

WRITINGS OF MATTHEW ALLEN

by Matthew Allen

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Matthew Allen, compiled for study and devotional reading.

22 Chapters

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1. Excited Utterances

Excited Utterances: A Historical Perspective On Prophecy, Tongues and Other Manifestations of Spiritual Ecstasy Study By: Matthew Allen 1. Introduction

2. Guarding the Treasure Entrusted to Us.

3. Hear the Words of the Wise.

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1.01. Introduction

Chapter 1:

Introduction On May 20, 1996, the Florida Baptist Convention's state board of missions voted to "disfellowship" two churches and "further study" the beliefs of a third because the three churches taught "neo-pentecostalism."¹ (The third church subsequently resigned from the Convention.²) The pastor of the first church told Baptist Press that "the baptism of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation" and that tongues and prophesy have not ceased.³ The pastor of the second similarly declared that, "in most cases," baptism of the Holy Spirit "is something that occurs after salvation" and "tongues are a gift and it is a valid gift and it is for today."⁴ A spokesman for the third church expressed similar views, declaring that "the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit were restored to the church" in the early 1970s, and "in the mid-1980s . . . the gifts of the prophet and the apostle in the local church was a restored truth that is being revealed."⁵ The Baptist battle for the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible may be over, but the battle for the sufficiency of Scripture may have just begun. When only Pentecostals preached the continuation of the revelatory gifts,⁶ we Baptists perhaps could afford to ignore them because they were perceived to be out of the mainstream. When Pentecostal doctrine spread to mainline denominations, we perhaps could still close our eyes to the growing movement since the charismatic renewal largely affected liberal denominations with which we did not associate.⁷ But we ignore at our peril the so-called "Third Wave" of "continuation" theology, for it has infiltrated many of our evangelical pulpits and pews.⁸ Since the late 1970s, charismatic tendencies have infiltrated en masse the more dispensational and Reformed evangelical groups that historically rejected the prior two waves. Over twenty million people now consider themselves a part of this "Third Wave" category.⁹ Charismatic doctrine has come to camp in our own backyard. The validity of the charismatic movement and its accompanying "signs and wonders" raises serious and controversial issues. These include: Did special revelation cease with the close of the canon? Are tongues for today? Do physical manifestations of ecstasy have biblical warrant? Is experience an appropriate guide to spiritual fulfillment? These issues are intertwined with an issue already familiar to Baptists -- the nature and sufficiency of Biblical authority. Charismatic Wayne Grudem is correct in observing that "this is a large and interesting area of discussion, one of immense importance in the church today."¹⁰ Obviously, these issues must be dealt with directly. Because of their importance, they cannot be glossed over in an effort to achieve unity at the expense of doctrinal purity. This paper examines three essentially related issues concerning charismatic theology: (1) the relationship between the revelatory gifts and the canon; (2) the place of the revelatory gifts in church history; and (3) the role of related manifestations of spiritual ecstasy (and emotional experience in general) in revival movements. I have framed each of these areas of inquiry around a specific historical context. This approach is profitable because our forefathers wrestled with the same questions we now face, and we would be most unwise to ignore their accumulated wisdom. Hopefully, by reviewing the charismatic phenomena as they were seen in history, we can gain a more rounded understanding and better evaluation of today's charismatic movement and the theology that informs it. It is said

that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. I pray that we may learn the lessons of those theological giants who came before us and on whose shoulders we stand. May God grant us the wisdom to walk with the wise!

1.02. Guarding the Treasure Entrusted to Us

Chapter Two:

Guarding the Treasure Entrusted to Us Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.” 2 Timothy 1:14 Montanism -- The Fountainhead of Christian Ecstasy The Phrygian region of Asia Minor was known in its pre-Christian days as “the home of a sensuously mystic and dreamy nature-religion.”¹¹ Given this backdrop, it is perhaps not surprising that Montanism, Christianity’s first schismatic movement, first broke out there.

Montanism was a “prophetic movement” that began around 172 A.D.¹² Its founder, Montanus, was a former “mutilated priest of Cybele.”¹³ Closely connected with Montanus were two “prophetesses,” Priscilla and Maximilla. The Montanists insisted upon the continuation of the gift of prophesy and the use of ecstatic utterances.¹⁴

Montanus, Priscilla and Maximilla proclaimed a “New Prophecy,” which foretold that Christ would return to Pepuza, a small village of Phrygia, upon which the new Jerusalem was to come down.¹⁵

Recognition of the Holy Spirit in the New Prophecy was the touchstone of authority for the Montanists; they claimed that the New Prophecy claimed for itself a special place in salvation history.¹⁶ The followers of Montanus believed that the Holy Spirit spoke to them in the first person through his prophetic mouthpieces.¹⁷ As Henry Chadwick described it, Montanus, together with Priscilla and Maximilla delivered utterances of the Paraclete in a state of ‘ecstasy’, i.e. not being in possession of his faculties. It was the peculiar form of these utterances to which other Christians objected: this kind of ecstatic prophecy was not, like that of the biblical prophets, delivered in the third person, but was direct speech by the Spirit himself using the prophet’s mouth as his instrument.¹⁸

Indeed, Montanus said that a person in spiritual ecstasy was like a musical instrument on which the Holy Spirit plays his melodies: “Behold, the man is as a lyre, and I sweep over him as a plectrum. The man sleeps; I wake.”¹⁹ Thus, Montanus plainly taught that the close of the biblical canon was not the end of God’s special revelation to man.

Montanus taught that the Holy Spirit spoke through him in the same way as He spoke through the writings of Scripture. In Bruner’s words, he “fell into somnambulistic ecstasies, and considered himself the inspired organ of the promised Paraclete or Advocate, the Helper and Comforter in these last times of distress.”²⁰ Eusebius records that Montanus “was filled with spiritual excitement and suddenly fell into a kind of trance and unnatural ecstasy. He raved, and began to chatter and talk nonsense. . . . Of those who listened at that time to his sham utterances, some were annoyed, regarding him as possessed, a demoniac in the grip of a spirit of error, a disturber of the masses.”²¹ In connection with its holdings on continuing revelation, Montanism sought a “forced continuance” of the miraculous gifts of the apostolic age. As Chadwick noted, “The Montanists did not expect all the Lord’s people to be prophets, but rather required their fellow-Christians to ‘acknowledge’ the supernatural nature of the utterances of the Paraclete’s

chosen three: to reject them was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.”²²

Montanism attracted a wide following for a time -- including the first significant Latin theologian Tertullian, who became a Montanist in his last few years. As the preeminent apologist for the movement, he was careful to affirm orthodox notions of God and Christ. Nevertheless, echoing Montanus, he conceived of Christianity as organic in nature, developing in four stages of growth, each superior to the preceding stage: (1) natural religion; (2) the legal religion of the Old Testament; (3) the gospel during the earthly life of Christ; and (4) the revelation of the Paraclete; that is, the spiritual religion of the Montanists.²³ In essence, the Montanists were the first charismatics. Frederick Bruner rightly called Montanism “the fountainhead of all the enthusiastic or pneumatic movements in Christian history.”²⁴ Its basic tenets have been recycled throughout church history by ecstatic sects, including today’s charismatic movement. Bruner noted the following central characteristics of Montanism that recur in today’s charismatic movement:

1. A fervent belief that the last period of revelation has commenced;
2. A distinctive emphasis on the Holy Spirit;
3. Generally orthodox tendencies apart from their doctrine of the Spirit;
4. An ardent expectation of the impending return of Christ; and 5. A strict morality.²⁵

Hence, Bruner declared Montanism to be “the prototype of almost everything Pentecostalism seeks to represent.”²⁶

Montanism eventually was condemned by synods of bishops in Asia and elsewhere.²⁷ The church was clearly bothered by the movement’s ecstatic exercises, as demonstrated by Hippolytus’s declaration that “the supreme miracle is conversion and therefore every believer alike has the gifts of the Spirit; the supernatural is discerned in the normal ministry of word and sacrament, not in irrational ecstasies which lead to pride and censoriousness.”²⁸ The orthodox church also declared the new prophesy “the work of demons.”²⁹ In this respect, the repudiation of Montanism was especially significant. “It was the occasion for establishing the truth that the Scriptures were closed, that the work of the Spirit was illumination of the Scriptures rather than bestowing a new revelation apart from the Scriptures.”³⁰ In condemning the Montanists, “the church early took its stand ‘that extraordinary gifts were never promised to the Church as a permanent inheritance.’”³¹ The “prophesies” of the Phrygian prophets were condemned as heretical because they were given “an importance which interfered with the sufficiency of the Scriptures.”³² Thus, Chadwick could say: The chief effect of Montanism on the Catholic Church was greatly to enforce the conviction that revelation had come to an end with the apostolic age, and so to foster the creation of a closed Canon of the New Testament. Irenaeus is the last writer who can still think of himself as belonging to the eschatological age of miracle and revelation.³³ The early church’s condemnation of Montanism heresy is under severe attack today. Pentecostals, charismatics, and adherents of the “Third Wave” all challenge the conclusion that the revelatory gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased. In addition, even non-charismatics are beginning to espouse the view that God still speaks today apart from the Bible, through dreams, visions, and the like. In essence, proponents of these views reject the historical Christian conclusion that God has chosen no longer to speak to man through direct special revelation apart from Scripture, and they thereby must reject the church’s judgment on the Montanists. The Cessation of the Revelatory Gifts

Space does not permit a full-orbed exposition of why the revelatory gifts have ceased. Nevertheless, the following points are in order:

(1) Jesus is the cornerstone of the church and the foundation upon which the church is laid (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:11). Jesus is also the culmination and completion of God's revelation to man (Hebrews 1:1-2).

(2) Apostles and prophets were raised up in the 1st century as New Testament witnesses to Christ, appointed by Him to bear authentic witness to his resurrection and redemption of man (Acts 1:2, Acts 1:8, Acts 1:21-26; 1 Corinthians 9:1, 1 Corinthians 9:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 1 Corinthians 15:8-11; Galatians 1:1, Galatians 1:15-16). Compared to Jesus, apostles were the foundation of the church only in a secondary and inferior sense. (Ephesians 2:20).

(3) Apostles were directly commissioned by Jesus for a unique missionary work (Mark 3:14-15; Acts 1:21-26; Romans 1:1; 2 Corinthians 11:5; 2 Corinthians 12:11-12; Galatians 1:1). As a unique office and gift, apostleship ended in the first century A.D. (Cf. Matthew 19:28; Acts 12:2).

(4) In the 1st century, the gift of prophecy was closely related to the gift of apostleship (2 Corinthians 12:12). The purpose of prophesy in the New Testament was to edify and strengthen the early church (1 Corinthians 14:3-4; 1 Corinthians 14:22).

(5) In essence, then, prophesy served the church as a specific witness to Jesus Christ at a time when it lacked the written revelation of Jesus Christ in the form of the New Testament.³⁴ As Gaffin has stated, "With this foundational revelation completed, and so too their foundational role as witnesses, the apostles and, along with them, the prophets and other associated revelatory word gifts, pass from the life of the church."³⁵ (6) Several Scriptural passages make this point: a. Jude 1:3 says, "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." The word "faith" refers to the body of truths taught by the apostles or the "things believed."³⁶ (See also Galatians 1:23; 1 Timothy 4:1). It is a reference to the propositional truth of the gospel -- a truth now found only in the written pages of Scripture. The word "entrusted" (paradidonai) is the word used for handing down authorized tradition in Israel.³⁷ (Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). Moreover, the phrase "once for all" (hapax) indicates that the faith -- the objective content of Christianity -- was entrusted to the saints one time, conclusively.³⁸ Once this process was completed, there was no further need for additional revelation beyond the apostolic age. b. Jesus promised his disciples that, after His departure, the Holy Spirit would give them "all truth" (John 14:26; John 16:12-13). 2 Peter 1:21 amplifies the method by which the Holy Spirit would give the apostles truth; Scripture is the result of the Holy Spirit's carrying the authors along as they wrote. c. The apostle John said that anyone who adds to the words of the book of Revelation would be cursed (Revelation 22:18). While his words apply specifically to the revelation given to him as recorded in the last book of the New Testament, inferentially, they equally apply to the canon of Scripture as a whole. In sum, because prophecy and other "revelatory" gifts have fulfilled their purpose and are no longer necessary to provide a witness to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, they have thereby ceased to exist; it is Scripture that now takes their place as God's special revelation regarding salvation. It is now the written Word of God that is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, in short for life, to equip man for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16). The view that God directly speaks to man today through the continuation of

revelatory gifts seriously undermines this principle. The Sufficiency of Scripture

Proponents of continuing revelation have moved beyond “tongues” and “prophecy” to say that God speaks directly to man today through dreams, visions, audible voices and other ways as well. A rapidly spreading teaching is that God speaks to his people today apart from the Bible, even though he never speaks in contradiction to it. In other words, proponents of this view assert the existence of “plus factors” -- God speaks directly to man through the Bible plus. For example, in his book, *The Word of God With Power*, Jack Taylor has written that it is a mistake to believe that we have in the Bible all the revelation we will ever need.³⁹ Although he readily acknowledges that the canon of Scripture “is complete and will never require addition,” he effectively contradicts himself (in the very same sentence) by declaring that God continues to directly speak to individuals through “impressions, messages, dreams and visions.”⁴⁰ The Holy Spirit, in his view, “will use the written Scripture, but He is not bound to its pages in the issue of making His will known to us.”⁴¹ In his book, *Surprised By the Power of the Spirit*, Jack Deere similarly states that “God does indeed speak apart from the Bible, though never in contradiction to it.”⁴² Deere believes that God “speaks to all of his children” and “in amazing detail,” through audible voices, impressions, visions, dreams, and through angels.⁴³ Deere has even gone so far as to say that “one of his [Satan’s] most successful attacks has been to develop a doctrine that teaches God no longer speaks to us except through the written word” and “this doctrine is demonic.”⁴⁴

Yet the Bible tells us, in explicit language, that God, through his divine power “has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness” that we need (2 Peter 1:3). Taylor and Deere and others like them are engaged in a frontal assault on the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. In effect, they seek to reopen the canon of Scripture by postulating a continuing form of special revelation. In order to understand the gravity of their error, we must review the concepts of revelation, inspiration, illumination and Holy Spirit guidance, for the “Bible plus” teachings inappropriately confuses these distinct works of the Holy Spirit. The word “revelation” means an uncovering, a removal of the veil, a disclosure of what was previously unknown.⁴⁵ Accordingly, in theological usage, revelation is the communication of divine truth from God to man.⁴⁶ It is God’s message to man. There are two basic types of revelation. Through general revelation (creation, the universe, nature), God reveals his character generally to mankind, though not sufficiently for man to find salvation. Everyone (at least in this debate) agrees that God still speaks to all humanity through general revelation. Special revelation, in contrast, does not come to all people. In the Old Testament, God revealed himself to specific people through dreams, visions, theophanies, angels, prophets, the lot, and the Urim and Thummim.⁴⁷ In the New Testament, as noted above, the incarnation of Jesus Christ as Savior was the culmination of God’s special revelation to man. The incarnation is “[t]he pinnacle of the acts of God.”⁴⁸ As the author of Hebrews wrote: “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Inspiration is the means of God’s communication of his written revelation to man. The word “inspiration” is a translation of *theopneustos*, which literally means “God-breathed.”⁴⁹ 2 Timothy 3:16-17 is the primary witness of the Bible to its own inspiration: “All Scripture is God-breathed (i.e., inspired) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” In other words, God

“breathed-out” what the sacred writers communicated in the biblical writings.⁵⁰ In this sense, inspiration was completed when the canon of Scripture was closed.

