause in verse 2 plus the two infinitives (saleuqh'nai and qroe'isqai). Though this clause may give Paul's purpose, here it would seem to indicate the content of Paul's "request" from verse 1.19. The request is two-fold: first, that they would not be "quickly shaken from [their] composure." The adverb "quickly" (tacevw") does not primarily refer to "haste." Rather, it is used here in the unfavorable sense of "too easily." Most commentators understand "spirit" (pneumatō) to be some sort of prophetic utterance; "message" (lovqou), an oral report or teaching; and "letter" (ejpistolh"), a written message.

Mark 13:1-3

As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples *said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" (2) And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."

This exclamation by one of His disciples reminds me of Peter's comments about building a place for each of the people who were seen at the transfiguration. The temple had been rebuilt by Herod the Great since the second temple built by Zerubbabel had badly deteriorated. The courtyard had been greatly enlarged to about 400 by 500 yards for the Jews corning for the festivals. The temple covered about 1/6 the area of the city of Jerusalem.

The stones were massive as reported by Josephus to be 25 cubits long, eight cubits high and twelve cubits wide. The comment by the disciple was then appropriate for a country boy! The reply by Jesus was startling and would be fulfilled in 70 A.D. All the buildings on the temple platform and the temple itself were utterly destroyed by Titus. Perhaps Jesus said this now is because they had been speaking of the function of the fig tree and other items being to fulfill the way God designed them for their function. The temple was not to reflect the glory of the builders but of God and the people were not functioning there as per His will (Keil CF, 1988).

Mark 13:3-9

Jesus is now on the Mount of Olives with the first four disciples He called into service. They -- referred would have included more than just what Jesus had predicted regarding the destruction of the temple. They expanded the question to include all these things and surely they are referring to the End Times. Jesus told them of many things that will happen that people would interpret as the End but He said that such were just the beginnings. We hear the same warnings today. Jesus told them in verse seven that wars and rumors of wars will happen as part of God's plan but that does not mean the end is near. He even tells them of nations warring against each other, kingdoms against kingdoms, earthquakes, and famines. However all of these events are just the beginnings of the birth pangs of the God's Kingdom. Jesus warns for they will suffer persecution at the hands of the religious courts. They will be flogged openly in the synagogues and stand before rulers to testify of Him to them. Clearly this event will occur soon so they must be prepared to stand firm for Him.

Mark 13:10-13

Mark then tells that Jesus said before the End comes the gospel must be preached to all the nations so the Gentiles must be reached. Then Mark switches to the event that will shortly occur and that is their arrest. Jesus promises them that the Holy Spirit will guide them in the proper response to the questioning. The Bible lets us know of some such situations:

Mark 13:14-18

"But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. "The one who is on the housetop must not go down, or go in to get anything out of his house; and the one who is in the field must not turn back to get his coat. "

But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! "But pray that it may not happen in the winter. This must not refer to the End Times for nobody can escape the judgment of God. Jesus must then be referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. The abomination is then probably the Roman army with its flags as they entered the temple area. This prophecy was remembered by the Christians when Jerusalem was put under siege. They left the city and lived in a city nearby (Pella in Perea) where they rekindled Christianity.

Mark 13:19-23

"For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will. "Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

Many exegetes think that now the temporal reference shifts to the End Times. However I am not so sure that is correct. The section starts with "for" and that seems to connect this section with the previous section that obviously concerns the fall of Jerusalem. The fall of Jerusalem was horrible. The next group starts with "but" and that seems to be the transition point in Mark's letter. The siege of Jerusalem was a horrible event in history. The Jews began the revolt as the Zealots raged against Rome thinking that this would encourage the coming of the Messiah. The emperor Nero sent his famous general Vespasian with a large force to Palestine. He started the siege in 67 A.D. from the Syrian port town Ptolemais with an army of 60,000 men (Asbridge T, 2010). But Nero had killed himself so the general stopped the war and returned to Rome. After the quick failures of three more emperors, Vespasian took over in the year 69 A.D. and restored order to the empire.

His son, Titus, took over the campaign against the Jews and was the hand of God in the punishment of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple. The siege began in April of 70 A.D. with 80,000 men. The Zealots responded with rage and inflicted considerable damage among the Romans. The crucifixion of hundreds of prisoners even engaged them more. But the famine began to take a huge toll as thousands died daily and a woman even roasted her own children. In July the castle of Antonia was surprised and taken by night. Daily sacrifices ended July 17 because everyone was needed for defense. The last sacrifice at the altar of burnt offerings was the slaughter of thousands of Jews crowded around it. Titus is recorded as trying to save the temple as a trophy of victory but his soldiers were inflamed by the events and could not be kept from its destruction as they also wanted the golden treasures. The temple was burned to the ground on August 10, 70 A.D. that is supposedly the same day that the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (Kenyon, 1978). The ground was nowhere visible as it was covered with corpses and there was even more blood than the fire. Josephus claims that 1,100,000 people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish, and that 97,000 were captured and enslaved. The Romans planted their eagles on the shapeless ruins over against the eastern gate and offered their sacrifices to them. This fulfilled the prophecy of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. As stated above, many Christians remembered the Lord's admonition and fled the doomed city in time to the city of Pella in the Decapolis, beyond the Jordan, where King Herod Agrippa II opened a safe asylum for them. The church was reconstructed there without its Jewish base. After this time and events mankind would no longer look at Christianity as a sect of Judaism but treat it as a new and peculiar religion.

However Christianity still had its roots in the OT and Christians were now seen as spiritual descendants of Abraham: "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." (Gal 3:7).

Mark) 3:24-27

"But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. "Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory. "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

The transition to the End Times certainly begins at this point as the predicted tribulation has ended. The Greek word used for "but" is "alia" and is a very strong word. Mark's quotation is from Isaiah 13:10 and other OT verses use similar language (Isa 24:23; 34:4Ezek 32:7-8; Joel 2:10, 30-31; 3:15).The words are Hebrew poetry and it is difficult to know if they are to be taken literally or symbolically. (Bickell G, 1879). Mark may be using phenomenal language as we know that the End Times will be accompanied by celestial occurrences that are literal: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." (2 Peter 3:10)

However Mark is quoting Jesus as He refers to the actual Parousia and not some years leading up to that event. These verses do not support any tribulation period as perceived by some popular writers.

In a way we have an advantage of having 2000 years of history past these writings. Also since we know that Jesus would not have been totally wrong about His prophecies. Certainly all His disciples (except Judas) would have seen the fall of Jerusalem and that awful tribulation. When He states that heaven and earth will pass away He is referring to all created things for there will be a new heaven and earth. Perhaps a good way to understand this passage is to remember that God's time is not the same as our time. The events of the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are one event in the mind of God and the remaining event, the Parousia (Weber, 1984). The five events are linked and ever since the incarnation people have been living in the last days (Ladd and Eldon, 1975). The promise of God is that the Parousia is a promised event that will occur in His chosen time and nobody will escape the judgment of God and all of His people will live with Him forever.

Mark 13:33-37

"Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. "It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. "Therefore, be on the alert- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening,

at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning-- in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. "What I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'"

It is a mistake to spend a lot of time trying to know the date of the End but it is not a mistake to know that it will come about. Our alertness to knowing that it could come at any time should just make us all the more intent to do what God calls us to do now so that our judgment will not include our not having done what He has clearly told us to do. This parable is somewhat like the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30) and the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:12-27). God has given each of His children specific gifts and talents that are designed to be used according to His will. Note carefully that in verse 37 Jesus is quoted as warning everyone, not just the disciples. So even after 2000 years we should all obey this command to be attentive

CHAPTER FOUR

ALTERNATIVE USES OF THE TERM "THE DAY OF THE LORD"

Feinberg puts it, "The day of the Lord will overtake the unbelievers as a thief in the night because of their general moral state, which is spoken of as night, or darkness. Believers, on the other hand, will not be surprised as they are of light and the day." In addition, the contrast between the "you" of verses 1-2, 4-5, and the "they" of verse 3 ("they shall not escape") strongly implies that it is the church which would escape, and that is one reason Paul had no need to discuss the "times and epochs" of the rapture (v. 1). These contrasts are followed in verses 6-8 with exhortations to be alert and sober living in faith, love, and a confidence in salvation (cf. Rom. 13:12-13). Drunkenness and sleep characterize behavior in the night, but alertness and soberness are typical for daytime (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8).²³ Then in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 Paul reaffirmed the fact that God has not destined believers to suffer this eschatological wrath, but he affirmed that they have been appointed to obtain salvation through Christ. This salvation is further defined in verse 10 as including an eternal "living together" with Christ, thus showing that it is parallel to the "rescue" of 1:10 and the "catching up" (rapture) of 4:17 ("thus we shall always be with the Lord").