Illumination, on the other hand, is fundamentally different from both revelation and inspiration. As Charles Ryrie has cautioned: “The experience of ‘illumination’ is not be ‘direct revelation.’ The canon is closed. The Spirit illumines the meaning of that closed canon, and He does so through study and meditation.”⁵¹ Taylor, at least, fails to appreciate this important distinction.⁵² The Holy Spirit’s leading and conviction ministries are also fundamentally distinct from revelation and illumination. John Murray has written wisely in this regard:

We must rely upon the Holy Spirit to direct and guide us in the understanding and application of God’s will as revealed in Scripture, and we must be constantly conscious of our need of the Holy Spirit to apply the Word effectively to us in each situation. The function of the Holy Spirit in such matters is that of illumination as to what the will of the Lord is, and of imparting to us the willingness and strength to do that will. . . . as we are the subjects of this illumination and are responsive to it, and as the Holy Spirit is operative in us to the doings of God’s will, we shall have feelings, impressions, convictions, urges, inhibitions, impulses, burdens, resolutions.⁵³

Yet Murray cautions, “The moment we desire or expect or think that a state of our consciousness is the effect of a direct intimation to us of the Holy Spirit’s will, or consists in such an intimation and is therefore in the category of special direction from him, then we have given way to the notion of special, direct, detached communication from the Holy Spirit. And this . . . belongs to the same category as belief in special revelation.”⁵⁴

Hence, “though the Spirit’s illumination and guidance may sometimes focus on phenomena such as promptings or impressions, those phenomena are not specifically interpreted as involving the biblical ministry-gifts of revelation, such as prophesy and tongues or their correlates (e.g., visions, dreams, auditions).⁵⁵ God has finally and completely spoken to man through Jesus Christ His Son. He has accomplished his salvific purpose. As White has stated: “With the completion of salvation in Christ comes the cessation of revelation. Consequently, the church now lives by a ‘Scripture only’ principle of authority.”⁵⁶

1.03. Hear the Words of the Wise

Chapter Three:

Hear the Words of the Wise “Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise.” Proverbs 22:17 The Shakers In an effort to show that the “signs and wonders” of the charismatic movement are not new phenomena, proponents of the movement frequently attempt to link the manifestations of today with allegedly similar manifestations in history. One group with which the Third Wave claims particularly close affinity is the Shakers. This is an interesting assertion given that the Shakers were a radical fringe sect that bore little, if any, resemblance to orthodox Christianity. A small branch of radical English Quakers, the Shakers (also known as the “Shaking Quakers”) were founded in 1758 by a woman named Ann Lee. The sect was characterized by the practice of ecstatic utterances in worship; a belief in rabid millennialism, and a lifestyle of extreme piety.⁵⁷ Interestingly, the Shakers felt a spiritual connection with the Montanists, considering them to have been the “forerunners of a new ‘dispensation.’”⁵⁸ In their worship services, the Shakers did not engage in preaching, prayer or other regular form. Rather: every one acts for himself, and almost every one different from the other: one will stand with his arms extended, acting over odd postures, which they call signs; another will be dancing, and some times hopping on one leg about the floor; another will fall to turning round, so swift, that if it be a woman, her clothes will be so filled with the wind, as though they were kept out by a hoop; another will be prostrate on the floor. . . some groaning most dismally; some trembling extremely; others acting as though all their nerves were convulsed; others swinging their arms, with all vigor, as though they were turning a wheel, etc.⁵⁹

Worship services were not only characterized by singing and dancing, shaking and shouting, however. They also contained “speaking with new tongues and prophesying, with all those various gifts of the Holy Ghost known in the primitive Church.”⁶⁰ As one observer wrote: At other times some were shaking and trembling, others singing words out of the Psalms in whining, canting tomes (but not in rhyme), while others were speaking in what they called ‘the unknown tongue,’ -- to me an unintelligible jargon, mere gibberish and perfect nonsense.⁶¹

Eventually, the meetings were so intense that Lee was imprisoned for profanement of the Sabbath. While in prison, she had a series of visions in which she claimed to have conversed with Christ.⁶² Presumably, as a result of her “conversations” with Christ, she subsequently believed and taught that she was “the female aspect of God’s dual nature as the second incarnation of Christ.” She told her followers that “It is not I that speak, it is Christ who dwells in me.”⁶³

Due to persecution in England, Lee and a small group of Shakers emigrated to America in 1774. They settled in isolated villages “away from the evils of the world,” and established “Millennial Laws,” which mandated an extreme separation of the sexes, even to the extent of dividing men, women and children into their own “families” and making men and women “leave through separate doors.” Property was owned communally. The distinctive craftsmanship of “Shaker furniture” is a result of the sect’s commitment to “a life of perfection.” A “revival” in the 1780’s brought increased

numbers into the Shaker community. Yet the sect reached its height of popularity during the Second Great Awakening, when there were between 18-21 Shaker villages and between 4,000 and 6,000 members. The sect eventually dwindled as a result of its celebrity beliefs; currently, only nine Shakers remain in two small towns in New England.⁶⁴ *The Disappearance of Spiritual Ecstasy From Orthodoxy In Charismatic Chaos*, John MacArthur observed:

[S]ince the canon of Scripture was completed, no genuine revival or orthodox movement has ever been led by people whose authority is based in any way on private revelations from God. Many groups have claimed to receive new revelation, but all of them have been fanatical, heretical, cultic, or fraudulent.⁶⁵

MacArthur makes an important point. Between the demise of the Montanists in the fourth century and the American Great Awakenings in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, only a few instances of ecstatic utterances are recorded, and these were either by isolated individuals such as Quaker George Fox or among heretical sects such as the Shakers or the French Prophets.⁶⁶ Andrews, who chronicled the Shakers, has noted the “little essential difference” among that group, Mormon Joseph Smith, and other sects who manifested “mystical experiences” and “physical phenomena of worship.”⁶⁷ For the person who values history, this is most significant. For if the charismatic claim that its manifestations of spiritual ecstasy are from God is true, one wonders why those manifestations were limited to fringe groups and heretical sects from the close of the canon to the First Great Awakening. The usual charismatic explanation is that “[t]he Holy Spirit continued in control until the close of the first century, when He was largely rejected and His position as leader usurped by man” so that “[t]he missionary movement halted” and “[t]he dark ages ensued.”⁶⁸ Indeed, one Pentecostal leader maintained that the signs and wonders of the New Testament era ceased because “the Church did not maintain its purity.”⁶⁹ This is a serious charge. Unfortunately, it also is an irresponsible one. Over 60 years ago, Colgate University educator George Cutten undertook an extensive survey of whether tongues were present in the sub-apostolic age, and he concluded that “in the ancient church at least, the church of the fathers, there was not one well-attested instance of any person who exercised speaking in tongues or even pretended to exercise it.”⁷⁰ In the fourth century, Chrysostom observed that tongue speaking had even ceased among fringe sects (presumably Montanists).⁷¹ Moreover, the two greatest Christian thinkers of all time (after the apostle Paul), Augustine and Martin Luther, never spoke in tongues or engaged in prophetic utterances. Nor did lesser lights such as Athanasius, Anselm, Aquinas, Melancthon, Calvin, Beza, or Zwingli.

Even if we limit the discussion to Baptists, our own tradition is replete with godly men who rejected the notion that God’s special revelation continues apart from Scripture. Indeed, Baptists have been in the forefront of defending, not only the authority of the Bible, but also its sufficiency. This was the view of the Anabaptists, from which, to some degree, Baptists trace their roots. For example, in 1524, Balthasar Hubmaier, an early Anabaptist leader, wrote *Eighteen Dissertations Concerning the Entire Christian Life and of What It Consists*, in which he declared that “All teachings that are not of God are in vain and shall be rooted up. Here perish the disciples of Aristotle, as well as the Thomists, the Scotists, Bonaventure, and Occam, and all teaching that does not proceed from God’s Word.”⁷² This was certainly the view of the Particular Baptists (who were Calvinistic in theology). Articles seven and eight of the Baptist Confession of 1644 state: The Rule of this Knowledge, Faith and Obedience, concerning the worship and service of God, and all other

Christian duties, is not man's inventions, opinions, devices, laws, constitutions, or traditions unwritten whatsoever, but only the word of God contained in the Canonical Scriptures. In this written Word God hath plainly revealed whatsoever he hath thought needful for us to know, believe, and acknowledge, touching the Nature and Office of Christ, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen to the praise of God.⁷³ The Second London Confession of 1689 states that "the Holy Scripture is the only sufficient . . . rule of all saving Knowledge, Faith and Obedience" and "those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people [dreams, visions, etc.] being now ceased."⁷⁴ It emphatically declares that the "whole Counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own Glory, Man's Salvation, Faith and Life is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new Revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men."⁷⁵ John Gill repeated this precept in his confession which states that Scripture is "the only rule of faith and practice."⁷⁶ Scripture contains "the whole of God's will and pleasure toward us."⁷⁷ The cessation of special revelation was even the view of the General Baptists (who were Arminian in theology). Thomas Helwys stated in Article 23 of his confession that Scripture serves "onely" as "our direction in al [sp] things whatsoever."⁷⁸ Helwys' successor, John Murton, similarly was of the view that Scripture is our sole authority in all matters of faith, conduct, worship, and doctrine.⁷⁹

American Baptists also vigorously upheld the notion of the sufficiency of Scripture. Roger Williams said that the Bible is the "square rule" that determines "all knowledge of God and of ourselves."⁸⁰ John Broadus, a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor, wrote:

14. What authority has the Bible for us? The Bible is our only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. . . 81

Finally, an introductory statement to the 1925 Southern Baptist Faith and Message declared: "That the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments."⁸² Are we to conclude that these great men of God "did not maintain [their] purity?" That they "rejected" the Holy Spirit and His position as "leader"? My answer is a resounding "no." It seems to me that Rene Pache got it right when he said:

If 'miraculous' gifts (healing, miracles, prophecy, tongues) have been absent at certain times, the probable cause has lain not always in man's unbelief, but in the will of God. If it were otherwise, why should the Spirit unceasingly give certain gifts. . . while failing to bestow others?⁸³ In order to walk with the wise and learn from the past, the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture must be reaffirmed.

1.04. Hear the Words of the Wise

Chapter Four:

Keeping All Things in Balance And Peter said to them, “Repent. . . Be saved from this perverse generation!” (Acts 2:38, Acts 2:40) “But you, be sober in all things” (2 Timothy 4:5) Jonathan Edwards and The First Great Awakening

Along with the other great church luminaries mentioned in the last chapter, Jonathan Edwards also never spoke in tongues nor believed that the revelatory gifts continued past the apostolic age.⁸⁴ Generally thought of as America’s preeminent theologian, this Calvinistic minister is perhaps best known for his role in sparking America’s first and greatest revival, the Great Awakening of the mid-Eighteenth Century. In 1733 and 1734, Jonathan Edwards preached on “God Glorified in Man’s Dependence” and “Justification By Faith Alone.” As a result of these messages, in Edwards’ own words, “the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in and wonderfully to work amongst us,” so that souls began to flock to Christ, as the Savior in whose righteousness alone they hoped to be justified.”⁸⁵ The Great Awakening had begun. Within a single year, in a town of some 200 families, about 300 souls were saved.⁸⁶ The former “dullness in religion,” “night walking, and frequenting the tavern and lewd practices” were replaced by a focus on God’s redemptive work.⁸⁷ The town “seemed to be full of the presence of God: it never was so full of love, nor so full of joy; and yet so full of distress, as it was then.”⁸⁸ Revival rapidly spread to other New England towns and villages. With regenerated souls came awakened emotions. At the time of conversion, the newly saved frequently manifested an extreme agony over their sinful condition. Edwards wrote that their consciences were “smitten” -- “as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart.”⁸⁹ They experienced “awful apprehensions” about the depths of their corrupted souls, and a sense that God was just in condemning them. Upon conversion, there was often laughter, tears or loud weeping.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, revival fires continued to burn. In 1740, George Whitefield visited Northampton and quickened the fervor. The manifestations accompanying conversion this time were “even more bizarre than the earlier ones;” parishioners “bewailed their sins aloud and groaned in fear and repentance.”⁹¹

Like Edwards, Whitefield was also a Calvinist who understood the role of emotions and experience in the Christian life. He decried the cold rationalism that infected the Anglican clergy of the day, emphasizing the centrality of the New Birth experience to salvation.⁹² He was himself prone to tears as he preached.⁹³ When Whitefield preached in Northampton, the power of the Holy Spirit was present. “Few dry eyes were in the assembly.”⁹⁴ Even Edwards felt “weak in body” and “wept during the whole time of exercise.”⁹⁵ One account has it that “Mr. Whitefield had scarcely spoken for a minute on the same text when the whole auditorium could be seen to be deeply moved, to be in tears, and to be wringing hands, and the sighing, weeping, and shouting of the people could be heard.”⁹⁶

Sometimes, however, the manifestations went beyond the emotions of repentance. Occasionally, enthusiasts heard voices and beheld visions, claiming that they had received revelations from God. Extreme manifestations of ecstasy also occurred during some of Whitefield's sermons. As one account of Whitefield's Scottish tour put it: "the Bodies of some of the Awakened are seized with Trembling, Fainting, Histerisms in some few Women, and with Convulsive-Motions in some others."⁹⁷

Edwards strongly condemned these extreme manifestations. He discounted such "false signs" as crying aloud repeated mantras ("Hosanna, Hosanna"), bodily behavior, self-induced affections, and "all other signs testifying not to the faith of children of light but to 'the presumption of the children of darkness.'"⁹⁸ He denounced persons who believed that fainting, bodily tremors and "all manner of natural passion" were positive elements of revival.⁹⁹ These signs were negative, in Edwards's eyes, because they were unrelated to the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit. and evinced no integration with the redirected heart.¹⁰⁰

Yet despite Edwards' strong condemnations of false affections, he did not fall to the other extreme of rejecting religious experience altogether. To the contrary, Edwards' life-long theme was that true religion "is a matter of true affections that incline the heart away from self-love and towards God."¹⁰¹ As Harold Simonson has stated:

It was not Edwards' intrepid defense of Calvinism per se that made his leadership during the Awakening most notable; it was rather his profound conviction that Calvinist theology was experientially true. He was convinced that human experience corroborates Calvin's insights. Edwards insisted that unless theology was rooted in experience, it could not be anything more than intellectual speculation.¹⁰²

Put another way, Edwards was a Calvinist with a heart. He struck a careful balance between validating the very real emotions that accompany repentance and revival and false affections that distract from and do harm to God's true work. The Second Great Awakening

Unfortunately, the careful balance struck by Edwards was sometimes lost during the Second Great Awakening. The story of the Second Great Awakening must begin with James McGready, a Presbyterian evangelical Calvinist.¹⁰³ It was McGready's sermons contrasting the glowing beauties of heaven with the fires and miseries of hell that spread revival across north-central North Carolina beginning in 1791.¹⁰⁴ When McGready and several of his converts moved to Kentucky in 1798, revival followed. As John Boles records it:

Under the ministrations of McGready and one of his North Carolina converts, the Reverend John Rankin, such a revival developed at a Gasper River sacramental service that many were quite overcome with emotion and fell to the floor, so deeply were they struck with "heart-piercing conviction." The uninhibited physical responses to penetrating preaching and beliefs that were soon to characterize the Kentucky phase of the Great Revival here made their first appearance. The revival now gained momentum.¹⁰⁵ At first, the emotions accompanying revival were closely tied to repentance. As McGready observed: "instantly the divine flame spread through the whole multitude. Presently you might have seen sinners lying powerless in every part of the house, praying and crying for mercy."¹⁰⁶ Yet, when the revival came to Cane Ridge in August, 1801, it was accompanied by more strange "exercises." As Boles put it:

Many participants, in the midst of the totality of revival phenomena, seemed to have lost control of their emotions. Considering themselves in the very presence of God, many felt so remorseful for their sins (the horrors of which were usually intensified by the ministers) that they fell apparently senseless to the ground. Others who, perhaps seeking a sense of assurance that they were being saved, unconsciously generated a series of physical “exercises” as evidence of their conviction and justification.¹⁰⁷

Camp meeting evangelist Barton Stone categorized these “exercises” into several groupings, among which were:

Falling: The subject would “generally, with a piercing scream, fall like a log on the floor, earth, or mud, and appear as dead.” The Jerks: When the head alone was affected, “it would be jerked backward and forward, or from side to side, so quickly that the features of the face could not be distinguished.” When the whole body was affected, the person would stand in one place and “jerk backward and forward in quick succession, [his] head nearly touching the floor behind and before.”

Dancing: Dancing would often follow the jerks.

Barking: “A person affected with the jerks would often make a grunt, or bark, if you please from the suddenness of the jerk.”