Having concluded our study about Luke's approach to the Gentiles and the Gentile mission, a brief comparison with Paul will serve to emphasize some of the distinctive elements in Luke.

One of the most noticeable characteristics of Luke's portrait of Paul is that he spends as much if not more, of his time preaching to the Jews as to the Gentiles. At each point in his itineraries Paul begins his work in the synagogues (9 20, 13 5, 14, 14 1, 17 1- 2, 10, 1 7, 18 4, 19, 19 8) and, though frequently frustrated his efforts continue up to the very end of Acts (28 23f). While he is the Gentile missionary 'par excellence', he also does more than any other figures in the early Church to promote the mission to the Jews. The historical reliability of this portrait has been radically questioned by Schmithals, but others defend it. Schmithals' view is based on a total mistrust of the historical reliability of Acts, the evidence of Paul's epistles, and practical considerations as to Paul's most 'natural' missionary methods. However, while Acts must be handled with care, we cannot reject its evidence out of hand. It is true that many of Paul's extant epistles are addressed to predominantly Gentile Churches and that Paul designates himself as the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11 13, 15 16,18, Gal 1 16, 2 2,9, I.Thess2 16), but one cannot ignore passages like I Cor 9 20 and I Cor 11 24, which imply that Paul did, at least early in his ministry, preach to Jews as well as Gentiles. It is nowhere said in the epistles that he did not approach Jews, for although Rom 9-11 say that Paul's method of reaching the Jews was through the Gentiles, these are the ideas of a man reflecting on something like twenty-five years of missionary experience and not the notions which inspired him when he set out on his endeavors. Schmithals rejects as 'unthinkable' Haenchen's claim that the synagogues were the natural starting places for Paul's work.

But it is only 'unthinkable' that Paul preached an antinomian gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. But since there is no evidence that Paul did encourage Jews to abandon the Law, Schmithals' objection

has little force. The synagogues, with their numbers of God-fearing Gentiles who accepted the basic tenets of the Jewish faith, would have been the ideal place for Paul to begin his missionary work. Certainly, Luke's account is stylized and follows a rigid pattern which does not always do justice to the complexity of the true events, but its essential reliability is not to be doubted.

CHAPTER FIVE

TIMING AND EXTEND OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

Another contentious issue is the rapture and the second coming of Christ. As Barber refers to Jack Van Impe, a prominent pre-tribulationists, he points out what they believe in about the rapture and the second coming of Christ. The pre-tribulationists believe in a two phase process of the second advent of Christ. Pretribulationists believe that the rapture takes place first during which believers will be resurrected. While, immediately thereafter Christians who are still alive will be transformed mysteriously. Both of these groups will meet Christ in the air and will live in heaven for seven years. At the end of seven years, the second coming of Christ will take place accompanied by the believers of the rapture. Thomas Ice, a strong critic of post-tribulationists has the following to say against them,

The pretribulationists must show that there is enough dissimilarities between clear rapture and clear Second Advent passages as to warrant the claim that the two kinds of passages could be speaking about two events which could occur at different times. The pre-tribulationists does not have to prove at this point...that the two events must occur at different times, but only that the exegetical data from the rapture and Second Advent passages do not make it impossible for the

events to occur at different times. If he can do that, the pre-tribulationists has shown that his view is not impossible. And, he has answered the post-tribulationists strongest line of evidence in his book *Things to come*, Dr.Pentecost (1965) suggests several reasons why he believes in a two phased coming of Christ. Firstly, he says that the rapture is a program for the church whereas the Second Advent is for Israel and the world. He further argues that the expectation of the church in regards to the church is that the Lord is at hand (Phil.4:5) while the expectation with regard to Israel is that the kingdom is at hand (Matth.24:14). It is also a fact that pre-tribulationists believe that we find ourselves in a period where God deals only with the church, referred to as the church period. And, that God is temporarily not busy dealing with Israel as His focus is on the Church. This church period started with the coming of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. And, that the church period will officially end with the rapture. Once God is done with His program with the church, he will focus His attention on Israel once the church is out of the way.

CHAPTER SIX

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE CONTROVERSY

The disciples were understandably shocked by Christ's prediction. After leaving the temple area, Jesus and the apostles stopped to rest on the Mount of Olives. "No sooner than the chance came many of the disciples (the inner circle-Peter, James and John--plus Andrew, Peter's brother, Mk. 13:3) asked Jesus a multi-faceted question relating to the prophecy. It is likely that all the disciples had discussed Christ's prediction and that the four agreed to ask the Lord privately about the prediction while the others waited apart for the relayed response. Mark and Luke record the question as having two parts: when will these things occur and what are the signs that tell us these things are about to happen. Matthew writing to a Jewish audience adds a third clause regarding the finishing of the age.

The first century apostolic understanding of the "end of the age" is reflected in the biblical phrase "the last days." Due to Bible many modern Christians have so been conditioned that about prophecy books to think that we alone of all generations are living in the last days or at the end of the age. A study of the New Testament, however, reveals that the apostles themselves were living in the last days. Peter said, on the day of Pentecost, Peter applied the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that had just occurred saying "It shall come to pass in the last days, says God" (Ac. 2:17). Their question regarding the end of the age in Matthew 24:3 must apply to something that occurred in their own generation.

The context and the manner in which the New Testament uses this terminology prove that they wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed and the Mosaic economy would end.

Such matters seem inconsequential to modern Christians, but to the disciples the destruction of the temple, the end of the sacrificial system and the end of Israel as a special covenant nation was exceedingly radical. From the time of Moses the true covenant religion was organized around one central sanctuary (Dt. 12:5 ff.). Jesus continues his Discourse with a “lesson from the fig-tree” that teaches about the nearness of the end “when you see all these things.” (Mt 24:33; cf. Mk 13:29; Lk 21:31) Though it is then near, only the Father knows about the hour. (Mt 24:36, Mk 13:32) Jesus then points to the certainty of his words: “I tell you this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (Mt 24:34f. Mk 13:30f.; Lk 21:32f.) In Matthew, Jesus compares the time “at the coming of the Son of Man” with the days of Noah. People will not expect Jesus’. These words naturally lead to a call for alertness in Matthew that is also emphasized in the last verses of the Discourse in Mark and Luke. To sum up, Jesus’ teaching in his Olivet Discourse covers a period of various trials, the abomination of desolation, a time of unequalled distress and his Second Coming. He taught his disciples that the end is still to come despite ‘such things’ (Mt 24:6; Mk 13:7; Lk 21:9), yet they should be alert because it is near “when you see all these things.” (Mt 24:33; cf. Mk 13:29; Lk 21:31) This tension is recognized in all accounts. Besides, the three gospel passages slightly but not ably differ in structure and wording. Luke differs most, especially in regard to the desolation passage. Matthew is the lengthiest account among them. His additional teachings about alertness.

Firstly, the question that introduces the Discourse asks for immediacy to some extent. The disciples sit on the Mount of Olives with the Temple in view and Jesus' prediction about its destruction in mind. An answer in which Jesus points to something yet remote and irrelevant for the disciples had been rather deceptive than helpful. (Carson 1984, 492) The events Jesus described as 'the beginning of birth pains,' on the other hand, designate a process that requires some time until the consummation of the age would come. It is difficult to imagine that such an extensive teaching about the end-time period would cover only a few decades. In particular, we do not follow the preterists viewpoint that the Gentile mission had been fulfilled before 70 A.D.

Whose view is most acceptable?