Laughing: The subject would let out “a loud, hearty laughter, but one that excited laughter in none else.”¹⁰⁸

Boles has noted that these “grossly exaggerated revival exercises” were “probably restricted to a comparative few” and that “except at the very start, they were never a significant factor in the camp meetings.”¹⁰⁹ Professor Bernard Weisberger agrees: “Many stories of unusual transports of holy joy and anguish were undoubtedly stretched. Some came from supporters . . . Others were planted by opponents, who were trying to underscore the element of caricature in the meetings.”¹¹⁰ Thus, for most people, shouting, crying, and falling down were the only physical responses to passionate preaching.¹¹¹ As Boles put it, “So desperate were many to secure their salvation that they called out in agony, ‘What shall we do to be saved.’”¹¹²

Behind the emotional outpouring, especially at the beginning of the Second Great Awakening, there was “a pervasive, strongly believed system of ideas about God and his dealings with men.”¹¹³ Early on, Calvinistic Baptist pastor Richard Furman said about the Awakening that it was “a blessed Visitation from on high.”¹¹⁴ Yet, as the camp meetings became more popular and the “convulsions grew more extreme,” opposition from orthodox Baptists and Presbyterians mounted.¹¹⁵ And as the more conservative churches abandoned the movement, its link to theological orthodoxy became more tenuous. The focus became Arminian, rather than Calvinistic.¹¹⁶ Many camp meeting leaders lapsed into heresy. Barton Stone, for example, eventually denied the substitutionary atonement, the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ.¹¹⁷ In addition, some participants began to believe that the jerks, and the other “spasms” were “new revelations of the Spirit.”¹¹⁸ Not surprisingly, the most extreme participants were drawn into the Shaker camp.¹¹⁹ The revival movement declined rapidly after 1805. Indeed, by 1804, the camp meeting had become almost exclusively a Methodist phenomenon, and in their hands, it became less a mysterious work of the Holy Spirit and more “a revival technique.”¹²⁰ Baptist Edmund Botsworth disapprovingly wrote to Furman in 1803 that many fell “some say, on purpose.”¹²¹ By

1835, Charles Finney could say with relative impunity, "A revival is not a miracle, nor dependent on a miracle, in any sense" but that "it is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means."¹²² The Place for Experience in the Christian Life As Jonathan Edwards discovered during the First Great Awakening, the Christian life is like walking a tightrope: If we take one step to the left into undue emotionalism or one step to the right into sterile rationalism, we fall. We Baptists have a saying, that Christianity involves a relationship, not a religion. By that, we mean that we do not hold to the staid formalism or empty rituals that typify much of religious expression in our day. After all, even orthodox belief, devoid of a personal relationship with the risen Savior, is dead faith. On the other hand, revivalism is equally invalid. Spiritual ecstasy and mysticism may be exciting and psychologically fulfilling, but they are spiritual poison when devoid of Biblical content and truth. Accordingly, Edwards had it right when he insisted that true religious emotion must inexorably be linked to a sense of fear and trembling before a just and holy God and a fervent desire to repent of sins. In other words, true religious affections derive from a mature love, an agape relationship, or at least, the friendship and devotion of *phileo* (cf. John 21:15-17). They will derive from a heart of repentance, crying out to God, "Oh, wretched man that I am." The spiritual ecstasies and excesses of the charismatic movement have a different type of "love," a selfish storge, as their focus. Their principal concern is not a mutual bond of relationship with Jesus Christ, after repentance of sin, but a mindset of: "How will the Spirit bless me today?" This distinction readily can be seen by contrasting the awakening experiences of Jonathan Edwards' parishioners with the circus atmosphere of a modern charismatic rally. Edwards movingly wrote of the conversion of a young girl, Phebe Bartlet, in *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, describing her pre-salvation state in terms of "continued crying" and "anguish of spirit." Contrast this to the state of Richard Roberts' nine year old daughter at a Rodney Howard-Browne meeting. According to her father, after Howard-Browne laid hands on her, she fell to the ground and laughed for an hour and 45 minutes, and when her parents tried to put her to bed that night, she fell out laughing so hard that they finally had to put her in the bathtub to calm her down.¹²³

Another contrast can be made. Although excesses certainly occurred during the Great Awakenings, revival came as a result of a steady diet of Calvinistic preaching by Edwards, Whitefield, McGready and others. It was the words that mattered, the words of the minister faithfully imparting the Word of God. Yet, in an interview with *Christian Research Journal*, Rodney Howard-Browne admitted that the message he is preaching is essentially irrelevant to whether people fall out in ecstatic manifestations.¹²⁴ Thus, despite Third Wave claims to be the spiritual heirs of Jonathan Edwards, there legitimately can be no comparison between Edwards' sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and the vain repetition of the words to a song led by Howard-Browne: "I am drunk. I am drunk. Every day of my life I am drunk. I've been drinking down at Joel's place every night and every day. I am drunk on new wine."¹²⁵

What, then, are we to make of the prophecies, tongues and other ecstatic utterances of the charismatic movement? Certainly, we can assume that at least some of the more bizarre manifestations of ecstasy are Satanic in origin. However, we cannot ascribe all of the emotionalism to the devil. Much of it lies in us. For example, Theodore Barber has suggested that there is little difference between hypnotism and the "high level of suggestability" activated by strong motivational instruction (such as that orchestrated at a typical Toronto Blessing or Rodney Howard-Browne meeting).¹²⁶ Vern Poythress has noted that free vocalization (speaking in

tongues) can be learned and, in fact, “is easier than learning how to ride a bicycle.”¹²⁷

We have no need, however, to characterize those things that we believe lacks biblical warrant. Rather, we have need of true and genuine revival of the type found in the Great Awakenings. Emotion is an important part of our spiritual life, but a genuine, authentic relationship with Jesus Christ is paramount. In fact, it must be paramount above either excessive emotionalism or sterile rationality. This can be seen by another contrast, this one between two Dallas Theological Seminary teachers. Former Dallas Seminary professor Jack Deere described his life before he became a charismatic in his book, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* as follows:

I knew where I was going. My life was both comfortable and secure. I was in control and liked it that way. Most of the time I felt I knew what God was doing.

Over the years, [my wife] had watched my passion for God slowly drying up like the reservoirs in Southern California during a draught. I wasn't conscious of losing any passion for God. I thought I had just grown up. But she was concerned that I had become complacent and self-satisfied. And she saw my attitudes as an enemy of God's calling on our lives.¹²⁸

Unfortunately, Deere's solution to his spiritual “draught” was to gravitate to the Vineyard movement and fall into excessive emotionalism.

Current Dallas Seminary professor Daniel Wallace's Christianity was challenged when his 8-year-old son was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma. In a speech before a regional group of the Evangelical Theological Society, Wallace recalled:

Through this experience, I found that the Bible was not adequate. I needed God in a personal way -- not as an object of my study, but as friend, guide, comforter. I needed an existential experience of the Holy One. Quite frankly, I found that the Bible was not the answer. I found the scriptures to be helpful -- even authoritatively helpful -- as a guide. But without feeling God, the Bible gave little solace. In the midst of this “summer from hell,” I began to examine what had become of my faith.¹²⁹

Out of this personal crisis, Wallace formulated eleven theses or challenges addressed to cessationists that echo the themes of Jonathan Edwards:

1. Although the sign gifts died in the first century, the Holy Spirit did not.
2. Although charismatics have given a higher priority to experience than to relationship, rationalistic evangelicals have given a higher priority to knowledge than to relationship.
3. This emphasis on knowledge over relationship has produced in us a bibliolatry.
4. The net effect of such bibliolatry is a depersonalization of God.
5. Part of the motivation for this depersonalization of God is our increasing craving for control.
6. God is still a God of healing and miracles.
7. Evangelical rationalism can lead to spiritual defection.

8. The power brokers of rational evangelicalism, since the turn of the century, have been white, obsessive-compulsive males.

9. The Holy Spirit's guidance is still needed in discerning the will of God.

10. In the midst of seeking out the power of the Spirit, we must not avoid the sufferings of Christ.

11. To what does the Spirit bear witness?¹³⁰ As cessationists, we would do well to grapple with these issues.

Questions to Charismatics At the same time, however, charismatics would do well to grapple with the following questions:

Issue 1: Is the canon of Scripture closed or open? This is the article on which the charismatic movement must stand or fall. It will not do to say that the canon is closed, but that God still speaks to man directly today through the same means and in the same way as He spoke, through special revelation, before the close of the canon. It also will not do to assert that God speaks today through "fallible" revelation (as opposed to the infallible revelation of Scripture). Either God's revelation is capable of error or it is not.

Issue 2: Is primacy to be found in biblical authority or experience? This point is closely related to, but distinct from, the first. Put another way, is truth objective and propositional, or subjective and personal? Historical Christianity has always held to the belief that truth is objective and propositional, as found in the Word of God. However, the modern charismatic movement has drifted from that firm anchor, in teaching that truth can take the form of personal revelation. The resemblance to neo-orthodoxy is striking. Jack Taylor has written that "The Bible is the Word of God. . . only when the Holy Spirit who inspires it enlivens it. Only then does it have life and power. Until then it is document; document is letter, and letter kills."¹³¹ Do charismatics agree with Taylor?

Issue 3: Is Scripture sufficient for faith and practice and, equally importantly, for life? 2 Peter 1:3 affirms that it is. Yet Jack Taylor has written that the traditional Baptist (really Petrine) doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is "the dung of meaningless tradition and unbiblical ideas."¹³² Do charismatics agree? If they do affirm the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture, what need is there for personal revelation to supplement what is all-sufficient?

Issue 4: Will our central focus be on the Savior or the Spirit? One of the cardinal Reformation principles was that of solo Christo. Should we keep that tenet, or change the focus to the Holy Spirit? Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would point to the Son. Can we do otherwise? If not, where is the condemnation of Rodney Howard-Browne?

(sola Christo)

Issue 5: Should we expect more to the Christian life? The charismatic movement (particularly, its Vineyard element) has attracted many Calvinists and professional theologians.¹³³ Many of these individuals had previously embraced Christianity only "from the neck up."¹³⁴ Many of them have longed for something more than "cognitive Christianity." This need for "something more" has always been there. It drove the Montanist movement in the early years of the church. As Griffith Thomas has noted, from a psychological standpoint, Montanism had its origin in "the recognition of

the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in a Church that was already tending to become too rigid in its intellectual conceptions and ecclesiastical organisation.”¹³⁵ Its adherents wanted to experience “something more.”

We are responsible to offer “something more” than either sterile rationalism or destructive emotionalism. We must offer a personal, real relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship involves all the normal emotions involved in a love relationship (love, joy, peace). As Edwards said in *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*:

There is no true religion where there is no religious affection. As on the one hand, there must be light in the understanding, as well as an affected fervent heart; where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart; so on the other hand, where there is a kind of light without heat, a head stored with notions and speculations, with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light, that knowledge is no true spiritual knowledge of divine things.¹³⁶ Edwards got the balance right. Following in his footsteps is our challenge.

1 Keith Hinson, “Florida Board Disfellowships 2 Charismatic Churches,” Baptist Press, May 20, 1996.

2 Michael Chute, “Inverness church ‘resigns’ from convention,” Florida Baptist Witness, 19 Sept. 1996, 5.

3 Keith Hinson, “Theology Key Concern in Florida Controversy,” Baptist Press, May 8, 1996.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 I adopt Richard Gaffin’s use of this term to describe prophesy and its assessment, tongues and their interpretation, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. See Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., “A Cessationist View,” in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* ed. Wayne A. Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 42.

7 Since 1960, the charismatic movement has exploded beyond Pentecostal denominational barriers. It has infiltrated virtually every mainline denomination -- at first, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Presbyterian, later, Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox. See Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books 1984), 205.

8 Indeed, key charismatic theologian Wayne Grudem apparently now attends a Southern Baptist church. See Wayne A. Grudem, preface to *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today*, 15.

9 John H. Armstrong, “In Search of Spiritual Power” in *Power Religion*, ed. Michael Horton (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 62.

10 Grudem, preface to *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today*, 10.

11 Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2 (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 417.

12 This date derives from Eusebius. Modern scholars believe this date to be too late, variously contending that Montanism originated between 126 and 180 A.D. See Schaff, *History of the*

Christian Church, 418 n.1.

13 Ibid, 418.

14 Ibid, 423.

15 Ibid.

16 Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 733.

17 Ibid.

18 Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Pelican Books, 1967; Penguin Books, 1990), 52.

19 Ibid.

20 Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 36.

21 Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Translated, G.A. Williamson, revised and edited, Andrew Louth (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 161.

22 Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 52.

23 Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 422.

24 Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 36.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid, 37.

27 Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 732.

28 Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 53.

29 Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 419.

30 John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 239.

31 George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1889), quoted in Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 239.

32 Ibid.

33 Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 53.

34 Parenthetically, the purpose of tongues was related, but somewhat different. Tongues were for unbelievers, specifically, as a sign to unbelieving Jews (1 Corinthians 14:22; cf. Isaiah 28:11-12). Their purpose was to assist in discerning whether the apostles' message was from God or not, since the people did not have the written New Testament to demonstrate the validity of the message. See generally William G. Bellshaw, "The Confusion of Tongues," *Biblia Sacra* 120, no. 478 (1963): 145, 148-150.

35 Gaffin, "A Cessationist View," 44.

36 Walvoord, John F. and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Scripture Press Publications, Inc., 1983, 1985, Logos Bible Software edition); Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: IVP/Eerdmans, 1987), 171.

37 Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 171.

38 *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc. 1995).

39 Jack R. Taylor, *The Word of God With Power* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 18.

40 *Ibid*, 20.

41 *Ibid*, 23.

42 Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 214.

43 *Ibid*, 213-214.

44 Jack Deere, *Vineyard Position Paper # 2: The Vineyard's Response to The Briefing* (Anaheim, Calif.: Association of Vineyard Churches, 1992, 22-23, quoted in R. Fowler White, "Does God Speak Today Apart From the Bible?," in *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, ed., John H. Armstrong (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 78.

45 David S. Dockery, *Christian Scripture* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 16.

46 Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 200.

47 Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), 63-64.

48 Erickson, 190.

49 Dockery, *Christian Scripture*, 41.

50 *Ibid*.

51 Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 116.

52 For example, he quotes approvingly from Watchman Nee, who wrote that "revelation (what I have previously referred to as illumination) means that God again breathes on His Word when I read Romans two thousand years later. . . . Inspiration is given only once; revelation is given repeatedly. By revelation we mean that today God again breathes on His Word, the Holy Spirit imparts light to me. . . . What again is revelation? Revelation occurs when God reactivates His Word by His Spirit that it may be living and full of life as at the time when it was first written." Taylor, *The Word of God With Power*, 49-50.

53 John Murray, "The Guidance of the Holy Spirit" in *Collected Writings of John Murray, Volume 1: The Claims of Truth* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976), 188-189, quoted in "R. Fowler White, "Does God Speak Today Apart From the Bible" in *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, ed. John H. Armstrong (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 87-88 (n.6).

54 *Ibid*.

55 White, "Does God Speak Today Apart From the Bible?", 79.

56 Ibid, 86.

57 Lee apparently joined the Shakers after the death of all four of her children, and as a result of this experience, she advocated a lifetime of celibacy among its adherents.

58 Edward Deming Andrews, *The People Called Shakers* (Oxford University Press, 1953; New York: Dover Publications, 1963), xi.

59 Ibid, 28

60 Ibid, 12.

61 Ibid, 29.

62 Ibid, 11-12.

63 Ibid, 11.

64 Additional information about the Shakers may be found at the following Internet sites: (a) Steve Lim, "Shakers: History of the Group," <http://ctdnet.acns.nwu.edu/skul/>; (b) "Shakers and Shakerism," "<http://www.nypl.org/>" and (c) Karl Mang, "The Shakers - Another America," "<http://www.shakerworkshops.com.>"

65 John F. MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 73.

66 It is recorded of the early Quakers that, as they sange and danced, "the Devil roared in these deceived souls in a most strange and dreadful Manner, some howling, some shrieking, yelling, roaring, and some had a strange confused kind of humming, singing Noise. . . about the one Half of these miserable Creatures were terribly shaken with violent Motions." Andrews, *The People Called Shakers*, 137.

67 Andrews, *The People Called Shakers*, 136.

68 David duPlessis, "Golden Jubilees," *IRM*, 47 (April 1958), 193-94, as quoted in Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 27.

69 J.A. Synan, "The Purpose of God in the Pentacostal Movement for This Hour," *Pentecostal World Conference Messages 1958*, quoted in Bruner, 27-28.

70 See George W. Dollar, "A Symposium on the Tongues Movement Part II: Church History and the Tongues Movement," *Biblia Sacra* 120, no. 480 (1963): 316, 317; "Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., "The Gift of Tongues in the Post Apostolic Church (a.d. 100-400), *Biblia Sacra* 122, no. 486 (1965): 134, 135-143.

71 Ibid.

72 L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 14.

73 Ibid, 51. Bush and Nettles note that the phrase "contained in the Canonically Scriptures" does not refer to a belief that God's words are intermixed with other words, but could as well be stated

“limited to the Canonically Scriptures.” Ibid, 53. Indeed, when the confession was republished in 1651, it was accompanied by an essay against Quakers which declared that the Bible contains “the whole Minde, will, and Law of God, for us and all Saints to believe and practise throughout all ages.” Ibid, 56.

74 Ibid, 62-63. Significantly, the expression that the Bible is “the only sufficient” rule of knowledge, faith and obedience is an addition from the Westminster Confession of Faith, from which the Second London Confession is modeled. Ibid., 65.

75 Ibid, 64.

76 Ibid, 105.

77 Ibid, 107.

78 Ibid, 31.

79 Ibid, 34.

80 Ibid, 78.

81 Ibid, 225.

82 Ibid, 387.

83 Rene Pache, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), 184.

84 E.g., Jonathan Edwards, “Charity More Excelleant Than the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit” available on the Internet at <http://www.dallas.net/~trigsted/jedwards.>”

85 Jonathan Edwards, “A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* vol. 1 (Worcester, 1834, reprinted, Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), 348.

86 Ibid, 350.

87 Edwards, “A Faithful Narrative” in vol. 1, Works, 347.

88 Ibid, 348.

89 Ibid, 350.

90 Ibid, 351-52.

91 Harold Simonson, *Jonathan Edwards: Theologian of the Heart* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 49.

92 Ibid, 97,

93 Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 41-42.

94 Ibid, 126.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid, 251.

97 Ibid, 150, quoting James Robe, Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth.

98 Ibid, 58.

99 Ibid, 50.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid, 13.

102 Ibid, 12-13.

103 John Boles records that McGready was “more interested in the salvation of his listeners than in constructing a formal creed” but that his sermons did “reflect the theological subtleties of evangelical Calvinism.” John B. Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), 40.

104 Ibid, 40-41. As one observer described McGready’s sermons: “Father McGready would so describe Heaven, that you would almost see its glories. . . and he would so array hell and its horrors before the wicked, that they would tremble and quake, imagining a lake of fire and brimstone yawning to overwhelm them.” See Timothy K. Beougher, “Did You Know? Little Known and Remarkable Facts About Camp Meetings and Circuit Riders,” *Christian History* 14, no. 45 (1995): 2.