The key term of the whole Olivet Discourse to analyze, however, is the 'abomination of desolation' the prophet Daniel spoke about. Preterists say this refers to the defilement of the Temple by the Zealots or the Romans during the Jewish war in 70 A.D. Futurists say this would be a certain event that is still to take place in the future. The preterist-futurist approach combines both viewpoints. Whereas Jesus indeed talks about the sign of the end of the age,

Yet he also speaks to his contemporaries with the Temple destruction in view and warns them to flee when the time comes. In this sense, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. can be seen as a token of things yet to come. (Turner 1989, 13). In comparison, scholars agree that the prediction in Daniel 11:31 refers to the 'abomination of desolation' set by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 168 B.C., yet Jesus cites Daniel with a future fulfillment in mind. If we take the fulfillment of Daniel as a token of the prophetic sign Jesus spoke about, we underset and more about the nature of this 'abomination.'

Epiphanes erected an altar to Zeus over the altar of burned offering and sacrificed a swine on it. (Carson 1984, 500) With this in mind, Randall Price defines the phrase ‘abomination of desolation’ as “a technical reference to the introduction of an idolatrous image or an act of pagan sacrilege within the Sanctuary that produces the highest level of ceremonial impurity, Temple profanation.” (Price 2003).

Lastly, Jesus’ teaching about ‘this generation’ causes much controversy. Some scholars – especially preterists – interpret the phrase referring to Jesus’ contemporaries, others – mostly futurists – maintain the viewpoint that Jesus talks about the coming generation which will experience ‘all these things’ within their life time, an interpretation that derives from the context of the passage. (Price 2003; Ice 2006; Leifeld 1984, 1023; Walvoord 1972, 24) We tend to agree with those who refer to the past generation of Jesus’ time. However, even if ‘this generation’ did not pass away until those things (such as the Jewish war) had happened, the following generations are not excluded to see such things, too. (Carson 1984, 507; Wessel 1984, 751.

Certainly we, too, should take serious the numerous exhortations our Lord gave ‘this generation’ in anticipation of his Second Coming and the consummation of the age. In summary, though the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. is clearly a token of things to come, Jesus primarily speaks about the end of the age and only secondary about this token. Only Luke allows a clearer reference to the Jewish war.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DELAY IN PAROUSIA AND IMPACTS ON EVANGELIZATION

The counter-movement in modern evangelicalism of the reacting post-tribulationism of Alexander Reese, George Ladd, and others, while returning to an appreciation of the rapture as occurring at Christ's appearing in glory, has continued to accept the futurism of Ribera and Maitland and thus to deny its immanency. Norman Douty, for example, concludes, "The rapture is not capable of occurring at any moment. There are intervening events" (Reese A, 1956). There remains, however, a third Biblical alternative; and a growing number of modern evangelicals, such as Harold Ockenga, pastor of Park Street [Congregational] Church, Boston (1936–1969) are coming to favor a full return to that imminent post-tribulationism which constitutes the classical view of the early church and of the reformers (Ockenga H). Little has been written in its behalf since A. J. Gordon's *Ecce Venu* in 1889, but the time seems ripe that all three views be weighed in the light of Scripture.

Exegetical Data

Without attempting to retrace the shifting arguments of dispensationalist and of its opponents, one cannot but conclude that Scripture opposes the concept of two returns of Christ, one before a future tribulation, and another after it. For example, Isa. 25:6-11 speaks of God's swallowing up death at the Messiah's appearing, but I Cor. 15:55 quotes this post-tribulational event as

occurring at the resurrection and rapture of Christian believers (Wood J.L 1956); Mt. 24 :23-31 speaks of the great tribulation, then of the sun being darkened in God's wrath, then of Christ's appearing, and then of the gathering together of God's elect, the church, not the presently unconverted Israel who in 22:14 are specifically contrasted, the chosen; II Thess. 1:6-8 speaks of "rest" for the saints only at the revelation of Christ and as simultaneous with His afflicting of the unbelievers; and Rev. 19-20 speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb and of the first resurrection only at the time of His appearing to rule. To postulate with pre-tribulationism that "the main aspect" of the resurrection must have taken place seven years before this "first" resurrection is hardly normal exegesis. But if the natural reading of Scripture produces the classical doctrine of post-tribulationism, it also produces the classical doctrine of imminence. For example, Mk. 13:33-37 speaks of "watching," not simply of watching out over ones conduct, but specifically of watching for the Lord, who might come at any time; and Lk. 12: 36-40 speaks of "looking for the Lord," who comes suddenly and unannounced. Such potential immediacy is the heart of imminence.

Modern posttribulationists that has reacted against pre-tribulationism, but that still believes in certain prolonged, and yet future, antecedents to the Lord's return, exposes its own inadequacy when it is forced to insist, as does Ladd, "Whatever this means, it cannot involve a secret, any-moment, unexpected return of Christ"(Ibid.). The question should rather be raised about the legitimacy of those antecedents to the Lord's post-tribulational coming that seem to force a man to deny the Biblical teaching of His imminence.

Future Antecedents

There remain a limited number of prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled and that must be interpreted both futuristically and as antecedents to the appearing of Christ and the rapture of the church. These make up the first stage of "the wrath of God"; they seem to include the 6th seal and the first four trumpets and bowls of Revelation; and they are summarized in the Lord's words, Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken: and then . . . all the tribes of the earth shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mt. 24:29-31). The classical viewpoint believes in the imminence of Christ's coming and in His one unified, post-tribulational appearing; but it disallows prolonged antecedents to this event. Dispensational pre-tribulationism is committed to prolonged antecedents and thus preserves imminence only at the sacrifice of the unified appearing.

Reacting post-tribulationism, on the contrary, retains the hope in the unified appearing but is forced, because of its continuing belief in lengthy antecedents, to surrender the hope of immanency. Of the three views, a synthesis of preterist, historical, and futurist interpretation seems to render imminent post-tribulationism the most Biblically tenable. Furthermore, by its combining the worthwhile emphases both of dispensational pre-tribulationism and of reacting post-tribulationism, it restores the full, blessed hope of the church to one of present reality and of day by day anticipation. There is no such element like the parallel of vocabulary, nevertheless the words look alike in both instances, but in contrast to an extraordinary event, or citing the saying of Jesus which is used to augment ethical exhortation (Marshall, 1980)

Erich Grasser, the German scholar, who has treated the theme of the delay asserts (Grasser E, 1987) in contrast to many theological excavation done by Dodd, Jeremias, J.A.T Robinson, that eschatology explained by Jesus was futurist (Grasser E 1957). There is no tension about it as all pervasive is the imminent future, though ethical pressures are exerted by the kingdom, in the present (Ibid.).

While Bebbington identified four primary characteristics of evangelicals the twin axes we have identified function at times as rival polarities: some biblicist-crucicentrics exhibit a passivity that disregards the biblical emphasis upon orthopraxy; some conversionist-activists display a casual disinterest in biblical theology which suggests their evangelicalism is more a sub-cultural ideology than a coherent theological tradition. Within populist evangelicalism, theological convictions are shaped less by key theologians and senior leaders and more by personality preachers capable of compelling a crowd of several thousand. Some of the popular celebration speakers make little non-eisegetical reference to the Bible.

Erroneous teaching which prompted the appeal, v. 2b to the effect that The Day of the Lord has arrived. Most pretribulation writers have held that all references to the Day of the Lord in both the Old and New Testaments refer strictly to an eschatological period beginning with the Tribulation, extending through the Millennium.

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The entrepreneurs of the conversionist- activist axis have substantially displaced the priorities of the biblicist-crucicentrics in some quarters of the evangelical subculture, resulting in impatience with critical reflection and an instinctive anti-intellectualism. While theological liberalism assimilates to evangelicalism ads up to mass culture, providing commodified religion repackaged for the TV age. As a result of the entrepreneurial pragmatic indifference to the inflexible prerequisites of the old conservatism, this activism made an oblique and unintentional, but highly significant contribution to the acceptability of the subsequent post-conservative reconstruction of evangelical theology.

The collapse of the monthly magazines in the early 1980s, evangelical monthly magazines enjoyed a monthly combined UK a sale of more than 70,000. During 90's shrank to just 42,000, and by 1999 to 28,000. This represents a decrease of 61.4% in 20 years, which indicates a devastating collapse in the market. These twenty years saw an 83% decrease in the sales of broad evangelical magazines. The merger between Christianity and Renewal in 2001 signifies the demise of a separate market for the moderate, non- or pre-charismatic evangelicals, and probably also indicates the unsustainability of second generation charismatic culture.