105 Boles, *The Great Revival*, 49.

106 McGready, *Narrative of the Commencement of the Revival*, xiii, quoted in Boles, *The Great Revival*, 56.

107 Ibid, 67.

108 “Piercing Screams and Heavenly Smiles” *Christian History* 14, no. 45 (1995): 15.

109 Boles, *The Great Revival*, 68.

110 Bernard A. Weisberger, *They Gathered at the River* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958), 35, quoted in Keith J. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 58.

111 Boles, *The Great Revival*, 68.

112 Ibid, 76.

113 Ibid, 70.

114 Ibid, 80.

115 Ibid, 89.

116 For example, the views of revivalist Richard McNemar were considered, after examination, to have been “essentially different from Calvinism” but “clothed in such expressions and handed out

in such a manner, as to keep the body of the people in the dark, and lead them insensibly into Arminian principles; which are dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion." Barton W. Stone, *History of the Christian Church in the West* (Lexington, KY: 1956), 4, quoted in Boles, *The Great Revival*, 150-151.

117 Ibid, 153; David L. Goetz, "Trendsetters in the Religious Wilderness," *Christian History* 14, no. 45 (1995); 26, 27.

118 Ibid, 92.

119 Ibid, 100. Upon reflection, Barton Stone ruefully acknowledged that circumstances were right for Shakers to gain converts: "Some of us were verging on fanaticism; some were so disgusted at the spirit of opposition against us, and the evils of division, that they were almost led to doubt the truth of religion in toto; and some were earnestly breathing after perfection in holiness." Stone, *Autobiography*, 184, quoted in Boles, *The Great Revival*, 157.

120 Ibid, 89-90.

121 Ibid, 95.

122 Keith J. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 21.

123 Julia Duin, "An Evening With Rodney Howard-Browne," *Christian Research Journal* (Winter, 1995), 43.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 See Theodore X. Barber, "Who Believes in Hypnosis?" *Psychology Today* 4 (July 1970): 20-27, 84, cited in Boles, *The Great Revival*, 67.

127 Vern S. Poythress, "Linguistic and Sociological Analyses of Modern Tongues-Speaking: Their Contributions and Limitations," *Westminster Theological Journal* 42, no. 2 (1980): 367, 369.

128 Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 13, 15-16.

129 Daniel B. Wallace, "The Uneasy Conscience of a Non-Charismatic Evangelical," Speech before the Evangelical Theological Society, Southwest Regional Meeting, 4 March 1994, available on the internet: </docs/soapbox/estsw.htm>.

130 Ibid.

131 Taylor, *The Word of God With Power*, 29.

132 Ibid, 178.

133 See, e.g., Daniel B. Wallace, "Charismata and the Authority of Personal Experience," available on the Internet: </docs/soapbox/personal.htm>.

134 This phrase belongs to Dr. Wallace. Ibid.

135 W.H. Griffith Thomas, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1986), p. 80.

136 Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections in The Works of Jonathan Edwards* vol. 1 (Worcester, 1834, reprinted, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1995), 243.

2. The Kingdom in Matthew

The Kingdom in Matthew Study By: Matthew Allen

1. Introduction
2. A Survey of the Kingdom of God in Theology.
3. The Coming Kingdom Proclaimed.
4. The Inauguration of the Kingdom.
5. Kingdom Living.
6. The Consummation of the Kingdom.
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2.01. Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction The concept of the kingdom looms large on the pages of Scripture. Herman Ridderbos thought it so important that he declared: “The whole of the preaching of Jesus Christ and his apostles is concerned with the kingdom of God.”¹ Robert Saucy echoes the point: “While mentioned far less often in the epistles, the ‘kingdom of God’ still qualifies as the summary of the apostolic teaching.”² John Bright has even stated that “the concept of the Kingdom of God involves, in a real sense, the total message of the Bible.”³

Yet despite its importance, perhaps no other theme of the gospels has invoked greater confusion and controversy. There is no agreement on such basic questions as: What is the very nature of the kingdom of God? Is the kingdom of God different from the kingdom of heaven? Has the kingdom arrived? If not, why not and when will it come? What did Christ teach about the kingdom? These questions and more like them have engendered much debate in the theological world. The purpose of this article is to evaluate the kingdom of God as it is espoused in the gospel of Matthew. I have chosen this topic for four basic reasons. First, attempting an overall survey of the kingdom would be a massive undertaking beyond my present capabilities. Second, Matthew is a hinge book, linking the Old and New Testaments, and so the presentation of the kingdom in the first gospel is extremely important. Third, the concept of the kingdom is prominently featured in Matthew; in fact, it is the theme of the book.⁴ Finally, although the advent of progressive dispensationalism has refocused attention on the kingdom of God, most of the detailed attention has been given to Luke 5:1-39

Chapter Two, lays a foundation for this study by providing a brief overview of various views of the kingdom from a systematic theology perspective. Chapter Three looks at the coming kingdom as it was announced by Jesus, and John before him, primarily in chapters 3 and 4 of Matthew. Chapter Four looks at the kingdom that “has come,” as espoused in Matthew chapters 12 and 13. Chapter Five looks at kingdom living, as Jesus explained it in chapters 5 through 7 (the Sermon on the Mount) and later in chapters 18 and 19. Chapter Six reviews the consummation of the kingdom when Jesus ushers in the millennial reign, as described principally in chapters 24 and 25. In Chapter Seven, I draw several modest conclusions from this study and suggest areas for additional study.

2.02. A Survey of the Kingdom of God in Theology

Chapter Two: A Survey of the Kingdom of God in Theology In this brief survey of the various theological viewpoints on the Kingdom of God, I examine first the critical-historical debate. I then turn to the three major views of Evangelicalism, the kingdom-future perspective of revised dispensationalism, the kingdom-now perspective of classical reformed or covenant theology, and the increasingly popular kingdom-already-but-not-yet perspective of historic premillennialism and progressive dispensationalism. The Critical Historical Debate

Nineteenth century liberal theologians Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack believed that the kingdom of God is not something to be established in the future, but is now present in the form of the “brotherhood of man,” the infinite value of the individual soul, and the ethic of love. To them, the apocalyptic element in Jesus’s teaching was the “husk” that contained the “kernel” of his real message of love.⁶ Hence, the predominant liberal view was that the kingdom of which Jesus spoke was a present ethical kingdom.

Johannes Weiss rejected that view. He wrote in *The Preaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God* that Jesus was “thoroughly eschatological, futuristic, and even apocalyptic in his outlook.”⁷ According to Weiss, Jesus expected the kingdom to come in the immediate future by a dramatic action of God.⁸ Thus, Jesus’s ethical commands (including the Sermon on the Mount) were interim rules in anticipation of the imminent kingdom, not rules of conduct given for all time.⁹ Albert Schweitzer picked up where Weiss left off. He interpreted the whole of Jesus’s preaching as being permeated with a conviction of the approaching kingdom. He called this interpretation a “consistent eschatology.” According to Schweitzer, a future heavenly kingdom was at the base of Jesus’s preaching even from the beginning of his ministry.¹⁰ However, in the end, in Schweitzer’s view, Jesus was traumatized by “the delay of the parousia” and he thus died in despair and disillusionment.¹¹

C.H. Dodd gave eschatology its next major reorientation. He believed the kingdom had already arrived, calling his system a ‘realized eschatology.’ According to Dodd, the kingdom is a transcendent order beyond time and space that has broken into history in the mission of Jesus.¹² The debate over “kingdom future” or “kingdom now” continues to rage. This is true in evangelical circles as well. The three views discussed below are representative.

Revised Dispensationalists—Thy Kingdom Come!

Revised dispensationalists¹³ have traditionally characterized the kingdom of God as consisting of an earthly theocratic kingdom promised to Israel in the Old Testament. It is the thousand year reign of Christ on earth.¹⁴ They believe that Jesus offered the kingdom to the Jews, but that Jesus’s own people rejected the offer, and so, instead of establishing the kingdom, Jesus postponed it until the second coming. In the meantime, he established the “mystery form” of the kingdom during the “inter-advent age,” in which “Christ rules spiritually in the hearts of believers without fulfilling the prophecies of the kingdom on earth.”¹⁵ As John Walvoord has stated:

Jesus had been offering the kingdom in the form of offering himself as the Messiah and King of Israel. This offer had been rejected, as God had anticipated, and ultimately this rejection would lead to the cross of Christ, which was part of God's plan for the redemption of the world. On the divine side this was no change of plan, but on the human side it was a change of direction regarding fulfillment of the kingdom promise.¹⁶

Revised dispensationalists thus believe that the kingdom promised in the Old Testament (what I call the eschatological kingdom) will be established in the millennium at which time Israel will be converted and Jesus will sit on David's throne. Both inauguration and consummation of the kingdom are future in orientation.

Revised dispensationalists have been particularly vigorous in proposing that the entirety of the eschatological kingdom of God will come in the future, as Jesus returns and ushers in the millennium. Charles Ryrie has emphatically declared that the kingdom is not the church, the body of Christ.¹⁷ Rather, the kingdom is future:

What would those people [the Jews of Jesus's day] have understood the kingdom to be? The Messianic, Davidic kingdom on this earth in which the Jewish people would have a prominent place.¹⁸ The kingdom is "physical, glorious and powerful."¹⁹ The gospel of Matthew factors prominently in the revised dispensational scheme of the kingdom. As Walvoord stated in his commentary on Matthew, the very purpose of the first gospel is to "explain[] why the prophecies relating to the kingdom of Christ on earth are delayed in fulfillment until the second coming."²⁰ It "was designed to explain to the Jews, who had expected the Messiah when He came to be a conquering king, why instead Christ suffered and died, and why there was the resulting postponement of His triumph to His second coming."²¹ Reformed Theology—Thy Kingdom Came (Mainly)!

Covenant theologians agree that Christ will return as He promised and that, when He does, He will bring in the fullness of the kingdom. Nevertheless, in contrast to revised dispensationalists, that is not their emphasis. They focus on the belief that the kingdom has already arrived. Charles Hodge is representative of this view. He said, with respect to the nature of the kingdom:

First, it is spiritual. That is, it is not of this world. It is not analogous to the other kingdoms which existed, or do still exist among men. It has a different origin and a different end. Human kingdoms are organized among men, under the providential government of God, for the promotion of the temporal well-being of society. The kingdom of Christ was organized immediately by God, for the promotion of religious objects. It is spiritual, or not of this world, moreover, because it has no power over the lives, liberty, or property of its members; and because all secular matters lie beyond its jurisdiction. . . . The kingdom of Christ, under the present dispensation, therefore, is not worldly even in the sense in which the ancient theocracy was of this world.²² More recently, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote:

It is a kingdom which is to come, yes. But it is also a kingdom which has come. 'The kingdom of God is among you' and 'within you'; the kingdom of God is in every true Christian. He reigns in the Church when she acknowledges Him truly. The kingdom has come, the kingdom is coming, the kingdom is yet to come. Now we must always bear that in mind. Whenever Christ is enthroned as King, the kingdom of God is come, so that, while we cannot say that He is ruling over all in the

world at the present time, He is certainly ruling in that way in the hearts and lives of all His people.²³ The New Geneva Study Bible sharpens the contrast between reformed theology and revised dispensationalism. It states that “the kingdom or the reign of God is what the Old Testament prophets awaited: God’s display of His sovereignty in the redemption of His people.”²⁴ Thus, with the death and resurrection of Jesus and the “spread of the good news to all nations,” the Old Testament promises of God “have been largely fulfilled for us, although we still await their complete realization when Christ returns in judgment.”²⁵ “The kingdom came with Jesus and is known wherever the lordship of Jesus is acknowledged.”²⁶ Historic Premillennialists and Progressive Dispensationalists:

Thy Kingdom—Already but Not Yet! A growing number of conservative theologians have refused to be boxed into either a “kingdom future” or a “kingdom now” emphasis. Beginning with Herman Ridderbos and George Ladd, these theologians embrace a “both/and” approach to the kingdom—postulating that the kingdom of God has already arrived in an inaugural form, but has not yet fully been consummated, and will not be until Christ’s second coming.²⁷ This “already/not yet” approach has drawn proponents from dispensational, historic premillennial and reformed camps, so much so that Richard Gaffin has observed that it “has now virtually reached the status of consensus.”²⁸ This position is well represented by New Testament commentators such as D.A. Carson and progressive dispensationalists such as Craig Blaising, Darryl Bock and Robert Saucy. As Bock stated:

What emerges is a picture of a career [of Jesus] that comes in stages as different aspects of what the Old Testament promises are brought to fulfillment at different phases of Jesus’s work. One might characterize these phases as the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ of Jesus’s career, or by reference to the kingdom, as the invisible and the visible kingdom of God.²⁹

Progressive dispensationalists, in particular, claim that they offer “a corrective” to both revised dispensationalism and covenant theology because “covenant theologians of the past have tended to overemphasize the ‘already’ in their critiques of dispensationalism, while underemphasizing the ‘not yet.’”³⁰ The gospel of Matthew is an integral component of the “already/not yet” eschatological scheme (though Luke appears to have been emphasized in progressive dispensational writings because of the particular expertise of Darrell Bock with respect to the Luke/Acts texts).³¹ D.A. Carson declared in his seminal commentary on Matthew that a “constant theme” of the book is that “the kingdom came with Jesus and his preaching and miracles, it came with his death and resurrection, and it will come at the end of the age.”³² As this short survey demonstrates, there are a wide variety of interpretations and explanations of the nature and purpose of the kingdom program of God. In 1958, J. Dwight Pentecost wrote that it was “almost impossible to make one’s way” through the maze of interpretations.³³ This task has not gotten any easier in the forty subsequent years, and any interpreter must remain humble in attempting to maneuver the maze. Yet Pentecost pointed the way out when he observed that the truths relating to the kingdom will not be found in examining the writings of men but only by an inductive study of the Word of God.³⁴ Accordingly, I now turn to the book of Matthew and its treatment of Jesus’s proclamation of the kingdom.

2.03. The Coming Kingdom Proclaimed

Chapter Three: The Coming Kingdom Proclaimed

Matthew mentions the “kingdom of God” four times in his gospel. He mentions the “kingdom of heaven” thirty-three times. The term “kingdom” is used seventeen additional times.³⁵ Obviously, then, God’s kingdom is a central theme of Matthew’s gospel. Although Walvoord and Vine believe the kingdom of heaven can be distinguished in some fashion from the kingdom of God,³⁶ the vast majority of theologians recognize that the terms are synonymous.³⁷ The Coming Kingdom Prophesied By John The Baptist The kingdom of God is introduced to us in Matthew through the ministry of John the Baptist. John had two roles. He was the last of the Old Testament prophets. In his prophetic ministry, he strongly castigated the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and other Jewish religious leaders. He was also the herald who came before the king, announcing his impending presence. He was Jesus’s forerunner.

Matthew 3:2 encapsulizes John’s basic message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This, our first encounter with the kingdom concept in Matthew, is a pivotal one. Here, at the beginning, we must grapple with several thorny foundational questions.

What did the term “kingdom” mean in the Old Testament?

It seems to me that much of the scholarly discussion of the kingdom of God is at such an abstract level as to be essentially meaningless. Alva McClain has well stated: “The great ideas of the Bible are concrete rather than abstract, and such terms as the kingdom of God are intended to convey meanings which are pertinent to actual situations in the world of reality with which men are somewhat familiar.”³⁸ My goal here is to examine the term “kingdom” in a concrete way.

It is customary to speak of a kingdom (*basileia*) as being made up of two component parts: [1] an authority to rule and [2] the realm or territory over which the king’s reign is exercised.³⁹ Vine, for example, speaks of the kingdom as being [1] sovereignty, royal power, dominion and [2] the territory or people over whom a king rules.⁴⁰ Strong similarly states that the kingdom consists of “royal power, kingship, dominion, rule” and “the territory subject to the rule of a king.”⁴¹ Bauer, Gingrich and Danker call the kingdom [1] “kingship, royal power, royal rule” and [2] “the territory ruled over by a king.”⁴² This two-fold division undoubtedly stems from the Scriptural two-fold depiction of the kingdom. It is first of all viewed as a universal, eternal, timeless kingdom (1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Psalms 10:16; Psalms 29:10).⁴³ The kingdom is second of all viewed as a “theocratic” or “mediatorial” kingdom.⁴⁴ These two perspectives are aspects of one holistic kingdom and should not be rigidly separated into separate kingdoms; indeed, Daniel 7:13-14, Daniel 7:27 combines them. Nevertheless, McClain has profitably written with respect to the latter: The mediatorial kingdom may be defined tentatively as the rule of God through a divinely chosen representative who not only speaks and acts for God but also represents the people before God; a rule which has especial reference to the human race (although it finally embraces the universe); and its mediatorial ruler is always a member of the human race.⁴⁵

Old Testament theology can be summarized under the central theme of this mediatorial kingdom. From the beginning of history, God worked through appointed mediators in administering the mediatorial kingdom.⁴⁶ The mediatorial kingdom was in its incipency during the time of the patriarchs. It began as a historical matter during the time of Moses and continued through the early great leaders of Israel such as Joshua and Samuel. It reached a height of glory during the reigns of Israel's first three kings. The reigns of David and Solomon in particular "typify the ideal of God's earthly kingdom during the Mosaic dispensation."⁴⁷ Its Old Testament close was recorded in the book of Ezekiel, when the Shekinah glory left the temple in Jerusalem as the covenant people of God were carried off into ignoble exile as judgment for their apostasy (Ezek. ch. 8-11).