Once popular notions of developing a Christian mind, appear to have sunk without trace, not because of postmodern skepticism about the very notion of a world view but rather because evangelicals have lost their appetite for such intellection.

Evangelical faith, at least in Britain, appears to have entered upon a consumerist trajectory, privately engaging but publicly irrelevant. The quest for an evangelical meta-narrative has been aborted in favor of inspirational entertainment. The secularizing process has produced evangelicals whose faith is compartmentalized and privatized according to the prevailing cultural pattern. While Bebbington identified four primary characteristics of evangelicals the twin axes we have identified function at times as rival polarities: some biblicist-crucicentrics exhibit a passivity that disregards the biblical emphasis upon orthopraxy; some conversionist-activists display a casual disinterest in biblical theology which suggests their evangelicalism is more a sub-cultural ideology than a coherent theological tradition. Within populist evangelicalism, theological convictions are shaped less by key theologians and senior leaders and more by personality preachers capable of compelling a crowd of several thousand. Some of the popular celebration speakers make little non-esegetical reference to the Bible.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

ESCHATOLOGY

After his remorseless 'expose' of the weaknesses of the 19th century liberal lives of Jesus Schwetzer (Schweitzer A, 1906), building on the work of J Weiss (Weiss J, 1971) offers an interpretation of the life and teaching of Jesus which places eschatology at the very centre. All the other themes of his teachings are subordinated to this one central factor - Jesus' expectation of an imminent End. He is portrayed as a sort of eschatological storm-trooper, who is dominated by the belief that by his life and, above all, by his sacrificial death he can precipitate the End. But this was not Jesus original view for, according to Schweitzer, he underwent a radical change in mid-stream. At first, Jesus sent the disciples out on a preaching mission on which he believed would usher in the End (Matt 10, especially v23) consequently he did not expect them to return.

But the disciples did return (Mk 6 30) and the End did not come. Jesus, therefore, had to rethink his position radically. As a result of reflection on the Servant figure in II Isaiah and on the fate of John the Baptist, he realizes that he must bear the suffering alone. He must himself absorb all the Messianic woes, die viciously on behalf of the man (Mk 10 45), and thereby precipitate the End. In the one act he could fulfil his Messianic vocation and bring in the Kingdom of God. Thus he expected the End to occur simultaneously.

With his own death. There would be no gap between the Resurrection and the Parousia, his own and the general Resurrection would be one and the same event (Schweitzer). Some of most of the other themes of the teachings are subordinated to this one central factor - Jesus' expectation of an imminent End. He is portrayed as a sort of eschatological storm-trooper, who is dominated by the belief that by his life and, above all, by his sacrificial death. But this was not Jesus' original view for, according to Schweitzer, he underwent a radical change in mid-stream. At first, Jesus sent the disciples out on a preaching mission on which he believed would usher in the End (Matt 10, especially v23) consequently he did not expect them to return. But the disciples did return (Mk 6 30) and the End did not come. Jesus, therefore, had to rethink his position radically. As a result of reflection on the Servant figure in II Isaiah and on the fate of John the Baptist, he realizes that he must bear the suffering alone. He must himself absorb all the Messianic woes, die viciously on behalf of the man (Mk 10 45), and thereby precipitate the End. Thus he expected the End to occur simultaneously. No gap would be there between the Resurrection and the Parousia, his own and the general Resurrection would be one and the same event (Schweitzer). In fact, everything which Schweitzer considered to be authentic in the Gospel records of Jesus' life is both Schweitzer's view. A common variation on Schweitzer's view is typified in the view of W. G. Kummel (Kummel WG, 1973). He accepts Schweitzer's main contention, namely that Jesus expected an imminent End, but modifies it to allow for a short interval between Jesus' Resurrection and Parousia. Jesus' expectation of an imminent End is made clear, he thinks, in such passages as Mk 9 1, 13 30 pars, 14 25, 62, Matt 10 23, Lk 18 8, and the parables of watchfulness, Mk 13 34f, 5 Lk 12 36-8, Matt 12 42f, 25. 1f (Kummel).

He then goes on to argue that there is no evidence that Jesus ever connected his own death and Resurrection With the coming of the Kingdom of God and the Son of Man. Rather, he foresaw that there would be a short interval between these two events - a view which Kummel finds in Mk 2 18, 14 28, 16 7, Lk 17 22, 18 8a, and Matt 23 27-9 Thus while he has modified Schweitzer's view, Kummel has not abandoned the central point, namely that Jesus' whole life and ministry was dominated by his expectation of an imminent End.

Kasemann (Käsemann, 1960) argues that the eschatology of II Peter is deChristologised,' de-ethicized and de-centralized; 6 but comparison with the earlier material again shows that the Christology is parallel the ethics similarly orientated, and the place and status of eschatology the same. Many critics maintain that a crisis (caused by the Parousia Delay) is reflected in the (so-called) new arguments adduced by the writer to 'emphasize the certainty of the end and to account in some measure for the delay'. These arguments are as follows:

1. The witness of the Flood to the coming world destruction, 'vv. 5-7. This, however, is already paralleled to some extent by Lk.17, 26 (Mtt. 24, 37); to be sure the emphasis in Luke (and Matthew) is upon suddenness, but the parallelism of imagery remains. If there is an element of newness in the argument, it can be accounted for by the mockers' objections which are being met: they apparently argued from the non-arrival of the Parousia (v. 4) to a denial of salvation-history as such. It is particularly appropriate in reply to point to a momentous past activity of God in the salvation history which is also a prototype of the momentous act still awaited.
2. The idea of a final world conflagration. But the prototype of the Flood and the Judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire probably gave rise to this imagery.

Already fire and Judgement are conjoined in the Old Testament,' and II Peter 3, 7. 3, 12-13 connect the End with Judgement. Lk. 17 connects the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with the Flood narrative as parallel examples of God's consuming wrath. Also in II Thess. 2, 8 (I, 7) fire and the End Judgement are brought together.

3. The impossibility of knowing the date of the End. But this (v. 8) is precisely the assertion of Mk. 13, 32 (cf. Mtt. 24, 36; Acts I, 7). It is also presupposed in II Thess. 2, 2-3. The balance of imminence and ignorance found in Mk. 13 3 and II Thess. 24 is maintained by the writer here also. Significantly the reminiscence is given a unique expansion which 'rules out the possibility of taking the meaning to be merely that God's time is measured on a bigger scale than man's.' The expansion shows that the writer is concerned to maintain the open possibility of the End coming at any moment; only man is ignorant of the date. This possibility (emphasized too by the 'sign' of the scoffers' presence), leads to an exhortation to watchfulness in face of the suddenness of the End, (v. 10).

4. God's patience in allowing time for repentance. This, v. g, is but another way of describing the present time as an opportunity for the preaching of the gospel, for which we may compare Mk.13,10 (and II Thess. 2; 6-7 if the interpretation adopted above be accepted) .

5. Repentance and the coming of the End (v. 12).¹¹ Knopf writes 'Merkwürdig und sehr beachtenswert ist die ...: O'm: ullm kann unmöglich heissen: entgegeneilen und auch nicht: sehnsüchtig erwarten, sondern... is preferable here. Even if the trans. sense is taken there is not necessarily a direct correlation of repentance with the End, as though the former effected the latter, but rather the obverse side of v.g is made explicit; in this sense Acts 3, 20 can be seen as a clear parallel. In neither case, therefore, is v. 12 entirely novel.