Yet, at the same time, God graciously revealed to his faithful remnant that the glory would one day return and that, one day, the kingdom would once again be established on earth, in the city of Jerusalem. On that day, God would "dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever" (Ezekiel 43:7).⁴⁸ Through the prophetic books of the Old Testament, a small stream of prophecies about the coming eschatological kingdom of God soon became a raging torrent. In the Old Testament revelation about the coming kingdom, there was a "deep note of mystery in the career of the coming King."⁴⁹ The Old Testament reveals a striking dichotomy in the person of the King. He is presented as coming in glory to reign on the earth. Yet he is also presented as a man of sorrow, despised and rejected of men; wounded, bruised, afflicted and dying for the iniquities of men (Isaiah 53:1-12). He is the great shepherd of Israel, yet he is smitten by the sword of God, and the sheep are scattered (Zechariah 13:7; cf. Isaiah 40:9-11). He is Messiah the Prince of Israel, ruler of the nations, yet he is "cut off" and has nothing which belongs to his regal glory (Daniel 9:25, Daniel 9:26).⁵⁰

It is also important to understand that the Old Testament prophets revealed that the coming kingdom would be primarily spiritual in nature. As McClain said:

It will bring personal salvation from the hand of God (Isaiah 12:1-6), divine forgiveness for sin (Jeremiah 31:34), provision of God's own righteousness for men (Jeremiah 23:3-6), moral and spiritual cleansing, a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:24-28), inward harmony with the laws of the kingdom (Jeremiah 31:33), recognition by men of all nations that Jehovah is the true God, the God who is able to answer prayer (Zechariah 8:20-23), the restoration of genuine joy and gladness to human life (Isaiah 35:10), and the pouring out of God's Spirit "upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28).⁵¹ In sum, the mediatorial kingdom of the Messiah, as prophesied in the Old Testament, is "material and spiritual, sacred and secular at the same time."⁵² As McClain put it, the kingdom: is spiritual; with effects which are ethical, social, economic, political, ecclesiastical, and physical. To single out any one of these important aspects, and deny validity to the others, is to narrow unwisely the breadth of the prophetic vision and to set limits upon the possibilities of human life on earth under God.⁵³ What was the nature of the kingdom of heaven as John the Baptist saw it? As noted in chapter two, there is a strong split of opinion among conservative theologians on even the nature of the kingdom. Reformed theologians believe the kingdom to be primarily spiritual. Dispensationalists of all stripes believe it has a strong material or territorial element. Commentators on Matthew likewise have espoused a wide variety of views on the nature of the kingdom proclaimed by John. For example:

Walvoord believes that the kingdom refers to the “climax of world history” which would be “an everlasting kingdom.” It would include “all who profess to be subjects of the King.”⁵⁴

France believes that the kingdom is “the establishment of God’s rightful sovereignty in judgment and in salvation.” It is the Messianic age.⁵⁵

Carson likewise stated that the kingdom was “the manifest exercise of God’s sovereignty, his ‘reign’ on earth and among men.”⁵⁶ Who is right? Walvoord’s statements seem incomplete. As we have seen, the eschatological kingdom was prophesied to be holistic in nature, and that is how John would have understood it. There is no reason to believe that John held to anything other than the same view of the kingdom as did the Old Testament prophets. He expected a physical reign, but with an acutely spiritual focus. This is evident from his message of repentance (3:2), his urging of the people to confess their sins (3:6), his scathing words to the Pharisees that “every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” (3:10; NIV). It is also evident from John’s prophecy concerning the work of the coming King—he would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (3:11).

Like the other Old Testament prophets before him, John did not differentiate between the imminent coming of Christ for salvation purposes and the future coming of Christ in the consummation of his kingdom. This is to be expected, of course, since he did not have the framework to conceptualize one Messiah with two comings separated by a vast gulf in time.⁵⁷ As Ladd put it, John “looked for a single, though complex, event of salvation-judgment.”⁵⁸ What did John mean when he said that the kingdom of heaven was “at hand?”

There is a longstanding debate over the meaning of the phrase “at hand” (eggiken). There is certainly a variety of views on the subject. On the one hand, Walvoord believes John taught that, in the person of the coming Messiah, “the kingdom was being presented to Israel and to the world.”⁵⁹ He states: “The kingdom being at hand meant that it was being offered in the person of the prophesied King, but it did not mean that it would be immediately fulfilled.”⁶⁰ At the other end of the scale, C.H. Dodd argued that the phrase “at hand” in 3:2 equalled the phrase “has come” in 12:28.⁶¹

Offering a somewhat mediating view is France, who observed that the NASB phrase “is at hand” does not do justice to the perfect tense of engizo which literally means “has come near.” In his view, the phrase “introduces a state of affairs which is already beginning and which demands immediate attention.” In his view, even the Anchor Bible’s “fast approaching” is too remote. The time for decision “has already come.”⁶²

Carson as well adopts this view, asserting that “with Jesus the kingdom has drawn so near that it has actually dawned.”⁶³

Interestingly, Glasscock (a dispensationalist) appears to agree, stating that “the major point in the proclamation was that the kingdom promised by God through Messiah was at hand because the Messiah was in the world.”⁶⁴

Certainly, the bare notion of an “offer” of the kingdom does not go far enough. John viewed the kingdom as “future, but close at hand.”⁶⁵ It was “approaching in time” and “approaching in space,” but it had not yet arrived.⁶⁶ The sense appears to be one of an inevitable and imminent approach

that could not be halted, similar to that of a freight train bearing down on a car stalled on the railroad tracks. The same word is used in Matthew 26:46-47, where Jesus told his sleeping disciples, "Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!" Verse 47 says, "while He was still speaking," Judas came up to betray him. As Darrell Bock well summarized: The point seems to be that with the coming of Jesus and the preaching of the message he commissions, the kingdom has arrived. Even if one prefers the sense of "approach," the kingdom is at least very near.⁶⁷

Accordingly, John undoubtedly believed the advent of the earthly kingdom was imminent. The Messiah would usher in salvation and judgment. John's pronouncement intentionally caused quite a stir among the Jewish people of Palestine. He set the stage for the beginning of Jesus's public ministry. The Coming Kingdom Proclaimed By Jesus When John was put in prison, Jesus began his public Galilean ministry. Matthew 4:17 records that "Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" It is evident that Jesus explicitly adopted John's message as his own. Matthew 4:23 also states that Jesus "went throughout Galilee . . . preaching the good news of the kingdom." His teachings were accompanied by "healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people" (Matthew 4:23; also Matthew 9:35). As with Matthew 3:2, several questions arise with respect to these verses. Did Jesus mean the same thing John meant when he referred to the kingdom? While most scholars agree that John the Baptist had the Old Testament concept of kingdom in mind when he spoke of the kingdom of heaven, the question of whether Jesus meant the same thing has been hotly debated.⁶⁸ Saucy states:

Most interpreters have understood him to mean by the kingdom of God . . . something akin to the realm of spiritual salvation presently enjoyed in the church. In contrast to John's understanding of 'the apocalyptic hope of the visitation of God to inaugurate the Kingdom of God in the age to come,' Jesus' meaning is said to be 'no apocalyptic Kingdom but a present salvation.' The 'nationalistic elements in the Jewish concept of the kingdom' are purged away 'to lay stress on the spiritual elements.'⁶⁹

Saucy rightly takes issue with this interpretation: "It is inconceivable that Jesus, knowing the understanding of his hearers, would not have immediately sought to correct their thinking if he in fact had another concept of the kingdom in mind."⁷⁰ Accordingly, it simply cannot be said that Jesus "purged" the nationalistic elements of the kingdom from his message. He never ignored the final consummation of the kingdom or even the uniquely Jewish flavor of the millennial reign (see Matthew 24:1-51; Matthew 25:1-46). The key to interpreting Jesus's view of the kingdom is to understand that Matthew 4:17 and 4:23 are summary statements of Jesus's message. When that message is considered as a whole, it is apparent that Jesus's teachings on the kingdom had a two-fold emphasis: (1) the standard of conduct for the kingdom now and (2) the final consummation of the kingdom later. As discussed later in this paper, Jesus made it clear that the kingdom would not be consummated during His first advent. His focus on the spiritual dimensions of the kingdom, the righteousness of kingdom citizens, was not to the exclusion of the millennial period, but in conjunction with and preparation for it. As Saucy states: "The full Old Testament kingdom that had been proclaimed prior to that time was not going to be established now; the kingdom would, however, be present in the world in spiritual power during the interim."⁷¹ What did Jesus mean when he said the kingdom was at hand?

John believed that a unified kingdom (salvation and reign) was imminent. As explained above, Jesus did not modify John's basic message. He did, however, in the course of progressive biblical revelation, break it out into its temporal components and emphasize each element separately.

Phase 1: At times, Jesus spoke of the kingdom as being present in the person of the king. This aspect was more than "at hand;" it had already arrived. (Matthew 12:28).

Phase II: At other times, Jesus spoke of the kingdom as being present in a "mystery" phase, which appears to refer to more than himself and less than the final consummation. It is valid to speak of this aspect of the kingdom as "at hand" in the sense of being inevitably inaugurated. (Matthew 13:1-58).

Phase III: At still other times, Jesus spoke of the kingdom in its fullness. (Matthew 24:1-51; Matthew 25:1-46). This final culmination of the kingdom was "at hand" only in the sense that it could come at any moment, but no one—not even Jesus—knew the day or the hour (Matthew 24:36). Only the Father knew the time or epochs which he had fixed by his own authority (Acts 1:6-7). By breaking out the different phases of the kingdom into their temporal components, Jesus did indeed diverge from the message of John the Baptist. The Coming Kingdom Proclaimed By The Disciples In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus called his twelve disciples together and commissioned them to go throughout Israel preaching the message that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 10:7). The content of their message was identical to the message of Jesus and John before him. Carson is undoubtedly right in assuming that "repent" is not mentioned but presupposed.⁷² The kingdom was to be authenticated by the same miracles performed by Jesus: healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing those who have leprosy, and driving out demons. (Matthew 10:8). This foreshadows Phase II of the progressive eschatological kingdom development—the mystery phase, in which the kingdom is played out through the work of kingdom citizens after the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

2.04. The Inauguration of the Kingdom

Chapter Four: The Inauguration of the Kingdom The Kingdom Advances In Matthew 11:1-30, the imprisoned John the Baptist has heard of Jesus's teachings and miracles, and he sent several disciples to ask whether Jesus was the Messiah or whether he should expect another. (Matthew 11:1-3). John was likely baffled by Jesus's teachings regarding the kingdom because he had envisioned the kingdom (as did the Old Testament prophets) as a unified event of salvation and judgment. He expected the Messiah to bring both political and spiritual redemption to the people of Israel. Jesus's emphasis on the spiritual aspects of the kingdom, seemingly to the exclusion of the political element, did not fit his conception of what the Messiah would be like. He needed comfort and reassurance.

Jesus provided it. He told John's disciples to go back and report to John the many Messianic signs performed by Jesus—"the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." (Matthew 11:4-5).

Then Jesus said something enigmatic. He told the listening crowd, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matthew 11:11). Jesus thus drew a sharp line between John and the kingdom citizen. Both France and Carson believe Jesus was saying in this statement that John stood outside the kingdom of heaven.⁷³ Jesus was not suggesting that John was not a believer; rather, his point was that John was the last of the Old Testament saints and, as such, he stood on the threshold of the eschatological kingdom. This implies that the kingdom was yet future during John's public ministry.

Then Jesus said something even more strange: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force." (Matthew 11:12). The phrase "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence" (NASB) has been variously interpreted. The NIV states that the kingdom "has been forcefully advancing." The verb *biazetai* holds the key to the correct view. Carson believes that it supports the NIV rendering of the passage because it is in the middle form.⁷⁴ This implies that "the kingdom has come with holy power and magnificent energy that has been pushing back the frontiers of darkness."⁷⁵ Moreover, instead of violent men taking over in a negative sense, forceful men take hold of the kingdom in a positive sense. As Carson sums up this difficult passage, "from the days of the Baptist—i.e., from the beginning of John's ministry—the kingdom has been forcefully advancing But it has not swept all opposition away, as John expected."⁷⁶

Carson thus views this verse as teaching that during John's time of ministry, the kingdom of God was inaugurated.⁷⁷ France similarly interprets this verse as meaning that John's fate was "the foretaste of the conflicts which are already beginning to affect the new order" and that "God's kingdom is clearly seen as already present, as a force sufficiently dynamic to provoke violent reaction."⁷⁸ In other words, the kingdom had come in some preliminary way at the time Jesus began his public ministry, after John had been put in prison (Matthew 4:12), through Jesus's

powerful preaching and miracles. The Kingdom of God Has Come Upon You

If there is any doubt remaining that the kingdom of God has arrived in an inaugural sense with the first advent of Christ, Jesus swept it aside by proclaiming in Matthew 12:28 that “the kingdom of God has come upon you.” Saucy has said in this regard:

Though the emphasis of the teaching of Jesus was on the futurity of the kingdom, His total message concerning the kingdom also included its presence and the possibility of men and women entering the kingdom now. He said it was present in the power of the Holy Spirit when He cast out demons (Matthew 12:28), and therefore it can be understood as having been present in all His miraculous works.⁷⁹

Hence, Jesus’s driving out demons, by the power of the Holy Spirit, “prove[s] that the kingdom age has already dawned.”⁸⁰ The words “has come upon” (ephthasen) suggests an arrival which catches unawares.⁸¹ Interestingly, Glasscock agrees: “the only logical conclusion was that the kingdom of God had come.”⁸² How had the kingdom of God come during Jesus’s earthly ministry?

Blaising and Bock summarize:

Whereas Jesus advances the tradition of the Old Testament prophets by predicting the coming of the eschatological kingdom with Himself as Messiah, there are some occasions in the Gospels when He speaks of the kingdom as being present in His own day. In these sayings, the kingdom is present in the sense that He Himself, the King of that kingdom, is present among them, displaying in Himself and in His activity the characteristics of the eschatological kingdom.⁸³ They distinguish the kingdom as present in Jesus’s pre-cross ministry from the kingdom in its post-cross sense: The difference . . . is not only a difference between His service of suffering and His future glory, but also the difference between the kingdom being in Jesus and the kingdom being universally established. The kingdom was revealed in and through Jesus’ activity. It was quite dynamic, being seen in displays of His power. However, He did not at that time institute the kingdom as an abiding structure for the world. It was only after the cross that He inaugurated certain aspects of the kingdom in an institutional sense.⁸⁴

Revised dispensationalists disagree. Although Walvoord does not treat 12:28 in his commentary on Matthew, Pentecost interprets the verse to mean that “since Christ did cast out demons by God’s power, it must be concluded that His offer of the kingdom was genuine and He was its bona fide King.⁸⁵ In my view, this does not do justice to the passage. The sense is that the kingdom has “just arrived.”⁸⁶ God’s kingdom has come; it is present in his person.⁸⁷

Revised dispensationalists consider chapter 12 to be a pivotal passage to their central tenet that Jewish rejection of Jesus resulted in a postponement of a kingdom offer. As Pentecost has asserted, “the nation had rejected Him and the kingdom had to be postponed.”⁸⁸

Many critics have had trouble with the idea that the kingdom was placed in abeyance because of the rejection of the Jewish religious leaders. Their critique has, for the most part, focused on the divine side of the equation. For example, Ernest C. Reisinger declares: My Bible knows nothing about a God who does not have power to perform His plan. The God of the Bible is sovereign in creation, sovereign in redemption, and sovereign in providence. He is all-wise in planning and all powerful in performing.⁸⁹ Kenneth Barker likewise asserts:

I would not use such terminology. The omniscient, sovereign God never ‘postpones’ anything. Israel’s rejection of their Messiah at his first advent—and along with him, the full expression of the theocratic kingdom at that time—was foreseen by God and, in fact, was part of God’s plan to accomplish redemption through the “sufferings of Christ.”⁹⁰

Walvoord defends the postponement view against these attacks by stating that “what is postponed from a human standpoint is not postponed from the divine standpoint” because “with God, all contingencies and seeming changes of direction are known from eternity past, and there is no change of God’s central purpose.”⁹¹ Walvoord should be applauded for recognizing that God’s redemptive plan for humanity was centered around the cross and that His plan never changed. Still, the question remains: given this truth, why use postponement language at all? Indeed, from the “human standpoint,” was the kingdom really postponed?

It seems to me that, even from a human perspective, a postponement of the kingdom is hard to square with the biblical data. If the kingdom was postponed in chapter 12, why did Jesus say in Matthew 12:28 that the kingdom “has come”? In addition, why did he proceed in chapter 13 to discuss the nature of the kingdom in his parables?