6. The appeal to Paul, vv. 15-16. The essence of the appeal is to support for the teaching given, from outside of the writer's own personal authority. In Mk. 13, 31 a similar appeal to veracity is made and again in II Thess. 2, 15. Kasemann argues that 'faith' in II Peter made 'acceptance of the apostolic testimony'- but this is nothing new! These are the so-called new arguments. A number of scholars further maintain that the number 01 ideas brought together here reflects the writer's embarrassment at the situation and the views of the mockers (showing what a great problem the community was facing). But vv. 17-18 exhort the community not to succumb to the false views of the mockers, implying that it has not yet done so, and it is probable that the writer has brought the full truth to the remembrance of the community from pastoral concern lest it should fall. It is by no means necessarily embarrassment which leads the pastor to relate the whole case against some evil, but a recognition of the real danger which that evil presents to the pattern and particular truths of the primitive tradition. In particular, he has retained the complex pattern of ignorance as to date, imminence of the End, and the grace character of the present. To be sure, the scoffers present a menace. But it is one amongst a number of diverse difficulties and dangers which faced the primitive communities will see here evidence of the supposed crisis through which the church passed-'Nur unter Schmerzen lernte die Kirche, wie unser Brief zeigt, dass die ursprüngliche Wiederkunftserwartung, welche das Ende ganz nahe glaubte (Mtt. 24, 34; Mk. 9, 1; cf. I Thess. 4, 15 'wir'), nicht zu halten sei. Nur ungern gab man dies er doch notwendigen Einsicht Raum. 'We suggest that the whole of our review so far of the New Testament evidence tells against this understanding both of the earliest Christian hope and of the situation addressed in II Peter faithful.

But further than this, the comparison with earlier tradition shows that the writer has not 'sought out' all the possible arguments against the mockers, but has faithfully reproduced the total It seems, therefore, most probable that the expression $\epsilon\kappa\chi\alpha\iota\tau\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ (without the article) is intended to reinforce this interest in the general character of the present. Even if we understand $\epsilon\kappa\chi\alpha\iota\tau\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ as 'the last hour' it is arbitrary to suppose that the writer has divided the present into a series of hours and means 'the last period of the interval between the first and second comings of the Christ'. The presence of antichrists" is taken by the writer as a sign that the present is $\epsilon\kappa\chi\alpha\iota\tau\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$; already light shines in the darkness (2, 7-II), darkness $\eta\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\tau\alpha\iota$, antichrist is in the world $\eta\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\tau\alpha\iota$ (4, 3). The present contains the open possibility that the Parousia can occur at any moment.

John 21, 20-23

Many think that the explanation of v. 23 is an early Christian apologetic accounting for the Parousia delay. Against this we must notice that that; context reaches back to v.15 where Jesus is represented as commissioning Peter and predicting his death. In contrast to this the saying in v. 22 is solicited and is not directed to the disciple in question but to Peter: we are, therefore, not to see two parallel predictions but a continuous dialogue with Peter. It is doubtless Peter's curiosity that prompts his question, and the answer given is not a straightforward one.² It consists of a) a reminder of Peter's proper concern) a hypothesis concerning the beloved disciple. This is a hypothesis (as the form $\epsilon\kappa\chi\alpha\iota\tau\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$... 6-AW suggests)," positing a fate as different from that predicted for Peter as may be $\epsilon\kappa\chi\alpha\iota\tau\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$: $\eta\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\tau\alpha\iota$ ewe;; $\epsilon\kappa\chi\alpha\iota\tau\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$: $\eta\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\tau\alpha\iota$.D The explanation, v. 23, confirms that this was

but a hypothesis and there is no necessity to suppose 'that the original meaning of the saying ... was that which it was popularly supposed to have', nor is there justification for linking the false understanding of v. 22 with Mk. 9, 1.7 The repudiation is straightforward and dispassionate, suggesting no underlying crisis. The passage is evidence that there existed some in the church at that time who held to a false hope, but there is no suggestion that every member of the community or the responsible leaders of the church were misled. Our original question is addressed, finally. At the outset we must notice that the present period is evaluated highly as a time of watching and repentance 2-and, perhaps, of the proclamation of the gospel; so that the place of the present is not underestimated. More important, we must notice that throughout the book there is a note of delay" which militates against the interpretation of the above expressions as delimiting the End. Whilst we suggest that there is here no delimited hope, there is the conviction that the End is 'near'. What this nearness means, or meant for the early church, is now our problem.

Even so, there are still other predictions of Jesus which seem to imply that he saw the Resurrection, Ascension and Parousia as one and the same event (Mk 8:31, 9:31, 10:34, 14:28, 62), and these are not easy to reconcile with Jesus' ethical teaching which, Dodd thinks, implies a continuation of history after Jesus' death.

Finally, we can note the more theological understanding of the tension between realized and future eschatology, which also allows for an extensive continuation of history after Jesus' death.

For example, C B Cranfield's statement that "In some sense the Parousia is near (Cranfield CEB, 1959). It is near, not in the sense that it must necessarily occur Within a month or a few years, but in the sense that it may occur at any moment and in the sense that, since the decisive event of history has already taken place in the ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, all subsequent history is a kind of epilogue, an interval inserted by God's mercy in order to allow men time for repentance, and, as such an epilogue, necessarily in a real sense short, even though it may last a very long time.

This dialectic approach to eschatology assumes that Jesus did believe in an imminent End, but that this belief was such that it did not preclude him from foreseeing that history might still continue for several centuries in one way or another, therefore, scholars can be placed into two main groups, those who think Jesus expected the End to come simultaneously with or soon after his death, and those who believe that he foresaw that history would continue indefinitely or at least for a very long time. On the first view, Jesus could not have expected, prophesied or commanded a Gentile mission such as we know took place after his death, since he did not envisage any continuation of history. Even if he expected there to be a short interval between his resurrection and the Parousia, such an interval would scarcely be long enough to contain a mission such as is envisaged in Mk 13:10, a problem which Kummel recognizes and then solves by denying that Jesus foresaw a Gentile mission. Then the next view in which Jesus foresees history which is indefinite he could have said about the Gentile mission which took place after his death. For those who think he did envisage such a mission, this can become - as with Glasson - an argument against Jesus having expected an imminent End.

Pneumatological eschatology is central to Moltmann's theology and an important component. The early Pentecostal movement was as eschatological in its orientation as it was Pneumatological. The move of the Spirit in charismatic dimensions, and especially speaking in tongues as the sign of baptism of the Holy Spirit, was seen as the latter min outpouring of the Spirit in preparation for the Lord's return. The theological revisions offered by the aforementioned Pentecostals is an effort to retain the eschatological and Pneumatological fervor of the early movement, while identifying Pentecostal theology within the contemporary context. These revisions not only critique the alliance Pentecostals made with fundamentalism, but re-evaluate the more prophetic vision of early Pentecostalism as a critique of current social-political conditions (Oliver D, 1968). One cannot overstate the innocence that Moltmann has had in the latter half of the twentieth century on Pentecostals and non-Pentecostal alike (Moltmann, Jurgen, 1977).

Pneumatological eschatology is central to Moltmann's theology and an important component in the theological proposals of Land, Wafarie, Volfand Macchia. The early Pentecostal movement was as eschatological in its orientation as it was Pneumatological. The move of the Spirit in charismatic dimensions, and especially speaking in tongues as the sign of baptism of the Holy Spirit, was seen as the latter min outpouring of the Spirit in preparation for the Lord's return. Although the latter min doctrine waned and fundamentalist eschatology influenced the development of Pentecostalism in the middle part of the twentieth century, at least for the Classical Pentecostals stemming from the Anisa Street revival, eschatology is still an important component of gospel (D. Martin, 2002).

Contextualizing Pentecost theology within the contemporary context. These revisions not only critique the alliance Pentecostals made with fundamentalism, but re-evaluate the more prophetic vision of early Pentecostalism as a critique of current socio-political conditions.

Eschatologists differ on the question of the continuity or discontinuity of the kingdom of God in the present with its ultimate consummation. Among our four Pentecostal theologians we find varying degrees of convergence or divergence with Moltmann on this question. Steven Land is clearly influenced by Moltmann's theology of hope¹⁶ and proposes a Pentecostal transformations eschatology as a passion for the kingdom, in which the charismatic manifestations of the Spirit in the present are a prolepsis of the coming kingdom of God.