Revised dispensationalists appear to be inconsistent in holding that the eschatological kingdom was postponed in chapter 12 but that another “mystery form” of the kingdom was presented in chapter 13. For example, Merrill Unger states that the kingdom of heaven is “now being consummated in this present age” as described in the “seven ‘mysteries of the kingdom’” in Matthew 13.⁹² John Walvoord says that “in Matthew 13:1-58, the kingdom in its present mystery form is revealed, that is the rule of God over the earth in the hearts of believers during the present age when the King is absent.”⁹³ But where is the evidence that the form of the kingdom in Matthew 13:1-58 is a separate kingdom from the eschatological kingdom prophesied by John and announced as “at hand” by Jesus? Isn’t it better to simply view the “mystery” as the revealing of a heretofore hidden phase of the same eschatological kingdom declared as “upon you” in Matthew 12:28?

Moreover, Matthew 12:28 is not the only verse to support a presently inaugurated kingdom. Matthew 19:12 also refers to the inaugurated form of the kingdom. There, in teaching on marriage and divorce, Jesus made the following comment: “For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.” Jesus’s point was that some believers can remain single rather than get married “for the sake of the kingdom” or as Carson puts it, “because of its claims and interests.”⁹⁴ This must be a reference to the present kingdom (Cf. Matthew 22:30).

Matthew 16:27-28 also appears to discuss the inaugurated form of the kingdom. There, Jesus told the disciples that “there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” Although some commentators take this enigmatic passage to refer to the Transfiguration,⁹⁵ it seems to me that Carson is right in observing that this would be “an extraordinary way to refer to Peter, James and John, who witness the Transfiguration a mere six days later.”⁹⁶ The better fit is that this is “a more general reference . . . to the manifestation of Christ’s kingly reign exhibited after the Resurrection in a host of ways, not the least of them being the rapid multiplication of disciples and the mission to the Gentiles.”⁹⁷

The Mystery of the Kingdom In chapter 13, immediately after the rejection of his Messiahship by the Galilean Pharisees, Jesus teaches in parables. Parables were designed to reveal the truth to believers and hide the truth from unbelievers (13:13-15). Jesus told his disciples, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted" (13:11). Walvoord states that the parables in Matthew 13:1-58 were designed "to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom." He believes that these mysteries were hidden in the Old Testament and revealed in the New Testament. They "deal with the period between the first and second advent of Christ and not the millennial kingdom which will follow the second coming."⁹⁸ After the Jewish leaders' rejection of Jesus as Messiah and the resulting postponement of the kingdom, Jesus introduced "a new method of teaching."⁹⁹

Carson essentially agrees that the rising opposition to Jesus encouraged his greater and greater use of parables. However, he disagrees that there was a "sudden switch in method."¹⁰⁰ Jesus had taught in parables before (cf. Luke 5:36; Luke 6:29). Carson also disagrees that the kingdom undergoes a radical shift with the mention of mystery."¹⁰¹ On the other hand, he agrees that Jesus introduced a "new truth" about the kingdom:

[T]he 'mystery of the Kingdom is the coming of the Kingdom into history in advance of its apocalyptic manifestation.' That God would bring in his kingdom was no secret. All Jews looked forward to it. 'The new truth, now given to men by revelation in the person and mission of Jesus, is that the Kingdom which is to come finally in apocalyptic power, as foreseen by Daniel, has in fact entered the world in advance in a hidden form to work secretly within and among men.¹⁰² The mystery phase is thus not a separate kingdom from that which preceded it and that which will follow; it is a phase or form of the same eschatological kingdom. It is "the presence of 'sons of the kingdom' (that is, people who truly belong to the eschatological kingdom) in the world prior to the coming of the Son of Man."¹⁰³ What do the parables teach about the mystery phase of the kingdom? The parable of the soils (Matthew 13:3-9) teaches that the mystery phase will involve some who believe and many who will not believe.¹⁰⁴ The parable of the weeds (Matthew 13:24-30, Matthew 13:36-43) explains how the kingdom can be present in the world while not yet wiping out all opposition.¹⁰⁵ Jesus's explanation in verse 41 is interesting. He says that, "at the end of the age," the Son of Man will "weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil" (NIV). This suggests that the kingdom exists before the Son of Man returns to establish his millennial kingdom. The parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32) explains that, while the kingdom has a small beginning, it is organically connected to the kingdom in its future glory.¹⁰⁶ This organic development militates against speaking of the inaugurated and consummated phases of the kingdom as separate kingdoms. The parable of the yeast (Matthew 13:33) has essentially the same meaning. The parables of the treasure and pearl speak of the supreme importance and value of the kingdom.¹⁰⁷ The parable of the householder shows that Jesus's teachings are new and revolutionary (Matthew 13:52).¹⁰⁸ The old treasure is the already revealed prophecies about the kingdom. The new treasures are the new knowledge imparted by Jesus with regard to the mystery phase of the kingdom. The new complements the old to create one "treasure," the kingdom of heaven.¹⁰⁹

2.05. Kingdom Living

Chapter Five:

Kingdom Living The Sermon on the Mount By now, it should not be surprising that there are many views on the proper interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. If the kingdom is solely future in orientation, then the logical conclusion is that the Sermon is not intended for believers of any age other than the millennial period.¹¹⁰ Quite understandably, most dispensationalists recoil from such a view, holding instead that the “full, non-fudging, unadjusted fulfillment” is for the millennial age, but that the Sermon is “applicable and profitable” to believers in the church age.¹¹¹ How this can be true without adopting a non-literal hermeneutic of the Sermon is unclear. The better view, it seems to me, is that the Sermon on the Mount describes the righteous character of a kingdom citizen—one who is living in the kingdom as it exists in its mystery phase here and now (cf. Matthew 5:20). France called the Sermon a “manifesto setting out the nature of life in the kingdom of heaven.”¹¹² Lloyd-Jones calls it “a perfect picture of the life of the kingdom of God.”¹¹³ In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went to great pains to emphasize the spiritual elements of the kingdom. As Carson has observed, the “unifying theme of the sermon is the kingdom of heaven.” For example, the theme of the kingdom envelopes the Beatitudes. The first Beatitude is “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3), while the last is “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10). This suggests to Carson that the intervening Beatitudes are kingdom blessings as well.¹¹⁴ The theme of kingdom is also at the heart of the Lord’s Prayer (“Thy kingdom come”) (Matthew 6:9). Carson has stated that to pray this petition is “simultaneously to ask that God’s saving, royal rule be extended now as people bow in submission to him and already taste the eschatological blessing of salvation and to cry for the consummation of the kingdom.”¹¹⁵ The kingdom “is breaking in under Christ’s ministry, but it is not consummated till the end of the age.” We should therefore pray “for its extension as well as for its unqualified manifestation.”¹¹⁶ The theme of kingdom is similarly prominent in terms of a kingdom citizen’s perspective (“seek first His kingdom and His righteousness”) (Matthew 6:33). Carson puts it well: “To seek first the kingdom . . . is to desire above all to enter into, submit to, and participate in spreading the news of the saving reign of God, the messianic kingdom already inaugurated by Jesus, and to live so as to store up treasures in heaven in the prospect of the kingdom’s consummation.”¹¹⁷

Finally, at the close of the Sermon on the Mount, the theme of kingdom is closely aligned with salvation (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus alone decrees who will enter into the kingdom (Matthew 7:21-23). Hence, Carson notes that the Sermon on the Mount equates entering the kingdom with entering life.¹¹⁸ Jesus’s Later Teaching on Kingdom Living At the close of his earthly ministry, Jesus came back to the topic of kingdom living. In Matthew 18:1-4, Jesus instructed his chosen disciples on humility: “[U]nless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (See also Matthew 19:14). He taught that a kingdom citizen must continuously and repeatedly forgive others (Matthew 18:21-35).

Matthew 19:23-26 also points out the spiritual predominance of Jesus's kingdom teachings. Jesus told his disciples that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." The disciples understood by this time that the kingdom involved more than a mere political reign. As Glasscock observed: "Their question, 'Who then can be saved?' revealed the connection in their mind between entering the kingdom of heaven (v. 23) with being saved (v. 25)."¹¹⁹

2.06. The Consummation of the Kingdom

Chapter Six: The Consummation of the Kingdom

Although Jesus's teachings during the first part of his ministry, as recorded in Matthew, focused on the presently inaugurated aspects of the kingdom, Jesus certainly did not neglect the topic of fulfillment of the kingdom. For example, in Matthew 8:11-12, Jesus foreshadowed the fact that, in the millennial kingdom, Gentiles would be included while the Jews who rejected their Messiah would be left out. This same teaching was repeated in Matthew 21:42-43. As Jesus's death grew closer, his teachings on the end of the age grew more prominent. Hence, Matthew 24:1-51 through 25 contain the Olivet Discourse, a discourse about the coming culmination of the kingdom given by Jesus during His last week before the crucifixion. In Matthew 24:3, the disciples asked Jesus, "what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Glasscock states that "the end of the age" is a clear reference to "the closure of Israel's rebellion and the beginning of the glorious kingdom."¹²⁰

Jesus responded by describing in significant detail the end of the age: the Tribulation period (Matthew 24:4-25), the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:26-31), and the regathering of true Israel at the beginning of the millennium (Matthew 24:36-41).¹²¹ Jesus then offered several parables to demonstrate the certainty of his coming. (Matthew 24:42-51; Matthew 25:1-30). Matthew 25:31-46 describes the judgment on the Gentile nations that closes the end of the age and ushers in the millennial period. Matthew 25:34 states that Jesus will invite Gentiles into the kingdom which had been "prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Glasscock rightly notes: The kingdom Messiah is establishing will include the Gentiles, and not as a last-minute adjustment to God's plan but determined from the very foundation of the world (*katholes kosmou*). The messianic kingdom, therefore, was predetermined, before the world was put into operation, to be a place for the human race to experience the divine kingship of God's Anointed.¹²² In Matthew 26:1-75, Jesus and the disciples were eating the Passover meal and Jesus instructed the disciples on the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. At this time, he told them, "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29). In other words, Jesus will not participate again in the Lord's Supper until "the consummation" when he "will sit down with them at the messianic banquet."¹²³

2.07. Some Closing Thoughts on the Kingdom

Chapter Seven:

Some Closing Thoughts on the Kingdom

What does all this mean? It seems to me that the following points can be concluded from the teachings on the kingdom in Matthew's gospel:

1. The kingdom of God in Matthew is unified and holistic. All at the same time, it is spiritual, material, ethical, social, political, physical and ecclesiastical.
2. At the same time, the kingdom has temporal components.
3. The kingdom's nearness was tied to the first phase of Jesus's earthly ministry. In proclaiming that the kingdom was "near," Jesus suggested "not that the kingdom has arrived in fullness but that signs of its initial stages have come."¹²⁴
4. The kingdom began to arrive with Jesus's ministry (Phase 1). It was present in the person of the King and the dynamic power that He exercised over demons, disease and death.
5. The kingdom advanced, and continues to advance, in its mystery phase (Phase II) during the inter-advent age. It is played out through the work of kingdom citizens during this present age. The Sermon on the Mount and other standards of kingdom living articulated by Jesus apply completely and directly to kingdom citizens in this inter-advent age.
6. The consummation of the kingdom of God on earth in the form of a thousand year millennial reign (Phase III) is the ultimate goal in biblical history. This event ushers in the final eternal state.¹²⁵ Several additional observations are also required.

First, this "already - not yet" framework, described above, is a dispensational framework. It does not lead to amillennialism or historic premillennialism. Indeed, dispensationalism has always been an evolving system, continually correcting weaknesses exposed through the criticism of others. This is one of its strengths.¹²⁶

Second, many revised dispensationalists implicitly adopt an "already - not yet" approach but refuse to use the terminology, presumably, out of fear of being associated with George Ladd. But as Bock stated in *Israel, Dispensationalism and the Church*: "One should not fear 'already and not yet' terminology since all Bible students accept its presence in soteriology: 'I am saved (i.e., justified) already—but I am not yet saved (i.e., glorified) is good theology.'¹²⁷

Third, Matthew does not directly address the issue of whether Phase II of the eschatological kingdom is a Davidic phase or something less. Revised dispensationalists affirm that the "mystery form" of the kingdom is spiritual in nature. However, they are not willing to say that it is the same as the eschatological kingdom to come. In contrast, progressive dispensationalists hold that Jesus is already inaugurated as the Davidic king and is now reigning on the throne of David.¹²⁸ This is

probably the principal distinguishing point between the two forms of dispensationalism.¹²⁹ However, resolution of this issue can only come from an exegetical study of Acts.

Fourth, there appears to be a clear link between the coming of Phase II of the kingdom and the eschatological coming of the Holy Spirit. This needs to be studied in more detail. The debates over the nature of the kingdom of God will continue. However, a careful, exegetical study of the use of the kingdom in Matthew provides at least a framework for continued study. The kingdom came in the presence of Jesus Christ as King. It advances through the lives of kingdom citizens in the present age. It will come fully and completely with the second advent of Jesus Christ. Come, Lord Jesus.

1 Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1962), p. xi.

2 Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), p. 81.

3 John Bright, *The Kingdom of God* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), pp. 7, 197, quoted in Herman A. Hoyt, "Dispensational Premillennialism" in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), p. 64.

4 D. A. Carson, *Matthew, Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), p. 101.

5 See Darrell L. Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Christ" in Blaising & Bock, ed., *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992); Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994-1996).

6 George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised, Donald Hagner, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993, reprinted 1997), p. 55; Ridderbos, p. xii.

7 Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983-1985), p. 1157.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Ridderbos, p. xiv.

10 Erickson, p. 1158.

11 Ladd, p. 55; Ridderbos, p. xix.

12 Ladd, p. 56; Ridderbos, p. xxxi.

13 I use this term to describe those dispensationalists who followed and modified the system of Darby, Scofield and Chafer. Revised dispensationalists wrote primarily from the 1950s through the late 1970s (though some are active into the present). Their numbers include John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, and J. Dwight Pentecost. See Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), p. 22.

14 Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), p. 148.

15 John F. Walvoord, *Major Bible Prophecies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), p. 218.

16 Walvoord, Major Bible Prophecies, p. 207. See also Herman A. Hoyt, "Dispensational Premillennialism," in *The Meaning of the Millennium*, p. 85-90.

17 Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, p. 97.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid, quoting Mark Saucy, "The Kingdom of God Sayings in Matthew, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 151 (April-June 1994): 196.

20 John F. Walvoord, *Matthew - Thy Kingdom Come* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), p. 9.

21 Ibid, p. 13.

22 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* vol. II (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, reprinted 1995), p. 604-05.

23 D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959-1960, reprinted 1997), p. 16.

24 New Geneva Study Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), note on Matthew 3:2 "kingdom of heaven."

25 Ibid.

26 "The Kingdom of God" in Ibid, p. 1638.

27 See generally, Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1962); George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised, Donald Hagner, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993, reprinted 1997).

28 Richard Gaffin, "A Cessationist View" in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, Wayne A. Grudem, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), p. 29.

29 Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Christ," p. 46.

30 Ibid.

31 See Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994-1996). The companion volume on Acts is forthcoming.

32 Carson, p. 101.

33 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1958), p. 427.

34 Ibid, p. 427-28.

35 G.E. Ladd, "Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), p. 607.

36 Walvoord, *Matthew - Thy Kingdom Come*, p. 30; W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), s.v. 'Kingdom', reproduced in *Biblesoft, PC Study Bible [CD-ROM]* (Seattle Wash. 1992-1996).

- 37 E.g., Ed Glasscock, Matthew, Moody Gospel Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1997), p. 70; Carson, p. 100; Ladd, "Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven," p. 607; Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume, ed. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1985, reprinted 1992), s.v. "basileia."
- 38 Alva McClain, "The Greatness of the Kingdom - Part I" Bibliotheca Sacra 112, no. 145 (1955) (republished on CD-ROM by Logos Research Systems, Oak Harbor, WA, 1997).
- 39 See, e.g., G.E. Ladd, "Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven," p. 608.
- 40 W.E. Vine, Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (republished on CD-ROM by Logos Research Systems, Oak Harbor, WA, 1997), s.v. "basileia."
- 41 Strong's Enhanced Lexicon (republished on CD-ROM by Logos Research Systems, Oak Harbor, WA, 1997), s.v. "basileia."
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- 47 Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, Progressive Dispensationalism (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), p. 217.
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- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid.
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- 53 McClain, "The Greatness of the Kingdom - Part I." See also Herman A. Hoyt, "Dispensational Premillennialism," in The Meaning of the Millennium, p. 82-84.
- 54 Walvoord, Matthew - Thy Kingdom Come, p. 30.
- 55 R.T. France, Matthew, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 90.
- 56 Carson, p. 100.
- 57 McClain, "The Greatness of the Kingdom - Part III" Bibliotheca Sacra, 112, no. 447 (1955).

- 58 Ladd, "Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven," p. 609.
- 59 Walvoord, Matthew - Thy Kingdom Come, p. 30.
- 60 Ibid, p. 38.
- 61 Carson, p. 117.
- 62 France, p. 90-91.
- 63 Carson, p. 117.
- 64 Glasscock, p. 70.
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- 66 Ibid, s.v. "eggizo."
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- 68 Saucy, The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism, p. 83.
- 69 Ibid, p. 83-84.
- 70 Ibid, p. 87; Blaising and Bock, Progressive Dispensationalism, p. 241.
- 71 Saucy, p. 86.
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- 73 France, p. 194; Carson, p. 265.
- 74 Carson, p. 266.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Ibid, p. 267 77 Ibid, p. 266.
- 78 France, p. 196.
- 79 Robert Saucy, "The Presence of the Kingdom and the Life in the Church," Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. 145, issue 577 (1988) (republished on CD-ROM by Logos Research Systems, Oak Harbor, WA, 1997).
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- 81 France, p. 209.
- 82 Glasscock, p. 270.
- 83 Blaising and Bock, p. 248.
- 84 Ibid, p. 251.

- 85 J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), p. 206.
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- 88 Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), p. 367. See also Hoyt, p. 85-90.
- 89 Ernest C. Reisinger, *Lord & Christ* (Phillipsburgh, NJ: P&R, 1994), p. 22.
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- 91 Walvoord, *Major Bible Prophecies*, p. 207.
- 92 Merrill Unger, *New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. 'Messiah', reproduced in Biblesoft, *PC Study Bible [CD-ROM]* (Seattle Wash. 1992-1996).
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- 105 Carson, p. 317.
- 106 Ibid, p. 318.
- 107 Ibid, p. 328-29.
- 108 France, p. 231.

109 Blaising and Bock, p. 254.

110 In fact, this was the view of L.S. Chafer and the original Scofield Bible. See Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), p. 99.

111 *Ibid*, p. 100. See also Walvoord, *Matthew - Thy Kingdom Come*, p. 44-45.

112 France, p. 106.

113 Lloyd-Jones, p. 16.

114 Carson, p. 132.

115 *Ibid*, p. 170.

116 *Ibid*.

117 *Ibid*, p. 181-82.

118 Carson, p. 101.

119 Glasscock, p. 393.

120 Glasscock, p. 464.

121 See generally Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 275-280.

122 Glasscock, p. 490.

123 Carson, p. 539.

124 Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Christ," p. 40.

125 Robert Saucy, p. 81.

126 See Craig A. Blaising, "Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 145, issue 579 (1988).

127 Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Christ," p. 46.

128 See Blaising & Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, pp. 174-194.

129 See Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, pp. 167-170.

3. Theology Adrift

Theology Adrift: The Early Church Fathers and Their Views of Eschatology Study By: Matthew Allen

1. Introduction.
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3.01. Introduction

Chapter One:

Introduction In 1962, philosopher-scientist Thomas Kuhn coined the term "paradigm shift" to signal a massive change in the way a community thinks about a particular topic.¹ Examples of paradigm shifts include Copernicus's discovery that the earth revolves around the sun, Einstein's theory of relativity, and Darwin's theory of evolution. Each changed the world of thought (some for better, some for worse) in a fundamental way. From a political perspective, Constantine's Edict of Milan, issued in AD 313, constituted the formal beginning of a major paradigm shift that signaled the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the medieval period. That edict legitimated Christianity and impressed upon it the Empire's stamp of approval. It provided in pertinent part:

We grant both to Christians and to all men freedom to follow whatever religion each one wishes, in order that whatever divinity there is in the seat of heaven may be appeased and made propitious towards us and towards all who have been set under our power. . . . And since these same Christians are known to have possessed not only the places in which they had the habit of assembling but other property too which belongs by right to their body. . . you will order all this property. . . to be given back without any equivocation or dispute to all those same Christians.²

While the edict was couched in terms of tolerance to all forms of religion, its significance and historical impact lies in the fact that its author, Constantine, was the first Roman emperor openly sympathetic to Christianity.³ From a theological perspective -- specifically an eschatological one -- the Edict of Milan also signaled a monumental paradigm shift -- from the well-grounded premillennialism of the ancient church fathers to the amillennialism or postmillennialism that would dominate eschatological thinking from the fourth century AD to at least the middle part of the nineteenth century.⁴ Yet, as explored below, the groundwork for this shift was laid long before Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in AD 313. In the two centuries that led up to the edict, two crucial interpretive errors found their way into the church that made conditions ripe for the paradigm shift incident to the Edict of Milan. The second century fathers failed to keep clear the biblical distinction between Israel and the church. Then, the third century fathers abandoned a more-or-less literal method of interpreting the Bible in favor of Origen's allegorical-spiritualized hermeneutic. Once the distinction between Israel and the church became blurred, once a literal hermeneutic was lost, with these foundations removed, the societal changes occasioned by the Edict of Milan caused fourth century fathers to reject premillennialism in favor of Augustinian amillennialism. This paper explores these two interpretive errors on the part of the post-apostolic fathers that set the doctrine of eschatology adrift from its secure biblical moorings and resulted in an acute paradigm shift from premillennialism to amillennialism. But first we must address a foundational question: Why do we care? Why does it matter what the early church father believed about eschatology anyway? Don't we as conservative Protestants embrace sola Scriptura? Isn't that enough? The answer to these questions is discussed in Chapter Two.

3.02. Why Study the Eschatological Views of the Early Church Fathers

Chapter Two:

Why Study the Eschatological Views of the Early Church Fathers

It is a fair question to ask: "Why do we care about the eschatological views of the early church fathers?" We as evangelicals emphatically agree with Hodge that "the true method of theology. . . assumes that the Bible contains all the facts or truths which form the contents of theology."⁵ As Ryrie cogently put it: The fact that something was taught in the first century does not make it right (unless taught in the canonical Scriptures), and the fact that something was not taught until the nineteenth century does not make it wrong unless, of course, it is unscriptural.⁶ In the words of our Baptist forefathers: "The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience" and "the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: Unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men."⁷ Therefore, since everything we need for an adequate understanding of doctrine is to be found in the Bible, are the doctrinal positions of our predecessors irrelevant to our understanding of theology? Not at all. There is, in fact, much value in studying historical theology.⁸ The value is interpretive. As stated by Erickson, historical theology "makes us more self-conscious and self-critical, more aware of our own presuppositions."⁹ It assists us in learning to "do theology" by showing us "how others have done it before us."¹⁰ Finally, it "may provide a means of evaluating a particular idea."¹¹ It shows us how a particular doctrine began, evolved and, importantly for purposes of this paper, "sometimes deviated from biblical truth." In sum, "historical theology attempts to understand the formation of doctrines, their development and change -- for better or worse."¹² Not surprisingly, the period of the early church fathers is considered the most important in historical theology.¹³ This is true for two reasons: First, the early church fathers were "close to the events of the life of Christ and the apostolic era." Moreover, the second century apologists took the lead in defending Christianity against its first barrage of intellectual criticism.¹⁴

Thus, it behooves us to understand the eschatological views of the early church fathers. This is especially so since one charge frequently laid against dispensational premillennialists is that our system cannot pass the test of historical theology. Dispensationalism cannot be true, so the assertion goes, because it is recent in origin.¹⁵ Charles Ryrie calls this the "historical attack."¹⁶ Of course, the historical attack on dispensational premillennialism ignores the overwhelming evidence that the church fathers of the first three centuries AD were uniformly premillennial, not amillennial or postmillennial. It also fails to recognize that a change in church dogma does not necessarily indicate a change for the better. Indeed, one can profitably learn as much from the mistakes of those who come before us as from their triumphs. Unfortunately, at least in the area of eschatology, the progression of doctrinal understanding leading up to the paradigm shift

occasioned by the Edict of Milan was not for the better. It involved two basic interpretive errors that remain with us today. The first critical error of the second century fathers -- the failure to keep distinct the nation of Israel and the church -- is discussed in Chapter Three.

3.03. The First Error: Blurring the Distinction Between Israel and the Church

Chapter Three: The First Error: Blurring the Distinction Between Israel and the Church THE FIRST ERROR: A fundamental tenet of dispensationalism is the belief that Israel and the church are distinct peoples of God.¹⁷ Indeed, a simple concordance search of the word "Israel" in the New Testament will lead to the conclusion that the New Testament writers never equated the church with the nation of Israel.¹⁸

However, what the New Testament writers did not do, the post-apostolic fathers quickly did. For example, around the turn of the first century AD, Clement appears to have ascribed to the church the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant in his Epistle to the Corinthians:

Let us then draw near to Him with holiness of spirit, lifting up pure and undefiled hands unto Him, loving our gracious and merciful Father, who has made us partakers in the blessings of His elect. For thus it is written, When the Most High divided the nations, when He scattered the sons of Adam, He fixed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God. His people Jacob became the portion of the Lord, and Israel the lot of His inheritance. And in another place [the Scripture] saith, Behold, the Lord taketh unto Himself a nation out of the midst of the nations, as a man takes the first-fruits of his threshing-floor; and from that nation shall come forth the Most Holy. Seeing, therefore, that we are the portion of the Holy One, let us do all those things which pertain to holiness, . . .¹⁹

While Clement's statement could perhaps be seen as ambiguous, the following assertions of Justin Martyr in Dialogue with Trypho (around AD 160) cannot:

[1] And Trypho remarked, What is this you say? that none of us shall inherit anything on the holy mountain of God? And I replied, I do not say so; but those who have persecuted and do persecute Christ, if they do not repent, shall not inherit anything on the holy mountain. But the Gentiles, who have believed on Him, and have repented of the sins which they have committed, they shall receive the inheritance along with the patriarchs and the prophets, and the just men who are descended from Jacob, even although they neither keep the Sabbath, nor are circumcised, nor observe the feasts. Assuredly they shall receive the holy inheritance of God.²⁰

[2] What larger measure of grace, then, did Christ bestow on Abraham? This, namely, that He called him with His voice by the like calling, telling him to quit the land wherein he dwelt. And He has called all of us by that voice, and we have left already the way of living in which we used to spend our days, passing our time in evil after the fashions of the other inhabitants of the earth; and along with Abraham we shall inherit the holy land, when we shall receive the inheritance for an endless eternity, being children of Abraham through the like faith. For as he believed the voice of God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, in like manner we having believed God's voice spoken by the apostles of Christ, and promulgated to us by the prophets, have renounced even to death all the things of the world. Accordingly, He promises to him a nation of similar faith,

God-fearing, righteous, and delighting the Father; but it is not you, 'in whom is no faith.'²¹

[3] What, then? says Trypho; are you Israel? and speaks He such things of you? "As therefore from the one man Jacob, who was surnamed Israel, all your nation has been called Jacob and Israel; so we from Christ, who begat us unto God, like Jacob, and Israel, and Judah, and Joseph, and David, are called and are the true sons of God, and keep the commandments of Christ. ²²

According to Saucy, Justin Martyr's statements were "the capstone of a developing tendency in the church to appropriate to itself the attributes and prerogatives that formerly belonged to historical Israel."²³ Saucy states: With Justin's statement, the developing theology of replacement was complete. There was no longer any place for historical Israel in salvation history. The prophecies addressed to this people henceforth belonged to the church.²⁴

Why did the early church fathers so quickly abandon the biblical distinction between Israel and the church? Saucy notes four factors. First was the developing antagonism between Judaism and early Christianity.²⁵ The early strife revealed in the apostolic period (Acts 4:1ff; Acts 5:17ff; Acts 6:12ff; Acts 9:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; Revelation 2:9) was "acerbated by the failure of Christians to support the Jewish revolt against the Roman authorities in AD 66-70, the Christians choosing instead to flee Jerusalem for the safety of Pella, across the Jordan in Decapolis." The schism was again deepened by the Jewish proclamation at the Council of Jamnia (AD 90) that all who departed from the standard Jewish faith were cursed.²⁶ The second factor influencing the thinking of early believers in terms of how they viewed Israel was the two-fold destruction of Jerusalem.²⁷ With the first destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem as a result of the second Jewish revolt in AD 132-135, the early Christians began to see these defeats as evidence of not only God's displeasure on Judaism, but also God's vindication of Christianity. The early Christians thus abandoned any hope for the restoration of the nation of Israel.²⁸ The third rationale was the refusal of Jews to accept Christ.²⁹ As time passed, the church began to realize that the Jewish establishment was not going to change its mind about Jesus Christ. Hence, early Christian leaders began to see Jews less as converts to the gospel and more as enemies of the gospel. The fourth rationale involved the increasingly Gentile composition of the church.³⁰ As the church began to be dominated by people without Jewish roots, the hardening of the Jews' hearts and the waning hope for Israel's conversion made it easier for the increasingly Gentile church to polemicize against Judaism and to seek a replacement theology.³¹ In sum, the basic premise of the early fathers was that God had permanently cut the nation of Israel off as his people as a result of her disobedience and idolatry in the Old Testament and her rejection and crucifixion of Jesus in the New. The faithful of the church age became the "new Israel" of God. They, along with the patriarchs and saints of previous ages, would inherit the promises given to national Israel, and these promises would be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom.³²

Although Saucy calls the reasoning of these post-apostolic fathers "surely understandable,"³³ it was equally certain error. As a result, the dispensationalism of the biblical writers was lost, even though the early fathers continued to hold to a literal millennial kingdom for the church and the Old Testament saints to enter. Moreover, this initial error led to a far more serious problem. The early fathers' willingness to abandon the literal meaning of the biblical text -- in this instance in terms of

the meaning of Israel and the church -- was merely a portense of things to come with regard to the second major error -- the systematic allegorizing and spiritualizing of Scripture. This is discussed in Chapter Four.

3.04. The Second Error: Allegorizing the Text of Scripture

Chapter Four: The Second Error: Allegorizing the Text of Scripture The early apostolic fathers interpreted Scripture according to a "functional hermeneutic," meaning that they applied the text to their own situation, often without regard for its original context.³⁴ For example, Clement included 166 quotations or allusions to the Old Testament in his Epistle to the Corinthians, seeking not so much to discover the Old Testament's message on its own or even with regard to the work of Christ, but more so to offer types and other pictures of Christ as a basis for moral obedience.³⁵ In the seven letters of Ignatius that are believed to be genuine, the Antioch bishop used almost fifty references to 1 Corinthians. In doing so, he characteristically took Pauline expressions from their contexts and used them in his own situations.³⁶ In the latter part of the second century, the church was beset by Gnostic critics who challenged the continuity between the Old and New Testaments. For example, the heretic Marcion rejected the Old Testament in toto. In response, Justin Martyr expanded the "functional hermeneutic" of the early fathers to include a "typological hermeneutic."³⁷ He linked the Old Testament and the New by adopting the view that the Old Testament in its entirety pointed to Jesus. Almost any person or event in the Old Testament profitably could be used to foreshadow the life or work of Christ.³⁸ In fact, Justin saw the Old Testament as being "a specifically Christian book, belonging to the church even more than to the synagogue."³⁹ This approach paved the way for the allegorical interpretive method suggested by Clement of Alexandria and perfected by his successor, Origen.

Clement became the leader of the Alexandrian school in AD 190. He saw the literal meaning of Scripture as being a "starting point" for interpretation. Although it was "suitable for the mass of Christians," God revealed himself to the spiritually advanced through the "deeper meaning" of Scripture. In every passage, a deeper or additional meaning existed beyond the primary or immediate sense.⁴⁰ "The literal sense indicated what was said or done, while the allegorical showed what should be believed."⁴¹

Origen, Clement's successor, took his approach to new levels. Origen (along with Augustine) has been considered the most nimble, creative mind of the early church.⁴² Schaff called him "the greatest scholar of his age, and the most gifted, most industrious, and most cultivated of all the ante-Nicene fathers."⁴³ Origen was a pious man. He "rarely ate flesh, never drank wine; devoted the greater part of the night to prayer and study, and slept on the bare floor."⁴⁴ He was tortured and condemned to the stake in the Decian persecution, and was saved from martyrdom only upon the death of the emperor.⁴⁵ For his faith, then, Origen is to be commended. For his theology, however, he is to be severely castigated.

Schaff's delicate suggestion that Origen's "great defect" was the "neglect of the grammatical and historical sense and his constant desire to find a hidden mystic meaning" in the text of the Bible is sheer understatement.⁴⁶ While Origen did not deny the literal meaning of the text, that most certainly was not his emphasis. Rather, he taught that Scripture has three different, yet complementary meanings: (1) a literal or physical sense, (2) a moral or psychical sense, and (3)

an allegorical or intellectual sense.⁴⁷ To Origen, much of the Bible, if read literally, was intellectually incredible or morally objectionable. An allegorizing interpretation was used to make objectionable passages palatable.⁴⁸ However, as Bruce has observed: "this approach was largely arbitrary, because the approved interpretation depended so largely on the interpreter's personal preference, and in practice it violated the original intention of the Scriptures and almost obliterated the historical relatedness of the revelation they recorded."⁴⁹ Farrar similarly declared: When once the principle of allegory is admitted, when once we start with the rule that whole passages and books of Scripture say one thing when they mean another, the reader is delivered bound hand and foot to the caprice of the interpreter. . . .

Unhappily for the Church, unhappily for any real apprehension of Scripture, the allegorists, in spite of protest, were completely victorious.⁵⁰ The dangers of an allegorical approach to interpreting Scripture are nowhere more evident than with regard to Origen himself. Origen taught the pre-existence of souls, universal salvation and a limited hell, doctrines for which he was posthumously condemned as a heretic.⁵¹ Despite his late condemnation, the damage had long been done. Through Augustine, Origen's allegorical hermeneutic became the backbone of medieval interpretation of the Bible.