Although Land tends to discuss the future Parousia in terms of the kingdom of God, he does refer to it as the new creation of the new heaven and new earth as well." The tongues of Pentecost (Acts 2) is the "eschatological key" for understanding the impulse of the Pentecostal movement. Land argues that the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit in the here and now is a sign of hope. Land's own eschatology involves both discontinuity and continuity between the present and the future, at times described by him as a crisis-development dialectic. For the early Pentecostal, significant points of crises were moments when God did something decisive, which made the impossible possible in personal or corporate development. At the same time, the history was ongoing and moving toward its Miment in the kingdom." Land cites Moltmann to quote in agreement with him that apocalyptic theology must view the apocalyptic as the separation of sin and death from creation, rather than creation's destruction. For Land apocalyptic hope is discontinuous (Rowley H, 1954).

The deference is that for Moltmann all workings of the Spirit are sacramental revelations of Christ, whereas Macchia is specifically interested in defining evidential tongues as one among many sacraments of the eschatological future. Moltmann's early theology is focused on the "not yet" of the kingdom and therefore calls for the radical transformation of the present. His more recent theology tends to affirm a stronger continuity between the future and the present through the concept of the indwelling presence of God in creation. Macchia has consistently emphasized a balanced view between the already not yet dialectic, seeing the kingdom already present but hidden in the Incarnation, cross and resurrection of Christ. As well, the kingdom is already here in the Pentecost event as the Spirit of Pentecost, yet the kingdom is not yet fully revealed. This full revelation will occur in the eschaton. All four Pentecostal theologians stand in agreement with Moltmann in envisioning eschatology to reject the fundamentalist's vision of the apocalyptic destruction of the world in favor of the transformation of history and creation into the kingdom of God (Macchia FD, 1996), and the new creation. Land emphasizes the kingdom of God and Volf the new creation, but both concepts are evident in the theologies. For Land, the charismata of the Spirit are the prolepsis in breaking of the kingdom. Volf sees as the in breaking of the new creation. Land does not deal with the millenarian aspect of Moltmann's theology, probably because it was articulated after Land's publication, and Volf thinks it unnecessary and even detrimental to Moltmann's eschatology. The millenarian of Christ in history risks becoming a historical eschatology that will suppress all contrary viewpoints. Volf's Christology and pneumatology are strongly influenced by Moltmann as well and therefore integrally connected to the kingdom.

His Christology is a wholehearted adoption of Moltmann's theology of the cross. Voif Moltmann's theology of the cross not only sees solidarity as the identity of the suffering Christ with the victims of oppression, but develops the theme of atonement for the perpetrators of oppression. Christ's sufferings are not merely his own sufferings, but the point of God's identification with the sufferings of the poor and the weak. Because God is in Christ in the suffering of the cross, the cross becomes the event through which the eternal fellowship of God, divine justice and righteousness flow outward into the world. Moltmann's mature Christology, argues Voif supplements the theme of solidarity with the mutual theme of atonement for the perpetrators of oppression. Atonement through God's embrace then becomes the model for human embrace of the Thus Voif takes Moltmann's functional understanding of the cross as solidarity for the victims of oppression and atonement for the perpetrators of oppression and further develops the theme of atonement through the metaphor of embrace (Voif M, 1990). Trinitarian history of God with the world is a history of mutual indwelling. The world's tells is ultimately to become the dwelling place of the triune God.

Voif borrows directly from Moltmann and argues that the Trinitarian Persons cannot be defined as pure relationality. However, the Trinitarian Persons cannot be as pure Person either. The triune God is the community of Persons who fully interpenetrate each other. In this social doctrine of the Trinity, the Spirit is not subordinated to Christ, but stands with Christ to bring about the new creation. In human embrace, the peculiarities of the other are inclusively affirmed, not to

force uniformity, but to include the other's diversity into my own distinctiveness (Moltmann J, 1991). This political theology resembles the social doctrine of the Trinity. Because the Trinity is "open to creation" for both Moltmann and Voif eschatological hope for humanity and the world has this Trinitarian character.

One can also see the influence of Moltmann's pneumatology in Voif's theology of the Spirit. His theology of work sums from a soteriological understanding of vocation to a charismatic understanding of the gifting of the Spirit." Similar to Moltmann's definition of charism, which makes no distinction between the natural and supernatural the secular and the sacred, thus work as charism is for both the sacred and the secular spheres. The gift of administration is as much a gifting of the Spirit as the gift of healing." Because work is seen as pneumatological, the denoting element of work is criticized as contrary to God's new creation. Also, because work is based in the Spirit's charisma, a person is not restricted to a single gift or a single task, but may be gifted with many charisms and therefore able to perform many tasks. As such, one may work in several occupations simultaneously or sequentially. All such gifts and tasks are directed by the Spirit toward service to the kingdom.

Macchia too argues for an eschatology similar to that of Moltmann with a strong Christological and Pneumatological framework, but rooted in Johann Blumhardt's focus on the outpouring of the Spirit of Pentecost hidden in history, and Christoph Blumhardt's Christological focus on the Incarnation, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the basis for social criticism. Macchia uses

the Blumhardts' theology as a fail to point out Pentecostalism's overemphasis on the supernatural aspects of the Spirit in healing and other charismata, and on the individualistic aspects of piety (Macchia F.D, 1980). The pietistic tradition can be a resource for the incorporation of faith and social responsibility into Pentecostalism. This includes criticism of sinful social structures. I suggest that an aspect of Moltmann's theology which could help to deepen the thought of the Pentecostal theologians, with the possible exception of Volf: The dialectic of cross and resurrection is the moment of the in breaking of the eschatological future into the present. The cross reveals the incarnate and suffering God, identified with the god forsakenness of creation, and is the symbol of resistance to all forms of oppression. The resurrection is the symbol of future hope for God's kingdom and a new creation, which seeks the annihilation of death through the victory of Life." Moltmann focuses on the Pentecostal concern to discern the Spirit, and sees the cross as the point of discernment for the Christian life. What endures in the face of the cross is truly of the Spirit of God. Although Pentecostal theologians, especially Macchia and ViIafa do see the cross as an important element of a Pneumatological eschatology, they could strengthen their theologies.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

We have already had cause to notice the link in synoptic eschatology between the Parousia and the kingdom of God. In terms of the thesis we have been examining, the association of these two concepts (as in II Tim 4 1) is now seen to be natural as well as inevitable. The kingdom of God, his sovereign rule in the hearts of men, is seen to arrive at a number of points from the incarnation onwards; and yet the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is always relevant. In the same way, the Parousia of God in Christ took place plainly and fully at Bethlehem and during the earthly ministry of Jesus. But tension arises about the context, exerting its moral demands as much in the realm of mission as ethics, and both truths cohere - that even as we wait for him, our Lord comes.

Given this fact we must approach Matthew 24 with utmost care and reverence, recognizing the analogy of faith and the difficulties involved in understanding certain sections of the discourse. It is our hope and prayer that a more biblical understanding of the Olivet Discourse will point the modern evangelical church away from rapture fever toward the important task of working for godly dominion in family, church and state. There remain a limited number of prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled and that must be interpreted both futuristically and as antecedents to the appearing of Christ and the rapture of the church. These make up the first stage of "the wrath of God"; they seem to include the 6th seal and the first four trumpets and bowls of Revelation; and they are summarized in the Lord's words, immediately after the tribulation of those days the 'sun

would lie unlit, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken': and then . . . all the tribes of the earth shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mt. 24:29-31). Two particular qualifications remain to be noted about this first stage of the wrath of God. (1) It is discriminatory. For the church, though present on earth, will "prevail to escape all these things and to stand before the Son of man" (Lk. 21:36; cf. I Thess. 5:4, 9) while God's wrath is poured out "upon the men that had the mark of the beast." (Rev. 16:2, cf. v. 6). (2) It is brief, a matter of mere minutes. The second stage of wrath, includes the 7th seal of Revelation (that follows Christ's advent, 6:16) and the last three trumpets and bowls (among the survivors of which are found no Godly men, 9:20), contains events of considerable duration: "half an hour" (8:1), or five months" (9:5,10), and embraces the gathering of the kings of the whole world to their defeat at Armageddon (16:14, 16). But these events occur as subsequent to the Lord's appearing and are, as a result, irrelevant to the church's hope of imminent translation.