Augustine (AD 354-430), perhaps Christendom's most preeminent theologian apart from the apostle Paul, was drawn to the Alexandrian approach to interpreting Scripture by Ambrose, his spiritual mentor. Building on Origen's interpretive system, Augustine suggested a four-fold sense which would later be adopted by medieval theologians: (1) literal; (2) allegorical; (3) tropological or moral; and (4) analogical.⁵² However, later in life, he began to emphasize more strongly the literal and historical sense of Scripture.⁵³ Stanton has even suggested that Augustine came to the view that the historical and doctrinal sections of Scripture should be interpreted by normal literal methods, while prophecy should be interpreted spiritually.⁵⁴ In apparently backtracking from Origen's purely allegorical method of interpretation, Augustine may have been influenced to some degree by the Antioch school of biblical interpretation, which arose in opposition to the Alexandrian school. The Antioch's school's two greatest exegetes, Theodore of Mopsuestia (AD 350-428) and John Chrysostom (AD 354-407), were "anti-allegorical," meaning they rejected interpretations that effectively denied the historical reality of what the scriptural text affirmed.⁵⁵ Chrysostom, in particular, avoided treating Old Testament passages as allegories of Christ and the church and instead sought typological meanings when the text allowed for it.⁵⁶

Chrysostom and the Antiochene school distinguished allegorical interpretation from typological in two primary ways. Typological interpretation attempted to seek out patterns in the Old Testament to which Christ corresponded, while allegorical exegesis depended on accidental similarity of language between two passages. Second, typological interpretation depended on a historical interpretation of the text. The passage, according to the Antiochenes, had only one meaning, the literal, and not two as suggested by the allegorists.⁵⁷ The Antioch school, however, was an aberration. It could not halt the torrent of allegorism spawned by Origen and matured by Augustine.

Whether Augustine personally abandoned Origen's allegorical hermeneutic later in life is open to debate. His legacy, however, at least through the medieval period, was the perpetuation of Origen's allegorical interpretive method. Indeed, with Origen's allegorical hermeneutic firmly in

place, it became an easy jump to amillennialism.

3.05. The Paradigm Shift: From Premillennialism to Amillennialism

Chapter Five: The Paradigm Shift: From Premillennialism to Amillennialism

Philip Schaff, no dispensational premillennialist, observed that "the most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millennarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment."⁵⁸ Schaff noted that the hope of Christ's imminent return "through the whole age of persecution, was a copious fountain of encouragement and comfort under the pains of that martyrdom which sowed in blood the seed of a bountiful harvest for the church."⁵⁹ Even church fathers who committed other errors discussed above, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, remained committed premillennialists. For example, Clement of Rome conspicuously combined premillennialism with a clear belief in the imminency of Christ's return. He wrote: Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, Speedily will He come, and will not tarry; and, The Lord shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Holy One, for whom ye look.⁶⁰

Barnabas, an early member of the Alexandrian school who otherwise spiritualized the Old Testament, expressly taught a millennial reign of Christ on the earth: The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation [thus]: And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it. Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, He finished in six days. This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years. Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. And He rested on the seventh day. This meaneth: when His Son, coming [again], shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the-sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day.⁶¹ In *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus extolled the virtues of the millennium in terms reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets. He also marshalled statements from Papias in support of his literal millennial views: The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth: as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times, and say: The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand dusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me. In like manner [the Lord declared] that . . . all animals feeding [only] on the productions of the earth, should [in those days] become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man. And these things are bone witness to in writing by

Papias, the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled . . . by him. And he says in addition, Now these things are credible to believers. 62 Polycarp asked two questions which reflected a belief in a literal, earthly reign of Christ and his saints: But who of us are ignorant of the judgment of the Lord? Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world? as Paul teaches.⁶³ Justin Martyr was an enthusiastic premillennialist, although by his day, premillennialism had at least some opponents: And Trypho to this replied, I remarked to you sir, that you are very anxious to be safe in all respects, since you cling to the Scriptures. But tell me, do you really admit that this place, Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt; and do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful with Christ and the patriarchs, and the prophets, both the men of our nation, and other proselytes who joined them before your Christ came? or have you given way, and admitted this in order to have the appearance of worsting us in the controversies?

Then I answered, I am not so miserable a fellow, Trypho, as to say one thing and think another. I admitted to you formerly, that I and many others are of this opinion, and [believe] that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware; but, on the other hand, I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise. . . . But I and others, who are fight-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.⁶⁴

Tertullian was also a premillennialist, but he unfortunately based his eschatology on the predictions of Montanist prophets as well as on Scripture.⁶⁵ Indeed, the Montanists' fanatical excesses worked to discredit premillennialism among early church leaders, and opposition to premillennialism began in earnest as a result of the Montanist movement. Caius of Rome attacked millennialism specifically because it was linked to Montanism, and he attempted to trace the belief in a literal millennium to the heretic Cerinthus.⁶⁶ In Alexandria, Origen spiritualized the eschatological prophecies of Scripture, in keeping with his general allegorical hermeneutic.⁶⁷ His student, Dionysius the Great, went so far as to even deny that the apostle John wrote the book of Revelation. Instead, he attributed the Apocalypse to a heretofore unknown elder of the same name.⁶⁸

However, these were mere harbingers of things to come. The crushing blow for premillennialism came with the Edict of Milan in AD 313, by which Constantine reversed the Roman Empire's policy of hostility toward Christianity and accorded it full legal recognition and even favor. Historian Paul Johnson calls the issuance of this edict "one of the decisive events in world history.⁶⁹ With it, no longer was the blood of the martyrs the seed of the church. Rather, Christianity would be, in many ways, a mirror-image of the empire itself. "It was catholic, universal, ecumenical, orderly, international, multi-racial and increasingly legalistic."⁷⁰ It was a huge force for stability.⁷¹ Hence, Christianity after 313 would become worldly, rather than other-worldly. The church's new-found favor from Rome caused dramatic upheavals. Jerome complained that "one who was yesterday a catechumen is today a bishop; another moves overnight from the amphitheatre to the church; a man who spent the evening in the circus stands next morning at the altar, and another who was recently a patron of the stage is now the dedicator of virgins."⁷² He wrote that "our walls glitter with gold, and gold gleams upon our ceilings and the capitals of our pillars; yet Christ is dying at our doors in the person of his poor, naked and hungry."⁷³

Thus, the focus of the church changed from looking for ultimate comfort in the world beyond the grave to seeking comfort in this world, in the here and now. Christianity was viewed as "a religion with a glorious past as well as an unlimited future."⁷⁴ As a result, it suffered what Johnson called "a receding, indeed, disappearing, eschatology."⁷⁵ He stated:

After Christianity, contrary to all expectation, triumphed in the Roman empire, and was embraced by the Caesars themselves, the millennial reign, instead of being anxiously waited and prayed for, began to be dated either from the first appearance of Christ, or from the conversion of Constantine and the downfall of paganism, and to be regarded as realized in the glory of the dominant imperial state-church.⁷⁶

Instead of being aliens and strangers in this world, Christians found themselves utterly at ease in the city of man as well as the city of God. Indeed, Augustine's City of God was the first comprehensive theology to result from this standpoint.⁷⁷ Augustine believed that history runs on two parallel tracks: the City of God (God's people) and the City of Man (human endeavor as typified by human government). He taught that the people of the City of God must support and uphold the ordered peace of human government, the City of Man. He believed that the two cities have a common task: to secure "those lesser goods" without which human existence would become impossible."⁷⁸

Augustine's amillennialism is an outworking of this general theme. He reinterpreted the millennium to refer to the church and equated the thousand year reign of Christ and his saints with the "whole duration of this world." Thus, Revelation 20:1-15 is to be interpreted as follows:

Jesus bound Satan and restrained him from seducing the nations at Calvary. The saints currently reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom of God, which presently exists.

Satan will be loosed for a three and a half year period of time, during which the church will be severely persecuted.

After this, Christ will return.⁷⁹

Interestingly, Augustine stated that the literal view of the scope of the millennium (one-thousand year reign) "would not be objectionable" if the nature of the millennial kingdom was a "spiritual one" rather than a physical one. However, he strongly objected to the view that "those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself. Such a view was to "be believed only by the carnal."⁸⁰

Augustinian amillennialism was the dominant eschatology for centuries. Premillennialism, with few exceptions, soon became the view only of outcasts and heretics.⁸¹ The paradigm shift was complete. The marginalization of the premillennialism of the Bible and the early church fathers was so successful that even the reformers dismissed it as a "fable of Jewish dotage."⁸² And it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that premillennialism was rediscovered as the true, biblical view.

3.06. Conclusion

Chapter Six:

Conclusion The early church fathers deserve great admiration for their courage to stand boldly for Christ, even at the cost of their lives. They shame us in our worldliness. The writings of the early church fathers also deserve serious study. These men lived in the shadow of the apostolic age. Some of them personally walked and talked with the apostles. Yet while the early fathers are to be seriously studied and respected, they are not to be venerated. As we have seen, like us, they too were fallible, capable of error. As I hope this paper has made clear, the interpretive errors of the early church fathers were occasioned by the circumstances in which these men of God found themselves. In an era in which Jews and Christians were engaged in overt hostility over which religion would emerge supreme and victorious, it was easy for church leaders to adopt a theology that the church replaced Israel. It was also easy for Justin Martyr to spiritualize the Old Testament in order to see more of New Testament Christianity in it, and thereby refute the Gnostics who denied the Old Testament's place in God's revelation to man. The lesson for us is that we must continually guard against interpreting the Bible according to current events -- a point often lost on some of dispensational millennialism's more popular proponents.⁸³ The bottom line, of course, is that we must continually go back to the Scriptures as our only source for "doing theology." As much as we may respect and admire the early church fathers, or, for that matter, the reformers, the puritans, or a particular modern spiritual leader, we must always remember to be Bereans, checking their conclusions and reasoning against the plumb line of God's Word. No one could put it more clearly or forcefully than Martin Luther as he boldly and defiantly proclaimed before the Diet of Worms: "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason -- I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other -- my conscience is captive to the Word of God. . . . Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise."⁸⁴

3.07. Works Cited

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3.08. Footnotes

1 Thomas, S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2d enlarged ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

2 Quoted in Michael Walsh, *The Triumph of the Meek: Why Early Christianity Succeeded* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 248.

3 Historians dispute whether Constantine's conversion to Christianity was genuine. E.g., Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Pelican Books, 1967, reprinted Penguin Books, 1990), 125-127; Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Great Books of the Western World ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1952), 290. Although Eusebius recounts that in AD 312, Constantine saw a "vision" in which the sign of the cross was emblazoned across the sky surrounded by the words "In this, conquer," this "vision" was almost certainly apocryphal. See Ramsay MacMullen, *Constantine* (New York: Dial Press, 1969), 73.

4 I recognize that the use of paradigm theory in theology is fraught with risk. Theology is concerned with ultimate truth, both in God and as revealed by God. By contrast, paradigm theory, at least at its scientific core, is pessimistic about truth-seeking. See Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Circle* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 403-404. Nevertheless, it seems to me that one can still view paradigm theory as a useful way of looking at how man conceives of ultimate truth at a specific point in time in the history of dogma without compromising the fact that ultimate truth (a) exists and (b) is found in Christ Jesus and in his written Word.

5 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprinted 1995), 17.

6 Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 15-16.

7 Baptist Confession of 1689, art. I.

8 Historical theology is the "unfolding of Christian theology throughout the centuries." Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1989), 403.

9 Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1983-1985), 26.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid, 26-27.

12 Enns, *Moody Handbook*, 403.

13 Church history is commonly divided into four major periods: (1) the ancient church (through AD 590), (2) the medieval church (AD 590 to 1517), (3) the reformation era (1517-1750), and (4) the modern era (1750-present). Ibid, 403-406.

14 Ibid, 404.

15 For example, Dale Moody has written, "Dispensationalism with the modern form of seven dispensations, eight covenants, and a Pretribulation Rapture is a deviation that has not been traced beyond 1830." Dale Moody, *The Word of Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 555, quoted in Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 14-15. Daniel Fuller has similarly written: "Ignorance is bliss, and it may well be that this popularity [of dispensationalism] would not be so great if the adherents of this system knew the historical background of what they teach. Few indeed realize that the teaching of Chafer came from Scofield, who in turn got it through the writings of Darby and the Plymouth Brethren." Daniel P. Fuller, "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism" (Th.D. dis., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, 1975), 136, quoted in Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 61. To these critics, never mind that there is ample evidence of dispensational-type thinking in the writings of the early fathers. See generally Larry V. Crutchfield, "Ages and Dispensations in the Ante-Nicene Fathers" *Bibliotheca Sacra* (October-December 1987).

16 Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 14.

17 E.g., Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), 451; Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 39-40. Progressive dispensationalists, rightly, in my view, consider both Israel and the church as ultimately belonging to one people of God and serving one historical purpose, but within that broad framework, they retain the traditional dispensational distinction between Israel and the church. See Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 187-218.

18 The only arguable passage is Galatians 6:16. Even there, however, the evidence does not support the conclusion that the phrase Israel of God refers to the church. First, the repetition of the preposition ("upon" or "to") indicates that two groups are in view. Second, all the sixty five other occurrences of the term Israel in the New Testament refer to Jews. It would thus be strange for Paul to use Israel here to mean Gentile Christians. Third, Paul elsewhere distinguishes between two kinds of Israelites--believing Jews and unbelieving Jews (cf. Romans 9:6). He does the same here, referring to true Israel, that is, Jews who come to Christ. See Donald K. Campbell, "Galatians" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary [CD-ROM]* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997). See also Saucy, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 198-202; Enns, *Moody Handbook*, 526 n.12.

19 Clement, "Epistle to the Corinthians" in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers [CD-ROM]* (Albany, OR: Sage Software, 1996), 34.

20 Justin Martyr, "Dialogue with Trypho" in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 406.

21 *Ibid*, 527.

22 *Ibid*, 532-33.

23 Saucy, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 212.

24 *Ibid*.

25 Saucy, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 213.

- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid, 215.
- 28 Ibid, 215.
- 29 Ibid, 216.
- 30 Ibid, 217.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Larry V. Crutchfield, "Israel and the Church in the Ante-Nicene Fathers" *Bibliotheca Sacra* (July-September 1987), 256.
- 33 Saucy, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 216.
- 34 David S. Dockery, *Christian Scripture* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 101.
- 35 Ibid, 102.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid, 103.
- 38 Ibid, 103-104.
- 39 Robert D. Preus, "The View of the Bible Held By the Church: The Early Church Fathers Through Luther," *Inerrancy*, Norman L. Geisler, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 359.
- 40 Dockery, *Christian Scripture*, 108.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Frederick W. Norris, "Universal Salvation in Origen and Maximus" in Nigel M. de S. Cameron, ed., *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 35.
- 43 Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1910, reprinted 1995), 790.
- 44 Ibid, 788. Origen's zeal for piety went to an unfortunate extreme. As a youth, he emasculated himself to guard against sexual temptation. Ibid.
- 45 Ibid, 790.
- 46 Ibid, 792.
- 47 Dockery, *Christian Scripture*, 110.
- 48 F.F. Bruce, "Interpretation of the Bible" *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* Walter Elwell, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984), 566.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 F.W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, 238 (cited in J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 23.

- 51 See C.C. Kroeger, "Origen" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 803; Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1015.
- 52 Dockery, *Christian Scripture*, 122.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Gerald Stanton, *Kept From the Hour* (Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Publishing, 4th ed. 1991), 148. Certainly, this was the view of the Reformers.
- 55 Dockery, *Christian Scripture*, 112-114.
- 56 Ibid, 115.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 614.
- 59 Ibid, 615.
- 60 Clement, "Epistle to the Corinthians" in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 31.
- 61 Barnabas, "Epistle of Barnabas" in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers [CD-ROM]* (Albany, OR: Sage Software, 1996), 279.
- 62 Irenaeus, "Against Heresies" in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1165.
- 63 Polycarp, "Epistle to the Philippians" in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1996), 79.
- 64 Justin Martyr, "Dialogue with Trypho" in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 479-480.
- 65 Schaff, 618.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Ibid, 618-19.
- 68 Ibid, 619.
- 69 Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Athenium, 1976), 67.
- 70 Ibid, 76.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Quoted Ibid, 78.
- 73 Quoted Ibid, 79.
- 74 Ibid, 99.
- 75 Ibid, 80.
- 76 Ibid.

77 The City of God was written as a result of a state crisis -- the ransacking of Rome by Alaric in AD 410. John J. O'Meara, "Introduction" in *An Augustinian Reader* (New York: Image Books, 1973), 18.

78 F.W. Strothmann, "Introduction" to Augustine, *On the Two Cities: Selections from The City of God* (New York, Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1957), vi-vii.

79 Augustine, *City of God*, *Great Books of the Western World* ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 535-543.

80 Augustine, *City of God*, 535.

81 At the council of Ephesus in 431, belief in the millennium was condemned as superstitious. See Robert G. Clouse, "Introduction" in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, Robert Clouse, ed. (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 9.

82 The Forty-First of the Anglican Articles drawn up by Cramner described the millennium in this fashion. See Schaff, 619, n.4. Similarly, the Augsburg Confession, Art. XVII., condemned those "who now scatter Jewish opinions that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being everywhere suppressed." See Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Harper and Row, 1931, reprinted, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), III: 18.

83 See especially, Hal Lindsey, *The 1980s: Countdown to Armageddon* (New York: Bantam, 1980).

84 Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1950), 144.

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