Dispensational pre-tribulationism is committed to prolonged antecedents and thus preserves imminence only at the sacrifice of the unified appearing. Reacting post-tribulationism, but is forced, because of its continuing belief in lengthy antecedents. Of the three views, historical, and futurist interpretation seems to render imminent post-tribulationism the most Biblically tenable. Furthermore, by its combining the worthwhile emphases both of dispensational pre-tribulationism and of reacting post-tribulationism, it restores the full, blessed hope of the church to one of present reality and of day by day anticipation.

It is possible that the Jews accused the Church of being an illegitimate offspring of Judaism. This kind of accusation was probably accompanied by personal attacks on Paul, the founder of so many Gentile Churches. It was probably said that Paul was an apostate Jew and that this stigma remained on all the Churches which had descended from him. This would explain why Luke's defense of the Gentile mission is bound up with his more personal defense of Paul. The way in which Luke emphasizes the faithfulness of the Apostles and Paul to their Jewish origins and their continued efforts to convert the Jews, may be in part a defense of the legitimacy of the Gentile Churches in the form of a defense of their co-founders. The emphasis Luke places both on the Old Testament prophecies of the Gentile mission and on the Jews' willful rejection of the gospel may be his response to Jewish calumny. Such a defense may imply that while Luke's Church was predominantly Gentile, it lived in a predominantly Jewish milieu.

CHAPTER NINE

HISTORICAL RELIABILITY

At the beginning of this study of Acts a short summary was given of the main views on the reliability of Luke's account, it is now time to draw together the various strands of evidence which have been studied and, while being aware that only select passages have been considered and not the whole of Acts, to propose some tentative conclusions on the broad and complex question. In the section on Luke's Gospel it was concluded that while Luke had mistakenly placed the command for a Gentile mission on the lips of Jesus in the immediate post-Resurrection period, he did not anachronistically place the origins of this mission within the ministry of Jesus. While Jesus prophesied the future inclusion of the Gentiles in the Kingdom of God and responded positively on the rare occasions he met a Gentile, he does not begin the Gentile mission himself. In view of Luke's interest in the Gentiles, it might have been tempting for him to make Jesus into the first Gentile missionary, but instead he follows in all essentials the pattern laid down in Mark's Gospel. With his knowledge both of Mark and of the fact that the Gentile mission had taken place, it would have been virtually impossible for Luke to probe behind the Gospel traditions and discover that Jesus did not authorize a historical Gentile mission.

This leads us immediately to the narrative in Acts 10-11 as we have already implied, Luke has magnified and schematized the account of Cornelius' conversion what was originally a simple, straight forward legend about the conversion of a godly Gentile, has been transformed into a type

or pattern for all Gentile converts Cornelius is singled out as the test-case around which all the problems of Gentile converts are settled once and for all. That Luke has magnified it out of all proportion is clear from the fact that a few years later a council convenes in Jerusalem to settle these problems once again, when ostensibly they had already decided. Certainly, it has a historical core, but this core has been embellished, probably both in pre-Lukan tradition and by Luke himself.

Much the same can be said about Luke's account of the Apostolic council. The outline of the narrative accords with what we find in Galatians, but at several points Luke betrays the presuppositions of a later age. The conflict and it is the Apostles Peter and James who, rather idealistically, are the chief defenders of the right of the Gentile mission. Paul's apostles are in tandem over the question of the Gentiles. Luke has also misplaced the Apostolic decree, and he assumes wrongly that Paul assented to it. Clearly, Luke is not aware of the depth or the extent of the conflict over the Law in Paul's teaching. It might appear that the extent of the harmonizing and idealizing process in Acts 15 is so great that it betrays more than a simple misunderstanding, namely a deliberate distortion of the facts. If this is so, then we cannot impute the whole of this process to Luke, for he rarely, if ever, gives the impression that he distorts facts which he knew to be true, rather, it is the facts which were available to him and his own understanding of them which are deficient. In the tradition which Luke uses in Acts 15j it is possible that at one or more stages the account was deliberately recast. Or it may be that Luke or his tradition were unwittingly influenced by traditions which stemmed from Paul's opponents. In either case, being both ignorant of Paul's epistles and influenced by the ideal picture of Paul in Christian tradition, and living at a

time when the heated disputes of the Apostolic era had faded in importance, it was almost inevitable that Luke would accept the tradition as he found it. Even if he was not the man to perpetrate deliberate falsehoods, neither was he exactly looking for evidence of disharmony in the primitive Church.

In his account of Paul's preaching to the Gentiles, Luke goes a little more astray (Acts 14, 7). He is correct in supposing that Paul did use arguments from Nature and more general philosophy and notions, but the use Paul makes of these arguments and the conclusions he draws from them are very different in Acts and Romans. In Acts 17, Gentile religiosity is assessed positively and independently of any overall theological framework, it is seen as the first stage on the way to salvation. In Romans, it is used negatively and is integrated into Paul's total theological complex, it is seen as the basis of the Gentiles' condemnation. Luke seems to have allowed his picture of Paul's preaching to be influenced by the sort of Gentile missionary sermon common in his own day.

To conclude Luke is neither totally reliable nor is he a wholly tendentious writer. He intends to write good history even if he is not successful. When he fails it is due to a variety of motives and not simply because he uses history to speak to his own generation. Luke has undoubtedly made clear his own interpretation of events, but he has also left sufficient number of lacunae and loose ends for us to be able to construct our own interpretation and this says a lot for his basic honesty. While it would be naive to accept uncritically everything Luke says, it remains true that for the careful and critical reader Acts contains an immense amount that is of great historical value.

We have already had cause to notice the link in synoptic eschatology between the Parousia and the kingdom of God. In terms of the thesis we have been examining, the association of these two concepts (as in II Tim 4 1) is now seen to be natural as well as inevitable for NT theology. The concept is not static, the kingdom of God, his sovereign rule, is concluded of various points from the incarnation onwards; still that prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is always relevant. In the same way, the Parousia of God in Christ took place plainly and fully at Bethlehem and during the earthly ministry of Jesus; yet he is still to appear in glory at time's end. At the same time the confusion persists, impacting its moral demands as much in the realm of mission as ethics, and both truths cohere - that "Our Lord comes in, even as we wait for him." We have already had cause to notice the link in synoptic eschatology between the Parousia and the kingdom of God. In terms of the thesis we have been examining, the association of these two concepts (as in II Tim 4 1) is now seen to be natural as well as inevitable for NT theology. The concept is not static, the kingdom of God, his sovereign rule, is concluded of various points from the incarnation onwards; still that prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is always relevant. In the same way, the Parousia of God in Christ took place plainly and fully at Bethlehem and during the earthly ministry of Jesus; yet he is still to appear in glory at time's end. At the same time the confusion persists, impacting its moral demands as much in the realm of mission as ethics, and both truths cohere - that "Our Lord comes in, even as we wait for him."

In view of the ground we have covered, is it too much to suppose that we do not witness in Paul's letters the fabrication of a vast "eschatological reconstruction," and we look at him for effect of

God's saving action in Christ on both history and history's relation to eternity, at present articulated in the church, the body of Christ; and as we do so, that we perceive a shift of emphasis, but no generically different perspectives.

CHAPTER TEN

MATTHEW'S VERSION

Emphasis on the application of the Olivet Discourse is introduced by the parable of the fig tree, an illustration from nature. (Walvoord 1972, 22) We observe the tree and expect summer. In the same way, we see all these things and expect Christ. The time of his Advent is near, and therefore we have to “keep watch.” (Mt 24:42) Though the time is near, no-one knows the exact hour, not even Christ himself but only the Father. The hour will come unexpectedly just as in the days of Noah. (Mt 24:37-41) Reasonably, Jesus warns the people to “keep watch “like an owner of a house who is ready whenever the thief comes, and to be busy like the faithful and wise servant who is expecting his master at any time. (Mt 24:43-51).

Jesus provides further material for admonition. In his parable about the Ten Virgins he again warns the people to be prepared for the bridegroom. (Mt 25:1-13). The foolish virgins had not prepared enough oil for their lamps and were for this reason excluded from the wedding feast. Likewise, we will be rejected by Christ if we are not prepared for his Coming. (Carson 1984, 511ff.) His next parable about the Talents teaches us faithfulness. (Mt 25:14-30) The Lord gave us talents, and he will come back to see and to judge about what we have done with these. We have noted that, despite the diverse theological heritage of early Pentecostalism, the emphasis on the charismatic dimensions of the Spirit in Pentecostal worship and theology was of utmost importance. Tongues was a sign of the latter rain outpouring of the Spirit in preparation

for the coming of the Lord. Seymour's prophetic message of social reconciliation envisioned a world where the personal and social prejudices of racism and gender division would be conquered through tongues and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's outpour at Pentecost was a focus for the envisioned unity, reconciliation and justice in the church and the world. Seymour's vision was ultimately frustrated. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the transformative vision of Seymour (Tinney J, 1976). Contemporary Pentecostal theologians, such as Steven Land, Eldin Viafane, Miroslav Volf and Frank Macchia, have revisited Pentecostal eschatology to recover the more prophetic, social, critical elements of the early movement. They reject fundamentalist eschatology, interpreting the Spirit of the last days as God's gracious presence and action to transform the person, society and creation itself into the eschatological new creation, a transformation that is already here through the person of Jesus Christ and the event of Pentecost, but awaiting the "not yet" of the eschaton. This eschatological re-visioning is better positioned to encourage contemporary Pentecostals to engage the world in a socially responsible manner.

Moltmann's theology is thoroughly eschatological, driven fundamentally by such biblical concepts as the kingdom of God, the new creation, the millenarian reign and the apocalyptic separation of good from evil. The kingdom of God breaks into the present to transform history and make anticipatory hope for the future. His work is also thoroughly Pneumatological. His eschatology is integrated with Christological pneumatology, in which the resurrection of the crucified Christ grounds Christian hope for the future resurrection of the dead and the transformation of creation. At the same time, the apocalyptic suffering of Christ on the cross is

The point of God's solidarity with the suffering of the poor and oppressed and the misery of all creation. Moltmann's theology is also thoroughly political. The powers of the status quo are criticized as contrary to God. We are called to live in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and to resist the social political powers of evil. Finally Moltmann has developed a cosmic eschatology that envisions the future indwelling of God in creation and creation in God, which will be the Sabbath rest of all creation. Important in Moltmann's eschatology is the belief that God will not destroy the world in the eschaton, but will bring creation to its final end.

Moltmann's eschatology is therefore thoroughly transformational. At four Pentecostals reveal varying degrees of influence by Moltmann's Pneumatological eschatology. In their own unique ways, each Pentecostal theologian has been in dialogue with Moltmann's theology to develop an authentic Pentecostal theology that not only recovers the neglected socio-critical elements of early Pentecostalism, but also seeks to broaden the scope of Pentecostal eschatology to include the social and the cosmic as well as the personal in eschatological transformation. Land articulates an apocalyptic spirituality that emphasizes orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy that are correlative with the Trinitarian being of God. Wafaie develops a Pneumatological social ethic that hinges upon the future reign of God, which has important implications for opposing the dehumanizing and oppressing "powers-that-be." Villafaie, as a Hispanic American liberationist, is partially influenced by Moltmann's theology of the cross, in that Christ's crucifixion functions as the point of God's solidarity with the poor in humanity thereby instilling resistance to dominating political powers. However, the relationship is more one of resemblance than of innocence. Volf constructs a political theology of human work and embrace that has its root in

the eschatological new creation. Of the four Pentecostals, Volf is most influenced by Moltmann. Macchia argues for an eschatology rooted in Blumhardt Pietism, in which the kingdom of God is nascent present in history through the Incarnation, the event of Pentecost and ultimately in the future parousia. This eschatology draws Macchia to argue that a Pentecostal theology of tongues is sacramental, theophoric (divine appearance that is perceived by the human senses) and eschatological. Although Moltmann uses the "epiphanic" rather than theophoric to describe the appearance of the divine in the present, he rejects epiphanic theology because it confuses the presence of God for the eschatological promise. Macchia is thus partly influenced by, but is quite distinct from, Moltmann. The dialogue partners have one important point in common. They all argue for transformational eschatology and thereby reject the fundamentalist vision of world destruction and passive resignation. Throughout this dissertation I have affirmed that a revisioning of Pentecostal eschatology is necessary to recover prophetic elements of the early movement that will allow Pentecostals to engage the world in a socially responsible manner. I have also argued that Pentecostals need to be critical of fundamentalist assumptions that have materialized within the Pentecostal movement, because passive resignation in the face of world destruction is dangerous, both theologically and politically. As well, the fundamentalist separation of the dispensation of Israel from the church is inconsistent with the Pentecostal emphasis upon the continuation of charismatic gifts of the Spirit from the Old Testament prophets to the present age. All four Pentecostal theologians, in dialogue with Moltmann, offer a Pentecostal eschatology that seeks to transform the world in the power of the Spirit of God.

These contemporary Pentecostal theologians' are significant because they not only draw upon their early heritage for inspiration to plot a course for the Pentecostal movement in the early 21st century. In dialogue with Moltrmann, they gain a theology that is open to history and creation as an integral part of salvation, and consequently envision a Pentecostal ethic that is personal and social in breadth. Through theological engagement, they have moved Pentecostal theology from isolation to inclusion, from separate on to ecumenism and from other worldly preoccupation to transformation.

This claim asserts that the incarnate Jesus Christ who died and rose again is the foundation of redemption and creation; in his bodily person and through the events of his death and resurrection God accomplishes and reveals his redemption. Such things requires explication in five areas: (1). How is one to understand that God works "through Jesus Christ? That God works through him suggests a mediatorial work. How mediator ship is rightly construed? (2) What is the significance of the personhood of Jesus Christ? (3) What is the significance of the cross? (4) What is the significance of the resurrection? (5) Why must this Christological understanding take priority over other understandings, particularly that of the pre-incarnational Logos- Christology?

Obviously such questions properly require extensive Christological description; however. Each of these issues has been raised earlier in this study. And here I will simply point them in directions that I believe are helpful. The first two issues are best taken together: a specific person serves as the mediator between the triune God and his creatures.

Describing Jesus Christ in this way requires careful qualification. The terms 'person' and 'mediator' are not prior abstractions awaiting the Incarnation to be filled with concrete content. Rather, the history of the creation reveals many anticipations of God's work in Jesus Christ. According to this account of progressive revelation the later neo-Calvinist ontology of creation law within whose frame one understands the person and work of Jesus Christ is to be rejected, but attempts to posit an ontology of the personal or an ontology of the relational derived from the Incarnation are equally problematic for similar reasons.' The starting point is not an abstraction into which a concrete reality named Jesus Christ is poured. Bavinck's assertion that the person and work of Jesus Christ are fundamental is helpful, as is his spelling out of the implications of this assertion: that the believer's primary response is one of adoration, that all roles which one perceives Jesus Christ to fulfil are secondary to and derivative of his person and work, and that any concepts which one uses to describe him are never more than 'the best one can do for now.' To develop an ontology rooted in abstract concepts as 'the personal' and 'relationality' is to violate the priority of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

This first thesis declares that ontological primacy properly belongs to the incarnate Jesus Christ, the character of the relation between God and his creation is revealed and the goal of its redemption is accomplished. On the basis of this fundamental claim one can articulate implications of this claim, and these implications include the mediatorial work of Christ which is focused on relation (i.e., as mediator Jesus Christ establishes and reconciles the relation between God and the creation), and the personhood of Christ. Construing aspects of these implications as

ontological truth claims not only succumb to the error of describing Jesus Christ through abstract categories defined outside of him, but also blinds one to the fact that these implications are often contextual; that is, the implications which one emphasizes are to a large extent dependent on the needs of context. It is the immeasurable wonder of the person and work of Jesus Christ that admits a variety of specific implications differing contexts; to grant ontological status to abstractions derived from such descriptions is to grasp for that which is beyond human reach, deny the provisional character of theological articulations and diminish the significance of the concrete person and work of Jesus Christ.

One cannot understand the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the foundation of the relationship between God and the creation and of the goal of redemption unless one sees within it the love of the Father for his cosmos in giving the Son, the love of the Father for the Son, the love of the Son for the Father in his obedience unto death, and the love of the Father and the risen Son in the sending of the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian frame for the person and work of Jesus Christ reveals that the three person God as a community of love shares that love with the creation and is personally involved within the history of this creation.

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